



# **Valdosta State University**

## **Student Government Association Bylaws and Statutes**

### **ARTICLE I: RESPONSIBILITY**

The Bylaws and Statutes shall be considered binding to all members Student Government Association.

### **ARTICLE II: ORIENTATION**

- A. There shall be a SGA Retreat or Orientation at the beginning of each semester
- B. All members shall receive copies of the SGA Governing Documents and be instructed regarding SGA's place in the University Community
- C. The SGA Executive Board shall work in consultation with the SGA Advisor to determine the activities and schedule of events for both the Fall and Spring Retreats

### **ARTICLE III: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

## **Section 1: Terms and Qualification of the Senate**

- A. Members of the Senate may not be the manager or managing editor of any campus communication funded by student activity fees, or hold any executive position in the SGA unless otherwise stated.
- B. Every Senator shall be required to take the oath of office as administered by the University President, Vice President of Student Affairs, or SGA President.
- C. A Senator's term of office shall run from the date of certification of election results to April 30th, as prescribed by the SGA Code of Elections.
- D. Senators admitted into the Senate through First Year Senator, Graduate Student Senator Selection, or individuals selected to fill vacancies by mid-term of the Fall Semester will be considered as having served the full academic year at the completion of their term.

## **Section 2: First Year Senators (FYS)**

- A. The First Year Senator Program shall be overseen by the SGA Executive Branch in Coordination with the entire Executive Council.
- B. FYS are full members and Senators of the Student Government Association from the point they are administered and complete the oath of office.
- C. FYS are to be given special training and opportunities to allow FYS to be enriched and prepared to lead as SGA Senators.
- D. Shall be selected through the process outlined in the SGA code of Elections.

## **Section 3: Graduate Student Senators**

- A. Shall be selected through the process outlined in the SGA Code of Elections.
- B. May have service and attendance requirements modified at the discretion of the SGA Vice-President to accommodate for academic program or work-related requirements.
- C. Shall be considered full members and Senators of the Student Government Association.

## **Section 5: Attendance**

- A. Senators with three unexcused absences will be referred to the Standards Review Committee by the SGA secretary. This may be included in the SGA Code of Conduct.

- B. The Executive Branch shall create a point-based system for the tracking of constitutionally mandated hour requirements and other purposes. Points should be considered by the Standards Review Committee and Executive Council in the adjudication of removals.

## **ARTICLE III: THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

### **Section 1: The Executive Cabinet**

- A. Members of the Executive Cabinet are individuals appointed to special positions within the Executive Branch by the SGA President.
- B. The SGA Chief of Staff and SGA Director of Communication require majority confirmation by the SGA Senate.
- C. Descriptions and responsibilities of Executive Cabinet Members shall be created at the time of appointment. All appointments shall be recorded in writing and maintained by the SGA Secretary. Any member of SGA may request these documents at any time.
- D. Members of the Executive Cabinet shall be considered full members of the Student Government Association. Individuals appointed before midterm of the fall semester will be considered as having served an entire academic year at the completion of their term.
- E. Some members of the Executive Cabinet may also be members of the SGA Senate with approval from the SGA Executive Council and Standards Review Committee.

### **Section 2: Executive Branch Vacancies**

- A. Specific Executive Board Vacancies
  - 1. If the Office of the SGA President is vacated, the SGA Vice President shall immediately assume the duties of the SGA President and be sworn in by the Vice President of Student Affairs as soon as possible. This individual also has the right to appoint the SGA Vice President once he/she assumes the role of SGA President in accordance with the SGA Bylaws.
  - 2. If the Office of SGA Vice-President is vacated, the SGA President may choose any voting member of the executive council to fill this vacancy. This appointment shall be announced to the SGA Senate as soon as possible.
  - 3. If the office of SGA Secretary or Treasurer become vacant the SGA President has fifteen business days to appoint a replacement. The appointee must then be interviewed by members of the Executive Council and confirmed by a majority

vote of the Senate. The SGA President may appoint an “acting” Treasurer or Secretary until such time as the position may be filled.

**B. Simultaneous Executive Vacancy**

The following rules apply only in the event the entire executive board becomes vacant simultaneously.

1. If the Office of the SGA President is vacated, the Vice President prescribed in the SGA Governing Documents shall assume the duties of the President and be sworn in by the Vice President of Student Affairs during the next immediate Senate meeting. The Office of the Vice President shall then be considered vacant.
2. If the Office of the Vice President is vacated, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, as prescribed in the SGA Governing Documents, must relinquish his/her position as a Senator in order to assume the office of the SGA Vice President.
3. If the SGA President Pro-Tempore cannot assume the Vice Presidency, the Senate Director of Campus Affairs must relinquish his/her position as a Senator in order to assume the office of the SGA Vice President.
4. If the Secretary of the SGA is vacated, the Parliamentarian, as prescribed in the SGA Governing Documents, shall assume the duties of the SGA Secretary and must relinquish his/her position as Senator in order to assume the office of the SGA Secretary.
5. If the Treasurer of the SGA is vacated, the Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson, as prescribed in the SGA Governing Documents, shall assume the duties of the Treasurer of the SGA and must relinquish his/her position as Senator to assume the Office of the SGA Treasurer.
6. In the event the VSU Vice-President for Student Affairs deems the guidelines for remedying a simultaneous vacancy, he/ she must provide notice to the members of the Student Government Association and may order a special-election or other remedy.

## **ARTICLE IV: CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1: Executive Council**

- A. Voting members shall include the president, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Senate Director of Campus Affairs, Senate Director of Academic Affairs, Director of Communication, Blazer Allocation Committee Chair, Parliamentarian, President Pro-Tempore, and Chief of Staff.

- B. The SGA President has the right to appoint Ex-Officio Members to the Executive Council.
- C. The Executive Council shall be responsible for ensuring effective communication among organization leaders.
- D. Shall meet as frequently as the SGA President deems appropriate but no less than once per month.
- E. Shall have the authority to make events mandatory for SGA members.
- F. May, by two-thirds vote, remove Senators recommended for removal by the Standards Review Committee.

## **Section 2: Standards Review Committee**

- A. Shall consist of three to five senators appointed by the SGA President in consultation with the SGA Secretary and shall be chaired by the SGA Secretary who shall vote only in the case of a tie. The SGA Parliamentarian shall be an ex-officio member unless he/ she is also an appointed member of the committee.
- B. Will assist the Vice-President with ensuring mandated service hours are completed, the Parliamentarian with adherence to the SGA Code of Conduct, and the Secretary with attendance requirements.
- C. May recommend members of the Senate for removal to the Executive Council for failure to fulfill constitutional service requirements, gross disregard for the SGA Code of Conduct, and attendance violations.

## **ARTICLE V: THE BLAZER ALLOCATION COMMITTEE**

### **Section 1: The Blazer Allocation Committee**

- A. Blazer Allocation Committee (BAC)
  - 1. Shall monitor the funds, budget, and all expenditures of the SGA Blazer Allocation Account.
  - 2. Will meet with students and organizations wishing to gain funds from SGA to discuss the details of their Blazer Allocation requests.

3. Shall be responsible for ensuring that all students and organizations meet the necessary requirements before being approved for Blazer Allocation funds.
  4. The Committee shall be made up of five Senators. The SGA Treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.
- B. The BAC shall meet as often as the Treasurer determines necessary but no less than once per month.
1. The Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson shall chair and facilitate the meetings but votes only in the case of a tie. The SGA Treasurer may assist in any way necessary to ensure efficiency and compliance.
  2. A quorum of the BAC shall be 2/3 or 3 Senators.

## **Section 2: Blazer Allocation Expenditures**

- A. Process and Responsibilities
1. The SGA Treasurer is responsible for the overseeing the application process and ensuring Blazer Allocation requests are complete and compliant with all policies.
  2. The Blazer Allocation Committee is responsible for reviewing Blazer Allocation requests. Once the committee has received all information necessary to make a decision, they may, by majority vote, approve, deny, or amend requests. The Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson is responsible for ensuring all votes are recorded correctly.
  3. The SGA President is responsible for reviewing, approving, or denying requests once the committee has rendered its decision. The SGA President may also send requests back to the BAC for further review.
  4. Once Blazer Allocation requests are approved by both the Blazer Allocation Committee and the SGA President, the Treasurer shall prepare and submit the requests for processing.
  5. The SGA Treasurer and Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson share responsibility in guaranteeing accurate reporting and transparency.
- B. Reporting

1. The SGA Treasurer shall maintain a list of approved expenditures and their amounts. This list shall be sent to the SGA Senate via email and uploaded to the SGA website no later than the Friday before SGA General Meetings.
2. The Blazer Allocation Chairperson shall briefly report on Blazer Allocation expenditure totals and remaining balances at SGA General Meetings.

C. Organization Allocation Request Requirements

1. The purpose of the Blazer Allocation process is to allow the Student Government Association to support registered student organizations and individual students through funding for events and travel that promote cultural awareness, educational development, program visibility, and diverse community interaction and/or involvement for the students of Valdosta State University.
2. Expenditure request applications must be completed in their entirety and approved by the registered student organization's president before the requests can be processed. Providing ample details of the event's expenses and intentions greatly enhances the organization's chances of being approved.
3. An itemized list of items to be purchased should be included or attached with the funding application.

D. Individual Allocation Requests

1. Individuals requesting funds for travel will be reimbursed for approved expenses.
2. Individuals will be required to meet with the Blazer Allocation Committee unless the SGA Treasurer and BAC Chairperson determines the individual is able to submit sufficient documentation for the BAC to make a decision regarding the request.

E. Restrictions

1. Valdosta State University is a tax-exempt institution and thus should not be charged any sales tax. The tax ID form can be provided upon application approval and request.
2. All requests must also follow Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee, VSU, Board of Regents, State, and Federal guidelines applicable to the expenditure of institutional funds.

3. Valid invoices not received within the allocated time period set forth by the SGA Treasurer will no longer be eligible for funding.
4. The Student Government Association receives funds from the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee per Board of Regents policy 7.3.2.1. The SGA has limited funds that have been allocated by the committee.
5. If it is found at any point in the funding process that an individual has provided false information or fails to meet the requirements set forth by the BAC or SGA Treasurer the allocation request may be cancelled by the SGA President.
6. It is recommended that requests be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the date of the event or travel. The SGA Treasurer reserves the right to reject applications that have unreasonable or infeasible timelines.

## **ARTICLE VI: LEGISLATION AND MEETING STRUCTURE**

### Section 1: Legislative

#### A. Procedure

1. While members of the Executive Branch may recommend or request legislation, only Senators may introduce legislation for passage in SGA General Meetings.
2. Bills and resolutions to be proposed at an SGA Meeting must be presented via email to the SGA Secretary three business days before it is to be brought to the Senate floor unless approved by the SGA Secretary or added to the agenda by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.
3. All bills or resolutions shall be listed under New Business on the agenda.
4. It is recommended that bills and resolutions be sent to the Parliamentarian and President Pro Tempore before passage for recommendations and semantic revisions.
5. All new legislation passed shall be updated and communicated to media outlets and made available to view by the student body within two weeks of passage.
6. All legislation passed shall abide by the proper process of ratification, including sending a signature request to the SGA President on Senate approved legislation.



B. Resolutions

1. Shall be drafted to express an official position of the Senate on behalf of the student body.
2. Shall be submitted to the President Pro Tempore for semantic revision before appearing before the Senate.
3. Shall require one reading at a Senate meeting. The Presiding Officer shall entertain debate and amendments, and the Senate will vote on the proposed resolution.
4. Shall require a majority vote (50%+1) of the Senate present at time of presentation.

C. Bills

1. Shall be drafted to alter any code or other governing document other than the Constitution.
2. Shall be submitted to the Parliamentarian for semantic revision before appearing before the Senate.
3. Shall require one reading at a Senate meeting. Upon the first reading, the Presiding Officer shall entertain debate and amendment, and the Senate will vote on the proposed bill.

D. The role of the SGA President in Legislation

1. The power of vetoing any measure by the SGA Senate before its passage and before its acceptance by the student body, in part or as a whole, is solely vested in the Office of the SGA President.
2. Any bill or resolutions passed by the Senate must be approved by the President within ten business days of its passage.
3. All bills that are approved by the Senate and sanctioned by the President will be signed with the President's signature to signify acceptance of the bill.
4. Any bill not approved by the President within the allotted ten-day period shall be automatically approved and shall take effect.

E. Meeting Structure

1. The standard meeting agenda shall be as follows, unless voted otherwise by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present:

l. Call to Order

President of the Senate

II.	Attendance	Secretary
III.	Minutes Reading and Approval	Secretary
IV.	Executive Reports	SGA President
V.	Legislative Reports	Senate Directors
VI.	Blazer Allocation	BAC Chair
VII.	Old Business	President of the Senate
VIII.	New Business	President of the Senate
IX.	Miscellaneous Business	President of the Senate
X.	Adjournment	President of the Senate

F. Meeting of the SGA Senate shall be Governed using parliamentary procedure as defined in Robert’s Rules of Order 11<sup>th</sup> Addition

1. Parliamentary Procedure may be Suspended by the President of the Senate if necessary for discussion or other purpose. They can be reinstated by the President of the Senate or a motion, second, and majority vote.

## **ARTICLE VII: IMPEACHMENT**

Section 1: Impeachment; the steps and procedures required for impeachment are as follows:

- A. The Senator who wishes to have a member of the SGA impeached should gather all necessary evidence in order to present a legitimate case of impeachment to the Senate
  1. Impeachable offenses include deliberate disregard of SGA governing documents, habitual poor or offensive decorum at senate meetings, as well as ignorance or incompetence of the responsibilities of one’s SGA office.
- B. After the individual has gathered all evidence; they shall meet with Parliamentarian and the Standards Review Committee in order for all evidence to be reviewed and be advised on all rights of impeachment.
  1. The Parliamentarian does not have the authority to dismiss any evidence and can only impartially advise the individual on impeachment policies and procedures.
- C. Upon meeting with the Parliamentarian and Standards Review Committee the impeachment hearing shall be placed on the agenda at the next SGA General meeting. This part of the meeting shall be closed to non-members of SGA.
- D. After charges have been brought before the Senate, a brief discussion of the prepared evidence will be held. The member being charged shall not be present during discussion of the evidence.

- E. At the conclusion of the discussion a vote shall be held to formally impeach the accused member. A majority (50%+1) vote is required to impeach any member (this vote does not remove the accused from SGA).
- F. If impeached, a date will be set for a trial. This trial will be a closed meeting of the Senate in which evidence may be discussed in detail, witnesses may be asked to testify, and the accused may speak in defense of themselves. After all evidence has been discussed and all members have finished debate, a vote shall be held to formally expel the accused from SGA. A three-fourths (3/4) vote is required to remove any member from SGA through the impeachment process.
- G. If any member of the SGA is found guilty at the conclusion on an impeachment trial, he/she shall be subject to the following restrictions.
  - 1. If the impeached individual was a member of the Executive Branch, he/she shall be forbidden from ever holding an executive position, and may only seek a senate position one year after the next election occurring after the impeachment trial.
  - 2. If the impeached individual was a member of the Legislative Branch, he/she shall be forbidden from ever holding an executive position, and may only seek a senate position one year after the next election occurring after the impeachment trial.
- H. Actions that may be considered minor offenses (including but not limited to: chronic failure to use parliamentary procedure and one-time failures to perform minor duties) are to be judged by the Parliamentarian and brought before the Senate if they deem necessary.
- I. Impeachment proceedings are not to be confused with the administrative process for removing Senators through the Standards Review Committee and Executive Council.