

**CONSTITUTION OF THE  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION  
OF MERCER UNIVERSITY**



**Revised April 2022**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TITLE I - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH</b>	<b>12</b>
ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose	12
ARTICLE II - Powers Of The Senate	12
ARTICLE III - Membership	13
ARTICLE IV - Removal from Office	13
ARTICLE V - Committees	14
ARTICLE VI - Elections	14
<b>TITLE II - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH</b>	<b>15</b>
ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose	15
ARTICLE II - President	15
ARTICLE III - Vice-President	15
ARTICLE IV - Recording Secretary	15
ARTICLE V - Treasurer	16
ARTICLE VI - Chief of Staff	16
ARTICLE VII - Media Secretary	17
ARTICLE VIII - Executive Powers	17
<b>Title III - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH</b>	<b>18</b>
ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose	18
ARTICLE II – Parliamentarian	19
ARTICLE III – Judicial Review	19
<b>TITLE IV - GOVERNING DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>20</b>
ARTICLE I - The Bylaws	20
ARTICLE II - The Statutes at Large	20
ARTICLE III - Election Code	21
ARTICLE IV - Standing Orders of the Student Senate	21
ARTICLE V - Committee Directives	21
<b>TITLE V - BILL OF RIGHTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>TITLE VI - OPERATIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
ARTICLE I - Governance	23
ARTICLE II - Non-Discrimination Policy	23
<b>TITLE VII - RATIFICATION, AMENDMENTS, INITIATIVE, AND RECALL</b>	<b>24</b>
ARTICLE I - Ratification	24

ARTICLE II - Amendment	24
ARTICLE III - Initiative	24
ARTICLE IV - Recall	24
<b>TITLE VIII - AMENDMENTS</b>	<b>25</b>

# **TITLE I - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

## **ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose**

1. The elected representatives of the student body shall be the Senate of the Student Government Association of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.
2. Representation of the Student Body
  1. The Senate of the Student Government Association of Mercer University, the Student Body President, and the Student Body Vice President shall be the legitimate representative voices of the undergraduate Student Body.
  2. The Senate shall officially liaise with the Dean of Students.
2. The legislative body of the student body shall have the following expressed purposes:
  - a. To express and promote the concerns and interests of the student body.
  - b. To facilitate communication between the students, faculty, and administration.
  - c. To facilitate and foster communication between the student organizations of Mercer University.
  - d. To encourage student involvement in all facets of university life.
  - e. To establish and maintain an effective means of communication amongst the various facets of student governance, student organizations, University administration, University faculty and staff, the Macon Community, and the University community;
  - f. To serve as an advocate and a resource for the Student Body;
  - g. To initiate and administer programs and services for the Undergraduate Student Body and the University;
  - h. To advocate for the Student Body in the process of establishing University policies and monitor their implementation;
  - i. To provide opportunities for the development of student leadership in governance;
  - j. To ensure that the University Conduct System guards and protects the rights and interests of all students;
  - k. To provide regular meetings open to the Student Body for the purpose of student governance.

## **ARTICLE II - Powers of The Senate**

1. The Senate shall:
  - a. Have established processes to obtain information or documents it may need to achieve its objectives, within the confines of applicable Federal, State, and Local laws, from the appropriate points of contact.
  - b. Recommend Senators, or other students, as representative members of any of the standing committees of the Student Government Association.
  - c. Through a collaboration with the University Administration, the Senate shall meet with the various Deans and Administrators to serve as a liaison in University matters which affect academic and student affairs.
  - d. Propose changes to University policy that affect the Student Body.

- e. Operate under the Governing Documents of the Senate.
- f. The Senate shall assume all powers necessary, proper, and feasible to carrying out its aforementioned powers and constitutional duties.

### ARTICLE III - Membership

1. The Legislative Branch of the Senate shall be elected by the students of Mercer University.
2. All elected and appointed members of the Senate must be enrolled as an undergraduate student in one of the schools or colleges on the Macon campus and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average from the time of qualification through the duration of the individual's time on Senate.
3. There shall be five Senators elected from the senior class to represent the senior class.
4. There shall be five Senators elected from the junior class to represent the junior class.
5. There shall be five Senators elected from the sophomore class to represent the sophomore class.
6. There shall be five Senators elected from the freshman class to represent the freshman class.
7. There shall be five Senators-at-Large elected to represent the student body.
8. The Senator-at-Large with the highest number of votes in the general election shall be the Leading Senator-at-Large.
9. The class Senators with the highest numbers of votes in the general election shall be the Class Presidents. The Senior Class President shall be charged with the oversight of the Senior Gift Committee.
10. The President, Vice-President, and Parliamentarian of the Student Government Association shall not serve as the Chief or Associate Chief Justice of the Judicial Council. A student elected or appointed to be President, Vice-President, or Parliamentarian who accepts a position of Chief or Associate Chief Justice must resign his or her post as President, Vice-President, or Parliamentarian upon acceptance.
11. The Student Senate shall have final jurisdiction over its membership, and shall be empowered to create additional qualifications for office.

### ARTICLE IV - Removal from Office

1. The Senate shall have the power to remove any members by a two-thirds vote for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office.
2. The Senate shall have the power to remove any member of the Executive Branch by a two-thirds vote for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office.
3. The President shall act as the Chairperson of the Senate for the impeachment hearing of any member of the Legislative body.
4. The Leading Senator-at-Large of the Student Government Association shall act as Chairperson of the Senate for the impeachment hearing of any member of the Executive Branch but shall exercise no vote.
  - a. This shall be subject to the approval of the Vice-President of Student Affairs.
1. Any member of the Senate or member of the Executive Branch who is subjected to removal or impeachment proceedings shall be afforded one week notice, shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her behalf, and have the opportunity to cross-examine any witnesses brought against him or her

## ARTICLE V - Committees

1. The Senate shall have the power to establish committees per the Bylaws of the Student Government Association.
2. Each committee of the Senate shall have the power to investigate matters placed before it, formulate resolutions and motions for recommendation to the Senate, and carry out such business as it may be authorized to do by the Senate as a whole.
3. Non-elected students may serve as members of such committees.

## ARTICLE VI - Elections

1. The Senate shall have the power to set and hold elections for membership, a referendum on amendments, and such other business, as it may be necessary to bring before the student body as a whole.
2. Senate elections shall be determined by a plurality of votes cast.
3. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates shall qualify, campaign, and be elected as a ticket.
4. Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections shall be determined by a simple majority of votes cast. If no ticket achieves a majority decision, a run-off election shall be held between the two candidates who received the most votes in the general election.
5. All undergraduate students of the Macon campus who are enrolled as full-time students shall be eligible to vote in any student election according to classification.
6. No student shall be eligible to cast more than one ballot in any election.

# **TITLE II - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

## **ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose**

1. The Executive Branch of the Student Government Association shall serve the following purposes:
  - a. The Executive Branch shall be the executive committee appointed to the Senate of the Student Government Association of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.
  - b. The Executive Branch shall serve as a representative of the student body before the administration, faculty, and community.

## **ARTICLE II - President**

1. The President of the Student Government Association shall be the head of the Executive Branch and the Chairperson of the Senate.
2. The President shall be an ex-officio member of the Senate and all its committees and shall reserve the right to vote on matters before the Senate in case of a tie.
3. The President shall assign committee assignments to elected Senators.
4. The President shall have the power to appoint non-elected students to committees subject to a two-thirds confirmation vote by the Senate.
5. The President shall have the power to create special committees subject to a two-thirds confirmation vote by the Senate.
6. The President shall have the power to appoint a Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Chief of Staff, and Media Secretary subject to a two-thirds vote of approval by Senate.
7. The President shall have the power to appoint a replacement for Vice-President should a vacancy occur in that office, subject to a two-thirds vote of approval of the Senate.

## **ARTICLE III - Vice-President**

1. The Vice-President of the Student Government Association shall be an ex-officio member of the Senate.
2. The Vice-President shall serve as the Chairperson of the Senate in the absence of the President.
3. The Vice-President shall fulfill such duties as assigned to him or her by the President.
4. The Vice-President shall be the successor in the Office of the President should the President be removed from office.
5. The Vice-President shall serve as the Chairperson of the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE IV - Recording Secretary**

1. The Recording Secretary of the Student Government Association shall be appointed by the President.
2. The Recording Secretary shall be a non-voting member of the Senate.
3. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining comprehensive minutes of all official business transpiring in regular or special meetings of the Senate of the Student Government Association except closed Senate meetings.
4. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining comprehensive minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs.

5. No elected Senator shall serve as Recording Secretary except in a temporary capacity without first resigning his or her elected office.

### ARTICLE V - Treasurer

1. The Treasurer of the Student Government Association shall be appointed by the President.
2. The Treasurer shall be a non-voting member of the Senate.
3. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all of the financial records of the Student Government Association.
4. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio voting member of the Organizational Affairs Committee.
5. No elected Senator shall serve as Treasurer except in a temporary capacity without first resigning his or her elected office.

### ARTICLE VI - Chief of Staff

1. The Chief of Staff of the Student Government Association shall be appointed by the President.
2. The Chief of Staff shall be a non-voting member of the Senate.
3. The Chief of Staff shall oversee the Student Government Association office, maintaining its order, cleanliness, and functionality. The Chief of Staff shall also be responsible for scheduling and assisting with all Student Government Association events, as designated by the President.
4. The Chief of Staff shall be a direct assistant to the President and Vice President of the Student Government Association, with his or her role being defined by the needs of the organization at a given time.
5. The Chief of Staff shall be no more powerful than any other member of the Executive Board.
6. No elected Senator shall serve as Chief of Staff except in a temporary capacity without first resigning his or her elected office.

### ARTICLE VII - Media Secretary

1. The Media Secretary of the Student Government Association shall be appointed by the President.
2. The Media Secretary shall be a non-voting member of the Senate.
3. The Media Secretary shall be responsible for assisting the Executive Board with all professional, digital, print, and social media for the Student Government Association.
4. The Media Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the Student Government Association website, ensuring it is current and contains all important information about Senate.
5. The Media Secretary shall work in cooperation with the Public Relations and Elections Committee to professionally reflect the Student Government Association.
6. The Media Secretary shall assist in all online elections.
7. No elected Senator shall serve as Media Secretary except in a temporary capacity without first resigning his or her elected office.



## ARTICLE VIII - Executive Powers

1. Executive Authority
  - a. The Executive branch of this government shall have authority to execute all necessary legislation and action as defined within the limits of this Constitution, the Bylaws of the Undergraduate Student Government, the Governing Documents, and the Student Handbook.
1. Limitations of Power
  - a. Policies adopted by officers and commissions of the Executive Branch shall be subject to review by the Senate.

# **Title III - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

## **ARTICLE I - Name and Purpose**

1. The Judicial Branch shall be composed of members appointed by the President of the Student Government Association and confirmed by the Senate.
2. The Judicial Branch shall interpret the Constitution, Bylaws, Statutes at Large, and other relevant governing documents and decrees by the Student Government Association.

## **ARTICLE II – Parliamentarian**

1. The Judicial Branch shall consist of three Parliamentarians: A Chief Parliamentarian and two Associate Parliamentarians. The Chief Parliamentarian should be a fourth-year student at Mercer while the two Associates should be students for two and three years respectively.
2. Parliamentarians may be nominated by the current President of the Student Government Association any time a vacancy opens. Appointments require a two-thirds approval by the Senate.
3. Upon appointment, a Parliamentarian holds their position indefinitely unless the officer is removed through nonfeasance or impeachment, resigns from office, or graduates from Mercer University.
4. Parliamentarians shall be non-voting members of the Senate.
5. Parliamentarians shall be responsible for advising the Chairperson of the Senate of the correct operation of parliamentary procedure.
6. The Parliamentarians shall serve on the Senate Rules Committee which shall be chaired by the Chief Parliamentarian.
7. Parliamentarians shall be responsible for maintaining an accurate and complete copy of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies of the Student Government Association. Parliamentarians shall also advise the President and the general Senate body of the provisions of these documents, when necessary, in order to avoid violation or ignorance of these provisions.
8. The Chief Parliamentarian shall be charged with the responsibility to meet with the incoming President and Vice-President upon their election in the spring to communicate the proper usage and applications of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Statutes at Large of the Student Government Association.
9. Parliamentarians shall be responsible for educating the general Senate body of parliamentary procedure at the beginning of each new member's term.
10. No elected Senator shall serve as Parliamentarian except in a temporary capacity without first resigning his or her elected office.

### ARTICLE III – Judicial Review

1. Constitutionality of legislation and acts by the Student Government Association shall be determined by the Parliamentarians.
2. Any act determined to be in violation of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, Statutes at Large, or other governing documents and decrees by the Student Government Association shall be immediately nullified by a majority opinion by the Parliamentarians.
3. In the case in which a dissenting Parliamentarian or Senator disagrees with a judicial ruling, a Writ of Mandamus may be used to bring a Judicial Review meeting before the Senate body. Senators in favor and opposed to the Parliamentarians' ruling should be given the opportunity to voice their concerns before another vote is held.

# **TITLE IV - GOVERNING DOCUMENTS**

## **ARTICLE I - The Bylaws**

1. The Bylaws of the Student Government Association shall establish and dictate general provisions relating to the functional proceedings of the Senate, its members, and its components.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be proposed in writing by a Senator or by a petition of five hundred students.
3. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be subject to a two-thirds vote of approval by the Senate.
4. The Senate shall pass no Bylaw that is in contradiction to any provision of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE II - The Statutes at Large**

1. All new bills, proclamations, and resolutions created or adopted by the Student Government Association shall be logged in the Mercer University Student Government Association Statutes at Large and organized according to the jurisdiction of the Senate.
2. The Statutes at Large shall hold inferior power to that of the Student Government Association Bylaws and the supreme power of the Constitution.
3. Statutes which seek to establish proceedings that require the adoption or amendment of a bylaw or enacted law explicitly stated in the Mercer University Constitution may not take effect until after ratification of the aforementioned amendment.
4. The Statutes at Large shall consist of the following categories of legislation:
  - a. Bill: Legislation that directly advises the executive action of the Student Government Association or any of its related entities such as the establishment of ad-hoc committee structures, expenditure of funds, etc.
    - i. Bills shall be adopted by a simple majority of the legislative body and signed into law by the President of the Student Government Association.
    - ii. Refusal to sign a bill into law by the President shall be considered an executive veto. Vetoes may be overridden by a majority vote of each class senator cohort and of the Senators-at-Large. Should any cohort vote no, the veto is not overridden. If overridden, the bill will be signed by the highest-ranking legislative member in favor of the bill.
  - b. Resolution: Legislation that advises the legislative docket or intent of the Student Government Association or any of its related entities for the ensuing term.
    - i. Resolutions shall be adopted by a simple majority of the legislative body and signed into law by the President of the Student Government Association.
  - c. Proclamation: Legislation which addresses the student body or dictates the Student Government Association's stance on real-world events or proceedings.

- ii. Proclamations shall be adopted by a three-fourths majority of the legislative body and signed by the President of the Student Government Association.
- iii. Refusal to sign a proclamation by the President shall be considered an executive veto. Vetoes of proclamations may not be overridden.

### ARTICLE III - Election Code

1. The Student Government Association supports a democratic, fair, and open electoral process, the purpose of the election code is to:
  - a. Provide equal access to all in serving the student body.
  - b. Prevent foul play that could interfere in a free and fair election.
  - c. Promote a positive response from the student body by ensuring they are fairly represented.
1. The Election Code establishes rules governing:
  - a. The annual campaign and election of President, Vice President, and Senators
  - b. Election Committee
  - c. Referendum questions
  - d. Special Elections
1. The election code shall not be amended once any election has begun. This moratorium shall end when the results of the election are finalized.

### ARTICLE IV - Standing Orders of the Student Senate

1. Legislation regarding rules and procedures shall be added to the Standing Orders
  - a. The Senate may determine the rules of its own proceedings.
1. Legislation regarding the rules for debate shall be added to the Standing Orders
  - a. Shall be determined within the rules and procedures.
1. Any rule in the Standing Orders may be temporarily suspended by a one-half vote of those Senators present unless expressly prohibited by the Standing Orders.

### ARTICLE V - Committee Directives

1. Shall follow the guidelines and the mission set forth by the Bylaws.
2. Legislation regarding the purpose and scope of the Standing Committees shall be added to the Committee Directives
  - a. The Standing Committees may determine the rules of their own proceedings
1. The powers for the Standing Committees are derived from the enumerated powers of the Executive and Legislative Branches.
2. Any rule in the Committee Directives may be changed by a two-thirds vote of those Senators present.
  - a. Changes may only be initiated by members from their respective Committees.

## **TITLE V - BILL OF RIGHTS**

1. The Student Government Association shall pass no law or act which abridges the freedom of speech, thought, privacy, assembly, religion or creed, or petition, regardless of location, of any student, organization, or entity associated with Mercer University.
2. The Student Government Association shall ensure equal protection under its policies and those of related entities for all Mercerians regardless of race, ethnicity, color, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion or creed, ability, socioeconomic status, or nationality.
3. The Student Government Association shall pass no law or act which threatens the franchise of any Mercer student or undermines the equal power entitled to all students regardless of age, class, or executive powers.
4. The Student Government Association shall pass no law or act which imposes sanctions or disciplinary actions upon any student or entity and shall make no attempt to interfere with specific judicial proceedings containing such.
5. The Student Government Association shall make no attempt to infringe upon the rights of Mercerians which are not expressly stated within this document but are implied by the Mercer University Code of Conduct and Community of Respect guidelines and basic human rights.
6. Any law or act which is held in violation of any of the sections herein listed under the Bill of Rights by the Judiciary of the Student Government Association shall be immediately repealed.

# **TITLE VI - OPERATIONS**

## **ARTICLE I - Governance**

1. The Governing Documents of the Student Senate and all of its subsidiary bodies, in their order of precedence, shall be:
  - a. The Constitution
  - b. The Bylaws
  - c. Statutes at Large, Election Code, and Committee Directives
  - d. Executive Orders
  - e. Standing Orders of the Senate
  - f. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, at the discretion of the body.
1. No provision of a Governing Document shall exist that shall contradict a provision of a Governing Document of higher precedence.

## **ARTICLE II - Non-Discrimination Policy**

1. Duly elected members and prospective members of the Student Senate shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, national origin, age, size, religion or a lack thereof, military history, sexual orientation, romantic identity, gender identity, gender expression, any perceived disabilities, or any other aspect of their personal identity.
2. If discrimination of any kind occurs against a member of the Senate, the Senate Executive Board shall be notified of the matter and report the incident to the designated authorities outlined in the student handbook.
3. Every pronoun that is used throughout Governing Documents of the Student Senate shall be construed as gender-neutral for the purposes of internal organization

# **TITLE VII - RATIFICATION, AMENDMENTS, INITIATIVE, AND RECALL**

## **ARTICLE I - Ratification**

1. This Constitution becomes the official Constitution of the Student Government Association upon ratification by the undergraduate students of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.
2. Ratification of this Constitution shall be by referendum and shall constitute a two-thirds vote of approval of voting students.
3. All previous Constitutions, Bylaws, and Policies not expressly continued by this Constitution are hereby declared null and void upon ratification of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE II - Amendment**

1. Amendments to the Constitution shall be made upon a referendum vote by the student body, and the ratification of such amendments shall be subject to a two-thirds vote of approval by those voting.
2. Amendments to the Constitution shall be proposed by a two-thirds vote of the Senate or by a petition of five hundred students.
3. Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be publicized for at least two weeks before the date of the referendum.
4. All passed amendments shall be added to TITLE VI with the date of Senate passage and date of Referendum passage.
  - a. Records of previous Constitutions and amendments shall be kept in an archive.

## **ARTICLE III - Initiative**

1. An initiative on any question except the allocation of Organizational Affairs Funding, the chartering of campus organizations, or the revocation of campus organization charters may be called by a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the Undergraduate Student Body
2. A meeting of the Senate must be called by the President within thirty days upon receipt of a petition signed by at least ten percent of the student body.

## **ARTICLE IV - Recall**

1. A recall election for any elected member of the Legislative Branch or Executive Branch may be called by a petition signed by at least ten percent of his or her electing constituency.
2. A special election shall then be held in which the electing constituency shall vote on whether or not to maintain that member or officer in his or her position.
3. A recall vote must be carried by a majority of the students voting.



# **TITLE VIII - AMENDMENTS**