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# Elon University Student Government Association Constitution

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## **PREAMBLE**

We, the students of Elon University, realizing the need for justice and progress of scholarship, leadership, and the arts in a model of fair representation and in the spirit of Numen Lumen, do hereby ordain and adopt this constitution of the Student Government Association of Elon University.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of the government herein established shall be the Student Government Association of Elon University (SGA).

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Student Government Association, authorized by the Elon University Administration, shall be to represent the rights and opinions of the student body in a manner consistent with the mission and honor code of Elon University, to provide for appropriate student activities, and to join with the faculty and administrators of the university in building a stronger, more effective living and learning community.

## **ARTICLE III. STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES**

### **A. Amount**

- a. The SGA reserves the right to recommend the amount of its student activities fees to the Budget Committee of the University and the Board of Trustees.

### **B. Collection**

- a. The university shall collect student activities fees from each student at the time of registration for classes. This shall be done only if the Board of Trustees has approved the amount of fees to be collected. SGA will receive an annual allocation as determined by the Vice President of Student Life.

### **C. Distribution**

- a. The SGA Finance Board, chaired by the Vice President of Finance, shall be charged with distributing allocated Student Activity Fees in a just and impartial manner in accordance with the SGA Finance Bylaws.
- b. Finance Board
  - i. The Vice President of Finance shall serve as the comptroller of the board.
  - ii. The voting members of the Finance Board shall consist of the four (4) Class Treasurers, the Assistant Comptroller, and four (4) non-Senator elected members. A simple majority vote is required for a request to pass. In the case of a tie, the Vice President of Finance retains the right to vote.
  - iii. The board shall conduct weekly meetings, as described in the Finance

Bylaws, in addition to the following:

1. The deliberations shall be closed, but all records of the votes shall be entered into the Senate Records.
2. The board may invite a student(s) or an organization's representative(s) during deliberation of an allocation to provide additional information on the organization's behalf, should the organization so desire.
3. The SGA and the Finance Board reserve the right to allocate all other fees with regard to the Finance Bylaws in a proper manner as the Senate sees fit.

D. Excess Yearly Funds

- a. In consultation with the university's Vice President of Student Life, the Finance Board shall maintain a reserve fund that shall not exceed the yearly operating budget of SGA.
- b. In consultation with the Finance Board, the SGA Senate shall reserve the right to allocate reserve funds through legislation towards campus improvements or any other cause.

## ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Qualifications

- a. Members of the Student Government Association must meet these requirements upon election or appointment, and for the duration of their term in office:
  - i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student of Elon University or a part-time senior in their last semester.
  - ii. Have paid student activity fees or Elon semester study abroad fee.
  - iii. Be in overall good standing with the institution, including conduct standing.
  - iv. Hold a cumulative 2.7 Grade Point Average.
  - v. Uphold all pledges set forth in the SGA Oath of Office.
- b. There shall be a one-semester probationary period for any member of SGA who does not meet the Grade Point Average requirements of SGA. Members who do not meet the minimum grade point average and standing shall not be eligible to run for office.

B. Removal

- a. If a member of SGA is removed from office for failing to meet qualifications as listed in Article IV, Section A, subsection a, that member shall be barred from holding a position in SGA until they meet the aforementioned qualifications.
- b. If a member of SGA is removed from office by the SGA Review Board for reasons as stated in Article VIII Section C subsection a subdivision i, they shall be barred from holding a position in SGA until the next university SGA election.

### C. Legislative Year

- a. Executive officers will take the ceremonial oath of office at or before the first business meeting following their election. Their term will coincide with the first legislative meeting.
- b. Newly elected senators shall take the oath of office at the first business meeting of the term for new Executive officers. Any senators appointed at a later date shall be sworn in at the earliest possible business meeting.
- c. The previous Senate's term shall conclude as the next Senate is sworn in.

### D. Oath of Office

- a. All members of SGA shall take the SGA Oath of Office administered by the SGA President or appropriate designee before assuming their positions and responsibilities.
- b. The SGA Oath of Office is as follows:
  - i. "I hereby pledge to faithfully represent the rights and opinions of the student body in a manner consistent with the mission and honor code of Elon University" (*I will*) "I will fulfill, to the best of my ability, all duties incumbent upon me as a member of the Student Government Association of Elon University" (*I will*).

## ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS

### A. Elections Committee

- a. The Elections Committee shall propose the Elections Manual at a time deemed necessary by the chairs of the Elections Committee and the Speaker of the Senate.
- b. The Elections Committee shall work in consultation with the Review Board of SGA and the Speaker of the Senate to ensure a fair and just electoral process.

### B. Elections Manual

#### a. Definition

- i. The Elections Manual shall consist of election guidelines, policies, and processes:
- ii. Any violation of the Elections Manual may result in loss of candidacy. If a violation of the Elections Manual occurs, these procedures will be followed:
  1. The Elections Committee Chairs will report the violation to the Speaker of the Senate. Review Board members will then decide whether the candidate will be disqualified. A simple majority is needed to disqualify a candidate.
  2. If the candidate is a current member of the Review Board, the Elections Committee Chairs will report the violation to the Senate.

The Speaker shall then lead the Senate through the same procedure to decide whether the candidate will be disqualified.

- b. Filing for Candidacy
    - i. To be eligible for the ballot, all candidates must sign the Elections Manual verifying knowledge of the rules and agreeing to their adherence.
    - ii. All candidates must be eligible for membership of SGA as stated in Article IV, Section A.
- C. Voting
- a. Only members of the Elon University undergraduate student body who have paid their student activity fees or the Elon semester study abroad fee shall be entitled to vote in any SGA election.
  - b. Candidates for Executive President and Executive Vice President must win a majority of the votes cast in a campus-wide election (50% plus one of the total votes cast). In the event no majority is achieved by a candidate, a run-off election between the top two vote recipients will be held at a later date to be selected by the Elections Committee.
  - c. All candidates for elected Senatorial positions must win a plurality of votes cast in a campus-wide election.

## **ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

- A. Definition
- a. The executive powers herein granted by the Elon University Administration and SGA constitution shall be vested in the SGA Executive Branch and its members led by the Executive President.
  - b. The offices of Executive President and Executive Vice President shall be elected by the student body in general elections.
  - c. The offices of Vice President of Communications and Vice President of Finance shall be appointed through an application process as outlined in the SGA Bylaws.
  - d. The Student Body President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Communications, Vice President of Finance, and Speaker of the Senate shall serve terms concurrent with the legislative year as defined in Article IV. Section C. of the SGA Constitution and receive, for services rendered, a stipend, which shall neither be increased nor decreased during their term of office.
    - i. To be eligible for stipends, each Executive must hold a minimum amount of office hours in the SGA Office in addition to other requirements as outlined in the SGA Bylaws for the respective legislative year.
    - ii. A joint committee consisting of members from the Review Board and Finance Board shall assess the amount of the stipend and the manner of distribution if called to review the stipends by the outgoing Executive Officers. It should then go to the Senate to be approved by a majority vote.

- e. All Executives shall take an oath of office, which shall be administered by the outgoing Executive President or designee.
- f. At the time of the election, candidates for the Executive offices shall be members of the rising Junior Class or the rising Senior Class.
- g. The Executive Officers must regularly attend the Senate Meetings of the Legislative Branch to provide updates and foster communication between the two branches.

## B. Executive Offices

### a. Executive President

- i. In all official dealings with the students of other colleges or universities, and in all dealings with Elon University faculty and administration, the Executive President shall represent the student body.
- ii. Chief of Staff
  - 1. The Chief of Staff shall help the Executive President and Executive Vice President to coordinate all of the duties and initiatives of their terms.

### b. Executive Vice President

- i. Shall be responsible for the organization of SGA events.
- ii. Should the Executive President be unable to fulfill duties, the Executive Vice President will assume the office of the Executive President.
- iii. Should a vacancy occur, the Executive President shall appoint the position within a responsible time and the appointment shall be confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote by the Senate.

### c. Vice President of Communications

- i. Shall be responsible for serving as the SGA's representative in liaison to address inquiries on behalf of SGA.
- ii. Assistant Vice President of Communications
  - 1. Shall assist in fulfilling all communications and outreach duties of the Vice President of Communications in conjunction with the Vice President of Communications' term.
- iii. Should a vacancy occur, the Executive President shall appoint the position within a responsible time and the appointment shall be confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote by the Senate.

### d. Vice President of Finance

- i. The Vice President of Finance shall serve as the Finance Board presiding officer and has the duty to follow and maintain the Finance Bylaws.
- ii. Assistant Comptroller
  - 1. Shall serve at the discretion of the Vice President of Finance and serve as the Assistant Chair of the Finance Board.



- iii. Should a vacancy occur, the Executive President shall appoint the position within a responsible time and the appointment shall be confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote by the Senate.
- e. Speaker of the Senate
  - i. The Speaker shall serve as the head of the legislative branch.
  - ii. Speaker Pro Tempore
    - 1. Shall serve at the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate and in line with SGA Bylaws.
    - 2. Should the Speaker of the Senate be unable to fulfill duties, the Speaker Pro Tempore will assume the office of the Speaker of the Senate.

## **ARTICLE VII. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

### **A. Definition**

- a. All legislative powers herein granted by the Elon University Administration and SGA Constitution shall be vested in the Senate.

### **B. Leadership**

- a. The Speaker of the Senate, Speaker Pro Tempore, Parliamentarian, and Committee Chairs shall work together to organize and direct the Senate's actions as Senate Leadership.
- b. The Senate Leadership shall meet regularly as outlined in the SGA Bylaws.
- c. Speaker of the Senate
  - i. The Speaker shall be chosen by Senators immediately following the Oath of Office for Senators on the first meeting of the legislative year.
    - 1. To qualify for the internal election of the Speaker of the Senate, a Senator must have had previous experience in the Senate and be of Junior or Senior standing.
    - 2. The newly elected Speaker shall vacate their Senate seat and all accompanying duties and privileges associated with the position.
    - 3. Upon vacating their Senate seat, the Speaker is then considered a member of the Executive Board alongside members of the Executive Branch.
  - ii. The Speaker shall be empowered to call any special meetings of the Senate.
  - iii. The Speaker shall be responsible for the assignment of Senators to Senate committees.
  - iv. The Speaker shall be responsible for drafting the Senate Rules, which can be found in the SGA Bylaws, to govern the Senate during the legislative year. The rules shall be submitted to the Senate for any amendment, and approval by a two-thirds majority is required.

- v. The Speaker of the Senate shall receive, for services rendered, a stipend, which shall neither be increased nor decreased during their term of office.
  - d. Speaker Pro Tempore
    - i. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall be elected internally by the Senate with a simple majority vote and serve for the duration of the legislative year.
    - ii. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall assume the responsibilities of the Speaker in the absence of the Speaker of the Senate.
  - e. Parliamentarian
    - i. The Parliamentarian shall be elected internally by the Senate with a simple majority vote and serve for the duration of the legislative year.
      - 1. If the Parliamentarian is unable to fulfill their duties, the Speaker Pro Tempore or designee shall step in.
    - ii. The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for all other clerical work for the Senate, including but not limited to, attendance and roll call voting.
  - f. Committee Chairs
    - i. The Committee Chairs are appointed by the Speaker of the Senate and may be removed at the discretion of the Speaker.
    - ii. The Committee Chairs shall be approved by the Senate with a simple majority vote and serve for the duration of the legislative year.
- C. Senators
- a. Definition
    - i. Representatives from each academic class, undergraduate college, and initiative as deemed necessary by the previous Executive team shall form the voting body of the SGA Senate.
    - ii. Only Senators who have taken the Oath of Office may participate in Senate voting procedures.
    - iii. All voting seats within the Senate must have been open to a campus-wide vote before being filled through appointment.
  - b. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. Each senator shall be responsible for any duties outlined in the SGA Constitution, in the SGA Bylaws, and by their Committee Chair.
    - ii. Each senator is required to participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of programming sponsored by a campus cultural identity group, center, or organization.
    - iii. Each senator is required to participate in diversity, equity, and inclusivity training.
  - c. Class Senators
    - i. Each class shall elect a President, Treasurer, and Class Senators.
      - 1. The exact number of Class Senators shall be specified in the SGA Bylaws, with the expectation that the First-Year class will have 1

more Class Senator than the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior classes.

d. Academic Senators

- i. The Academic Senators shall represent the five (5) undergraduate colleges of Elon University: the College of Arts and Science, the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education, the Love School of Business, the School of Communications, and the School of Health Sciences.

1. The number of senators for each college shall be proportional to the total number of students in each college and shall be specified in the SGA Bylaws.

- ii. Academic Senators representing their respective colleges shall meet with their Deans as stipulated in the SGA Bylaws, but no less than once per semester.

e. Initiative Senators

- i. The Initiative Senators shall represent the priorities of the Student Government Association as determined by the SGA Bylaws.

D. Committees

a. Standing Committees

- i. There shall be standing committees in the Senate, to which the Speaker of the Senate may appoint chairpersons and designate the number of members of which each committee shall consist.
- ii. The Committee Chairs serve a term coinciding with the legislative year and at the discretion of the Speaker.

b. Academic Relations Committee (ARC)

- i. The Committee shall produce a set of goals for the Academic Relations Committee to be carried out during the Senate term.
- ii. Except for the Chair of the Committee, members will be responsible for serving on an additional Senate committee.

c. Elections Committee

- i. This committee will manage all elections conducted by the SGA.
- ii. This committee shall edit the Elections Manual as needed, to be approved by the Senate as outlined in Article V.
- iii. This committee must be chaired by a member of the Senate who is a member of the Senior class and therefore not a candidate in the election.
- iv. Members of the committee may be senators or students not participating in an upcoming election cycle.

d. One Phoenix Committee

- i. This committee shall work in collaboration with university partners on initiatives to help enhance a sense of community and belonging on

campus.

- ii. This committee shall execute events and activities as deemed necessary by Senate Leadership.
- e. Students Promoting Inclusive Excellence Committee (SPIE)
  - i. This committee will be responsible for promoting an inclusive campus for all students. The committee will work with the student body, Senate, and administration to initiate, develop, and support diversity, equity, and inclusivity initiatives on campus.
  - ii. This committee will be responsible for maintaining an updated document of cultural organizations on campus and updating the Senate on cultural events and groups around campus.
- f. Student Outreach Committee (SOC)
  - i. The Committee shall be responsible for polling, surveying, and outreach to the student body to recognize issues concerning the student body.
  - ii. The Committee shall be responsible for assisting the development of projects, initiatives, legislation, and other innovative solutions to issues facing the student body.
- g. AdHoc Committees
  - i. AdHoc Committees serve as temporary committees to respond to changing issues within SGA and the student body as they arise.
  - ii. These shall be created at the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate.
  - iii. After the period of one (1) calendar year, the Senate by a two-thirds majority vote may deem an AdHoc Committee important to the mission and functioning of the SGA to become a standing committee.

#### E. Meetings

- a. The Speaker of the Senate shall preside over meetings. The Speaker shall have no vote, except in the case of a tie.
- b. A simple majority (50% + 1) of the total membership of the Senate shall constitute a quorum.
- c. The meetings shall be conducted under the Senate Rules for the respective legislative year.
- d. Senators not in attendance are subject to the senatorial conduct process as outlined in the Review Board Bylaws, SGA Bylaws, and SGA Code of Ethics.

#### F. Legislation

- a. Definition
  - i. The Senate shall have the authority to draft and consider legislation in the form of bills and resolutions.
  - ii. Bills shall be defined as legislation with which the Senate takes action on a matter.

- iii. Resolutions shall be defined as legislation which expresses the will of the Senate but takes no action.
  - b. Passage
    - i. Legislation shall pass with a simple majority of all senators present.
  - c. Eligibility
    - i. Any member of the undergraduate student body shall be eligible to author legislation.
    - ii. All senators shall be eligible to present legislation to the Senate for consideration, as its sponsor.
- G. Veto
  - a. Senate-approved legislation shall be presented to the Executive President, who upon approval shall sign it immediately.
  - b. Should the Executive President not approve the legislation, the Executive President has veto power over any piece of legislation but must return the legislation to the Senate in its entirety with objections.
  - c. Vetoed Legislation
    - i. The Senate has the power to override a presidential veto with a two-thirds majority of those present. An override must take place within two consecutive business meetings of the legislation being returned to the Senate.
    - ii. Vetoed legislation may also be amended and presented to the Senate for a re-vote.
  - d. Any legislation presented to the Executive President must be signed or vetoed within two weeks time. Failure to do so renders the bill effective immediately.
- H. Records
  - a. The Speaker of the Senate shall keep records of the Senate, Committee, Class meetings, and other proceedings.
  - b. The Senate records shall be made available upon request.
  - c. The Speaker of the Senate shall transmit records to the Elon University Archives.
- I. Vacancies
  - a. Should a vacancy occur the Executive President in collaboration with the Speaker of the Senate shall nominate a candidate, within a responsible time, and confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate.

## **ARTICLE VIII. REVIEW BOARD**

- A. Definition
  - a. The judicial powers herein granted by the Elon University Administration and SGA Constitution shall be vested in the SGA Review Board.

- b. The SGA Review Board shall serve as a fair and impartial component of the Student Government Association of Elon University, to ensure that SGA and all of its members abide by the Constitution, all Bylaws, and the Code of Ethics.
- B. Membership
- a. Members will consist of the Executive Vice President, Speaker of the Senate, and all class presidents. The Speaker of the Senate will serve as an impartial non-voting member to present the facts of each case.
    - i. The Vice President of Finance will replace the Speaker of the Senate as an impartial voting member in the case of a Finance Board appeal.
  - b. Involved parties can request members of the board to recuse themselves. Requests will be reviewed by the SGA Advisor.
    - i. Per the discretion of the SGA Advisor, temporary board members can be appointed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the board remains impartial.
  - c. The Executive Vice President will serve as the presiding officer of the SGA Review Board. If they are unable to do so, the Speaker of the Senate shall assume these duties.
  - d. The Executive Vice President will be responsible for keeping records of all Review Board meetings and hearings.
- C. Powers
- a. SGA Ethical Infractions
    - i. The Review Board shall oversee any and all SGA ethical infractions that include the following charges:
      1. Attendance and Excessive Absence
      2. Conduct Unbecoming of a Senator
      3. Elon University Judicial Standing
      4. Failure to Fulfill Duties
      5. Hazing
      6. Misuse of Powers/Privileges
  - b. Elections Oversight
    - i. Any candidate who violates the Elections Manual shall be subject to investigation by the Elections Committee Chair.
  - c. Finance Board Appeals
    - i. If a group or organization's budget request below \$5,000 is denied by the Finance Board, they have the right to appeal to the review board.

## **ARTICLE IX. GOVERNING DOCUMENTS**

- A. Bylaws
- a. The Bylaws of the SGA shall consist of the following:
    - i. Senate Bylaws
      1. Senate Rules

2. Senate Dialogue
      3. Expectations of Senators
    - ii. Finance Bylaws
    - iii. Review Board Bylaws
    - iv. Executive Bylaws
    - v. Manuals
      1. Elections Manual
      2. Finance Manual
  - b. The Bylaws shall be a supplement to the SGA Constitution and shall at all times be in agreement with the SGA Constitution.
  - c. The Bylaws shall be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate.
- B. Code of Ethics
- a. The SGA Code of Ethics shall be a supplement to the SGA Bylaws.
  - b. The Code of Ethics shall seek to provide a basic outline of what is expected of all members of the SGA.
  - c. The Code of Ethics shall define which infractions the Review Board and Senate have a duty to address, including but not limited to:
    - i. Attendance and Excessive Absence
    - ii. Conduct Unbecoming of a Senator
    - iii. Elon University Judicial Standing
    - iv. Failure to Fulfill Duties
    - v. Hazing
    - vi. Misuse of Powers/Privileges
- C. Constitutional Amendments
- a. The Constitution of the Student Government Association shall be amended when:
    - i. Amendments have been approved by a two-thirds majority vote within the Senate, and Executive Offices, then;
    - ii. A minimum one-week information period has passed starting once the Speaker of the Senate notified the student body, then;
    - iii. The student body passes the amendments by a simple majority of those voting in a campus-wide vote.
    - iv. The Senate may amend the Constitution for non-substantive purposes to remove inconsistencies and ambiguity, achieve consistency with applicable law or policy, and correct grammar and obsolete terms, names, or titles. A two-thirds majority vote of the Senate is required to make non-substantive changes.