

Louisiana State University Student Government Constitution

Preamble

We, the students of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in order to provide an officially recognized student organization to identify and represent student interests; to promote student participation in the overall policy and decision-making processes of the university; to enhance the quality and scope of education at the university; and to promote the general welfare of the Student Body, do hereby adopt and establish this constitution of the LSU Student Government.

Article I: The Student Government

SECTION 1. The governmental organization of the students of this institution shall be known as the Student Government of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College at Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

SECTION 2. Every full-time student, as defined by the regulations of the University, shall be defined as a member of the Student Body and shall be entitled to representation within the Student Government.

SECTION 3. The primary purpose of the Student Government is two-fold:

1. To represent the concerns and interests of LSU students.
2. To provide and/or assist in providing programs for the betterment and enrichment of the campus community.

SECTION 4. The secondary purpose of the Student Government is to provide a means for LSU students to gain valuable experience in meaningful community service after graduation.

SECTION 5. The Student Government shall be considered and referred to as the official advisory body of the students to the University administration, faculty, staff, the LSU Board of Supervisors, and the Louisiana Legislature in all matters affecting the Student Body.

SECTION 6. The governing structure of the Student Government shall consist of the following three (3) branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

Article II. Legislative Branch

SECTION 1. All legislative powers of the Student Government shall be vested in the LSU Student Senate.

SECTION 2. The Student Senate, commensurate with the subsequent provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws, shall have the power to act as follows:

1. By a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Senators present and voting at any duly constituted Student Senate meeting, the Student Senate may suspend the Student Senate Rules of Order.
2. By a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senators present and voting at any duly constituted Student Senate meeting, the Student Senate may:
 - (a) Approve Judicial Branch appointments;
 - (b) Override any Presidential veto;

- (c) Remove the Speaker of the Student Senate;
 - (d) Impeach any officer of the Student Government;
 - (e) Amend the Student Senate Rules of Order;
 - (f) Amend the Bylaws.
3. By a simple majority vote of the Senators present and voting at any duly constituted Student Senate meeting, the Student Senate may:
- (a) Recommend action and express opinion on behalf of the Student Body in all areas of student life;
 - (b) Approve the Student Government Budget and make appropriations;
 - (c) Approve any appointments other than to the Judicial Branch by the President and/or Speaker requiring Senate approval under this Constitution and Bylaws;
 - (d) Create any temporary Student Senate committee and approve any appointments made thereto.

SECTION 3. The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the procedure of the meetings of the Student Senate, except as otherwise provided for in this Constitution, the Bylaws, or the Rules of Order of the Student Senate.

SECTION 4. Student Senate meetings shall be held as specified in the Bylaws.

SECTION 5. The Student Senate shall be composed of students representing the following Academic Units and/or Divisions: Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Basic Sciences, Business Administration, Design, Education, Engineering, Graduate School, Mass Communications, Music and Dramatic Arts, University College Center for Advising and Counseling, University College Center for Freshman Year, and Veterinary Medicine. For the purposes of this Constitution, any Academic Units or Divisions represented in this Section shall hereafter be referred to as Academic Areas.

SECTION 6. Apportionment of the Student Senate shall be as follows:

1. By the first day of December of each year, the number of Student Senators from each Academic Area shall be adjusted so there are two (2) Senators for each one thousand (1,000) students, rounding up to the nearest thousand, regardless of enrollment numbers; no Academic Area may have more than ten (10) Senators;
2. Apportionment shall be based on the official University full-time enrollment figures for that Fall semester. This apportionment shall be performed by the Speaker of the Student Senate, and must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate. This apportionment shall become effective on the first day of January of the following year;
3. Reapportionment or the discontinuation of any Academic Area shall not affect the term of office of any duly elected and installed member of the Student Senate;
4. Half of the total number of Senators from each Academic Area will be elected in the Fall semester and half will be elected in the Spring semester, for a term of one (1) year;

SECTION 7. If a vacancy occurs on the Student Senate, it may be filled immediately by the respective college council by a majority vote of its members. The seat shall then be up for election during the next regularly scheduled campus-wide election, regardless of how long is left remaining on the term. A person may only be appointed once by a college council to fill a Senate vacancy.

SECTION 8. The Student Senate shall be presided over by a Speaker of the Student Senate, who shall be elected by and from the members of the Student Senate. Such election shall be by secret ballot, and the favorable vote of a majority of the elected members present of the Student Senate shall be required to elect the Speaker of the Student Senate. The election of the Speaker shall be the next order of business following the installation of the Student Body President at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Student Senate. The Speaker's term of office shall run concurrently with that of the Student Body President.

SECTION 9. The Speaker of the Student Senate shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To preside over meetings of the Student Senate;
2. To appoint and/or remove the membership and chairmen of all Student Senate Standing Committees with approval of the Student Senate;
3. To serve as a member of the President's Cabinet;
4. To serve as President in the event of the incapacity of both the President and the Vice-President;
5. To present all Legislation passed by the Student Senate to the President within 48 hours of passage;

SECTION 10. Only members of the Student Senate as defined in this Article may vote; each Senator may cast one (1) and only one (1) vote on any matter under consideration by the Senate.

Article III: Executive Branch

SECTION 1. The execution power of the Student Government shall be vested in the Student Body President and Vice-President.

SECTION 2. The Student Body President shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. Serve as the chief executive officer of the Student Government;
2. Act as the chief spokesperson of the Student Body;
3. Call special meetings of the Student Senate, the President's Cabinet, and the Student Body;
4. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees appointed by him/her;
5. Execute all enacted legislation of the Student Senate, report the status of all enacted legislation, and address the Student Senate on a regular basis for the purpose of answering questions and for clarification;
6. Serve on and/or nominate and/or appoint representatives of the Student Body to University committees affecting the activities and lives of the students, with such service and/or nominations and/or appointments made upon the request of the proper University officials;
7. Appoint each student member of the University Courts designated as a Presidential appointee with a two-thirds (2/3) approval by the Student Senate;
8. To immediately fill any vacancy on the University Court incurred by the graduation, impeachment, resignation, or expulsion of an elected University Court Justice with a two-thirds (2/3) approval by the Student Senate. This seat shall then be up for election during the next regularly scheduled campus-wide election regardless of the duration of the originally elected term.

9. Sign or veto all legislation passed by the Student Senate, provided that such power is exercised within six (6) calendar days after passage of the legislation in question. If the legislation is not signed or vetoed within this period of time, it shall be considered enacted;
10. Submit the Executive Branch Charter to the Student Senate outlining the organization of the Executive Branch, including any officers and their duties, as provided in the Bylaws.
11. Serve as the Student Body's representative on the Louisiana Council of Student Body Presidents;

SECTION 3. The Student Body Vice-President shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. Serve as President in the absence or incapacity of the President;
2. Serve as a member of the President's Cabinet;
3. Serve as the Student Government's representative to the Union Governing Board;
4. Serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of all Student Government Executive Committees;
5. Assist the President in such executive matters as the President sees fit.

SECTION 4. In accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws, there shall be a President's Cabinet to act in an advisory capacity on all matters affecting student welfare.

SECTION 5. No executive officer or judicial officer or paid appointed officer shall be permitted to serve as a member of the Student Senate. No executive officer, paid appointed officer, or member of the Student Senate shall be permitted to serve on either of the University Courts.

SECTION 6. The President and Vice-President shall be elected in the Spring semester for a term of one (1) year, and candidates for these offices shall not be separate voting for the President and Vice-President.

Article IV: Judicial Branch

SECTION 1. The judicial power of the Student Government shall be vested in the University Court and the University Trial Court.

SECTION 2. The University Court shall be composed of eight (8) Justices:

1. Three (3) Justices, who may be LSU Law Students, appointed by the student Body President with the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the Student Senate present and voting.
2. Four (4) Justices elected in campus-wide elections--two (2) elected in the Fall, and two (2) elected in the Spring.
3. The LSU Dean of Students or his/her designate, who shall be non-voting.

SECTION 3. The University Trial Court shall be composed of one (1) Trial Judge.

1. The Trial Judge, who may be an LSU Law School student, shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the Student Senate present and voting.
2. The Trial Judge shall conduct the University Trial Court in accordance with the Rules of Court and shall issue judgments in all cases in which the Trial Court has jurisdiction.

SECTION 4. The University Court shall have the following powers exclusively:

1. To elect a Chief Justice.
2. To recommend to the Student Senate such changes to the Rules of Court as it deems necessary. The Senate may approve such changes by a simple majority vote of those present at a duly convened meeting.
3. To hear and to rule upon all cases referred to it by the Vice Chancellor for Student Services or the Dean of Students.

SECTION 5. The University Court and the University Trial Court shall share the following powers.

1. To hear all cases and controversies arising under the Student Government Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules of Order, and to issue judgments upon such cases and controversies. The Courts shall have complete and exclusive authority to interpret and to give meaning to any Constitutional provision, Bylaw, Rule of Order, or legislative instrument.
2. To hear and issue judgments upon all cases and controversies arising under the Student Government Election Code and elections held by the Election Board.
3. To issue injunctions and to compel any member of the Student Government to appear before them in any case or controversy arising under this section.

SECTION 6. The jurisdiction of the Courts shall be as follows:

1. In cases arising under Section 5 of this Article, the University Trial Court shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction.
2. In cases arising under Section 5 of this Article, the University Court shall have exclusive appellate jurisdiction. Judgments issuing from the University Court in this capacity shall be final.
3. In cases arising under Section 5 of this Article, the University Court shall have original jurisdiction. When the court sits in this capacity, its judgment shall be final, but subject to review by the Dean of Students.

SECTION 7. Administration

1. University Court shall be administered in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Rules of Court.
2. Judgments of the University Courts shall be expressed in writing and filed in the records of the Court.
3. Final judgments shall be sent to the Executive Branch for appropriate action.

Article V: College Councils

SECTION 1. Every Academic Area listed in Section 5, Article II of this Constitution shall have a College Council, which shall serve to represent the interests of LSU students on the College level.

SECTION 2. Each College Council shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary, who shall be elected in the Spring semester for a one-year term. Each College Council shall also provide for members that represent all departments and/or disciplines within the Academic Area governed by the Council.

SECTION 3. Upon taking office, each Student Senator shall be a member of the college council representing his/her academic area. However, a Senator may be removed from membership in the college council if he/she fails to adhere to the rules and regulations prescribed in that council's constitution.

Article VI: Elections

SECTION 1. Students who are registered for at least part-time status at the beginning of the semester shall be eligible to vote in all election provided for in this Constitution excluding those fees that do not affect them.

SECTION 2. In order to be eligible for election or appointment to any office under this Constitution, a student must meet all University-mandated requirements of officers of recognized campus organizations. Any exception to this Section must be expressly provided for elsewhere in this Constitution.

SECTION 3. All officers elected under this Constitution must receive a majority of votes cast in the election, unless as otherwise provided as a special case in the Student Government Election Code.

SECTION 4. The Election Board shall be composed of the following:

1. The Commissioner of Elections, a student appointed by the Student Body President and approved by the Senate, who shall serve as the chairman, but shall vote only in case of a tie;
2. Five (5) student members appointed by the Student Body President and approved by the Senate. Appointments shall be made in accordance with the Student Government Election Code.

SECTION 5. No person who is member of the Election Board may be a candidate in any campus-wide election or hold any other office under the authority of this Constitution or the Bylaws while that person serves on the Board.

SECTION 6. The Election Board shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To conduct, or delegate authority to conduct, all elections of the Student Government, subject to the provisions of the Student Government Election Code;
2. To announce all election and petition returns, such returns being final unless contested within forty-eight (48) hours after the announcement of the results of the election or petition.

SECTION 7. No student may simultaneously hold more than one (1) elected office under this Constitution.

SECTION 8. Two campus-wide elections shall be held each year, one (1) in the Fall and one (1) in the Spring on dates as provided for in the Student Government Election Code.

Article VII: Terms of Office

SECTION 1. All officers under this Constitution shall assume their duties upon validation of their election, appointment, or succession to office and after they are duly installed as defined in the Bylaws.

SECTION 2. The term of office of any officer provided for in this Constitution may be terminated by means of either of the following procedures:

1. Impeachment:
 - (a) By filing of formal impeachment charges by ten (10) members of the Student Senate at a regular meeting of the Student Senate; and

- (b) By a formal hearing at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting, to be presided over by the Chief Justice of the University Court (or by the President in case the Chief Justice is the officer under impeachment); and
 - (c) By an affirmative vote for conviction at that Student Senate meeting by two-thirds (2/3) of those Senators present and voting by secret ballot; or
2. Recall:
- (a) By submission of a petition to the Election Board signed by fifteen percent (15%) of the electorate of the office concerned; and
 - (b) By the Election Board setting provisions for a recall election within two (2) weeks after the petition is submitted; and
 - (c) By a majority of those voting in the recall election expressing their desire to recall the incumbent.

SECTION 3. The term of office of any person elected or appointed under this Constitution and Bylaws shall be terminated upon occurrence of any of the following conditions:

1. Upon the installation of his/her duly chosen successor.
2. For a member of the Senate whose position has been discontinued, upon the expiration of his/her normal term (i.e. upon the installation meeting held two (2) campus-wide elections after his/her position is normally elected).
3. Upon the acceptance of his/her resignation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present and voting.
4. Upon his/her incapacity to continue in office, to be determined by a two-thirds vote of the Student Senate present and voting.
5. In addition, for the Student Body President, upon acceptance of any paid employment:
 - (a) outside the University during the Fall or Spring semesters; or
 - (b) outside the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area during any other time.
6. For Senate members, upon failure to continue to be enrolled in the Academic Area represented, with the exception of University College Center for Freshman Year Senators, who may enroll in a different Academic Area one (1) semester after their election.
7. Upon failure to meet the University-mandated requirements for officers of recognized campus organizations, with the exception of any LSU Law School student appointed to a Judicial Branch position.
8. For Senate members, upon failure to meet the attendance requirements specified in the Bylaws.

SECTION 4. No student elected as Student Body President may run for re-election to the office of Student Body President.

Article VIII: Operational Funds

SECTION 1. Operational funds for the Student Government shall come from a per capita assessment of each member of the Student Body. The amount of this per capita assessment shall be in accordance with the official University Student Fee Schedule.

SECTION 2. Operational funds for the Student Government shall be deposited by the University in a Restricted Fund Account in the Office of the Bursar. These funds may not be expended in a fiscal year until the Student Government Budget for that fiscal year has been adopted.

SECTION 3. The President shall be responsible for all operational funds of the Student Government, shall insure that all expenditures are in accordance with the provision of the Student Government Budget and the Bylaws to this Constitution.

Article IX: Auxiliary Documents

SECTION 1. There shall be a set of Bylaws to this Constitution as well as Rules of Order of the Student Senate, either of which shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the members of the Student Senate present and voting for the amendment.

SECTION 2. The Rules of Court shall further specify the procedures and rules of order of the University Courts. The Rules of Court may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Student Senate present and voting upon the recommendation of the amendment by a simple majority of the University Court. The Student Senate may not initiate such an amendment.

SECTION 3. The Student Government Election Code shall specify the procedures for holding Student Government elections, as well as the powers and duties of the Election Board. The Election Code may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present and voting; however, such amendment will not go into effect until one (1) semester following passage, not including the Summer Semester.

SECTION 4. No measure may be enacted which would be in conflict with any provisions of this Constitution. No provision may be enacted in the Bylaws or the Rules of Court which would be in conflict with any provision found in the Election Code.

Article X: Amendments

SECTION 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member of the Student Senate.

1. Following a period of at least seven (7) calendar days from the date of proposal, amendments may be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present and voting.
2. Any amendments must further be ratified by a majority of the students voting in any campus-wide election of the Student Government.

SECTION 2. The privilege of initiative is hereby secured to the Student Body. If a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the Student Body requesting an election for consideration of a constitutional amendment be presented to the President, an election for the consideration of such an amendment must be held between fourteen (14) and twenty-one (21) calendar days following the presentation of the petition to the President.

Article XI: Self-Assessed Student Fees

SECTION 1. Any proposal to levy, amend, repeal, or otherwise regulate any student self-assessment which affects the entire Student Body must be approved by a majority of the members of the Student Body voting in the Fall or Spring Primary Election.

SECTION 2. Any such proposal may be sent to the Student Body only in either of the following ways:

1. By approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting of the Student Senate at least seven (7) calendar days after introduction; or

2. By petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Student Body presented to the President.

Article XII: Area of Application

SECTION 1. This Constitution and Bylaws, official actions, and rules derived therefrom, shall be the supreme source of student authority and responsibility of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. However, nothing herein shall be construed to deny or disparage fundamental rights retained by the students.

SECTION 2. Nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to supersede the power and authority of the Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana State University System, the laws of the State of Louisiana, and the laws of the United States.

Article XIII Ratification

SECTION 1. This Constitution, Bylaws, Rules of Order, Election Code, and Rules of Court shall be ratified upon the President's receipt of at least ten percent (10%) of the Student Body requesting consideration of the new constitution and further after majority approval of the students voting in the election for its ratification.

SECTION 2. The provisions of this Constitution and the auxiliary documents listed in Section 1 of this Article shall go into effect immediately upon ratification, with the exception that all current officers of the Student Government Association shall be allowed to serve out their regular terms; all previous Constitutions, Bylaws, and related rules shall then be null and void.

(Amended through Act 14 of the Spring 2006 Regular Session)