

# CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA STUDENT COUNCIL

*Ratified December 9, 1969*

*As Amended through February 19, 2008*

Realizing the necessity for student self-governance, understanding the importance of articulating the views of the student body, desiring to further the welfare of students, and believing that student government is needed to carry out these actions, we the students of the University of Virginia do hereby establish the Constitution of the Student Council of the University of Virginia.

## **ARTICLE I: GENERAL**

### *Section 1: Name*

The name of this organization shall be the Student Council of the University of Virginia.

### *Section 2: Purpose*

The purpose of Student Council is to protect and improve the rights, opportunities, and quality of life of every student at the University of Virginia.

### *Section 3: Authority*

The authority of Student Council is derived from the students of the University of Virginia and collectively recognized by the Board of Visitors, the University President and other University Administrators.

### *Section 4: Non-Discrimination*

The Student Council of the University of Virginia will not restrict membership and/or activity by reason of age, citizenship, color, disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or status as a disabled veteran, or veteran of the Vietnam eras. Notwithstanding these requirements, Student Council may restrict membership based on an ability to perform the activities related to its purpose.

## **ARTICLE II: STRUCTURE**

### *Section 1: Executive Officers*

A. The Council shall be led by the following executive Officers:

- a. President: The President shall be responsible for representing the views and concerns of the Student Body to the University administration and the community, and for leading efforts to improve student life and resolve student grievances.
  - b. Vice-President for Administration: The Vice-President for Administration shall serve as Chief Operations Officer of the Council, and shall oversee the Council's internal management and operations, including its finances, property, information technology, communications, publicity, and services.
  - c. Vice-President for Organizations: The Vice-President for Organizations shall be responsible for the Council's oversight of Contracted Independent Organizations, as well as the distribution of Student Activity Fee funds and other Council resources to Contracted Independent Organizations.
  - d. Chair of the Representative Body: The Chair of the Representative Body shall act as liaison to the other Officers on behalf of the Representative Body.
- B. Each executive Officer shall have the power, with the majority approval of the Representative Body, to make appointments in their area of responsibility as follows:
- a. No one but the President may appoint officers and staff whose purpose is to address issues and concerns affecting the Student Body at large. These appointees shall be known as the President's Cabinet, and shall be supervised by a Chief of the Cabinet.
  - b. No one but the Vice-President for Administration may appoint officers and staff whose purpose is to manage the Council's operations, including its finances, property, information technology, communications, publicity, and services. These appointees shall include a Chief Financial Officer, who shall be responsible for managing the Council's budget.
  - c. No one but the Vice-President for Organizations may appoint officers and staff whose purpose is to oversee and allocate resources to Contracted Independent Organizations. These appointees shall include the chairs of an Appropriations Committee, which shall review all funding requests made by Contracted Independent Organizations.
  - d. No one but the Chair of the Representative Body may appoint officers and staff whose purpose is to manage the affairs of the Representative Body.

*Section 2: Representative Body*

- A. The Representative Body shall act as the legislature of Student Council, and shall have the following powers:
  - a. To approve allocations of the Student Activity Fee.
  - b. To recognize, withdraw recognition, or impose conditions of recognition on all Contracted Independent Organizations.
  - c. To sponsor University-wide referenda on any student issue, except for the Honor Code or the Standards of Conduct.
  - d. To create and modify Bylaws governing the Council's structure and procedures, with a two-thirds majority; such Bylaws may not require the use of Council funds for specific purposes.
  
- B. The Representative Body shall consist of Representatives from the various Schools of the University as follows:
  - a. Each School shall have at least one Representative.
  - b. Each School shall have an additional Representative for every one-thousand students enrolled in that School.
  - c. Schools with separate undergraduate and graduate governing Councils shall have separate Representatives allocated to their undergraduate and graduate students, as if each constituency were a separate School.
  
- C. At least one Representative shall be an entering undergraduate first year student, and at least one shall be an entering undergraduate transfer student, as follows:
  - a. Each School shall reserve one of its Representative seats for an entering undergraduate first year student, for every one-thousand such students enrolled in that School.
  - b. Each School shall reserve one of its Representative seats for an entering undergraduate transfer student, for every one-thousand such students enrolled in that School.
  - c. If no School reserves at least one seat for an entering first year undergraduate, and at least one seat for an entering transfer undergraduate, then one or more special seats unaffiliated with any School shall be allocated to the group lacking representation, according to its total enrollment; these numbers shall be subtracted from the figures used to allocate seats to the Schools.

- D. The following rules shall govern the apportionment of Representative seats:
  - a. Only students enrolled on-Grounds at the University shall be counted towards the apportionment of Representative seats.
  - b. All Representative seats, including first year and transfer seats, shall be apportioned using the enrollment figures from the previous fall semester.
  - c. Changes to the apportionment of seats shall not take effect until a new Representative Body is elected.
- E. E. The President, Vice-President for Administration, and Vice-President for Organizations shall serve on the Representative Body in an ex officio capacity; to preserve the balance of representation between Schools, they shall have voice but no vote.
- F. The Representative Body shall elect a Chair from among its membership, who shall preside over the Representative Body and manage its affairs, but shall retain the same voting privileges as all other Representatives.
- G. Quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all Representatives, including the Chair but excluding non-voting members.

*Section 3: Rules and Ethics Board*

- A. The Rules and Ethics Board shall be responsible for the adjudication of alleged violations of the Constitution and Bylaws, as well as ensuring that all Officers and Representatives are familiar with the Constitution, Bylaws, and procedures of Student Council before taking office.
- B. The Board shall consist of seven members, with one member serving as Chair, according to the following rules:
  - a. No School of the University may have a majority of members on the Board.
  - b. At least one member must be a graduate student.
  - c. No member of the Board may be an elected or appointed member of Student Council, or participate on the Council in any other capacity.
- C. The Board's term of office shall commence at the beginning of the fall semester and last for one year.

- D. Board members shall be nominated by the President, with the majority approval of the Representative Body.
- E. The Representative Body shall have the power to regulate the Board's procedures, but not the Board's jurisdiction.

### **ARTICLE III: ELECTIONS**

#### *Section 1: Candidacy*

- A. Candidates shall only run for one position on Student Council.
- B. All candidates must be enrolled in an on-Grounds degree program at the University of Virginia.
- C. Candidates for Representative seats must be enrolled in the School which they intend to represent.

#### *Section 2: Elections*

- A. The University Board of Elections or its successor body shall have the power to regulate Student Council elections.
- B. Elections for Officers and Representatives shall take place annually in the spring semester.
- C. During spring elections, the President, Vice-President for Administration, and Vice-President for Organizations shall be elected by the Student Body at large; Representatives shall be elected by the students enrolled in each School.
- D. Only students enrolled in classes on-Grounds at the University of Virginia shall be eligible to vote in elections.

#### *Section 3: Term of Office*

- A. The term of office for Officers and Representatives shall begin thirty days after the end of spring elections, or on the last day of spring semester classes before final exams, whichever date occurs first.
- B. The term of office for all Officers and Representatives shall end when their successors' term of office begins.

### **ARTICLE IV: IMPEACHMENT, RESIGNATION, AND REPLACEMENT**

#### *Section 1: Impeachment*

- A. Any elected or appointed member of Student Council may be impeached for malfeasance, gross incompetence, or for failing to fulfill the duties of their position.
- B. The procedure for impeachment and removal from office shall be as follows:
  - a. The Representative Body shall have the power to impeach a member of Student Council by approving a written statement of charges by a majority vote.
  - b. The impeached member shall be supplied with the written statement of charges as soon as possible after the vote.
  - c. At the next regularly scheduled Student Council meeting, there shall be an impeachment trial with the Representative Body serving as the jury.
  - d. After a full hearing of the charges, a two-thirds vote of the Representative Body shall be necessary to vacate the office of the impeached member; impeached members shall have no vote in the removal proceedings.

### *Section 2: Resignation*

- A. A member of Student Council may resign from his or her position at any time by submitting a written letter of resignation.
- B. Any member of Student Council whose enrollment at the University is terminated, or any Representative whose enrollment is terminated in the School that he or she represents, shall be considered to have resigned from his or her position.

### *Section 3: Replacement*

- A. A Presidential vacancy shall be filled by the Vice President for Administration, who shall then appoint a replacement Vice-President for Administration with the majority approval of the Representative Body.
- B. A vacancy in the offices of Vice-President for Administration or Vice-President for Organizations shall be temporarily filled by the President, who shall then appoint a replacement Vice-President for Administration or Vice-President for Organizations with the majority approval of the Representative Body.
- C. Representative vacancies shall be filled by the governing Council of the School whose seat is vacant.

## **ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

### *Section 1: Proposal of Amendments*

- A. Amendments to the Student Council Constitution may be proposed using any of the following methods:
  - a. By a written petition of five percent of the full-time student body submitted to the Representative Body.
  - b. By a written petition of twenty-five students, submitted to the Representative Body, and passed by a two-thirds vote of the Representative Body.
  - c. By a three-fourths vote of the Representative Body.

*Section 2: Amendment Passage*

- A. Two-thirds of those voting must vote in favor of the amendment during elections.
- B. Any changes to the method of apportioning Representative seats shall not take effect until after the next spring election, following approval of these changes by the Student Body.

*Section 3: Ratification*

- A. For ratification of this Constitution, two-thirds of those voting must vote in favor of adopting this Constitution.
- B. This Constitution shall take effect upon its ratification.
- C. The ratification of this Constitution shall relinquish all previous Constitutions of the University of Virginia Student Council.