

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

### **BY-LAWS AND STATUTES**

#### **ARTICLE I: RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. The By-laws and Statutes shall be considered binding to all members of the Legislative and Executive Branch of the Student Government Association as well as to those members of the Executive Cabinet, outlined in Article V, who are duty-bound to the Executive Branch.
- B. An SGA Executive Board designee in collaboration with the Parliamentarian and Speaker of the Senate is responsible for the continuous maintenance of the SGA By-laws and Statutes such that at any time they reflect all legislation enacted as of that time. Legislation shall be considered enacted when all SGA action, including but not limited to voting and signing by the President, is completed.
- C. The By-laws and Statutes shall at all times be subordinate to the Constitution of the Student Government Association.

#### **ARTICLE II: ASSEMBLY ORGANIZATION**

##### **Section 1: Orientation**

- A. Executive Board members must complete orientation with the Dean of Students office.
- B. New senators will be given an orientation session no later than two weeks after the fall elections. During this session, the following materials shall be distributed or discussed with all new Senators:
  - 1. Copies of the SGA Constitution and By-Laws
  - 2. Parliamentary Procedure overview
  - 3. Guidelines and suggestions regarding the process of introducing bills, motions, resolutions, etc., and a description of what happens once legislation is passed
  - 4. A current list of position occupancies and vacancies
  - 5. The officers will also discuss their office in terms of duties and responsibilities
  - 6. Nomination, debate, voting approval of Executive Council members
  - 7. Chamber overview and delegations
- C. Incumbent Senators who have not attended an orientation must attend the next scheduled orientation.

##### **Section 2: Chamber Meetings**

- A. Chamber of Campus Affairs (hereafter referred to as CCA)
  - 1. The CCA shall meet once weekly outside of the weekly meetings of the entire senate.
  - 2. The Speaker of Campus Affairs shall preside over meetings of the CCA.
- B. Chamber of Academic Affairs (hereafter referred to as CAA)
  - 1. The CAA shall meet once weekly outside of the weekly meetings of the entire senate.
  - 2. The Speaker of Academic Affairs shall preside over meetings of the CAA.
- C. Chamber of Finance (hereafter referred to as CF)
  - 1. The CF shall meet once weekly.
  - 2. The Speaker of Finance shall preside over meetings of the CF.

- D. Chamber of Civic Service and Public Relations (hereafter referred to as CCP)
  - 1. The CCP shall meet once weekly outside of the weekly meetings of the entire senate.
  - 2. The Speaker of Civic Service and Public Relations shall preside over meetings of the CCP.
- E. The speaker of the senate shall reserve the right to move a senator from the chamber he/she is originally appointed to in the event that an increase in senate membership following the official reporting of appointments allows for a senator to move to the chamber of their preference, a decline in the senate membership warrants the need for senators to be moved from one chamber to another to allow that chamber to fulfill its purpose effectively, or a circumstance arises within a chamber making it necessary for the Speaker of the Senate to move a senator(s) to restore functionality to a chamber.

### **Section 3: Assembly Meetings**

#### **A. Presiding Officer**

- 1. The Vice President shall be the presiding officer over meetings of the entire senate, and be referred to as “Mister or Madam Vice President.”
- 2. The Speaker of the Senate reserves the right to set meeting times and locations
- 3. In the event that the Vice President is not in attendance, the Speaker of Campus Affairs shall preside over the meeting and be referred to as “Mister or Madam Speaker.”
- 4. Any student, university personnel, and/or media personnel may speak at Senate meetings after being recognized by the presiding officer. The presiding officer is required to recognize any person wishing to speak during miscellaneous business at least twice should that individual so desire.

#### **B. Meeting Agenda**

- 1. The standard meeting agenda shall be as follows, unless voted otherwise by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present:
  - a. Meeting called to order by Presiding Officer.
  - b. Attendance by the Secretary.
  - c. Minutes Reading and Approval by Secretary.
  - d. Executive Reports.
  - e. Speaker Reports.
    - 1. Speaker of Campus Affairs
    - 2. Speaker of Academic Affairs
    - 3. Speaker of Finance, Promotion, and Civic Service
  - f. Old Business before the Senate.
  - g. New Business.
  - h. Miscellaneous business and announcements.
  - i. Adjournment.
- 2. Executives are only required to present a report if they have information pertaining to their duties and responsibilities that has not previously been shared.
- 3. The Speakers of each Chamber must report on the content of their Chamber meetings.

#### **C. Adjournment**

- 1. Adjournment may only be called when all the Senate business is done; however, a motion for a recess may be made at any point during the meeting.

#### **D. Recess**

- 1. If the Senate recesses, the next session begins at the point where the Senate has recessed. If the Senate is adjourned, the next session begins with the beginning of the agenda.
- 2. The presiding officer shall determine the length of recess.

#### **E. Dress Code**

- 1. No clothing that is explicitly insulting (including but not limited to racist, sexist, or politically derogatory in nature) may be worn.

2. Dress code for mandatory events will be specified at the time of the announcement. Those directing the event reserve the right to ask members of SGA to leave an event if not dressed appropriately.
  3. All matters of the dress code shall be left to the interpretation of the Parliamentarian. If the Parliamentarian is not present, it shall be left to the interpretation of the Speaker of the Senate.
- F. All records, such as meeting agendas, meeting minutes, budgets, reports, etc. should be made available to review to the Valdosta State University community—students, faculty staff, and administration.

#### **Section 4: Assembly Governance**

##### **A. Parliamentary Procedure**

1. *Roberts Rules of Order* (Parliamentary Procedure) shall be followed. If there is a conflict with the SGA By-laws or the SGA Constitution, the By-laws will override *Roberts Rules of Order* and the SGA Constitution will override the By-laws.
2. Parliamentary Law gives the Presiding Officer the power to rule on questions of order or to answer parliamentary inquires as prescribed by the most current edition of *Roberts Rules of Order*.
3. All inquiries regarding points of order, rules and procedures, or parliamentary procedure must be referenced by the SGA Constitution, the SGA By-Laws, or *Roberts Rules of Order*.

##### **B. Suspension of *Roberts Rules of Order***

The *Rules* may be temporarily suspended by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present. When requesting suspension of the *Rules*, the requesting Senator must state the purpose, and when that purpose has been carried out, the Senate *Rules* shall immediately go back into effect.

#### **Section 5: Assembly Structure**

##### **A. Voting**

1. Executive Board and Executive Cabinet members shall not vote, with the exception of the Vice President, who votes in case of a tie.
2. There shall be three (3) ways in which a Senator may vote:
  - a. For—in favor of the motion or legislation.
  - b. Against—opposed to the motion or legislation.
  - c. Abstention—neither for nor against the motion or legislation. It is advised that Senators abstain only in cases in which there is a distinct conflict of interest.

##### **B. Debate**

1. Every member of the SGA has the right to speak to every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon. This right cannot be interfered with except by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.
  2. Until a matter has been brought before the Senate in the form of a motion proposing a specific action, it cannot be debated.
  3. Members of the Senate shall not address one another directly, but must address all remarks through the Presiding Officer as proscribed by the most current edition of *Roberts Rules of Order*.
  4. Any student of Valdosta State University may speak in regards to debate on issues and legislation before the Senate; however, speaking preference is given to members of the Senate.
- C. The structure of the Senate, including but not limited to, agendas and seating arrangements, are to be set by the Speaker of the Senate, or his/her designee.

#### **Section 6: Attendance**

##### **A. Members of the Senate, Executive Board, and Executive Cabinet are required to:**

1. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate.
2. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of their Chambers.
3. Attend all mandatory events as specified by the Senate.

4. Communicate within 24 hours with the SGA Secretary regarding any absences before the meeting or event has occurred.
- B. Early Dismissal
1. Any member who leaves a Senate meeting early without permission or approval by the Secretary, the early dismissal will be documented as one half (1/2) of an unexcused absence.
- C. Excused Absences
1. Situational or excused absence approvals will be left to the discretion of the SGA Secretary.
  2. An excused absence includes the following: academic class opportunity (extra credit, etc.), family emergency, an official university event, or personal illness with documentation.
- D. Unexcused Absences
1. If a member of the Senate has acquired three or more unexcused absences in a semester he/she shall be subject to expulsion from the Senate.
- E. Tardiness
1. If a member of the Senate has incurred an unexcused instance of tardiness three or more times from any meeting or event deemed mandatory, he/she will be charged with one absence on his/her attendance record.
  2. An unexcused tardy during meetings will be defined as anytime a member of the Senate arrives after the official roll has been called/taken.
  3. An unexcused tardy during an event will be defined as anytime a member of the Senate arrives after the official start time of the event, unless it is otherwise specified that the member in question was to arrive at a time that is different from the official start time of said event.
  4. All instances of tardiness must be discussed with the SGA Secretary after the meeting or event has concluded.
- F. Absence Reprimand
1. If two (2) or more unexcused absences have occurred, the Senate member in question will be required to receive notification of his/her absences from the Secretary within one week of his/her last absence regarding his/her current status within the Senate.
  2. If a senator is absent without a valid excuse for a third time, the Secretary must provide the senator in question with a formal written reprimand. The Secretary will then decide if the Senator's attendance violation merits expulsion from the Senate.
  3. If the Secretary decides it is appropriate to remove the Senator from SGA, the Secretary must provide the recommendation to the Senate. The Senate must then by a two-thirds (2/3) vote choose to either keep him/her as a current voting member of the Senate, or expel him/her from SGA.
  4. If the member in question is voted out of the Senate by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate, he/she shall not be allowed to become a member of the Senate again for one full year from the date of expulsion, unless otherwise specified by the Senate.
- G. Members of the Senate and Executive Board must be given two weeks' notice of a mandatory SGA event, when possible.
- H. Any absence not reported to the SGA Secretary and/or Chamber Speaker before the meeting or event has occurred will be considered an unexcused absence unless underlying circumstances have occurred.
- I. Falsification of any information on an official SGA absentee form will automatically result in a referral to the Parliamentarian, who will then decide if further disciplinary action should be discussed and approved by the Senate.

## **ARTICLE III: CHAMBERS**

### **Section 1: Organization**

- A. There shall be four (4) Student Government Association Senate Chambers:

- i. The Chamber of Campus Affairs (CCA)
- ii. The Chamber of Academic Affairs (CAA)
- iii. The Chamber of Finance (CF)
- iv. The Chamber of Civic Service and Public Relations (CCP)

## **Section 2: Appointment**

- A. The number of members to serve in each Chamber shall be left to the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate, in cooperation with the preferences of other SGA Senators.
- B. The Speaker of the Senate should make an effort to fill the CCA, CAA, CF, and CCP with a ratio of 3:4:1:1 members (respectively). The number of Senators may not always allow for this exact ratio of Chamber membership, however this ratio should serve as a guide when assigning.
- C. Although the Speaker of the Senate should make an effort to appoint Senators to the Chamber they most wish to serve, it may be necessary to disregard the preference of a Senator; all appointments made by the Speaker of the Senate are final once they are officially reported to the Senate.
  - a. In the event the Speaker of the Senate must choose between the preferences of a new member and a returning member, priority will be given to the returning Senator.
  - b. When making assignments, the Speaker of the Senate will be sure to leave at least 4 seats open in the CAA, 3 seats open in the CCA, 1 seat open in the CF, and 1 seat open in the CCP; these seats may will be filled by freshman senators.
- D. Appointments of Senators must be officially reported to the Senate no later than the meeting following the appointment of the Speaker of the Senate.

## **Section 3: Expectations of Chambers**

- A. Shall meet every week or whenever deemed necessary by the Chamber Speaker.
- B. Shall coordinate or co-sponsor at least two programming events per year that relates to their Chamber's duties and responsibilities for the entire student body outlined in Article III, Section 5.
- C. Shall provide student representation on any board, committee, etc., related to their Chamber as needed.
- D. Shall present legislation before the Senate as so deemed necessary to make improvements to the respective Chamber focus.

## **Section 4: Chamber Speakers**

- A. Shall be appointed by a majority vote of each Chamber's members.
- B. Shall preside over meetings of their Chamber and coordinate Chamber meetings with a prepared agenda.
- C. Shall record the attendance of their Chamber's meetings and provide such attendance records to the Secretary.
- D. Shall record the minutes of their Chamber's meetings.
- E. Shall provide a report to the Senate during Senate meetings.
- F. May call a special Chamber meeting as deemed necessary.
- G. Shall have the discretion to appoint and oversee special committees and committee chairpersons to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Chamber after consultation with the executive board and Speaker of the Senate.
- H. Shall consider other assigned duties per the request of the executive board.

## **Section 5: Duties and Responsibilities**

- A. Chamber of Campus Affairs
  - 1. Shall actively engage in discussion with members of the student body to identify issues pertaining to non-academic matters (including but not limited to: dining, parking and transportation, health and safety, and housing).
  - 2. Shall discuss campus issues at weekly chamber meetings.
  - 3. Shall focus on writing legislation to address problems on campus and issues that are of a non-academic nature.

4. Shall coordinate meetings with heads of various campus departments to ensure student opinions are being communicated to VSU faculty and staff.
5. The Speaker shall serve as a liaison of the concerns of active student organizations and the Office of Organizational Development. The Speaker will be responsible for attending periodic roundtables coordinated by the Office of Student Life with student organization representatives and ongoing support to increase interaction and communication between various campus organizations. This responsibility may be delegated to the Vice President when necessary.

**B. Chamber of Academic Affairs**

1. Shall actively communicate with the student body to identify academic issues at VSU (including but not limited to: grading policy, prerequisite mandates, professor-student relations, and advising issues).
2. Shall discuss academic issues at weekly Chamber meetings.
3. Shall focus on writing legislation to address academic issues and to improve the quality of education available to the student body.
4. Shall coordinate meetings with EACH academic department head at least once during each semester of the academic year. These meetings will be to communicate student concerns to department heads as well as to receive information and feedback from department heads.
5. The CAA is responsible for ensuring EACH academic college is represented. These include:
  - i. The College of Arts and Sciences
  - ii. The College of the Arts
  - iii. The College of James L. and Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education and Human Services
  - iv. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences
  - v. The Langdale College of Business Administration
  - vi. The Honors College
  - vii. The Graduate School
6. May coordinate meetings with individual professors when deemed necessary.

**C. Chamber of Finance**

1. Shall monitor the funds, budget, and all expenditures of SGA.
2. Shall assemble weekly to discuss monetary matters of SGA and the university (including but not limited to: students and organizations wishing to gain funds from SGA, university fees, and student financial stress).
3. Shall be responsible for ensuring that all organizations meet the necessary requirements before being approved for SGA sponsorship; this Chamber's recommendation to the Senate will serve to assure all voting members of the Senate that SGA funds are being dispersed responsibly. A recommendation to allocate funds for any reason must be officially given to the Senate by the Comptroller and such allocations must be approved or disapproved by a majority (50%+1) vote following discussion by the Senate.
4. Will meet with students and organizations wishing to gain funds from SGA so as to discuss the details of such allocations.
5. Will meet with appropriate faculty and staff to discuss student body concerns that relate to financial matters.
6. Shall focus on writing legislation that addresses SGA funding practices and university monetary issues.

**D. Chamber of Civic Service and Public Relations**

1. Shall serve as the public relations cabinet of SGA. The CCP will be responsible for ensuring SGA business is being communicated to the student body.

2. Shall advertise any vacant Senate seats throughout the year to ensure the student body is aware of vacancies and their potential to be filled.
3. Shall organize, coordinate, and execute events that inform potential VSU students about SGA and its purpose
  - a. All members of SGA are expected to communicate with the student body and to promote SGA, but it is the specific responsibility of the CCP to ensure these objectives are accomplished THROUGHOUT each semester by employing members inside and outside the Chamber.

### **Section 6: Special Committees**

- A. The SGA President or Chamber Speakers shall have the authority to establish special committees as deemed appropriate.
- B. Budget Request Committee
  1. This committee will contain the SGA President, SGA Vice President, SGA Comptroller, and the 4 SGA Chamber Speakers.
  2. The SGA Budget Request Committee shall have the responsibility to review the following year's budget and sole responsibility to approve a request amount to present to the Student Activities Fee Allocation Committee.
  3. SGA President-elect and SGA Comptroller-elect shall be included in the committee if the spring elections have taken place or provided a thorough report upon elected.
  4. It shall be the current Comptroller's duty, in coordination with the CF, to formulate the proposed budget to present for approval to both the SGA Budget Request Committee.
  5. It shall be the SGA Speaker of Finance's duty, or assigned delegate approved by the SGA Comptroller, to present the proposed budget to the University Student Activities Fee Allocation Committee.
  6. This committee shall meet during the period of time between the SGA Spring elections for officers and the scheduled meeting of the Student Activities Fee Allocation Committee, if applicable deadlines are feasible to prepare the budget appropriately.
  7. All reports of this special committee shall be reported to the Senate during Miscellaneous Business, when applicable.
- C. Elections Committee
  1. Shall fulfill all duties and responsibilities as described in Article VIII of the By-Laws

### **Section 7: University & Faculty Senate Committee Student Representation**

- A. University committees are important institutions of University governance, idea formulation, and interaction.
- B. University committee delegates shall be assigned by the SGA President after consultation with the Speaker of the Senate; the Speaker of the Senate will act as an advisor to the President when discussing university committee delegate assignments.
- C. Members of the Senate or any student of Valdosta State University may be delegated to serve as student representatives.
- D. Appointees to University committees are expected to attend or take necessary actions as specified by the attendance policy.
- E. Appointees to University committees are expected to prepare a written report to present to the Senate within the next two Senate meetings.

<b>ARTICLE IV: LEGISLATION</b>
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### **Section 1: Presentation of Legislation**

- A. Only Senators may introduce new legislation.
- B. Any Senator from any Chamber may legislate on any topic.

### **Section 2: Bills and Legislation**

- A. Bills to be proposed on the Senate floor must be presented in writing to the SGA Secretary three (3) class days before it is to be brought to the Senate floor.
- B. The SGA Secretary shall type and prepare all bills due for presentation at the next scheduled Senate meeting.
- C. All bills shall be listed under New Business on the agenda.
- D. Upon passage, legislation is intended to serve as the position statement of the Student Government Association on the subject respective legislation on behalf of the student body.
- E. Any member of the Senate may submit resolutions to be brought to any scheduled Senate meeting, providing the Speaker of the Senate or Parliamentarian has had ample time to review the resolution and given that the resolution is consistent to the Constitution and By-laws of SGA.

### **Section 3: Legislation Procedure**

- A. All new legislation passed shall be updated and communicated to media outlets and made available to view by the public within two senate meetings of the passage.
- B. All legislation passed shall abide by the proper process of ratification, including sending a signature request of the SGA President on Senate approved legislation, outlined in Article IX.

## **ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE CABINET**

### **Section 1: Appointment**

- A. The executive cabinet can be but is not required to be an elected member of the Senate prior to being nominated for appointment as a member of the executive cabinet.
- B. Nominees shall assume office upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate present at the time of nomination.
- C. The SGA President shall have the power to remove any non-constitutional member of the Executive Cabinet based upon performance.
- D. The Executive Cabinet shall consist of any other offices that the Student Government Association President sees fit.
- E. The SGA President is not required to nominate cabinet members if he/she chooses not to do so.

### **Section 2: Responsibilities and Operations**

- A. Shall adhere to any formal or informal structures or reporting techniques deemed appropriate by the executive board.
- B. Shall assist the two branches of SGA with good communication and coordination.
- C. Shall attend all executive board and cabinet meetings.
- D. Shall be responsible for formulating projects and programs relating to their individual internal responsibilities.
- E. Shall directly report and meet at the discretion of the SGA President.
- F. Shall be expected to abstain from voting on Senate decisions, if an elected Senator and serving as an Executive Cabinet member, in the event of prior knowledge or bias.

### **Section 3: Chief of Staff**

- A. Shall oversee, upon consultation with the SGA President, all cabinet members.
- B. Shall stay in communication with the SGA Executive Board and shall tactfully advise on important and controversial matters of the student body.
- C. Shall assist and work in coordination with the SGA Vice President and Secretary to maintain of the SGA website.



- D. Shall oversee and seek SGA public communication relations and coordinate opportunities with media and press outlets the workings and vision of SGA.
- E. Shall develop a strategic plan on the execution of the Executive Board platform initiatives, mission, and vision.
- F. Shall serve as ex-officio member of the Legislative Affairs committee.
- G. Shall coordinate the scheduling of speaking engagements, opportunities, and appointments for the official organization spokesperson, the SGA President.
- H. Shall attend all SGA meetings in accordance with the SGA attendance policy.
- I. Shall assist SGA President in external relations of the SGA.
- J. Shall conduct other duties as assigned by the SGA Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE VI: DISPLINARY ACTION**

**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 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 a date will be set, no later than fourteen (14) days from the time of the individuals meeting with the Parliamentarian, for the individual to bring his/her charges of impeachment before the Senate.
  - 1. Any evidence that has not been reviewed by the Parliamentarian cannot be presented to the Legislative Branch at any point during the impeachment process.
- 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 an 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.
- 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.

### **Section 2: Non-impeachable offenses**

- A. 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.
- B. Only the Senate has the power to debate and approve through a two-thirds (2/3) vote mandatory disciplinary action.
- C. The Senate may not initiate impeachment in these circumstances, and disciplinary action may not prevent the offender from performing their duties and responsibilities.

## **ARTICLE VII: ORGANIZATION EXPENDITURES**

### Section 1: Approval of Expenditure

A. No SGA funds may be expended without the majority approval (50%+1) of the Finance Chamber that is present and the majority approval of the present voting body of the SGA Senate. Expenditure reports shall be presented weekly to the Senate by the Comptroller during his/her officer report.

### Section 2: External Organization Expenditure Request Requirements

#### A. Purpose

a. The purpose of the Expenditure Request process is to allow the Student Government Association to support registered student organizations and university departments through funding for events that promote cultural awareness, educational development, program visibility, and diverse community interaction and/or involvement for the students of Valdosta State University.

B. Expenditure request applications must be completed in its entirety and approved by the registered student organizations President and Advisor(s) head 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.

C. Expenditure request applications should be turned in at least three weeks prior to the event date or date when the funds are needed, whichever date comes first. Late submissions will not be accepted without the approval of the SGA Comptroller.

D. The organization will be required to prepare a brief presentation, preferably with a handout or PowerPoint presentation, to the Finance Chamber at their regularly scheduled meeting requesting a motion for the approval of the amount of funds to be allocated.

E. Following approval by the finance chamber, the comptroller shall present the funding request to the next regularly scheduled senate meeting. Funding shall only be approved by a majority vote (50%+1) of the present voting body.

F. Funding will be granted on the adherence to the purpose of the Club/Organization program's purpose.

G. An itemized list should be included or attached with the funding application.

H. 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.

I. The rules and guidelines for funding can be found on the Valdosta.edu website.

J. Valid invoices not received within the allocated time period set forth by the SGA Comptroller and/or Finance Committee Chairman will no longer be eligible for funding.

K. 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.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ELECTION CODE AND REGULATIONS**

*This code shall be the governing document in regards to all aspects of the elections process for the Student Government Association of Valdosta State University.*

### **Section 1: Definitions**

- A. "Candidate" is an individual seeking an elected office of Student Government Association.
- B. "Campaign" is any public activity or attempt to influence votes for or against a candidate.
- C. "Campaign agent, assistant, or staff" is an individual assisting or acting on behalf of a candidate.
- D. "Campaign materials or paraphernalia" is any advertisement, flyer, t-shirt, handbill, button, sticker, handout, or other item produced or on behalf of a candidate.
- E. "Ticket" is an affiliation of individuals seeking the position of President, Vice President, Secretary, and/or Comptroller soliciting votes collectively in such a manner that a vote for one person in the group is a vote for all persons within the group.
- F. "Endorsement" is defined as a candidate or ticket receiving the support of a member of SGA, a chartered school organization, or an entity with or without relation to the University through a signed agreement entitled the "Organizational Endorsement Form," provided in the SGA elections packet for the current term.
- G. "Active campaigning" is defined as verbal and/or physical actions taken by a candidate, legislative or executive branch, or any campaign agent, assistant, or staff in an attempt to persuade voters to support their chosen cause or entity participating in the SGA election. Wearing t-shirts, buttons, interpersonal activities on or off campus, etc. are considered active campaigning.
- H. "Passive campaigning" is defined as non-verbal, non-physical activities that attempt to persuade voters toward a certain cause or candidate in the SGA election. Social media invitations, signs or flyers left in place, etc. are viewed as passive campaigning. Attempting to draw attention vocally or physically to these stationary items, however, is considered "active campaigning."
- I. "Support" is defined by financial contribution, word of mouth, interpersonal communication, inclusion in handouts, website, social media, e-mails, and additional promotional campaign materials.
- J. The Elections committee has the right to clarify any definition or interpretation of the above listed definitions and any additional terms through written communication with the candidates.

### **Section 2: Elections Committee**

#### **A. Organization**

##### **1. Elections Chairman**

- a. Shall be a voting member of the Senate excluding Chamber Speakers, the Parliamentarian and the Speaker of the Senate.
- b. Shall coordinate all logistical and organizational efforts of the elections and campaign period.
- c. Shall directly report to the Elections Commissioner, Speaker of the Senate, SGA Executive Board, and VP of Student Affairs/Dean of Students.
- d. Shall be selected and nominated to the Senate by the Parliamentarian and affirmed by a majority vote (50%+1) of the Senate that is present at the time of nomination.

2. Elections Commissioner
  - a. Shall be a third party entity of SGA whose purpose is to work in coordination with SGA in holding the annual fall and spring elections.
  - b. Shall be a staff member or graduate assistant within the Division of Student Affairs, unless otherwise approved by the Dean of Students/VP of Student Affairs.
  - c. Shall be affirmed by majority (50%+1) vote of the Senate that is present.
  - d. Shall be responsible for organizing necessary political forums to inform the student body on the issues concerning the elections.
  - e. Shall review all grade point averages and elections packets prior to the candidate seminars.
  - f. Shall report to the Senate on all elections issues and will be responsible for initiation of all issues concerning the enforcement of elections rules mandated by the Senate.
3. Committee Members
  - a. There shall be five members of the Elections committee: Elections Chairman, Elections Commissioner, two (2) faculty and/or staff members appointed by the Dean of Students/VP of Student Affairs and/or SGA Advisor, and the current SGA President (if he or she is not running for re-election, otherwise the highest ranking executive board member not running for re-election).

#### B. Duties

1. Shall annually review the elections code and regulations of the SGA By-laws.
2. Shall interpret, execute, and enforce all election laws provided in the Election Code.
3. Shall disseminate rules and regulations to the extent that they are necessary in providing an equal opportunity to all candidates during the entire elections process.
4. Shall work in conjunction with the Executive Branch and the Elections Commissioner to help prepare and conduct all regular and special elections of SGA.
5. Shall prepare and distribute elections candidate packets in a timely fashion with a submission deadline at least two (2) weeks in advance of the beginning of campaign weeks.
6. Shall declare students eligible or ineligible to serve in any elected SGA position in accordance to candidacy qualifications prior to the candidate seminar and communicate ineligibility within seventy two (72) hours of campaign packet final deadline.
7. Shall conduct all elections qualifying meetings and candidate seminars.
8. Shall distribute a copy of the Elections codes, regulations, and expectations during or prior to the candidate seminar.
9. Shall establish and publish the official election dates and times.
10. Shall explain any ambiguities or queries that the candidates or campaign staff may have.
11. Shall investigate and adjudicate all campaign violations and inform the Assistant Dean of Students for Conduct of any violations within the Student Code of Conduct.
12. Shall communicate and coordinate with the Division of Informational Technology regarding adequate publicity and set-up of voting. A copy of all correspondence should be distributed to the SGA executive board and Dean of Students Office.
13. Shall be responsible for posting a copy, recording, and announcing of the results within 24 business hours of the closing of the polls on the final day of elections, provided that there are no campaign violation allegations pending.

#### C. Impartiality

1. No member of the Elections Committee shall be a candidate for any office in the Student Government Association while serving on the Elections Committee.
2. No member of the Elections Committee shall assist, endorse, or support with a campaign for office in the Student Government Association while serving on the Elections Committee.

3. No member of the Elections Committee may be personally related to any candidate for office (family, employer, student organization affiliate, etc.).

### **Section 3: Terms, Conditions, and Requirements for Office**

- A. All candidates for the Senate and Executive Board shall be enrolled students in good standing with the university at the time of the election and must maintain that good standing throughout their term of office.
- B. Executive Board Candidates
  1. Includes the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Comptroller.
  2. Must be registered as a full-time, twelve or more credit hours, student in good standing with the university and must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale prior to the start of the campaign period and throughout the elected term.
  3. Shall, as an individual, submit a petition with two hundred (200) current VSU student signatures.
  4. Shall be elected by the student body in a secret ballot prior to the third week of April of the spring semester prior to term.
  5. May serve no more than two terms in a SGA Executive Board position.
  6. Any person elected as a part of the Executive Branch may not hold more than two executive board positions including SGA in any other student organization on campus during their term.
  7. Must be able to fulfill the obligations of the office during the term as listed in the SGA Constitution.
  8. In the event there is no candidate who is completely qualified under the SGA Constitution and By-Laws that is willing to run for any executive seat, the Elections Committee will be responsible for suspending necessary qualifications and interviewing potential candidates.
- C. Senatorial Candidates
  1. Must be registered as a student in good standing with the university and must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale prior to the start of the campaign period and through the elected term.
  2. Must submit application based on classification for the vacant seats outlined in SGA Constitution Article I, Section 2, Part B. Candidates with 1-29 earned credit hours will be considered a freshman. 30-59 earned credit hours will be considered a sophomore. 60-89 earned credit hours will be considered as a junior. 90+ earned credit hours will be considered as a senior.
  3. Must be able to fulfill the obligations of the office during the term as listed in the SGA Constitution.
- D. Only students enrolled in classes at the Valdosta State University campus are eligible to run for office in Student Government Association.
- E. Each candidate shall file an elections packet including a statement of intent and grade release statement with the SGA Elections Commissioner which shall be subject to review by the Elections Committee.
- F. Candidates will be required to provide campaign staff contact information, ticket affiliations, and organizational endorsement documentation as deemed appropriate within the elections packet.
  1. A candidate may add or remove staff until the close of the packet acceptance period.
  2. A candidate may not add or remove oneself from ticket affiliations once the elections packet with the consent to affiliate is turned in.
  3. Organization endorsements will be accepted until the conclusion of the second week of campaigning.
- G. No person shall run for more than one office at a time. Once a statement of intent has been submitted to the Elections Commissioner, the candidate may not change the title of the office in which the candidate intends to run for.
- H. An individual shall be considered an "official candidate" only after the Elections Commissioner has received the candidate's elections packet including the statement of intent and has verified the candidate's qualifications.

- I. Any tampering of elections documents will result in the disqualification of the candidate including but not limited to disciplinary action for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

#### **Section 4: Elections Timeline**

- A. Shall be the official timeline detailing all deadlines and important dates of the elections process subservient with the Elections Code.
- B. Shall be set and approved by the Elections committee with the approval of the Elections Commissioner at least forty five (45) days prior to the election.
- C. Shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate present at motion of approval.
- D. Shall be distributed to each candidate within the candidate packet and reviewed during candidate seminars.
- E. After passage of the timeline by the Senate, the Elections committee shall have the power to amend the timeline as needed with the approval of two-thirds of the Senate present at the time of timeline adjustment announcement. These changes must be communicated in written format within forty eight (48) hours to the candidates and all branches of Student Government Association.
- F. All freshman Senators shall be elected by the Student Body during an election held during the fourth (4th) week of the fall semester. The fall elections timeline may be adjusted to ensure an equally fair opportunity is available within the shortened designated time period. These Senators shall be installed at the first SGA meeting following their election to office.
- G. All sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate student Senators shall be elected by the student body during an spring election to be held no later than the third (3rd) week of April during the spring semester.
- H. The Executive Officers shall be elected by the student body during an election to be held no later than the third (3rd) week of April in the spring semester. Installation and oath of office of executive branch shall take place no later than May 1.
- I. Qualifying for the fall elections shall begin at least ten (10) days prior to the day of election and the deadline for qualification shall be five (5) days prior to the election day no later at five o'clock pm (5:00PM).
- J. Qualifying for the spring elections shall begin at least fourteen (14) days prior to the day of election and the deadline for qualification shall be one week later at five o'clock pm (5:00PM).

#### **Section 5: Candidate Seminars**

- A. Only official candidates who meet all qualifications and their campaign staff should be allowed to attend candidate seminars.
- B. Candidate Seminars shall be held within two weeks of the official campaign start date. Only "official candidates" whose qualifications and elections packets have been approved by the Elections committee will be allowed to attend. The exact time and place shall be determined, announced, and published within the elections timeline.
- C. It is the duty of the Elections Committee to use the Candidate Seminar to inform candidates of policies within the Elections Code, informing of duties of office, special elections expectations, and candidate questions.
- D. Candidates shall inform the Elections Committee chairman within forty eight (48) hours prior to the meeting of an absence. Failure to attend the Candidate Seminar or make special meeting accommodations with the Elections Committee chairman will result in disqualification to run and his or her name will not appear on the ballot.
- E. It is recommended that two separate seminars be held for executive board candidates and senatorial candidates.
- F. It is recommended that all campaign agents, assistants, and/or staff members of official candidates, who are listed on the of the approved elections packet, under the campaign staff listing section, attend the Candidate Seminar in addition to the candidates.

#### **Section 6: Elections Campaigning**

- A. The campaign period is required to consist of at least fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days (including weekends) and will be set by the Elections Committee.

B. Campaigning can only take place after the attendance of the candidate seminar and an approved elections packet.

C. Restrictions on Campaigning Materials

1. All campaign materials must be approved by the Elections Commissioner and Student Life office.
2. Only approved postings may be displayed. The approval of postings will be denoted by the approval form on file with the Student Life office marked with an additional approval signature of the Elections Commissioner.
3. Only on-campus and social media may be used for campaigning.
4. All postings within the VSU campus must abide by the VSU Campus Sign policies outlined by the Department of Event Services, Student Life, Dining Services, Department of Housing and Residence Life, academic building, or digital posting guidelines. Any other applicable posting policy of a VSU governing body must be followed as well.
  - a. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that all postings are placed properly and follow the proper policies and procedures.
5. If an individual candidate or ticket wishes to alter any respective posting after its approval, the new changes must also be approved by the Elections Commissioner and Student Life office.
6. Each candidate is responsible for seeing that his or her postings are removed by 7:00 a.m. the day following the voting period conclusion.
7. The same restrictions apply as stated above in the event of a run-off election unless otherwise stated in writing by the Elections Committee.
8. Campaign materials cannot be posted in or around any proximity of a University computer lab.

D. Campaign Regulations

1. No person other than a member of the Elections committee, the respective candidate, or member of the candidate's campaign staff shall willfully destroy, deface, obscure, move, or remove postings.
2. The agreement form entitled "Ticket Affiliation Form" provided in the SGA elections packet must be signed by each individual and approved by the Elections Commissioner prior to ticket campaigning.
3. Any endorsements without the adequate paperwork and approval on file with the Elections Committee will be deemed in violation of the Elections Code. All "support" tactics and mechanisms must abide by the appropriate campaign dates campaign guidelines listed in SGA By-laws Article VI, Section 6-B.
4. Candidates are responsible for the campaign actions of their campaign agents, assistants, and staff members.
5. No candidate or any individual working on a campaign may align or damage the character or false, misleading information of another candidate, staff member, or Elections committee member publicly via word of mouth, written communication, or social media.
6. Disrespectful, slanderous, gender, and racially charged tactics, including on social media, will not be permitted in within the SGA elections time period and campaign events.
7. All campaign messages, descriptions, and locations (i.e. sidewalk chalking, slogans, social media group descriptions, print flyers, etc.) must be approved by the Elections chairman prior to posting or making public.
8. Defacing University property are prohibited campaign tactics.
9. Campaign materials placed on or near student, faculty, or staff vehicles is prohibited.
10. Door-to-door campaigning in residence halls is prohibited.
11. No candidate shall claim to be endorsed by any organization unless the candidate has secured a written statement of endorsement and approval from the Elections committee.
12. Candidates may be asked to complete a Financial Campaign Disclosure Form as so deemed by the Elections committee at any time during or after the elections period.

13. The Elections Committee and Commissioner will be responsible for alerting respective candidates of complaints and violations of Elections Codes in relation to each candidate's respective campaign within 24 business hours of the incident and/or notification.

#### E. Executive Branch Candidate Debate

1. Attendance at the executive debate is mandatory for all respective candidates for the executive branch.
2. The format of the debate shall be determined by the Elections committee and communicated to the candidates in the candidate seminar.
3. It is the responsibility of the Elections Committee to publicize the executive debate through relevant campus media and communication outlets.

#### F. Senator Candidate Forum

1. The Elections Committee shall be responsible for coordinating, publicizing, and hosting a forum in which all qualified candidates running for a Senate position shall be invited to answer questions from the student body.
2. The forum must be held at least 24 hours prior to the election, and it may not be held during the same time as the executive debate.
3. Attendance is not mandatory for Senate candidates; however, Senate candidates must commit to being present at the forum at least 72 hours prior to the event.

#### G. Conflict of Interest

1. No executive tickets or individual candidates may endorse a senatorial candidate. Executive tickets must run independently of senator candidates.
2. In the event that any member of the student judicial council is interested in becoming a candidate for the executive branch, he or she must resign from office, in writing, at least one semester prior to the elections semester.

#### H. Campaign Violations

1. All complaints relating to violations of the above stated rules and regulations must be filed with the Elections Commissioner of the SGA within ten (10) days of the election.
2. The Elections Commissioner of the SGA shall then present the complaints to the Elections Chairman. The Elections Committee must hear the complaint within five (5) class days of its submission to the Elections Chairman.
3. A three-fifths (3/5) vote by the committee is required to initiate action on alleged violations.
4. Violators may receive the maximum punishment of forfeiture of the office or disqualification from the election.
5. All disciplinary action shall be initiated only with the approval of such action by majority (50%+1) vote of the Senate that is present.
6. All admissible evidence shall be presented as supporting documentation and verified by the Elections Commissioner, first before any disciplinary action can be recommended. Any other non-verified evidence cannot be considered valid.

### **Section 7: Elections**

#### A. Fall Elections

1. The fall elections will be used to elect Senators from the freshman class (students with 0-29 completed VSU credit hours).

#### B. Spring Elections

1. The spring elections will be used to elect Senators who have completed thirty (30) or more VSU credit hours.
2. The spring elections will be used to fill the vacancies of the Executive Branch as prescribed by the SGA Constitution.

#### C. Elections Regulations

1. No student enrolled in good standing with Valdosta State University shall be denied the right to vote.



2. The elections shall be held at the end of the second campaign week.
3. Only individuals who are officially registered as students at VSU may participate in SGA elections.
4. One person submitting a ballot using the identity of another student, regardless of the willingness of the student, is prohibited.
5. The counting of votes shall be under the supervision and authority of the Elections committee.

#### D. Form of Ballot

1. The candidates shall be listed in alphabetical order with a photograph under the office for which they have qualified, last name first, to be followed by the candidate's entire legal name, with nicknames to be closed in parentheses, as signed on their statement of intent followed by any party or group of affiliation as indicated on their statement of intent.
2. The Elections committee and Information Technology department shall administer the voting website that is accessible via the VSU website homepage.

#### E. Results

1. Senatorial candidates must obtain at least ten (10) votes of the student body to be elected.
2. Results of the elections shall be given to the Elections Commissioner and the VP of Student Affairs/Dean of Students Office directly from the Information Technology department designee.
3. Results of the election shall be announced within twenty four (24) business hours of the closing of the polls on the final day of elections, provided that there are no campaign violation allegations pending. In the event that there are campaign violation allegations pending, the results shall be announced within twenty four (24) hours of the elections committee determinations. This record shall include the total number of ballots casts and the votes casted for each candidate.
  - a. This announcement should be specified the Elections Timeline devised by the Elections Committee.

#### F. Recount

1. Any individual desiring a recount must petition in writing the Elections committee within twenty four (24) hours after the elections results are announced.
2. All candidates involved in a recount shall be notified with twenty four (24) hours of the request.

#### G. Run-off

1. A run-off between candidates will be required in the event that majority (50%+1 of votes) is not obtained by any candidate.
2. In the event of a run-off election between the two candidates having the largest number of votes will be held on a date no later than ten (5) days after the original election.
3. A simple majority (50%+1 of votes) will determine the winner.
4. Any candidate may decide not to run in the run-off election by submitting a statement of such to the Elections Commissioner and Elections Chairman, and by doing so the remaining run-off candidate would then be declared the winner of the office.

#### H. Irregularities

1. The Elections Committee shall have the power to withhold the certification and results of an election in which it finds substantial evidence that irregularities and/or fraud and alleged or suspected violations of the Elections Code and regulations have occurred and may have influenced the outcome or results of the election.
2. Notice of withholding results must be communicated to the Student Government Association Executive and Legislative branch, outlining investigation focuses prior to the announcement of withholding results to the student body and candidates.
3. If the election is ruled invalid, the Elections Committee and the Elections Commissioner shall be responsible for obtaining voter information statistics from Information Technology department, and any other materials deemed necessary to allow for a proper and speedy investigation of the possible violations.

4. The Elections Committee shall have three business days maximum to investigate and rule on the irregularity.
5. The Elections Committee may call a new election to be held within the approved timeline of the Senate.

### **Section 8: Transition & Oath of Office**

- A. The transition period of Student Government Association shall begin immediately following the announcement of the election results and will end with the oath of office in the new Student Government Association executive board.
- B. Any Senator elected to any Executive office must resign, in writing, from the Senate within five (5) days prior to installation in the Executive office.
- C. The Executive Board shall assume office effective May 1 to April 30 of the following calendar year, unless otherwise approved by the VP of Student Affairs/Dean of Students.
- D. The President-Elect, Vice President-Elect, Secretary-Elect, and Comptroller-Elect shall be administered the Oath of Office by President of the University at a time and date set by the Elections Committee and VP of Student Affairs/Dean of Students before or on the first day of the term of office, May 1.
- E. The Senate shall be administered the Oath of Office by the President of the University, the Vice President of Student Affairs, or his/her designee on the same day as the newly elected executive board.
- F. Oath of Office shall be read as follows:

*“Raise your right hand, and say,  
I, (State name)*

*In the presence of these witnesses, do solemnly swear and affirm, that I will strive to advance the interest, and promote the progress of the student body, by the diligent application and performance of my duties.*

*I promise, that I will reflect the interest of the students which I represent to the best of my ability, and shall under no circumstances, act under personal bias or prejudice, in the execution of my duties as Student Government Association (state position).*

*Each and all, I solemnly swear.”*

- G. The newly elected Senate and executive board shall meet at least once between their swearing in and the end of the Spring semester.
  - a. During this meeting the new Speaker of the Senate and Parliamentarian shall be nominated and confirmed.

<b>ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS</b>
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- A. Amendments, additions, revisions, and/or removal to the SGA By-Laws and Statutes shall require approval by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.
- B. Any alteration must be assigned a proper section and/or subsection before the motion is considered by the Senate.
- C. Every year the Elections committee shall convene post spring elections to review the Elections Code before the elections process of the next academic school year. If any amendments are deemed necessary, the Elections committee shall recommend amendments to the Elections code via a written letter to the SGA President, SGA President Elect, and SGA Vice President Elect by the end of the election semester.
- D. Proper placement of a new statute or the relocation of an existing statute shall be determined by the SGA Parliamentarian and approved by the SGA President.
- E. By-Laws shall take effect when approved by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.