



## **By-Laws of the HBU Student Government**

### **Article I – Apportionment**

**Section 1** – The House of Representatives of the Legislative Branch shall be composed of representatives from: The School of Business, School of Christian Thought, School of Fine Arts, School of Humanities, the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences, the School of Nursing and Allied Health, College of Science and Mathematics, the Honors College, the Residential Population, the Commuter Population, the Transfer Population, the International population, and the Athletic Population. The number of which shall be one representative per population.

**Section 2** – The Senate of the Legislative Branch shall be composed of: two (2) senators from the Freshman class, two (2) representatives of the Sophomore class, two (2) representatives of the Junior Class and (2) representatives of the Senior Class.

#### **Par. 1 – Special Appointment**

- A. The two (2) senators who shall represent the Freshmen class **shall not** be included on the Student Government election cycle ballot.
- B. Freshman senators shall be nominated out of the Freshman Council every fall semester by its respective Faculty Advisor by a manner he or she shall deem fitting.
- C. The Directors of Finance and Public Relations will be appointed in a manner determined by the President and Vice President of Student Government Association.

### **Article II – Standing Committees**

**Section 1** – All Standing Committees shall be filled by members of the Legislature as appointed by the Executive Branch.

**Section 2** – The Public Relations Committee shall consider all matters pertaining to the Houston Baptist University and Student Government Association Image, campus-wide advertisement, and all matters pertaining to public affairs as designated by the Legislative Branch. The Public Relations Committee shall also be responsible for keeping and maintaining the website along with any other applicable electronic multimedia and shall collaborate with the Elections Committee during elections cycles to promote the involvement of the Student Body.

**Section 3** – The Student Involvement Committee shall oversee and coordinate all initiatives and activities in which the Student Government Association shall be involved. These may include, but shall not be limited to, SGA promotional events, awareness events, campus-wide initiatives, co-sponsored events, etc. This committee shall be comprised of the Senate and Area Representatives (Residence Life, Commuter Life, International, Transfer, and Athletics Representatives).

**Section 4** – The Academic Affairs Committee shall be responsible for managing initiatives and issues which relate to academics. This committee shall be comprised of the House of Representatives, excluding Area Representatives (Residence Life, Commuter Life, International, Transfer, and Athletics Representatives).

**Section 5** – The Standards Committee shall stand as an ad hoc committee, formed only when disciplinary issues arise. Disciplinary issues may include, but are not limited to, negligence of



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duties, excessive absences, behavior in violation of HBU policies, etc. This committee shall be headed by the Director of Public Relations and consist of three Legislative members. The committee will meet with the member in question to determine their fitness for office and report meeting information back to the SGA.

**Section 6** – The Elections Committee shall aid and assist the Public Relations committee in involving the Student Body in the elections process and shall supervise and administer all elections in accordance with the Election Code, as set forth in Article III of the By-Laws.

### **Par. 1 – Duties**

- A. To determine the eligibility of the candidate upon his filing for petition
- B. To determine the validity of the petition of the candidate.
- C. To determine, issue and supervise the official campaign regulations with the approval of the Legislative Branch.
- D. To provide adequate voting opportunities via online or other methods deemed appropriate.
- E. To disqualify any ballot when voters' intentions are not clear;
- F. Tabulate; and post results of election within three (3) days after the election unless previously specified. Posting of results of election includes the names of the candidates and percentage of votes received.
- G. To conduct within five (5) days any runoff election as set forth in Article III, Section 3, part 2-E of the By Laws.
- H. To report irregularities of the election to the Judicial Branch within forty-eight (48) hours.
- I. To keep accurate record of all student's elections for a minimum of a year and a half in the vault of the Registrar.

**Section 5** – The Constitution Committee debates and considers all possible changes via amendment in the Student Government Association Constitution. All matters pertaining to the Constitution is within their oversight and purview.

### **Par. 1 – Definition**

- A. External activities shall be defined as any activity in which one or more organizations involved are not affiliated with Houston Baptist University. This shall include, but is not limited to, nonprofit organizations, other collegiate organizations from local universities and local government organizations or authorities.

## **Article III – Election Code**

### **Section 1 – Qualification for filing**

**Par. 1** – Be a member in good standing of the Student Body and also shall possess at the time of filing, and maintain through their term, a GPA of 2.5 for his/her work done at HBU. Candidates for Executive office must meet the qualifications of their respective position as stated in Article I, Section II of the Constitution of the Student Government Association.



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- A. The School / College Representatives shall pursue a degree within one of the disciplines of the School / College for which office is sought..
- B. The Residential Representative shall be a student who is currently and has previously resided in an on-campus dormitory or apartment for at least one (1) semester.
- C. The Commuter Representative shall be a student of the university who is currently and has resided off campus for at least one (1) semester.
- D. The Transfer Representative shall be a student who has transferred to HBU from a previous University.
- E. The International Representative must be recognized by HBU as an international student.
- F. The Athletic Representative must be a current or past athlete in a NCAA Division I sport at Houston Baptist University.
- G. The Senators shall be a member of their respective class by collegiate hours
- H. The Representatives and Senators must meet the qualifications of their respective position as stated in Article II, Section II of the Constitution of the Student Government Association.

**Par. 2** – File with the Elections Committee for nomination to the ballot at the beginning of the election cycle detailed in Article III, Section III. The annual filing of candidates for Freshman Senators and any other vacant position within Student Government shall begin during the third week of the Fall Semester unless otherwise specified.

**Par. 3** – May not file as a candidate for more than one Student Government Association Executive Office.

### **Section 2 – Procedure for Campaigning**

**Par. 1** – At the time of official filing each candidate will be given official campaign regulations.

**Par. 2** – Any deviation from official campaign regulations will be referred to Election Committee for disciplinary action.

### **Section 3- Voting**

#### **Par. 1 – Election Timeline:**

- A. Applications begin distribution on the first business day of week one of the campaign cycle.
- B. Applications are due on the last business day of week two of the campaign cycle.
- C. Campaigning starts the Monday of week three, and ends the Wednesday of week four of the election cycle.
- D. Voting occurs the Wednesday of week four of the campaign cycle.
- E. This timeline shall be known as the General Election Cycle and shall occur over the course of four consecutive business weeks between the first week of March and the last week of April. All officers, representatives, and senators shall be elected once a year through this process unless any position was vacant and then filled during the Fall special election cycle, in which case the position will once again be up for election the following Spring.

#### **Par. 2 – Procedures**

- A. Each member of the Student Body shall have the right to cast his vote for the candidate of his choice.



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- B. Voting shall be by in person ballots and shall be conducted in one day.
- C. Any candidate receiving a plurality of the votes where one position is being filled shall be declared elected. A person receiving a plurality is the person receiving the greatest percentage (actual number) of the votes.
- D. Where more than one position is being filled with the same title, such as any Representative or Senatorial seat, the winners shall be determined by plurality, starting with the highest vote getter and going successively down the list of candidates until all vacant positions for any given position are filled.

### **Section 4 – Validations:**

Any irregularity or untruths in applicant statements discovered by the Student Government Association Elections Committee or the Executive Branch must be filed for review, after the results of the election have been posted. Such an appeal must be made within forty-eight (48) hours after the results of the election have been posted.

### **Section 5 – Vacancy of Office:**

In case of vacancy in an Executive or Legislative Office, the executive branch shall submit to the legislative branch nomination(s) of person(s) to fill vacant offices, the nominee being considered elected by two-thirds majority vote of the legislative branch, after which the nominee is entitled to all powers and responsibilities prescribed by the position therein.

### **Section 6 – Inauguration:**

**Par. 1** – The President shall be given the oath of office at the time and place designated by the preceding Legislative Branch. This ceremony must be held within the semester of the election

**Par. 2** – The outgoing president of the Student Government Association shall administer the oath of office to the President-elect. The President-elect shall, in turn, administer the oath of office to the incoming Legislative and Executive Branch

### **Section 7 – Oath of Office:**

**Par. 1** – The oath of office for the Student Government Association officers shall be as follows:

“I, (person’s name), do promise to uphold the Constitution, Covenant Agreement, and By-Laws of the Student Government Association of Houston Baptist University, giving my best effort to execute the duties incumbent upon me as (person’s office) of the Student Government Association of Houston Baptist University. So help me, God.”

**Par. 2** – The oath of office shall be administered by the President of the Student Government Association at the first meeting following the election.

## **Article IV – Quorum**

**Section 1** – One more than half of the members of the Student Government Association constitute a quorum.



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### **Article V – Impeachment**

**Section 1** – After consultation with the chaplain as outlined in Article I, Section III of the Constitution of the Student Government, habitual negligence or violation of duty as outlined in Section II, or any act which would bring discredit to the Student Government Association shall be sufficient grounds for bringing charges of impeachment against any standing member of the Student Government Association.

**Par. 1** – Any member of the Student Government Association may bring charges against any other member by submitting the charges in writing to the Executive Branch, which then must vote within one month whether to impeach the member and initiate an inquiry into the removal of the accused member from office. A two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Branch will be considered sufficient to affirm a charge of impeachment. If the member in question is a member of the Executive Branch then his/her vote shall not count towards a two-thirds majority of the Executive Branch in affirm a charge of impeachment. Charges shall be affirm and an inquiry initiated if any Student Government Association member presents to the Legislative Branch a petition containing the signatures of twenty (20) percent of the Student Government Association within the document containing the charge.

**Par. 2** – If an inquiry is initiated, and the Executive Branch affirms the charges brought forth, the trial of removal from office shall be held in the Legislative Branch and shall be presided over by the Vice President of the Student Government Association provided that he/she is not the member in question. If he/she is, then the trial shall be presided over by the Chaplain of the Student Government Association. The accused shall have no vote in the trial.

### **Section 2 – Definition:**

**Par. 1** – Habitual Negligence shall be defined as any action which demonstrates a severe lack of involvement in the activities of the body entire. This includes, but is not limited to, continual disregard of policy initiatives as designated by the Legislative Branch and/or severe absenteeism as outlined in Article VI Section 1 Par. 1.

**Par. 2** – Violation of Duty shall be defined as any action which is not in accord with Student Government policy as set forth within the By-Laws and Constitution, Houston Baptist policy as set forth in the University Preamble and By-Laws, or violation of Local, State or Federal law.

### **Article VI – Attendance Regulations**

#### **Section 1 – Absences:**

**Par. 1** – When a member of the Student Government Association has three (3) unexcused absences in one academic year, his record will be reviewed by the Standards Committee to determine fitness for office. Severe cases of non-communicated absenteeism will constitute grounds of habitual negligence as stated in Article V of the By-Laws. Members must notify the Vice President of Records at least 24 hours prior to any absences from any required meeting, event, activity, etc. In the case of an Executive officer being absent from an event, that officer must in turn notify another Executive officer of their absence at least 24 hours prior to the event.

**Par. 2** – Upon review, the member in question must submit documentation to justify his



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absences

**Par. 3** – The Standards Committee will consider illness, official school business, or special circumstances to be excused

### **Section 2- Tardies:**

Two (2) tardies shall constitute one (1) absence. Any member shall be considered tardy if he/she arrives after the beginning invocation or leaves before the meeting has been officially adjourned. Any member out of dress code shall receive (1) tardy for that respective meeting.

### **Section 3 – Activities:**

Specified Legislative activities shall be included along with regular meetings as required attendance.

### **Section 4—Definitions:**

**Par. 1**— An absence shall be defined as an unexcused failure to attend general body meetings, scheduled committee meetings, or event.

**Par. 2-** A Tardy shall be defined an unexcused failure to appear within fifteen (15) minutes of the specified starting time of general body meetings or scheduled committee meetings.

## **Article VII – Representative Responsibilities**

### **Section 1 – Duties of Representatives**

Representatives will be expected to perform specific duties relating to their area of representation. The responsibilities are as follows:

#### **COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES SHALL:**

- A. Meet with 7 constituents (constituents are those students who are within the school that the representative represents) once per semester. These meetings must take place within the allotted time frame as determined that year. The representative is expected to field comments and concerns from their meetings to bring back to the SGA. The representative must also bring proof of the meeting by providing 7 signatures from the constituents they met with.
- B. Meet on two separate occasions with their college's respective deans in order to represent their constituents and to work on addressing ongoing issues within their college. These meetings must take place within the allotted time frame as determined that year.
- C. Prepare a report to be made public to the student body that lays out the accomplishments and work they have done for their college and the university as a representative.

#### **RESIDENTIAL, COMMUTER, TRANSFER, INTERNATIONAL, AND ATHLETIC REPRESENTATIVES SHALL:**

- A. Meet with 7 constituents (constituents are those students who are within the area or population that the representative represents) once per semester. These meetings must take place within the allotted time frame as determined that year. The representative is expected to field comments and concerns from their meetings to bring back to the SGA.





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The representative must also bring proof of the meeting by providing 7 signatures from the constituents they met with.

- B. Meet on two separate occasions with their area or population's respective administrative head in order to represent their constituents and to work on addressing ongoing issues within constituency. These meetings must take place within the allotted time frame as determined that year.
- C. Prepare a report to be made public to the student body that lays out the accomplishments and work they have done for their college and the university as a representative.

### **SENATORS SHALL:**

- A. Meet with 14 constituents (constituents are those students who are within grade level that the senator represents) once per semester. These meetings must take place within the Allotted time frame as determined that year. The senator is expected to field comments and concerns from their meetings to bring back to the SGA. The senator must also bring proof of the meeting by providing 14 signatures from the constituents they met with.
- B.

## **Article VIII – Formal Issue Resolution Process**

### **Section 1 – Introduction of Issue**

- In order for an issue to be addressed in an SGA meeting, the representative or executive must notify the vice-president of records 48 hours before the next full SGA meeting.
- Once the vice-president of records is notified, the representative or executive must fill out an issue request form in order to create a summary of the issue and begin to create a record of the SGA's addressing of the issue.
- During the next meeting, if the issue request form is complete, and the Vice-President of Records was notified within 48 hours of the meeting, the representative bringing forth the issue will be given time to present the issue or concern verbally to the student government body.

### **Section 2 – Discussion and Debate of Issue**

Once the issue is fully presented, an open floor will ensue, during this period, all members of the student government body will be at liberty to discuss the issue and come to a decision point regarding a solution.

### **Section 3 – Decision on Issue**

When open floor discussion has been deemed by the President or other presiding officer to be no longer beneficial, a decision by the student government body will be made. The student body must decide:

- A. To table the issue
- B. Establish a committee to create a focus group and poll the student body. The executive will determine how long the committee has before it must return its findings. Open floor will then resume on the issue.
- C. Establish a committee to do further research on the issue (this includes general research as well as contact with administrators). The executive will determine how long the



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committee has before it must return its findings. Once it returns and reports its findings, open floor discussion will resume on the issue.

- D. Assign either the representative who brought forth the issue, another representative, or a group of representatives to draft and sponsor a bill that present a solution to the original issue.

### **Section 4 – Resolution on Issue**

- Once the SGA has determined a solution, and the solution has been formally drafted into a bill, the bill must be submitted to the vice-president of records and will be brought before the student government for a vote if it is received within 48 hours of the next meeting. The student government will formally vote upon the bill.
- If the bill passes, the executive branch shall begin executive implementation procedures.
- If the bill fails to pass, the floor can be opened to determine whether alteration to the bill is needed. If it is determined that no alteration to the bill could lead to its passage, the bill will be effectively killed and the SGA may determine to address the issue through initiating legislative process or table the issue.

## **Article IX – Executive Implementation Procedures**

### **Section 1 – Communication and Publication of Student Government Decision**

The executive branch must identify an administrator or administrators whose roles are most pertinent to the legislative action that has been passed. The executive must present the bill to that (those) administrator(s) within 72 hours of the bill's passage. The executive branch must push for a response from that (those) administrator(s) within one week of the communication. The executive must make the bill public to the student body within 72 hours of the bill's passage.

### **Section 2 – Inaction of the Student Government Decisions**

When the response back from the administration is in the affirmative, the executive will work in whatever way is needed to enact the contents of the bill. In the case that the affirmative answer from the administration is contingent on an adjustment to the contents of the bill, the executive branch will work with the administration to create a compromise agreement. The newly crafted agreement will be brought before the legislative to be approved, requiring the same majority that the original bill needed to pass. Once a final resolution is reached, and all parties are in agreement, the student body must be notified and the agreement made public within 72 hours. If the response back from the administration is in the negative, the executive must relay all information concerning the negative decision back to the legislative branch.

Hereafter, the student government can take whatever action they see fit to enact the change they voted on such as:

- A. Student petition
- B. Walk about interaction with student body
- C. Demand public response from administration
- D. Protest





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E. Host awareness event

### **Article X – Rules of Order**

**Section 1** – The rules contained in Robert’s Rules of Order Revised shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the By-Laws or the special rules of order found in the Constitution of the Student Government Association or validly passed by the Legislative Branch.

**Section 2** – It is required of each Legislative Branch member to be familiar with Robert’s Rules of Order Revised.

### **Article XI – Enactment Clause**

The Constitution of the Student Government Association shall supersede all previous constitutions of the Student Government Association. It shall become effective when ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Student Government Association and when signed by the direct faculty advisor for Student Government Association of Houston Baptist University.

*Revised: 08.04.17*