



Constitution of the Roger Williams University Student Senate

PREAMBLE

We, the undergraduate students of Roger Williams University, in order to create a representative form of student government; to provide means for responsible and effective student participation in the organization and control of student affairs; to serve as the official voice of student opinion on matters affecting students and/or their rights; to provide for a mutual and beneficial understanding with members of the faculty and administration; and to enhance educational, social, and cultural opportunities, establish this constitution of the Roger Williams University Student Senate.

ARTICLE I - NAME

This organization shall be known as the Roger Williams University Student Senate.

ARTICLE II - ELECTORATE

The electorate of the Student Senate shall consist of all students of Roger Williams University who are required to pay the Student Activities Fee. No student who pays this fee shall be denied the right to vote for or participate in the Student Senate unless they fail to meet the requirements set forth in this document.

ARTICLE III - AUTHORITY

This constitution of the Roger Williams University Student Senate shall take precedence in all cases over the charter and/or contract of any student club or organization under the jurisdiction of the Student Senate and shall have ultimate authority in the resolution of any disputes. This document's authority is invested in it by the membership of the Student Senate.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1:

The membership of the Student Senate shall consist of twenty senators chosen by the electorate and a parliamentarian appointed by the President from outside of the membership. The Executive Board shall be included among the twenty, and will be considered Senators in addition to their executive positions, with all the rights and privileges granted to Student Senators.

Section 2:

The duties and responsibilities of the Senate are:

- a. To act as the official voice and to promote the interests of the student body;
- b. To give due consideration to any proposal, request, complaint, or grievance that a student or group of students may present in the best interest of the student body;
- c. To use and distribute the Student Activities Fee in the best interests of the Student Body;
- d. To approve or reject the charters of student groups wishing to be recognized as official clubs or organizations of the Student Senate and to receive the benefits of such recognition, including but not limited to, access to Student Activities Fee;
- e. To staff and maintain Standing and Ad Hoc Committees to ensure the smooth operation and continuity of the Student Senate;
- f. To consider a two-thirds override of any presidential veto;
- g. To uphold and defend the Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Senate.

Section 3:

All Senators shall be required to maintain a GPA of 2.5 and may not be placed on academic or disciplinary probation during the length of their term. At such a time as a Senator fails to meet these requirements, he or she will no longer be considered a Senator and will step down. Any Senator who must leave the Senate because of failure to meet these requirements will be eligible for election to the Senate once he or she meets these requirements.

Section 4:

A Senator may be impeached for not fulfilling his or her responsibilities as a Senator; the oath he or she was sworn to; not conducting him or herself in fashion befitting a Senator; not adhering to the unexcused absence policy. These are to be determined by either the Constitution, the Bylaws or the Executive Board, in that order.

Section 5:

A Senator may resign from their position when he or she finds that they are no longer able to fulfill the requirements of the office. Resignations shall be submitted to the Executive Board at the Executive Board meeting prior to the following general Senate meeting. Resignations shall be announced by the resigning Senator, or by the President in the event that the Senator cannot attend, during Open Floor and shall take effect immediately upon announcement.

Section 6:

When vacancies occur in the Office of Senator, the Senate shall elect new Senator(s) to fill the vacancy(ies) within three weeks. If more than two vacancies exist, the Elections Committee must call a special election within one month of the vacancies.

ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE BOARD**Section 1:**

The executive power of the Student Senate shall be vested in the Executive Board, which shall consist of:

1. President, elected by a plurality of the electorate;
2. Vice President, elected from amongst the Student Senate;
3. Treasurer, elected from amongst the Student Senate;
4. Secretary, elected from amongst the Student Senate;
5. Parliamentarian, appointed by the President from outside the membership of the Student Senate and confirmed by the Student Senate.

Section 2:

The Executive Board shall:

- a. Act as a steering committee for the Senate;
- b. Meet weekly with the advisors to the Senate;
- c. Appoint members to standing and ad-hoc committees;
- d. Resolve conflicts both within the Senate and those that concern the Senate outside of the organization;
- e. Deputize assistants and/or apprentices to the Senate for any specified duties or lengths of time;
- f. Plan all training sessions, conferences, and retreats;
- g. With unanimous consent of its members act on behalf of the Senate in emergencies and report such action to the Senate;
- h. Perform additional duties as may be required.

Section 3:

The President of the Student Senate shall:

- a. Be a non-voting member of the Student Senate, except to break a tie;
- b. Chair all Senate meetings;
- c. Appoint the Parliamentarian and all Senate Chairmen with the approval of the Student Senate;
- d. Be the official representative of the electorate, both within and outside the University community;
- e. Have veto power over any legislation except Bills of Impeachment, Bills Calling for Referendum and Constitutional amendments;
- f. Appoint Senate representatives to University and other committees with the approval of the Student Senate.
- g. Be responsible for all external Student Senate correspondence;
- h. Meet at least once a month with the University President;
- i. Meet at least once a month with the Dean of Student Affairs;
- j. Perform any additional duties as may be required.

Section 4:

The Vice President of the Student Senate shall:

- a. Be a voting and speaking member of the Student Senate;

- b. Act as President in the absence of the President, assuming all responsibilities with the exception of veto power;
- c. Assist the President in his/her duties;
- d. Report to the President;
- e. Chair the Executive board;
- f. Chair the Executive Council;
- g. Perform any additional duties as may be required.

Section 5:

The Treasurer of the Student Senate shall:

- a. Be a voting and speaking member of the Student Senate;
- b. Be responsible for the internal finances involving the Student Senate budget, including:
 - i. Approving all appropriate purchases;
 - ii. Keeping accurate financial records;
 - iii. Reporting twice a month on the financial status of the Senate;
- c. Prepare an annual fiscal budget for approval by the Senate, derived from Student Activities Fees and associated income;
- d. Report to the President;
- e. Be a voting member of the Standing Committee on Finance;
- f. Perform any additional duties as may be required.

Section 6:

The Secretary of the Senate shall:

- a. Be a voting and speaking member of the Student Senate;
- b. Record and keep in permanent file the minutes of all meetings, regular and special;
- c. Make copies of the Student Senate minutes and necessary legislation available to the University Community;
- d. Receive and keep record of all legislation introduced to the Senate;
- e. Report to the President;
- f. In the absence of a Parliamentarian, chair the Elections Committee and supervise all elections, regular and special;
- g. Perform any additional duties as may be required.

Section 7:

The Parliamentarian of the Senate shall:

- a. Be a non-voting member of the Student Senate, however will be allowed to speak on non-legislative matters or when assisting the President in keeping order during Senate meetings;
- b. Interpret, enforce and defend the Constitution and Bylaws and inform the Senate when such have been violated;
- c. Inform all Senators of the rules and regulations of the Student Senate;
- d. Update the Constitution and Bylaws when such have been amended by the Senate;

- e. Chair the Elections Committee and supervise all elections, regular and special.

Section 8:

When vacancies occur:

- a. In the office of President, the Vice-President becomes acting President until the next general election.
- b. In the Office of Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary the Senate must elect new officers from amongst its members within two weeks of the vacancy.
- c. In the Office of Parliamentarian, the President must appoint a new Parliamentarian within two weeks of the vacancy.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Section 1:

The membership of the Executive Council shall consist of representatives of all Organizations as outlined in the Student Senate Bylaws.

Section 2:

The Executive Council shall:

- a. Discuss activities and concerns from respective organizations on the council;
- b. Make recommendations and/or suggestions to the Student Senate;
- c. Convene at least once a month and additionally as needed;
- d. Be chaired by the Vice President of the Student Senate.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

Section 1:

The Senate shall have a number of standing committees as outlined in the Student Senate Bylaws. Standing committees shall be charged with specific duties of the Senate, shall be created with a two thirds majority vote of those senators present at a meeting, and shall be altered with a two thirds majority vote of the Senate.

Section 2:

The Student Senate shall, from time to time, create any number of ad-hoc committees charged with a specific task of the Senate. At the completion of such a task, the ad-hoc committee must report back to the Senate. Such committees shall be created and dissolved with a majority vote of the Senate.

Section 3:

Standing and ad-hoc committee chairmen shall, from time to time, meet with any or all members of the Executive Board in a manner deemed appropriate by the Board. Such a meeting shall be for the purpose of increasing communication between the Executive Board and the chairmen of Senate committees.

Section 4:

The membership of Senate standing and ad-hoc committees may consist of both Student Senators and members of the electorate.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS

Section 1:

The Student Senate spring elections shall take place no later than the first Wednesday and Thursday of April. These elections shall cover elections for Student Senate President, sixteen Senators and sophomore, junior and senior class officers.

Section 2:

The Student Senate fall elections shall take place no later than the first Wednesday and Thursday of October. This election shall cover those offices not filled in the spring elections.

Section 3:

The Student Senate Parliamentarian shall be responsible for the facilitation and supervision of all Student Senate elections, regular and special.

Section 4:

Candidates must participate in the nomination process as outlined by the Student Senate Parliamentarian. Instructions must be made available in writing at least one month prior to the election date.

Section 5:

The following are the requirements for office for all Student Senate elections:

- a. All candidates must have and maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 2.5 and not be on academic or disciplinary probation at the time of candidacy or throughout the length of the term.
- b. Candidates for Senate President must have served on Senate for no less than two academic semesters.
- c. Candidates for Senate Vice President must have served on Senate for no less than one academic semester.
- d. Candidates for the positions of Student Senate Secretary or Treasurer must have served on the Student Senate for no less than 12 general Senate meetings.
- e. Class Officers must belong to the class they are running for as defined by University policy and records.

Section 6:

The Student Senate officers elected in the April general elections shall take office the first Monday of May. The period between the elections and this date shall be considered a period of duplication, where retiring Senators and Officers will retain their duties and be assisted by the newly elected Senators and Officers. Retiring officials will advise and explain duties to incoming officials during this period.

An organizational caucus of the newly elected Senate shall following each regular meeting of the current Senate during this period of duplication. The first two caucuses will be reserved for the election of the vice president, secretary and treasurer with the first caucus being for the purpose of garnering nominations from the Senate and the second for deliberation and consideration of the candidates. The remaining caucuses shall be for the consideration of Presidential appointments. The newly elected President shall preside over these caucuses.

Section 7:

Four Senate seats shall be set aside every spring to be filled by freshman and transfer students in the fall general elections.

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS

Section 1:

All meetings of the Student Senate, Senate standing committees, and Senate ad hoc committees shall be open to the University community unless two-thirds of any of these bodies votes for a closed session. The Senate may, however, through a majority vote, demand an explanation and the minutes of any closed session.

Section 2:

The Student Senate must meet at least once a week, every week of a semester excluding Spring Break and finals week. However, this meeting may be cancelled by a consensus of the Executive Board in the case of extenuating circumstances.

Section 3:

Standing Committees must meet at least twice a month for each calendar month in a semester, with the exception of May, January, and December where only one meeting is required.

Section 4:

Special meetings of any of the above may be called by the appropriate chairperson or at the request of a majority of its members, as long as at least three business days notice and a specific agenda is given. Only the specific agenda items listed can be discussed.

Section 5:

All of the above assemblies require a quorum of two-thirds of the voting members before business can be transacted.

Section 6:

All Senators must be present and recognized at Roll Call for their vote to be recognized.

Section 7:

Senators are allowed two unexcused absences from Senate meetings. Any additional unexcused absences will result in expulsion from Student Senate.

ARTICLE X - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1:

All organizations under the jurisdiction of the Student Senate shall be governed by this Constitution and duly passed bylaws. Should these documents not clearly identify a course of procedure, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be consulted.

Section 2:

It shall be the duty of the Senate Parliamentarian to ensure that the Senate Constitution and Bylaws are followed at all times by both the Senate and the organizations within its jurisdiction.

ARTICLE XI - BUDGET

Section 1:

The Student Senate budget shall be comprised of the Student Activities Fee, herein referred to as "SAF".

Section 2:

The Senate shall have sole control of the SAF, which will be levied on all undergraduate, day division students. It can be increased proportionately with tuition increases and decreased at any time. All increases and decreases must be approved with a two-thirds majority vote of the Student Senate.

Section 3:

All allocations, transfers, and expenditures of SAF funds must conform to standard University purchasing and accounting practices.

ARTICLE XII - IMPEACHMENT

Section 1:

An impeachment proceeding may be initiated against any member of the Student Senate for dereliction of duties or gross misconduct by bringing a Bill of Impeachment to the Senate floor, which must be co-sponsored by at least four Senators.

Section 2:

A Bill of Impeachment, once brought to the Senate floor, cannot be brought to discussion or hearing until the next regularly scheduled meeting. Any individual subject to impeachment proceedings shall be entitled to a fair and equitable hearing at which time charges will be presented with an opportunity for refutation.

Section 3:

The entire Student Senate shall serve as the adjudication body. A Senate advisor, selected by a majority vote of the Senate, shall preside over the hearing. A two-thirds vote is required to expel any member of the Student Senate. Neither the individual subject to impeachments, nor the individual bringing the impeachment charges, may serve as a member of the adjudication body.

ARTICLE XIII - BYLAWS

Section 1:

The Senate shall adopt a body of Bylaws to compliment this Constitution.

Section 2:

The Senate Bylaws may be amended at any time, provided that Senators receive no less than one weeks notice of the proposed change and the proposal receives two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at a Senate meeting.

Section 3:

This Constitution shall in all cases take precedence over the Bylaws of the Senate.

ARTICLE XIV - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Section 1:

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Student Senate and a majority vote of the electorate voting in a referendum.

Section 2:

All Amendments must then be submitted to the Roger Williams University President for approval. Amendments shall take effect immediately upon passage by the University President, unless otherwise noted.

ARTICLE XV - CONSTITUTIONAL RATIFICATION

Section 1:

This Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of those Senators present and voting at a Senate meeting.

Section 2:

Upon Senate approval, this Constitution must be approved by a majority vote of the electorate present and voting in a referendum.

Section 3:

This Constitution shall take effect upon approval of the Roger Williams University President