



**Constitution of the Lipscomb University
Student Government Association
2022-2023**

PREAMBLE

We the Student Government Association establish this Constitution in furtherance of the following outcomes:

That we may facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation with Lipscomb University's faculty, staff, and administration on behalf of the University's undergraduate students.

That we may advocate for and enact the desires of our diverse student population in the spiritual, academic, and social spheres of the University's affairs.

That we may work to support the interests of current student organizations and to aid in establishing future student organizations.

That we may endeavor to represent the interests of all students by a good-faith effort to work impartially on behalf of each and every constructive desire of our student body

And that we may daily realize a greater vision of our University by action, attitude, and conduct, while providing for student participation in its affairs.

For these reasons, we hereby establish this Constitution of Lipscomb University's Student Government Association.

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Name

This organization shall be known as the Student Government Association of Lipscomb University—hereinafter, SGA.

Section 2. Objectives

The objectives of the Student Government Association shall be to promote the Christian values and principles of the university, to provide liaison with the administration, to sustain the spirit and the morale of the student body, to enable campus leadership, and to serve as a catalyst for spiritual, academic, and social growth.

Section 3. Guiding Scripture

The SGA motto shall be 1 Kings 3:9, “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

Section 4: Motto

Enhancing the student experience

Section 5. Membership

SGA represents every regularly enrolled undergraduate student of Lipscomb University as defined by the student handbook.

Section 6. Sponsor

The SGA sponsor shall be appointed by the Vice President of Student Life.

ARTICLE 2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Section 1. Description

This association shall have four officers: The President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Section 2. Qualifications

- A. All Executive Officer candidates must have at minimum a 3.0 GPA, which must be maintained during their tenure as an Executive Officer
- B. Every candidate for President must have completed at least six (6) (Fall or Spring) semesters, four of which are in residence at this university, or achieved senior status (as defined by the registrar) prior to the beginning of the term for which they are running.
- C. Every candidate for Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer must have completed at least four (4) (Fall or Spring) semesters, two (2) of which are in residence at this university, or achieved junior status (as defined by the registrar) before the beginning of the term for which they are running.
- D. All Executive Officer candidates must attend at least four (4) Senate meetings and four (4) Committee meetings during the academic year prior to the year for which they seek election.
- E. All Executive Officer candidates must be able and willing and able to serve for a full academic year.
- F. All Executive officers candidates cannot be scheduled to graduate the December semester immediately following election. Rather, the earliest a candidate can graduate is the May (or two full academic semesters) following election.

Section 3: Duties

- A. President
 - a. The President shall have the authority to call a special meeting of any committee with approval of the SGA sponsor;
 - b. The President shall have the power to veto any measure by the Senate, provided they exercise their veto power within 48 hours of the actions by the Senate and notifies the Senate immediately and publicly at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting, or calls a special meeting of the entire Senate.
 - i. In the event of a Presidential Veto, the Senate after at least one week following the veto shall have the power to override that action by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
 - c. The President shall preside over all facets of SGA meetings.
 - d. The President shall serve as the official voice and representative of SGA to the student body and to the Lipscomb administration.
 - e. The President will represent SGA on any university committees

- f. The President holds a standing position on the Presidential Advisory Council (PSAC)
- g. Make the announcements at the Gathering
- h. Serves as the co-chair of the SGA Election Commission
- i. The President shall preside over all facets of SGA meetings
- j. The President does not hold an official vote in the Senate
- k. In coordination with the other executive officers, the President shall appoint the chairperson and the other members of each special committees
 - i. They may also appoint any number of non-voting aides for any committee
 - ii. They shall have the authority to call a special meeting of any committee with approval of the SGA sponsor;

B. Vice President

- a. The Vice-President of the SGA shall, in the absence of the President, perform all other appropriate executive functions,
- b. Upon a vacancy in the office of the President, immediately succeed to the post and shall occupy it until the installation of the president's successor, at which time they shall resume their former office.
- c. The Vice President does not hold an official vote in the Senate. However in the event of a tie, the Vice-President shall serve as the deciding vote.
- d. The Vice President may only retain their right to vote in case of a tie.
- e. The Vice President shall handle parliamentary voting.
- f. They shall assist the President in performing appropriate executive duties
- g. The Vice-President serves as the president of the Senate
- h. Serve as the co-chair of the Election Commission
 - i. In the event that the Vice President is a candidate in the election, the President, along with the SGA sponsor, will appoint a replacement

C. Secretary

- a. The Secretary shall have a vote in the Senate.
- b. The Secretary will be treated as a Senator with a vote as such, equal with all other SGA Senators.
- c. The Secretary shall prepare meeting agendas in coordination with other Executive Officers.
- d. The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of all proceedings of the Senate
 - i. A copy shall be made available for student review, distributed to each Senator,
- e. They record and report the results of all votes within the Senate
- f. Serve as the primary marketing officer of the Senate
- g. The Secretary shall create, manage and distribute the content, messaging, and updates of SGA social media platforms, graphics, and websites (i.e. Google Drive and Have You Herd)

- h. The Secretary shall prepare meeting agendas in coordination with other Executive Officers.

D. Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer shall maintain the SGA budget, maintain a record of the financial affairs of the SGA
- b. The Treasurer shall have a vote in the Senate.
- c. Maintain the budget through the SGA Presence platform
- d. The Treasurer will be treated as a Senator with a vote as such, equal with all other SGA Senators.
- e. The Treasurer shall maintain the SGA budget, maintain a record of the financial affairs of the SGA
- f. Provide regular budget and financial operation updates to the executive officers and Senate
- g. Make the necessary arrangements for the payment of all SGA debts to the University through the business office.
- h. They will handle the purchasing card reservation, check-out, and receipt management process
- i. Hold office hours to provide opportunities for student clubs and organizations to discuss details about their respective budgets and financial concerns.

Section 4. Terms

- A. Executive terms shall begin with the summer immediately after the election and ending at the conclusion of the following spring semester.
- B. While all executive terms shall officially begin the summer immediately after the election, the president's term and compensation will begin June 1st the summer immediately following election.
- C. The vice president, secretary, and treasurer will be compensated during the summer if work is needed beyond from the monthly all senate check-in.
- D. All executive terms and compensation will end at the conclusion of the following spring semester.

ARTICLE 3. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Section 1. Senate

- A. As the SGA's legislative body, the Senate shall comprise 28 Senators, up to 24 Representatives, and 4 Executive Officers.
- B. Each class shall each be represented by 7 elected officials. (their Class President, their Class Vice President, their Class Coordinator, and their class's 4 at-large senators)
- C. This structure excludes the Freshman class. Interested members of the Freshman class will be evaluated, interviewed, and appointed by the Executive Officers to form the Freshman Leadership Council at the beginning of each Fall semester.
 - a. There shall be 7 members of the Freshman Leadership Council.

Section 2. Qualifications

- D. Each Class official must be a member of the class which they seek to represent, determined by:
 - a. Total college semesters completed
- E. Students who have a legitimate case that they would be better classified under a different class may present their case to the SGA sponsor, who will render a final decision along with the Executive Officers.

Section 3. Senatorial Power

- A. The Senate shall have the power to write, pass, and lobby legislation.
- B. The Senate shall have the power to allocate its budget to officially recognized student clubs and organizations on campus.

Section 4. Duties of Class Executive Officers

- F. The Class President, Vice President, and Coordinator shall lead the class and work with the SGA Executive Officers to develop leadership skills and facilitate better communication.
- G. The Class President, Vice President, and Coordinator shall enjoy the same rights and privileges as Class Senators.
- H. Class President
 - a. The Class President shall organize and facilitate meetings with their fellow Class Executive Officers and Senators to enhance the experience of their grade level classmates.
 - b. The Class President shall work with the SGA President and Sponsor to further learn and develop leadership skills.
 - c. They shall confer with their constituents when considering voting Yea or Nay on a bill or funding proposal in order to represent the interests of their constituents in the Student Government Association.

- d.
- I. Class Vice President
 - a. The Class Vice President shall assist the Class President in organizing and facilitating meetings and events with their fellow Class Executive Officers to better the experience of their grade level classmates.
 - b. The Class Vice President shall work with the SGA Vice President and Sponsor to further learn and develop leadership skills.
 - c. They shall confer with their constituents when considering voting Yea or Nay on a bill or funding proposal in order to represent the interests of their constituents in the Student Government Association.
- J. Class Coordinator
 - a. The Class Coordinator shall be responsible for planning, organizing, and communicating grade level events and announcements for their class.
 - b. They shall assist the Class President and Vice President to provide organizational leadership support.
 - c. They shall confer with their constituents when considering voting Yea or Nay on a bill or funding proposal in order to represent the interests of their constituents in the Student Government Association.
- K. Class At-large Senator
 - a. The Class At-large Senators shall serve as representatives of each grade level class.
 - b. They shall confer with their constituents when considering voting Yea or Nay on a bill or funding proposal in order to represent the interests of their constituents in the Student Government Association.

Section 5. SGA Representatives

- A. The primary responsibility of SGA Representatives shall be to represent the interests of their college or department to the SGA Senate in order to foster better communication and clarity across the Lipscomb Student Body.
- B. Each academic college and campus department may make SGA Representative positions available to interested students. There shall be up to 2 SGA Representatives per academic college or department.
 - a. SGA Representatives are permitted to attend Senate meetings and hold a vote on bills and / or resolutions.
- C. SGA Representatives shall be elected or appointed within their own college or department. The college or department may choose to either elect or appoint their SGA Representatives.
- D. SGA Representatives will be held to the same standard as Senate members. They are required to abide by the expectations described in this Constitution. Failure to do so may

result in removal from the SGA. The Executive Officers may remove a student appointed as a representative in the case of misconduct or excessive absences.

- E. The Executive Officers may make available SGA Representative positions for non-academic departments and offices.

Section 6. Term

- A. The session of the Senate shall coincide with the traditional academic year, starting at the beginning of each fall semester and ending at the conclusion of the following spring semester.

ARTICLE 4. ELECTIONS

Section 1. General Elections

- A. Elections for all SGA offices shall occur in April of each year.
- B. The rules for each election shall be updated, established, and approved by the Election Commission prior to the beginning of nominations. All rules must be approved by the Sponsor.
- C. The Executive officer (both senate and class) elections occur before the At-large election. Candidates must select to run for either a senate executive position or a class executive position. All unsuccessful candidates for those positions automatically qualify to be candidates for Senator-At-Large.
- D. Executive officer positions will be decided by using the ranked-choice voting method. Ballots with two or fewer names will use the traditional voting system where the name receiving the majority of the votes wins.

Section 2. At-large elections

- E. If a candidate does not win their Class Executive Officer race, their name shall be included in the ballot for At-Large Senators.
- F. During the At-Large election, students may vote for up to four (4) class senators in the class that best corresponds to their student class designation. The four candidates for each class senator receiving the highest vote totals are named class at-large senators.
- G. Eligible students who only wish to run for a Senator at-large position shall be included on the at-large ballot on the Thursday Election.

Section. 3. Election Commission

- A. The Election Commission shall consist of the Executive President and Vice President
- B. If either the Executive President or Vice President is considering running for office or is scheduled to appear on the current ballot, the Senior Class President shall serve on the election commission.
- C. The Election Commission shall update, establish, approve, and distribute the official campaign and election rules.

ARTICLE 5. LEGISLATION

Section 1. Bills

- A. A bill is a direct call to action from the sponsors and senate to the administration. There is a clear end result of action on the end of the administration.

Section 2. Resolutions

- A. A resolution is a statement on behalf of the senate to the Student Body. Resolutions follow the same procedures and requirements as a bill (as they are both considered legislation). However, resolutions are not directly a call to action. While resolutions may include a call to action within them, their purpose is more to serve as a statement on behalf of the Senate to the greater Lipscomb University community.

Section 3. Process

- F. The Vice President shall preside over the Senate's legislative powers and must maintain fairness, and professional moderation of debate.
- G. The Vice President has the power to strike any non-inquisitorial question during the first reading of a bill and may regulate debate during the bill's second as appropriately as he or she sees fit (including the enforcement of time limits, speaker limits, etc...). He or she may call upon the secretary to assist in debate moderation as he or she sees fit.

H. Sponsorship

- a. Any articles of legislation require two sponsors, one of which must be an elected Senator or a Representative.
- b. Students, faculty, and any other member of the Lipscomb community may sponsor bills.
- c. The bill's sponsors, along with a member from the committee of review, may lobby the administration for its enforcement.
- d. Legislation may be presented by any member of the Student Government Association, with the exception of the Vice President.

I. Reading

- a. Each piece of legislation will go before the senate twice. During the legislation's first reading, the senate may ask inquisitorial questions only (the idea behind the legislation, what research went into it, what departments/ students have helped develop the legislation, etc...).
- b. The following week, the legislation is sent to a committee that will review the legislation (called, "committee of review") and offer revisions to the legislation's sponsors.
- c. The executive officers will establish the committee of review for each legislation. Should the executive officers not find an appropriate committee to act as such, the

executive council will act as an ad hoc committee of review for the legislation in question.

- d. During the second reading, the legislation is presented to the senate in a potentially revised state (senators are not required to adhere to revisions suggested by the committee of review).

J. Voting

- a. Senators and Representatives may vote on legislative matters.
- b. Two-thirds (2/3) of eligible voters must be present to vote on legislative matters.
- c. Legislation passes with a simple majority (50.1%) of present senators).
- d. Legislation that is passed by the senate is not binding, until enforced by the administration. Bills, rather, act as strong, sophisticated and professional suggestions to the administration regarding the needs and wants of students.

Section 4. Emergency Passage

- K. In the case that the sponsor of a piece of legislation along with the senate believes that the legislation needs to be passed that night (immediate/ emergency passage), after the first reading of the legislation, a senator may motion to move immediately into voting procedure over the legislation. The motion must be seconded, and then the Senate may vote on the motion.
- L. For the legislation to be emergently passed, the senate must vote on the motion with a passing rate of a supermajority (2/3 or 66%). If the motion is passed, the senate will move directly into voting procedure.

ARTICLE 6. FINANCES

Any student from an officially recognized campus group, club or organization may present a funding proposal before the senate.

Section 1. Proposals

- A. Presenters must meet with the executive officers prior to their senate presentation date.
- B. During the funding proposal presentation before the senate, the senate may ask inquisitorial questions only, or may offer suggestions regarding the proposal.
- C. The Vice President has the power to strike any inappropriate question as they see fit.
- D. After the conclusion of the funding proposal presentation before the senate, the Vice President may allow debate and moderate it appropriately. Senators may offer suggested revisions to the budget, and the senate may vote on those revisions as they come up throughout the debate.
- E. Senators may vote on monetary proposals.
- F. Representatives may not vote on monetary proposals.
- G. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate must be present to hold a vote on monetary proposals.
- H. A simple majority vote must be received in order for the funding proposal to be accepted and passed by the senate. Any money that is not used by the requesters will be returned to the Senate's funding proposal budget. Requesters may not go over the senatorial allotted budget.

Section 2. Student Organization Funding

- A. Every registered student organization is eligible to receive \$200 upon request to support their programs, events, activities, and events.

Section 3. Budget

- A. The Executive Officers establish the budget at the beginning of each semester and maintain the right to allocate portions of the budget to partnership with on-campus departments.
- B. The budget must be approved by majority vote by the Senate at the beginning of the Fall semester.

ARTICLE 7. COMMITTEES

- A. In order to facilitate the interests of the SGA and the student body, the SGA may create non-standing committees dedicated to specific areas of student interest. Both the Senate (by majority vote) and the President (by executive action) shall have the power to create or dissolve these non-standing committees as they deem necessary.
- B. No committee chairperson shall ever abuse their authority by disregarding a proposal brought before their group.

ARTICLE 8. VACANCIES

Section 1. Executive Officers

- A. In the event of an Executive vacancy, the remaining Executive officers should, first, seek counsel from the SGA sponsor to determine which of the existing senators meet the qualifications to hold an executive position.
 - a. If it is determined that one of the remaining Executive Officers is qualified, willing, and able to serve in a vacant role, that officer shall move forward in the senate approval process.
- B. If it is determined that neither of the remaining Executive Officers are qualified, willing, and able to serve in a vacant role the Executive officers shall seek to fill the role from the existing Senators. The Executive Officers will consider nominations from the Senate.
- C. If it is determined that neither of the remaining Executive Officers or senators are qualified, willing, and able to serve in a vacant role the Executive officers shall seek to fill the role from qualified members of the student body.
 - a. In the event that an Executive vacancy moves to the student body prior to the start of the Fall semester, the candidate(s) names shall appear on the Fall voting ballot.
- D. The Senator selected must be approved by a majority of the Senate.

Section 2. Class Officers

- E. All class officer vacancies that occur between Spring elections and the subsequent Fall semester (including Summer) shall be filled through a Fall election that takes place before the Fall Senate retreat.
 - a. The Fall election will follow the same voting proceeds as the Spring election, with a modified campaign process as determined by the executive officers.
- F. When a Senator vacancy occurs during the Fall semester, the Senate shall move forward with the remaining senators for the remainder of the semester.
- G. The Executive Officers will consider nominations from the Senate and any interested parties to fill the vacancies and shall then appoint a replacement senator to complete that following Spring term.
- H. The person selected by the Executive Officers must be approved by a super majority (2/3 or 66%) of the Senate.

ARTICLE 9. DISCIPLINE

Section 1. Misconduct

- A. Any Executive Officer, Senator, or Representative who, whether in word or deed, impugns the reputation, impairs the efficacy, or otherwise inhibits the SGA will be subject to impeachment. This includes, but is not limited to, dereliction of one's SGA duties, failure to adhere to Lipscomb's standards of behavior & conduct, and other behavior that rises to such a level, as determined by the SGA sponsor.

Section 2. Absences

- A. SGA Senators are permitted one absence from Senate Meetings and one absence from Committee Meetings each semester. Additional absences may be excused if approved by the Executive Officers and the SGA Sponsor. If two unapproved absences occur, the Senator, or Executive Officer in question will be terminated from office. The Executive Officers must utilize fair and sustainable methods of excusing absences.

ARTICLE 9. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the following procedure:

- Any Senator or Executive Officer may introduce an Amendment Proposal before the Senate. In order to pass, the Proposal must receive a majority vote by the Senate.
- If the Executive Officers approve the Proposal, the Amendment Proposal will be adopted & made part of the SGA Constitution.
- If the Executive Officers fail to approve the Amendment Proposal, it passes back to the Senate.
- The Senate may overrule the decision of the Executive Officers by a three-quarter majority vote, after which the Amendment Proposal will be adopted & made part of the SGA Constitution.

(Fall Semester, 1997)

(Amended Spring Semester 2000)

(Amended Spring Semester 2015)

(Amended Spring Semester 2020)

(Amended Spring Semester 2021)