The Johns Hopkins University Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution
Ratified: May 4, 2015

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Preamble We, the Undergraduates of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering, realizing the necessity for student self-governance and understanding the importance of strengthening student unity, representing student interests, and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, hereby establish this Constitution.

Article I: Bill of Rights All persons enrolled as undergraduates in the Homewood Divisions of the Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the G.W.C. Whiting School of Engineering have equal rights as students under this Constitution, as do persons who may be extended such status by the Student Government Association.

1. The SGA will not restrict membership and/or activity by reason of age, citizenship,

disability, gender, race, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. 2. Students have a right to join any group chartered by the SGA. 3. Students have a right to run or to be appointed to the SGA, provided that they shall be a full-time undergraduate student, taking at least 12 undergraduate credits, throughout the following term of office. 4. Students have a right to attend all meetings of the SGA, and all minutes and proceedings

of the SGA shall be open to student inspection, except those deemed secure by a closed session motion by the Senate. 5. Students have a right to veto any decisions reached by the SGA by means of student

referenda. 6. Students have a right to free speech in all matters relating to the SGA. The spirit of this

sentiment shall be extended to all student activities on the Homewood campus.

Article II: Name, Authority, and Membership Section One: Name The official governing body of the Undergraduates shall be referred to as the Student Government Association (SGA).

Section Two: Purpose The purpose of the SGA is to protect and improve the rights, opportunities, and quality of life for every undergraduate student at the Johns Hopkins University.

Section Three: Authority and Supremacy

1. The authority of SGA is derived from the students of the Johns Hopkins University and

collectively recognized by the University President and other administrators. 2. This Constitution, Bylaws, and Senate Procedural Rules shall govern the SGA. 3. This Constitution shall supersede all other governing devices of student organizations,

commissions, and committees. 4. The SGA shall be the principal representative body of the undergraduates of the Krieger

and Whiting Schools. 5. No student group within the jurisdiction of the SGA shall enact a constitution, bylaws, or

any legislation which conflicts or supersedes the authority of the SGA.

Section Four: Membership

1. The SGA shall be composed of the legislative branch, executive branch, and judicial

branch. 2. No student may serve as a member of more than one branch. 3. A student may run for or be appointed to an office, provided that they maintain a 2.5

overall GPA and are a full-time undergraduate student throughout their term of office.

a. Full-time undergraduate students are defined as a course load that includes 12 full

time undergraduate credits. 4. Terms of Student Senate and Executive Branch members shall end on the date of annual inauguration ceremony of the new SGA, and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Article III: Executive Branch Section One: Structure and Basic Responsibilities The Executive Board shall serve as the internal governing body of the SGA. All executive power shall be invested in the Executive Branch. Such power involves day-to-day affairs of the SGA, and carrying out the instructions of the Senate. All executive officers serve as ex-officio members of the Senate, with the exception of the Vice President, who is the Presiding Officer, and who shall vote only in the case of a tie. The Executive Branch shall be composed of the following four members:

1. Executive President

a. Shall serve as the spokesperson of the Student Body b. Shall ensure the efficient operation of the entire SGA and shall faithfully execute

acts of the Senate c. Shall meet with representatives of the Dean of Student Life’s office on a regular

basis d. Shall convene Executive Board meetings on a weekly basis 2. Executive Vice President

a. Shall assist the President in all their duties b. Shall succeed the President in case of their impeachment or resignation c. Shall preside over the Senate and set its agenda

d. Shall accompany the Executive President to meetings with administrators when

necessary 3. Executive Treasurer

a. Shall work with the Finance Committee to formulate an annual budget for the

SGA b. Shall assist with the funding and/or recognition process of student groups c. Shall act as the financial officer of the SGA, keeping al of its ledgers and

coordinating with the Finance Committee 4. Executive Secretary

a. Shall be responsible for maintenance of all SGA email lists and shall serve as the

point of contact for all SGA communications. b. Shall keep detailed minutes of each meeting and shall take a roll call of

attendance and votes. c. Shall maintain the SGA website and social media and ensure it is up-to-date

Article IV: Legislative Branch Section One: Structure The Legislative Branch shall be composed of the Student Senate and shall meet at least once a week.

1. The Senate shall be presided over by the Vice President, who shall have a vote only when

a tie exists. 2. The Senate shall have 28 members, 7 of whom shall be elected from each class for a one-

year term, and each shall have one vote and the power to introduce legislation. 3. The top six candidates who gain the most votes shall be elected as Senators. 4. There shall be a separate Class President position, who shall be the primary class

representative and must run as a separate position on the ballot, but still be a Senator for the intent of the Senate.

Section Two: Basic Responsibilities

1. All legislative power shall be invested in the Senate. 2. The Senate shall deal with all matters of policy, both internal and external, relating to the

undergraduates of the university. 3. The Senate shall pass an annual Rules Bill to govern special rules of each session. 4. The Senate shall have jurisdiction over but not limited to: the appointment process of

groups and finance, constitutional affairs, student life, academic affairs. 5. Proxy voting is not allowed; members must be physically present in meeting in order to

vote. 6. The Senate, in the spirit of open meetings, shall keep all votes public and shall only enter

Closed Session to deliberate upon Impeachment and other sensitive matters deemed necessary by the Senate. 7. All documents, minutes and proceedings of the Senate shall be open to the public for

inspection, except those from closed meetings.

Section Three: Attendance

1. The Class President and Senators shall have specific duties, as outlined in the Bylaws.

2. Each SGA member is granted excused absences for the Senate, Committee or Class

Council meetings. The Executive Vice President, Class President, or Committee Chair shall grant these excused absences.

a. If a member of the SGA misses 2 unexcused meetings per semester, they are

automatically subject to impeachment. b. If the member misses a total of 4 unexcused meetings per semester, they are

automatically removed from the SGA. 3. The annual Rules Bill will specify the process by which an “unexcused” or “excused”

absence will be determined.

Section Four: Special Rules

1. All SGA meetings are open to the public except meetings that are closed by 2/3 (two-

thirds) of the Senate.

Article V: Judicial Branch Section One: Structure The Judicial Branch shall have jurisdiction on all matters relating to the SGA, including SGA- approved groups.

1. Judicial shall be an independent branch, composed of five Justices, who shall elect a

Chief Justice amongst them. 2. Appointments to Judicial shall be proposed by the SGA President, upon the advice of the

senate, and subject to the approval of 2/3 (two-thirds) of the Senate.

Section Two: Basic Responsibilities

1. Provided that Justices remain full-time undergraduates of KSAS or WSE, they shall serve

their term until resignation.

a. Membership of the Judicial Branch is detailed in Article 2, Section 4:

Membership b. Resignations of Judicial Branch members shall follow the details in Article IX. 2. Shall be responsible for interpreting the Constitution and Bylaws, enforcing election procedures, and serve as the final avenue of appeal for all matters relating to the SGA. 3. The Judicial Branch shall operate according to its own Rules and Guidelines.

Section Three: Judicial Branch Decisions

1. Decisions made by the Judicial Branch on matters relating to the Senate, Executive

Board, or election procedures may be encouraged for reconsideration by a student referendum.

a. In such an instance, the referendum may be approved by either a 2/3 (two-thirds) vote from the Senate or from a petition containing signatures from 15% of the undergraduate student body.

Article VI: Ad-hoc and Standing Committees Section One: Standing Committees

1. Each committee shall choose its chair, as per the Bylaws. 2. The number and type of committees of the Senate shall be established in the Bylaws. 3. The duties and responsibilities of these committees shall be established in the Bylaws.

4. Membership in all committees may be open to students at large, subject to restrictions in the Bylaws.

a. Such students may take part in all committee matters, with the expressed exception of voting. 5. Committees, as per the Bylaws, may submit recommendations to the full Senate. Such recommendations are not binding themselves, and must be approved or denied by the body. 6. The Vice-President shall, at the first Senate meetings, following the Bylaws, sort Senators into committees subject to confirmation by the Senate.

Section Two: Ad-hoc Committees

1. The Senate may, by a 2/3 vote, convene ad-hoc committees to deal with matters of great importance. Such committees will expire at the end of an academic semester.

Article VII: Elections Section One: Structure and Membership All election authority shall be invested in the Committee on Student Elections, hereafter referred to as the CSE.

1. The CSE shall be composed of seven members who shall each have an equal vote and who shall choose their own chairperson. 2. Current SGA members are ineligible to be members of the CSE. 3. CSE members shall serve for one academic year.

Section Two: Basic Responsibilities

1. The CSE shall operate according to its own Constitution and Election Rules and shall be free from SGA interference during election periods.

a. Such rules may limit free speech rights of candidates during election periods, but not in a manner that disrupts a campaign atmosphere. 2. The SGA Judiciary shall handle appeals of CSE decisions.

Article VIII: Referenda Section One: Purpose A campus-wide referendum shall advise the Johns Hopkins administration on a specific issue or policy based on the will of the undergraduate community. A referendum shall be held if 2/3 (two-thirds) of the Senate votes to hold one.

Section Two: Petitioning a Referendum

1. A referendum may be approved after a petition is successfully completed, presented to the SGA, and approved by a 2/3 vote of representatives. A petition is deemed valid if it contains the signatures of at least 15% of the student body that knowingly consent to the sentiment of the proposed referendum. 2. No student referendum nor SGA act may influence the conduct of a group or inhibit its right to expression, except if their conduct violates university regulations or local, state or federal laws.

If a petition wins the right to a referendum, a referendum shall be administered over a well-advertised window via online voting software with statements advocating each side of the issue at hand.

1. Any referendum that receives a plurality of votes shall become binding to the SGA.

a. A referendum is considered to have plurality when more respondents vote “yes” than “no” and the total number of students who voted yes amounts to at least 1/3 (one-third) of the undergraduate student body. b. Votes in abstentions shall not count towards plurality.

Section Four: Referenda for a Constitutional Amendment This Constitution may be amended by a student referendum:

1. Any member of the Senate may propose an amendment to the Constitution via student referendum. Said referendum must first be supported with a 3/4 vote of the Senate and shall become binding upon completion of the steps detailed under Article IX, Section Three.

Article IX: Removal Procedures and Vacancies Section One: Recall

1. The Vice President shall hold a recall election for any SGA member upon receipt of a

petition that contains a 50-word justification for recall and the signatures of no less than 1/3 of students eligible to vote for the position in question. 2. The Vice President shall hold a recall election within two weeks of their receipt of the

recall petition. 3. All students eligible to vote in an election for the position in question shall be eligible to

vote in the recall election. 4. A 3/4 of vote may remove the representative from office.

Section Two: Resignation

1. Any member of the SGA may resign by submitting a statement of resignation to the

President.

Section Three: Removal

1. Impeachments may be carried out for serious breaches of the Constitution and Bylaws, breaches of University, local, state, and federal laws or for a lack of good behavior. 2. Charges of impeachment against any member of the SGA shall be brought in the

following ways:

a. Any member of SGA may introduce impeachment charges, provided that they

collect the signatures of at least one-third of the Senate membership and present them to the Vice-President at a meeting of the Senate. b. Upon receipt of said document, an impeachment hearing shall be scheduled at least one week after the receipt of charges, and no later than three weeks later.

Section Four: Impeachment Process

1. Members with clear conflicts of interest are asked to recuse themselves from impeachment proceedings.

2. Impeachment hearings shall be closed, and the accused shall have time to provide their defense. At no point shall the accused take part in any deliberation whatsoever. 3. After the accused has left the room, the Senate shall deliberate and then vote to remove the member in question. 4. Secret ballots shall be used, with no identifying marks. 5. A 2/3 vote of the entire Senate is needed to remove the member. If in the affirmative, the member shall be thanked for their service and dismissed.

Section Five: Senatorial Vacancy

1. The remaining members of the class shall solicit for applicants and choose a new Senator, per the Bylaws. The Senate must confirm this applicant.

Section Six: Class Presidential Vacancy

1. The remaining members of the class shall solicit for applicants and choose a new Senator, per the Bylaws. The Senate must confirm this applicant.

Section Seven: Executive Board Vacancy

1. The Vice President shall succeed the Executive President. 2. In the case of a vacancy in any other executive position, the Executive President shall propose three current SGA members, and the Senate shall, by secret ballot, choose one to fill the vacancy.