

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Preamble

We, the students of Virginia Highlands Community College, in order to promote open communication among students and between students and other groups in the college community, to form an effective student government, to encourage the development of a spirit of community within and around the college and to strive for the attainment of educational excellence throughout the college community, do hereby establish this constitution for the organization and regulation of student government.

Article I: Name

The name of the organization shall be the Student Government Association of Virginia Highlands Community College, hereafter referred to as the SGA. All power granted herein shall be vested in the six (6) executive officers and five (5) student senators of the SGA. An executive committee of these members and the SGA advisor will be responsible for the exercise of all provisions of the constitution.

Article II: Purposes

The purpose of the SGA shall be:

1. To promote the development of a climate favorable to educational excellence and community involvement.
2. To promote open communication among the students and between students and other segments of the community.
3. To uphold and protect the rights of students as set forth in the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
4. To formulate and to propose rules, standards, and regulations pertaining to student conduct and affairs.
5. To assist the Student Success Center in the preparation of the activities calendar.
6. To establish and implement policies and procedures necessary to carry out the orderly functioning of student government.

Article III: Organization

To carry out student governance the SGA shall be organized in the following manner: The Student Body, the SGA Executive Officers, and the SGA Student Senate.

Section I: The Student Body

All currently enrolled students at VHCC shall be considered members of the Student Body.

Section II: Student Government Association Executive Officers

The SGA shall consist of six (6) executive officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Historian, Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer and Student Activities Officer. These officers shall be elected by the student body and delegated the authority to act on its behalf.

Section III: Student Government Association Student Senate

The Student Senate shall consist of five (5) members. These student senators shall be elected by the student body with the intent to represent their needs and interests on the SGA.

Article IV: SGA

Section I: Meetings

A. Regular Meetings

1. The SGA will meet no less than once a week during the fall and spring semester for regular business. During the summer semester the SGA will meet bi-weekly to discuss regular business. All meetings are open to the student body. Each semester, the student body shall be informed of the specific meeting times and place.
2. Attendance shall be mandatory, unless notification has been given to the president or advisor of the SGA.

B. Special Meetings

1. The president of the SGA shall have the power to call special meetings or to cancel any other SGA meetings, with the exception of meetings called by a quorum of the officers.
2. A quorum of the officers, upon written notification to the SGA president, may call a special meeting.
3. A retreat will be held after the spring election of new executive officers. Topics covered will include (but will not be limited to): a review of the previous year's activities, an outline of goals to be accomplished in the upcoming year, training for new executive officers from outgoing executive officers, and an introduction of new officers to promote better cooperation during the ensuing term.
4. A one day retreat will be held in the fall semester immediately following election of SGA Student Senators. Topics covered will include (but will not be limited to): a review of current SGA projects and upcoming SGA events, and an orientation to the policies and procedures of the SGA. This meeting will also be used to acquaint the new SGA Student Senators not only with each other but with the SGA Executive Officers as well.

Section II: Quorum

A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section III: Term of Office

1. The executive officers of the SGA shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Historian, Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer, and Student Activities Officer. Each executive officer shall serve from the day following the end of spring semester following his/her election to the last day of the next spring semester.
 - a. In order to better focus on the strenuous schedule of the SGA and to better serve the student body, executive officers of the SGA shall not serve as an officer of any other club at VHCC.
2. The SGA Student Senate shall consist of five (5) members. Each student senator shall begin service immediately following the fall semester election, and their term shall run until the next fall senator election.

Section IV: Qualifications

1. To be eligible for executive office, a student must have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and plan to be a full time student for the entire upcoming year.
2. To be eligible for the student senate, a student must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average and plan to be enrolled in at least six credit hours (half-time) for the entire upcoming year.
3. The Student Success Center must verify a student meets the above qualifications before the student announces his/her candidacy and will check throughout the year to confirm they maintain their eligibility. Any officer or senator who falls below the minimum GPA eligibility will no longer be able to serve as a member of the SGA.

Section V: Elections

1. Elections for President, Vice President, Secretary, Historian, Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer, and Student Activities Officer will occur in the spring of the year prior to their term of service. There will be a two week period in which all eligible students may submit an application to run for office. At the end of the application period, only those that complete the application and submit it to the SGA Advisor are eligible candidates for office. If, at the end of the application period, any office has only one candidate, that candidate is declared the winner by default. If a position has more than one candidate apply, the winner will be determined in an open election to be held in the Wolves' Den over a two day period.
2. Campaigning must be conducted in an appropriate manner. There is no campaigning in the Wolves' Den during voting. Candidates must stay at least 10 feet away from the election table (except when voting).
3. Voters must be currently enrolled students and must present valid ID when voting.
4. A clean, updated list of eligible students must be used for each election. Each student that votes is to be marked off the list to prevent duplicate voting.
5. In the event that an office has no eligible candidates at the end of the application process the position will remain unfilled until the next election.
6. In the event the college is closed due to weather or any type of emergency during the two days for election, the election that was missed will be rescheduled. Monday and Wednesday election dates will be rescheduled for the following Monday or Wednesday. Tuesday and Thursday elections will be rescheduled for the following Tuesday or Thursday. This will be done in order for every student to have an opportunity to cast a ballot.
7. In the event there is a tie between more than two candidates for the same position, a special election will be held for one day and students will be allowed to revote for the candidates and the candidate with the most ballots will be declared the winner. If there were only two candidates for the same position and the student body vote results in a tie, the Executive Board will meet with both candidates individually and discuss why they want to be in the SGA. After reviewing and meeting with each candidate the Executive Board will make the final decision by casting one last vote amongst themselves and the candidate with the most ballots will be declared the winner.

Section VI: Duties of the Members

Each member will be pledged by the president of the college to uphold the Constitution of the SGA and to represent the college and its students to the best of his/her ability. The line of succession is as follows.

A. President

The President of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To preside over all SGA meetings.

2. To uphold and execute the provisions of this constitution.
3. To execute and administer any rule, regulation, and resolution enacted pursuant to this constitution.
4. To serve when it becomes necessary in an ex-officio capacity on all standing and special committees.
5. To attend, upon invitation, meetings of administrative and faculty councils when student affairs are under consideration.
6. To interpret the constitution upon concurrence of the SGA.
7. To appoint or abolish special offices and committees upon concurrence of the SGA.
8. To ensure that minutes of all meetings are submitted to the SGA and to the Student Success Center.
9. To act at all times only within the jurisprudence of his/her elected position.
10. To represent the student body on the President's Advisory Council (PAC).
11. To monitor and maintain the SGA e-mail account.

B. Vice-President

The Vice-President of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To preside in all SGA meetings in the absence of the President.
2. To assume temporary duties of the office of President in the event it is vacated until completion of the re-election process.
3. To serve in ex-officio capacity on all standing and special committees as the SGA President may direct.
4. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.
5. To uphold and execute the provisions of the constitution.
6. To represent the student body on the college's Student Advisory Committee.

C. Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer

The Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To work with the college public relations specialist, and independently, to publicize all SGA special events.
2. To maintain SGA profiles on social networking sites on the internet.
3. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.
4. To represent the student body on the college's Alumni Board.
5. Serve both as recording and corresponding Treasurer of the SGA with a voting right in the Student Government.
6. Establish and maintain audit system for the SGA with assistance from the College Accountant.
7. Deposit all money donated/raised for SGA within 24 hours into the proper account through the SGA Advisor to the Institutional Advancement Assistant.
8. Collect and maintain records of monies collected at SGA events.

9. Provides financial reports for all SGA meetings and at the request of the President. Be aware that all reports are considered "public domain." Should someone request a copy of any and all reports, they must be made available through the SGA advisor.
10. Manage all SGA budget proposals.
11. Request the allocation of SGA funds for student scholarships and student initiatives.
12. Provide Treasurer's reports at the request of the SGA President or Student Government.

D. Student Activities Officer

The Student Activities Officer of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Student Activities Officer will work with students, faculty and staff to organize a variety of campus activities and events.
2. To integrate social, cultural and recreational experiences into the college experience, creating well-rounded students who become leaders and members of their community
3. To work closely with the Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer in the publicity of all events and activities.
4. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.
5. To represent the student body in the Student Success Center and on all student led activities.

E. Secretary

The Secretary of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To record the minutes of all meetings of the SGA.
2. To post and distribute the minutes of all meetings of the SGA.
3. To file all documents originating from or received by the SGA.
4. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.
5. To represent the student body on the college's Academic Programs Committee.

F. Historian

The Historian of the SGA shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To maintain an accurate history of all SGA meeting agendas and minutes, events and activities, and member's roles for the year.
2. Be responsible for taking pictures during events.
3. Create and maintain a yearly SGA portfolio detailing the year's history.
4. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.
5. To represent the student body on the college's Academic Services Committee.

G. Student Senators

1. To disseminate the programs the SGA Executive Officers are working on to the student body on a one-to-one basis.
2. To work with the Public Affairs/Treasurer Officer to publicize all SGA special events.

3. To attend all SGA meetings and present the concerns of the student body to the executive officers.
4. To maintain the SGA suggestion box.
5. To discharge all duties assigned by the SGA President.

Section VII: Professional Behavior

It is the responsibility of all elected members of the Student Government Association to follow the highest standards of personal conduct as established by school policy in compliance with Federal, state and local laws in order to uphold the integrity of the Student Government Association and each individual office therein. Officers must refrain from activities both on and off campus that may cause embarrassment to their respective positions. This includes any actions or spoken conduct on/off campus, online/offline. In the event of any officer's failure to comply with this code of honor the SGA reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary measures including, if deemed necessary, the impeachment of said Officer/Senator.

1. The appropriate disciplinary measures that should be taken are as follows:

a. To initiate a professional behavior review, a written complaint must be submitted to the SGA Advisor. This complaint should include the SGA Officer/Senator's name, reason for the complaint including if applicable any evidence of misconduct, and the name of the person issuing the complaint. The Advisor will notify the SGA member in question that a formal complaint has been issued within one day of receiving the complaint. Since SGA members are elected by the student body and represent the students, issuances of complaints are not restricted to elected SGA members but can come from any currently enrolled VHCC student.

b. A private hearing among the Executive Officers and Senators of the SGA will take place within one week of the complaint, where the member in question will have a chance to address the concerns issued in the complaint. After everyone has an opportunity to ask questions, the member in question will leave the room and the Executive Officers and Senators will vote immediately on one of three sanctions: warning, probation or impeachment. A majority vote of Executive Officers and Senators (the member receiving the complaint is not eligible to vote) will be required for impeachment. If there is a tie, the decision of impeachment will go to the President of the SGA, unless the complaint is against the President and then it will go to the Advisor. The member in question will be notified of the sanction decision that day by the SGA Advisor.

i. If the complaint is issued in the summer when there are no Senators, the process will proceed with only the Executive Officers.

ii. If the complaint is issued from a student that is not an elected SGA member, the complaining student will be asked to attend the private hearing and explain why they issued the complaint to help the Officers/Senators understand the situation completely.

iii. Sanctions are defined as:

1. Warning – Notification that the behavior that caused the complaint is not appropriate for a SGA representative and should not be repeated.

2. Probation – SGA member will lose voting rights for a defined period of time (as declared in the sanction). Any further complaints while on probation will result in impeachment.

3. Impeachment – SGA member will be removed from office and unable to run as a student representative for at least one year following the year they were impeached.

- c. If the decision of the SGA is impeachment, the impeachment will be effective immediately.
- d. The SGA advisor will share the complaint with the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services. If the Vice President deems the complaint violates college behavior policies, disciplinary measures may additionally be taken by the College.

Section VIII: Resignation, Removal, and Replacement

1. A member who plans to resign will indicate his/her intent to the SGA and the date on which his/her resignation will be effective. Withdrawal from the college shall automatically mean resignation from the office.
2. A member who fails to fulfill the responsibilities associated with his/her position may be removed from office upon recommendation of the executive officers and advisor.
3. Any member missing more than 4 meetings/events without prior notification during a semester must receive approval for additional absences from the remaining SGA members. Consistent absences will result in removal from the SGA. All members will be allowed to make a case in their defense, before final removal.
 - i. The duties of military service, illness, and family emergencies are pre-excused.
 - ii. After a member makes their case, that member will be asked to step out of the meeting in order for the remaining members of the SGA to vote on no punishment, warning, suspension and/or removal of member.
4. The SGA executive officers shall appoint an acting member until the next elections are held. It shall be the policy of the SGA to fill vacancies within the ranks of the executive officers from other executive officers and/or members of the SGA Student Senate. If a vacancy occurs within the SGA Student Senate the SGA will, depending on the time of year of the vacancy, leave the position vacant until the next election or approach the candidate with the highest votes from the previous election to fill the spot. If there were no eligible candidates the SGA will have an application process open to all students. If a student would like to become an SGA officer during summer months, the Executive Officers shall have the right to initiate an election for any individual requesting that position. Should only one person submit an application for that position, the Executive Officers will appoint that individual to that position. The final decision on all appointments will reside in the purview of the executive officers and advisor, but input from the student senators will be received.

Article V: Students Offering Support (S.O.S.)

The S.O.S. (Students Offering Support) is a fund that was established by the SGA and will be used to help students in need of financial benefits that encounter a personal hardship.

Section I: Qualifications

1. In order to receive in financial benefits from the S.O.S. fund the applicant has to be an active student enrolled at Virginia Highlands Community College during the term the disaster happens and also at the time of receiving aid unless it is a level 1 disaster and then will go to the immediate family.
2. Applicant must provide proof of injury/illness/disaster in order to be considered for receiving aid.

Section II: Eligibility

1. Student may be eligible for evaluation a maximum of one incident per semester. If there are special circumstances to an incident it may be brought before the SGA Committee for appropriated funding.

Section III: Levels of Disaster

- a) There will be four different levels of disaster to determine the amount of financial benefits student will be eligible to receive. If for any reason the disaster that happened does not belong to any of the following levels, it will be up to the Executive Board to make the final decision on how much financial benefits the student will receive. Following is a list of the levels and how much financial benefits that will be received if approved for each level.
- b) Level 1: Death of student or student's spouse/dependent child (must live in same household) – contribution of \$250 will be donated to immediate family of that student
- c) Level 2: Serious injury or incident that forces student to withdraw from current semester - \$150 will be donated to student
- d) Level 3: Disastrous incident resulting in uninhabitable shelter of student for a minimum of seven days - \$100 will be donated to student
- e) Level 4: Illness or injury of student resulting in missed classes for a minimum of two consecutive weeks - \$50 will be donated to student

Section IV: Application Process

1. All claims submitted by students will be submitted to the SGA for approval of funding.
2. Donations will be awarded based upon availability of funds.

Section V: Approval Process

1. Please turn in applications to the SGA advisor in the Student Success Center.
2. Applications will be given to SGA Senators to review. If approved by Senators, petitions will then proceed to a review by the SGA Executive Board.
3. The SGA Executive Board will make the final decision concerning the distribution of funds.
4. In the event of a denial of an application, student will receive written notification delivered to the address provided.

If petition is approved, students will receive funds in the mail at the address provided within ten business days

Article VI: Amendment

Any amendment to this constitution shall be proposed and approved by majority vote by the elected SGA members. The SGA advisor then shall submit the proposed amendment to the Student Advisory Committee for final approval.

Revised September 2014