

# **Student Government Association at South Texas College**

## **Constitution**

Established: Summer 2009

Amended on November 19, 2021

### **Preamble**

The Student Government Association at South Texas College is the representative organization for the student body at South Texas College. The Student Government Association at South Texas College provides a forum for open discussion of matters affecting students at South Texas College.

### **Article I – Name**

The name of this organization is the Student Government Association at South Texas College or SGA@STC. No other name shall be used in the advertisement or representation of the organization.

### **Article II – Purpose**

The SGA@STC promotes the general welfare of the student body by serving as an advocate for student issues. Therefore, presenting the student perspective to college administration, faculty, staff, and College committees.

### **Article III – Affiliations**

The SGA@STC is a member of the American Student Association of Community Colleges (ASACC) and American Student Government Association (ASGA).

### **Article IV – Eligibility and Election**

#### Section 1: Eligibility

Students who wish to participate in the SGA@STC must be currently enrolled at South Texas College. The student must possess a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0. Any student that desires to become a voting member must have a minimum GPA of 2.5. Students attending their first semester at South Texas College are exempt from the grade point average requirement.

Each campus has its own SGA@STC. To be eligible for that campus' SGA@STC the student must be attending at least one class on that campus.

In case the student attends two campuses the student must commit to only one SGA@STC. In the event that a student transfers to a different campus, the student is

allowed to remain at their original campus for the remainder of the academic school year.

All voting members must be able to actively attend scheduled SGA@STC meetings in person or online, attend events, and be able to fulfill the responsibilities of their office.

Membership and the rights and privileges of membership shall not be in any way denied or restricted on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, disability, sexual preference, or any other criteria except for such qualifications for office as shall be provided by this Constitution.

## Section 2: Election

All prospective SGA@STC members must submit a completed SGA@STC Application to their campus Student Activities Office.

Representative positions are granted automatically and immediately upon successful completion of the SGA@STC Application and meeting eligibility criteria.

The Department of Student Activities and Wellness will establish guidelines and procedures for the election of Officers and Senators.

Officer and Senator positions are elected once each year at the beginning of the Fall Semester.

Application deadlines and specific election information are determined by the Department of Student Activities and Wellness.

The term of office for all Officers, Senators, and Representatives is from the time they are elected or appointed until August 31 of that same academic year, provided that the student maintains eligibility as stated in Article IV, Section 1 of this document.

Officers, Senators, and Representatives may be removed from the SGA@STC through procedures outlined in Article XI of this document.

## Section 3: Graduation Stole

Purpose: The Executive Board of Student Government Association at South Texas College is proposing the following criteria to identify the requirements to receive the graduation stole for Student Government Association:

Position:

- Officers, Senators and Members will all be eligible for the Graduation Stole, upon meeting the other requirements.

GPA Requirement:

- Officers: 2.5 GPA
- Senators and Members: 2.0 GPA
- Student Government Association members must meet the minimum GPA requirement based on the position held during their semester of graduation in order to be eligible to receive SGA stole

Attendance:

- Attendance will start once student signs the Student Government Association application.
- Student must fulfill a one (1) year term as an SGA Officer, Senator, or Member.
- Graduation Candidates are only allowed three (3) absences per semester over the course of a year, previous to their graduation.

Graduating Semester:

- Any eligible Graduation Candidate must be actively involved in Student Government Association during their semester of graduation in order to receive SGA Stole

Events:

- Graduation Candidates must attend a minimum of three (3) events per semester.
  - Fall Semester Events Include:
    - FYC – New Student Orientation
    - 9/11 Ceremony
    - Veterans Day Ceremony
    - Fall Festival
    - SGA’s Signature Program
    - Any Conferences/Student Travel
  - Spring Semester Events Include:
    - FYC – New Student Orientation
    - Jaguar Leadership Banquet Hosted by Student Government Association
    - SGA’s Signature Program
    - Any Conferences/Student Travel

## **Article V – Office and Duties**

### Section 1: Officer Positions

Officers are voting members, elected according to the procedures outlined in Article IV of this document.

Individual Campus Officer positions consist of the following:

- Campus President
- Campus Vice-President
- Campus Secretary
- Campus Parliamentarian
- Campus Historian

### Section 2: Senate Positions

Senators are voting members, elected according to the procedures outlined in Article IV of this document. There are 10 Senate positions available at each campus.

Eligibility requirements for Senator are outlined in Article IV of this document.

### Section 3: Representative Positions

Representatives are non-voting and non-elected members of the SGA@STC. There are an unlimited number of representative positions available at each campus.

Eligibility requirements for representative are outlined in Article IV of this document.

### Section 4: Officer, Senator and Representative Authority and Responsibilities

All officers must attend all official meetings virtually or in person.

The Campus President shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Call all regular and special meetings.
- Develop the agenda for all regular and special meetings.
- Preside over all meetings.
- Appoint all standing and special committees.
- Fill vacant officer positions by appointment.
- Represent the SGA@STC as needed, both on and off campus.
- Consult regularly with the SGA@STC Advisor(s) on all current concerns and activities.
- Serve on the SGA@STC Executive Board.
- Ensure all provisions of this Constitution are faithfully implemented

and followed.

- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Exercise the right to vote in the event there is a tie at any regular or special SGA@STC meeting.

The Campus Vice-President shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Assist the President in his/her duties.
- Assume all powers of the President in his/her absence or when so directed by the President.
- Represent the SGA@STC as needed, both on and off campus.
- Serve on the SGA@STC Executive Board.
- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Exercise the right to vote at all regular and special SGA@STC meetings.

The Campus Secretary shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Maintain written records (minutes) of meetings.
- Keep minutes and other documentation filed accurately.
- Maintain official membership roll.
- Prepare general correspondence including meeting agenda, letters and memos, and send out notices of meetings.
- Have this Constitution, a list of committees with their members, the official membership roll, and the current meeting agenda available at each meeting.
- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Exercise the right to vote at all regular and special SGA@STC meetings.

The Campus Parliamentarian shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Provide advice regarding parliamentary procedure to the Campus President, Officers and Senators during meetings.
- Inform the President of errors in parliamentary procedure.
- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Exercise the right to vote at all regular and special SGA@STC meetings.

The Campus Historian shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Take pictures and provide to advisors for SGA@STC social media.
- Post minutes from meetings and meeting schedule on SGA@STC platform.
- Maintain photos and other records other than those kept by the Campus Secretary.

- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Exercise the right to vote at all regular and special SGA@STC meetings.

The Campus Senator shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Participate in discussion on matters that are presented at regular and special meetings.
- Provide support during SGA@STC activities.
- Exercise the right to vote at all regular and special SGA@STC meetings.

The Campus Representative shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Interact informally with students to determine specific issues and concerns and present these concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.
- Participate in discussion on matters that are presented at regular and special meetings.
- Provide support during SGA@STC activities.

#### Section 5: Executive Board

The SGA@STC Executive Board membership consists of the Campus Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

The purpose of the Executive Board is as follows:

- Facilitate communication between each campus SGA@STC.
- Represent each individual campus SGA@STC regarding district-wide issues.
- Represent South Texas College and the students of the South Texas College at College-sponsored, community, and related events.

The Executive Board has no formal power over each individual campus SGA@STC.

Executive Board members rotate chairing Executive Board meetings according to a schedule developed by the Director of Student Activities and Wellness.

### **Article VI – Meetings**

#### Section 1: Frequency

Campus SGA@STC meetings will be held on a minimum of, but not limited, to a bi-weekly basis and member attendance is mandatory.

Executive Board SGA@STC meetings will be held monthly and member attendance is mandatory.

Standing and Special Committee meetings will be held as necessary.

All voting members who miss three regular or special meetings per semester will be removed from office. The former voting member shall be removed at the third missed meeting but is not limited on becoming a non-voting member. Advisor must excuse the absence.

All voting members are required to stay until the meeting is adjourned. If the voting member leaves without a valid reason at the advisor's discretion, it will count as an absence.

#### Section 2: Establishment of Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the officers. An advisor must be present to meet quorum.

#### Section 3: Rules of Order

The rules contained in the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order, The Modern Edition, shall govern the SGA@STC in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the SGA@STC may adopt.

### **Article VII – Advisor Appointment and Duties**

#### Section 1: Advisor Appointment

SGA@STC Advisors are appointed by the Director of Student Activities and Wellness.

#### Section 2: Advisor Duties

The SGA@STC Campus Advisor shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Provide guidance for students to properly fill their roles in the SGA@STC.
- Attend all meetings and activities.
- Serve as a resource to the SGA@STC regarding South Texas College policies and procedures.
- Advise the SGA@STC regarding financial matters and ensure that

- adequate accounting procedures are established and followed.
- The SGA@STC Campus Advisor shall provide financial support and resources to all approved SGA events.
  - Call special meetings to discuss an unusual situation or opportunity.

The SGA@STC Executive Board Advisor shall have the following authority and responsibilities:

- Provide oversight to Campus Advisors.
- Serve as liaison between SGA@STC and College Administration.
- Provide guidance for students to properly fill their roles in the SGA@STC.
- Attend all Executive Board meetings and activities.
- Serve as a resource to the SGA@STC Executive Board regarding South Texas College policies and procedures.
- Call special meetings to discuss an unusual situation or opportunity.

## **Article VIII – Committees**

Standing and special committees are appointed by the Campus President and meet as necessary.

Only officers and Senators may chair committees. Members may chair committees as long as appointed by president.

## **Article IX – Communication**

SGA@STC members represent the concerns of students at South Texas College, and not personal agendas. All communication to students, faculty, College Administration, and College committees must be approved by majority vote at a regular or special SGA@STC meeting.

### Section 1: Students

SGA@STC members are expected to interact with students regularly to identify key issues and concerns and present these issues and concerns to the SGA@STC at regular and special meetings.

Surveys may be used to obtain student input. Surveys must be reviewed and approved by the College Office of Research & Analytical Services. Petitions are not an approved method of surveying students.

### Section 2: College Administration, Faculty, and Staff

SGA@STC members must follow appropriate protocol when proposing issues to College administration, faculty, and staff. All communication must be in writing and forwarded through the Director of Students Activities and Wellness.



### Section 3: College Committees

SGA@STC members are encouraged to serve on College committees. All requests to serve on College committees will be forwarded to the appropriate committee chair by the Director of Students Activities and Wellness.

#### **Article X – Resignation**

Any member of the SGA@STC who wishes to resign must inform the SGA@STC Campus President or Campus Advisor in writing.

The resigning member shall be held accountable for his/her actions prior to resignation.

Following the resignation of an Officer, the Campus President is responsible for filling the vacant position by appointment.

Should the Campus President resign, the Campus Vice-President shall immediately assume the position of Campus President.

#### **Article XI – Disciplinary Action**

All SGA@STC members are expected to abide by the South Texas College Student Code of Conduct and the articles of this Constitution or face disciplinary action by the Director of Students Activities and Wellness. Disciplinary action may include removal from office, removal from the SGA@STC, or other sanctions outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Should an SGA@STC Officer not fulfill the responsibilities of their office, they may be removed from that office by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of quorum present at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Should an SGA@STC Officer not fulfill their requirements stated on Article IV may be removed from office automatically at a special meeting called for that purpose.

#### **Article XII – Constitutional Amendments**

##### Section 1: Amendment Process

Any South Texas College student who meets eligibility requirements listed in Article IV may introduce proposed amendments to this Constitution. The amendment must be presented in writing.

##### Section 2: Ratification

Acceptance by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum present at any regular or

special SGA@STC Executive Board meeting and approval by the Director of Student Activities and Wellness shall be necessary for adopting an amendment to this constitution. All legislation properly enacted thereafter shall become effective and shall replace all previous provisions.

## **Election Code of The Student Government Association at South Texas College**

### **I. Eligibility and Election**

#### **A. Purpose**

1. This Article seeks to establish and regulate elections for the Student Government Association. It outlines the procedures for conducting elections, and it also provides the rules that all candidates must follow to ensure elections are fair.

#### **B. Definitions**

1. **Student Government Association Elections**: These occur during the fall semester to elect the campus officers.
2. **Campaign Materials**: any physical or electronic item that is publicly available or distributed to promote a Candidate or Team, especially to people who are unfamiliar with the Candidate(s)
3. **Campaigning**: Any public action that promotes a Candidate or Team, especially to people who are unfamiliar with the Candidate(s).
4. **Candidate**: Any qualified student who seeks election to a position in Student Government Association.
5. **Election Packet**: Distributed to interested Candidates. Includes the application for Candidacy, Elections Code, important dates, and a job description of the position, all relevant regulations, and any other documents chosen by the Elections Committee.
6. **Executive Ticket**: Any two qualified students who seek election to the position of Student Government Association President and Vice President.
7. **Executive Offices**: The executive office will be Student Government Association President and Vice President.
8. **Polling Area**: Any kiosk set up by Student Government Association and all College computer labs and computers.
9. **Qualified Voter**: Any fee-paying student currently enrolled in the College at the time of the Elections is qualified to vote.
10. **Team**: A group of two or more Candidates choosing to Campaign together. This does not include the President and Vice President.
11. **Term of Office**: Members of Student Government Association will serve from the date they are sworn in until their successor assumes office, approximately one (1) year later.
12. **Violation**: Any action taken by a Candidate, which violates or goes against this Code.
13. **Voting Facility**: Any place where Qualified Voters can vote, or device which they can use to vote.
14. **In Kind Donation**: any giving in which, instead of giving money to buy needed goods and services, the goods and services themselves are given.

#### **C. Eligibility**

Membership and the rights and privileges of membership shall not be in any way denied or restricted on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, disability, sexual preference, or any other criteria except for such qualifications for office as shall be provided for by this Constitution.

#### D. Election

All prospective Student Government Association at South Texas College members must submit a completed Student Government Association at South Texas College Application to their campus Student Activities and Wellness Office. Representative positions are granted automatically and immediately upon successful completion of the Student Government Association at South Texas College Application and meeting eligibility criteria.

Officer positions are elected once each year at the beginning of the Fall Semester. Application deadlines and specific election information are determined by the Election Committee.

The term of office for all Officers is from the time they are elected or appointed until August 31 of that same academic year, provided that they student maintains eligibility as stated in Article IV, Section 1 of this document.

Officers, Senators and representatives may be removed from the Student Government Association at South Texas College through procedures outlined in Article XI of the Student Government Association Constitution.

## **II. Election Committee (EC)**

A. Elections for the Student Government Association will be supervised by the Election Committee that is made up of the Director of Student Activities and Wellness, the Coordinator of Student Activities and Wellness and the Student Activities Specialists assigned to the Student Government Association and the faculty advisors for the Student Government Association. Decisions of the EC will be based on a vote of the majority present.

B. The Election Committee is responsible for:

1. Preparing and distributing Candidate packets
2. Making any and all necessary arrangements to organize and administer elections.
3. Formally recognizing Candidates and Teams
4. Maintaining Candidate information online during the campaigning period
5. Providing Campaign Materials for Candidates as defined in this Code
6. Taking necessary measures to ensure Elections adhere to this Code

## **III. Qualifications and Declaration of Candidacy**

A. Qualifications

1. To be included on the ballot and to qualify for election, a Candidate must be a ½ full-time (Fall/Spring –6hrs or Summer –3hrs) student at the College. A Candidate must be in good standing with the College. A Candidate must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher.

B. Declaration

1. Election Packets

- a. Candidates will be required to turn in complete Election Packets by a certain date, as specified by the EC and the packet itself, in order to be placed on the ballot.
- b. These packets include an application for candidacy, which requires at minimum the name, student ID number, contact info, and expected graduation date of a potential Candidate.
- c. Candidates who do not meet this deadline may still turn in a packet (which will not require petition signatures) and campaign as a Write-In Candidate.
2. Candidates are encouraged, but not required, to attend an informational meeting. Candidates are responsible for the content of informational meetings even if they do not attend.
3. All Candidates declare their candidacy individually, with the exception of Candidates for President and Vice President who have the option to declare candidacy jointly as an Executive Ticket or independently.
4. To prove their viability, each Candidate will ask Qualified Voters for a signature showing support for the Candidate. This process is referred to as Petitioning. All signatures will be verified by student's username by professional staff. The number of signatures required for each elected position is as follows:
  - a. President: 50 signatures
  - b. Vice President: 50 signatures
  - c. Secretary: 25 signatures
  - d. Parliamentarian: 25 signatures
  - e. Campus Historian: 25 signatures
  - f. Senators: 25 signatures

#### **IV. Campaign Guidelines**

A. Additional guidelines can be provided by the EC as long as they are not in violation of this Code.

B. All Candidates must adhere to the South Texas College Student Code of Conduct.

#### **C. Campaigning**

1. Campaign Materials are required to be submitted to the Elections Committee only when the materials use supplies or funds provided by the Student Activities and Wellness Department. Campaign Materials funded by this department may be censored if they are discriminatory in nature based on Financial Code IV.C.1.
2. No items of significant value may be distributed for the purpose of Campaigning. Clarifying example: A t-shirt which promotes a Candidate or Team does not have significant value; a computer with a sticker that promotes a Candidate or Team does have significant value.
3. Campaigning may begin once the candidate has submitted a completed Election Packet to the Election Committee.

#### **D. Where to Campaign?**

1. Academic buildings: Campaigning is acceptable in academic buildings, but it must not take place in the classroom during instruction times (without permission of the professor) or otherwise disrupt classes that are in session. Campaign Materials may be posted only on public bulletin boards and in department offices with proper approval by the department.

2. Policies regarding the use of non-academic facilities for campaigning will be determined by the respective departments. Documentation of these policies will be provided to Candidates in Election Packets.
3. Computer labs: No Campaigning. College computers may be used to prepare and print Campaign Materials.
4. Student Government Association Meetings: Candidates will not announce or promote their candidacy or their intent to pursue candidacy during a meeting of any Student Government Association Body.
5. Student Organizations: Candidates are encouraged to contact Student Organizations and get permission from them to Campaign at a Student Organization meeting. Student Organizations do not have to grant permission to any Candidate.
6. Additional guidelines from Facilities Operations & Management will be provided to Candidates.
7. Candidates cannot campaign within 10 feet of a Polling Area. Candidates may still use College computers to prepare and print Campaign Materials and for any other purpose permitted by College policy.
8. Candidates will not create or advertise any specific on-campus Voting Facilities other than designated Polling Areas.

#### E. Communication

1. All elections communication must abide by the relevant College policy.
2. Candidates are permitted to contact the officers of Student Organizations.
3. Social media communication must follow the same guidelines as any other form of Campaigning.

#### F. Campaign Endorsements

1. Candidates will not falsify endorsements.
2. Candidates will report all financial and in-kind contributions on the form provided by the EC.
3. Student Government Association will not endorse any Candidate.
4. Student Government Association Personnel on the Executive Board and members of the Election Committee will not endorse any Candidate.
5. Current Student Government Association Officers are allowed to be Candidates and are allowed to Campaign for themselves or their Team. However, their Campaigning must not interfere with their official duties in the Student Government Association.

#### G. Campaign Finances

1. Candidates for executive positions must report all campaign finance information to the EC on the day before the first day of voting.
2. The campaign finance report must include the following: a. Amount of money spent, by the Candidate/Team for the purpose of Campaigning, and the specific expenditures (i.e. posters, candy). b. Amount of money donated and the name(s) of the donors. In-kind donations must be described, but the value does not need to be estimated.

### **V. Election Procedures**

A. All elections will be held online. Provisions may be made for paper ballots in the case of an emergency. All on-campus computer labs or College computers are considered polling areas.

B. Polling Areas will be provided by the Election Committee.

#### C. Ballots

1. The Election Committee is responsible for administering the online voting process, and is permitted to hire/utilize computer experts.
2. The order of Candidates' names on the ballot will be based on the order of completed applications submitted.

#### D. Voting

1. Elections shall be based on the majority rule principle. All candidates must receive 50% + one vote of the votes cast to be elected. The Election will follow an Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) system if there are more than 2 candidates as described below.

a. Voters will rank candidates for each office. The voter will place a '1' by their first choice a '2' by their second choice, and so on, until they no longer wish to express any further preferences or run out of candidates.

b. Candidates are elected outright if they gain more than half of the first preference votes. If not, the candidate who lost (the one with least first preferences) is eliminated and their votes are redistributed according to the second (or next available) preference marked on the ballot. This process continues until one candidate has half of the votes and is elected.

2. Any effort to falsify voting is subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

3. Qualified Voters may not allow someone else to vote for them by proxy. Any Candidate encouraging such behavior is in violation of this Code.

4. If it is discovered that online voting has been altered or tampered with, the Election Committee will take immediate action to correct the problem. If election results have been compromised, new dates for the Election will be set by the EC.

#### E. Tabulation of Votes

1. Online votes will be tabulated by noon the day following the last day of polling and announced as soon as possible unless prevented by extenuating circumstances.

2. The Candidate (or Executive Ticket) receiving a majority of votes in an Instant Runoff Vote for that office is elected to said office.

3. Requests for recounts must be filed within two (2) school days of the announcements of unofficial results. Any associated cost will be paid by the petitioner(s) unless otherwise authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Election Committee, or unless the recount proves to be in favor of the petitioner(s). Recounts will occur within three (3) school days of the authorization of the request.

4. Recounts will be conducted and paid for by the Student Government Association when the margin of victory is less than one (1) percent of the total number of votes cast.

5. Election results will be unofficial until certified by the EC.

#### F. Notification of Results

1. Unofficial results will be announced by noon the day following elections.

2. Official results, once certified, will be publicly posted online and sent to the College President, all Vice Presidents, Deans, and the Department of Public Relations and Marketing.

## **VI. Handling Violations**

A. All violations will be handled by filing a Complaint with the EC.

B. College students, faculty or staff members may file a Complaint when they believe a Candidate or Team has violated this Code, or the Student Code of Conduct.

C. The following punishments are available when the EC determines a Candidate has violated this Code: 1) Disqualification; 2) Revoking the use of any available Student Government Association resources; 3) Requiring the removal of posted campaign materials, including the deletion of web content; OR 4) Fining the Candidate or Team only if Student Government Association had to pay for the Violation.

D. Any Candidate or Team who receives a punishment may file an appeal as outlined in Student Code of Conduct.

E. Any Candidate or Team may also file a Complaint with the Dean of Student Affairs against current Student Government Association Personnel for violating the Election Code.