

Undergraduate Student Government  
Stony Brook University  
SAC Suite 202, Room 210  
(631) 632-6473



Deborah Machalow  
Executive Vice President

Thomas Kirnbauer  
President Pro Tempore

## SENATE

# SENATE BYLAWS REFORM ACT

*An Act to increase the efficiency of the Senate*

*Be it enacted by the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government,*

### SECTION 1: TITLE

This act may be referred to and cited as the “Senate Bylaws Reform Act.”

### SECTION 2: FINDINGS

The Senate finds that –

1. The current Senate Bylaws are to a large extent poorly written and at times inconsistent with the USG Constitution.
2. The rules governing the Senate are incredibly out of date and thus require amendment.

### SECTION 3: ENACTMENT & REPEAL

1. This Act shall repeal and supersede the current Senate Bylaws and the aforementioned shall be replaced by the document appended to this Act.
2. This Act shall take effect immediately following the enactment of this Act.

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Deborah Machalow

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Date

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Matthew H. Graham

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Date

Executive Vice President

President

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT SENATE BYLAWS

## PREAMBLE

*This Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government is granted its authority and powers by the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government and shall at all times be in conformity with the same. The purpose of these bylaws is to establish a framework and structure to ensure the fair and just exchange of opinions amongst the voting and non-voting membership of the Senate.*

## ARTICLE I GENERAL PROVISIONS

### 1 Legislative Power

- 1.1 The legislative power of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be solely vested in a Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government; said powers are inherited from the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government.

### 2 Composition

#### 2.1 Membership

- 2.1.1 The Senate shall be composed of Senators, voting and non-voting, and of other Officers chosen by the Senate, as defined by the Constitution and these Bylaws.

#### 2.2 Officers

##### 2.2.1 Chair

- 2.2.1.1 The Executive Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be the Chair of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless the Senate is equally divided.

##### 2.2.2 President Pro Tempore

- 2.2.2.1 The Senate, from its own voting membership, shall choose a President Pro Tempore. The President Pro Tempore shall be the official representative of the Senate to all other Governmental Branches and Agencies.

- 2.2.2.2 The Senate may, from time to time, vote to remove its President Pro Tempore by a two-thirds affirmative majority vote. At such times, the vote to remove the President Pro Tempore shall be separate and distinct from the vote to elect a new President Pro Tempore. At least seven (7) days prior to any motion to remove the President Pro Tempore, the Senate shall entertain a Motion of No Confidence in the President Pro Tempore, thereby granting the President Pro Tempore full notice of impending disciplinary actions.

##### 2.2.3 Parliamentarian

2.2.3.1 The President of the USG, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall hire a Parliamentarian to ensure meetings are held in accordance with the Senate Bylaws, the Constitution, *New York State Open Meetings Law*, and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

2.2.3.2 The Parliamentarian shall advise the Chair on all Parliamentary matters, but the decision shall be reserved to the Chair.

#### 2.2.4 Recording Secretary

2.2.4.1 The Senate shall choose a Recording Secretary, who shall keep a Journal of its proceedings, and from time to time, publish the same. The official published minutes shall include a summary of the debate conducted on each agenda item. This does not apply to minutes recorded during Executive Session, at which only a record of the motions made shall be recorded. The official published minutes shall also include a list of any and all affiliations of Senators and non-voting Senators with regards to USG recognized clubs and organizations. The Parliamentarian of the Senate may act as both Recording Secretary and Parliamentarian.

### 3 Meetings

- 3.1 The Senate shall assemble no later than the second Thursday of the Fall semester, unless the Senate shall by law appoint a different day, and shall subsequently meet at least once every two weeks during the academic year, with the exceptions of Summer Session, Winter Session, University Vacations or Breaks.
- 3.2 All Meetings of the Senate and its Committees shall be held in accordance with this Document, *New York State Open Meetings Law*, and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
- 3.3 All members, voting and non-voting shall be required to attend meetings unless they have a legitimate academic obligation conflicting with the meeting or a generally accepted legitimate excuse for missing the meeting.
- 3.4 The President Pro Tempore may from time to time, call unofficial meetings of the Senate to allow the Senate to deliberate without the presence of other Governmental Branches or Agencies. All such meetings shall require three (3) business days' written notice. The President Pro Tempore shall act as the Chair at such meetings. Quorum shall not be required in such meetings. The Senate, from its membership, shall designate a Recording Secretary to ensure that a Journal of the proceedings is recorded and presented to the members of the Senate.
- 3.5 The President of the Undergraduate Student Government may, from time to time, call emergency Senate meetings, notifying appropriate officials, in writing, at least twenty-four hours prior to the start of the emergency meeting. Similarly, a Senate meeting shall be called within three days of a written request, signed by one-third of the voting or non-voting members of the Senate, being submitted to the President and the Executive Vice President.

### 4 Agenda

A simple affirmative majority vote of the Senate shall amend the agenda.

### 5 Attendance

- 5.1 Senators are expected to attend Senate meetings regularly.
- 5.2 Each Senator is allowed two unexcused absences and two opportunities to use a proxy per semester.
- 5.3 An excused absence is defined as an absence with an adequate and acceptable explanation.
- 5.4 If a Senator has two or more unexcused absences in a semester, he will be subject to impeachment by the Executive Council and removal from office by the Supreme Court.

## **6 Executive Session**

- 6.1 The Senate may choose to enter into Executive Session in accordance with *New York State Open Meetings Law*. Such sessions may exclude any non-member of the Senate, with the exception of those acting as proxies for members of the Senate.

## **7 Quorum**

- 7.1 Quorum shall be defined as the presence, in person or by proxy, of a majority of the filled voting seats of the Senate. Quorum shall be required for any and all official Business of the Senate.
- 7.2 A filled seat shall be defined as a seat to which a Senator is elected, has taken an Oath or Affirmation of Office, and has been trained in parliamentary procedures and all other policies as defined by the Executive Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government.

## **8 Proxies**

- 8.1 A voting Senator, who is unable to attend a meeting of the Senate, may designate another undergraduate student at Stony Brook University as their proxy, by way of Proxy Designation Form. The Proxy Designation Form, initialed and time-stamped by the Front Desk Staff or a member of the Office of the Executive Vice-President, shall be submitted to the Office of the Executive Vice-President by 2:00 PM, the day of the meeting. Those acting as proxies for voting members of the Senate shall make readily available the initialed and time stamped Proxy Designation Form before and during the meeting.
- 8.2 The absence of a Senator represented by a proxy is considered an excused absence.
- 8.3 An individual may not serve as the proxy for more than one individual simultaneously in the same Senate meeting.
- 8.4 Any individual currently holding an elected position of the Executive Council, including and limited to, the President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer, Vice President of Communications and Public Relations, Vice President of Student Life and Programming and Activities, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Clubs and Organizations, Senior Class Representative, Junior Class Representative, Sophomore Class Representative and Freshman Class Representative, shall be ineligible from serving as a proxy for a voting Senator.
- 8.5 Any individual holding an appointed and confirmed seat of the Judicial Branch, including and limited to the Chief Justice and Associate Justice positions shall be ineligible from serving as a proxy for a voting Senator.

## **9 Special Rules of Order**

- 9.1 The Senate shall be able to adopt its own Special Rules of Order, through an affirmative simple majority vote, to either supplement or overrule *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **AUTHORITY AND ROLE OF SENATE CHAIR**

#### **1 Chair**

- 1.1 The Executive Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government shall serve as the Chair of the Senate. The President Pro Tempore shall preside over the Senate in the absence of the Executive Vice President, or when the Executive Vice President shall exercise the Office of the President of the Undergraduate Student Government.
- 1.2 The Executive Vice President may resign as Chair for the full or temporary duration of the meeting for the reasons that he may no longer remain impartial or wishes to engage in debate, at such times, the President Pro Tempore shall preside as Chair.
- 1.3 The authority and duties of the Chair shall include but not be limited to, declaring the opening and adjournment of meetings, recognizing any and all speakers, acting as the principle and primary authority on all points of order or procedural matters, announcing the results of all votes, and setting the Agenda for meetings of the Senate, by and with the advice of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
- 1.4 The Chair has the final say on all procedural issues in the chamber and the right to make decisions on matters of procedure. The only power denied to the Chair is to reject a Motion to Appeal the Decision of the Chair, after it has been seconded.

#### **2 President Pro Tempore**

- 2.1 The President Pro Tempore shall reserve the unrestricted right to vote unless serving as Chair of the Senate. While serving as Chair, the President Pro Tempore shall not vote unless the vote changes the outcome.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **POWERS & PROCEDURES**

#### **1 Legislation**

- 1.1 The Senate shall have the sole power to enact Legislation of the Undergraduate Student Government. Such Legislation shall be binding on all other Governmental Branches or Agencies and Student Organizations receiving funding.
- 1.2 Any vote by the Senate resulting in a policy, procedure or fiscal appropriation that shall be binding on the USG, shall be defined as an Act.
- 1.3 The passage of legislation by the Senate shall require an affirmative majority vote of the filled seats of the Senate.
- 1.4 Amendments that originate from the floor of the Senate shall be submitted and subsequently announced by the Recording Secretary of the Senate. An amendment may only substantively amend a single clause of the Bill or Resolution, and all amendments shall be considered individually.

- 1.5 Legislation that originates from a petition of the student body shall require a petition that contains the following fields:
  - 1.5.1 Legal Name
  - 1.5.2 Signature
  - 1.5.3 NetID
  - 1.5.4 Phone Number
- 1.6 Petitions that introduce legislation shall be presented to the Office of the Executive Vice President one business day prior to the next Senate meeting. The petitions shall be verified by the Executive Vice President or his designee. The petitioners must receive formal notice from the Office of the Executive Vice President once validation is complete. Petitions that are not validated within twelve (12) hours after submission shall be considered validated, unless proven invalid by the Executive Vice President.
- 1.7 All legislation presented to the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be accompanied by, in writing, the following information:
  - 1.7.1 Author(s) of the Legislation;
  - 1.7.2 Sponsors and Co-Sponsors of the Legislation;
  - 1.7.3 The Committee that referred the Act to the Senate; and
  - 1.7.4 Date of referral by Committee to the Senate.

## **2 Resolutions**

- 2.1 A resolution is any written document drafted and adopted by the Senate that has any of the following qualities and effects: (1) it expresses the non-binding will of the Senate. (2) It contains complex motions or affects parliamentary procedure of the internal workings of the Senate. (3) It is an exercise of powers vested solely in the Senate, such as articles of impeachment or its own rules.
- 2.2 The Senate may adopt force resolutions to express its dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the Executive or Judicial Branch or its subordinate agencies and departments.

## **3 Amendments**

- 3.1 A friendly amendment shall be defined as an amendment that corrects the grammar, wording, punctuation, typing or otherwise clarifies the sponsor's original intent.
  - 3.1.1 They shall be adopted upon the suggestion by one Senator and the approval of the sponsor, without the formality of a vote.

## **4 Budgetary Matters**

- 4.1 A budgetary matter shall be defined as an allocation to or subtraction from an individual organization, budgetary line, or other forms of indirect allocation of funds.
- 4.2 All budgetary matters, excepting the passage of the annual budget of the Undergraduate Student Government, shall require a simple affirmative majority vote of the filled seats in a roll-call vote. The annual budget of the Undergraduate Student Government shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of the filled seats of the Senate, through a roll-call vote.

## **5 Voting**

- 5.1 Voting shall consist of the voting “aye,” “nay” or “abstain.” All those with voting rights must vote in one of these three ways.

# **ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES**

## **1 Committee Assignments**

- 1.1 The Executive Vice President, by and with the advice and consent of the President Pro Tempore, shall assign voting members of the Senate to all Standing Committees of the Senate. In the case of Ad-Hoc Committees, the Senate reserves the right to assign individuals to such committees or to grant the authority to the Executive Vice President and/or President Pro Tempore.
- 1.1.1 In the case of a disagreement between the Executive Vice President and the President Pro Tempore over an individual Senator’s committee assignment, the Senate shall make the decision by a simple majority vote.
- 1.2 All Senators must serve on at least one Standing Committee of the Senate. Senators reserve the right to remove themselves from a Committee without the consent of the Executive Vice President or President Pro Tempore provided that said Senator remains on at least one standing committee.
- 1.2.1 Senators who are on one standing committee and disagree with their assignment shall have the power to appeal to the voting membership of the Senate, which, through a simple majority vote, may appoint or remove an individual to a specific committee.
- 1.3 Voting Senators shall be permitted to become full voting members of a Standing Committee to which they are not assigned if they attend three consecutive meetings of that committee.

## **2 Types of Committees**

- 2.1 Standing Committees
- 2.1.1 All Standing Committees are established by the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government. The Executive Vice President may, by and with the advice and consent of the President Pro Tempore, decide to combine Standing Committees when necessary.
- 2.2 Ad-Hoc Committees
- 2.2.1 Ad-Hoc committees may be established by the Senate, by an Act or Resolution, for fixed periods of time, not exceeding the term of the Senate, which established the committee. Said Act or Resolution shall act as the Charter for the committee unless otherwise enacted.

- 2.2.2 All Ad-Hoc committees shall operate in accordance with this Document, unless expressly provided for in the Charter of the Committee.

### **3 Membership**

- 3.1 Each Standing Committee shall be solely composed of voting members of the Senate, except in the case of the Budget Committee, which shall be composed of the Treasurer of the Undergraduate Student as its Chair and other voting members of the Senate.

### **4 Meetings**

- 4.1 Each committee shall meet no fewer than once a month while the Senate is in session. If business is brought to the attention of the committee, the committee shall meet within two weeks to discuss or postpone the business.
- 4.2 Each chairperson, by and with the advice and consent of the majority of members of the committees, shall set a time and place for the committee's regular meetings. The Chair shall reserve the right to call special meetings of the committee, but he shall be required to provide adequate, written, notice for all such meetings.

### **5 Officers**

- 5.1 Each committee, unless explicitly provided for otherwise by Law and this Document, shall select from its own membership a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Recording Secretary.
- 5.2 The Chairperson shall:
  - 5.2.1 Preside over all meetings and call each meeting of the committee. The Chairperson shall not vote unless the vote changes the outcome of the vote.
- 5.3 The Vice-Chairperson shall:
  - 5.3.1 Preside over meetings in the absence of the Chair and may call meetings if the Chair has resigned, fallen ill, or been otherwise incapacitated. The Vice-Chairperson shall reserve the right to vote unless acting as Chair. In such case, the Vice Chairperson shall not vote unless the committee is equally divided.
- 5.4 Recording Secretary shall:
  - 5.4.1 Take attendance, record all votes of the committee and all motions made, and shall, in coordination with the presiding officer, be responsible for ensuring that the Senate receives the correct version of any bill or resolution and a copy of the minutes.
  - 5.4.2 The committee may decide to appoint the Chair or their designee as the Recording Secretary.

### **6 Removal of Committee Members and Officers**

- 6.1 Committees shall reserve the right to expel a member of the committee by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the committee membership. In such cases as when a member is expelled, quorum shall be recalculated to reflect the change in committee membership.



- 6.2 Each committee shall have the power, from time to time, to remove its elected officers with affirmative two-thirds majority votes of the members present. Separate votes shall be held to elect new officers to fill vacancies.

## **ARTICLE V AMENDMENTS**

Whenever the Senate shall deem it necessary, it shall propose Amendments to these Bylaws. All amendments shall be ratified by two-thirds affirmative majority vote of the Senate. All amendments shall be appended to the end of this Document and not inserted therein.