

The University of Texas at Austin

Student Government Constitution

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Preamble

We the students of The University of Texas at Austin, in order to establish the official association through which student opinion may be expressed, to investigate student welfare and take appropriate action, to facilitate responsible student participation in the policy and decision-making processes of the university community, to enhance the quality and scope of the student experience at the university, to ensure responsible and effective participation in the organization of student affairs, to transparently, effectively, and responsibly utilize student fees to promote student welfare, and to provide an educational experience for leadership development for students at the university, do ordain and establish this constitution for The University of Texas at Austin Student Government.

Article I: Membership and Structure

Sec. 1.1 ORGANIZATION TITLE. This student governance organization shall be known as The University of Texas at Austin Student Government. The University of Texas at Austin Student Government is the sole recognized students' association of The University of Texas at Austin (Rule 50203, Section 1, Regents' Rules and Regulations).

- a. Only this association and its designees shall have the right to represent The University of Texas at Austin student body in university-related matters, and dealings with other elements of the university.
- b. While not the intended purpose of Student Government, officers and members of the association may, from time to time, take positions on non-university matters.
 - i. When acting on non-university related matters, the association must make it clear that the association members do not speak on behalf of all students or the university and must follow the Office of the Dean of Students' guidance on ensuring statements are clarified with appropriate advance disclaimers that such statements only represent the personal views of the association members supporting the position.

Sec. 1.2 MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE. All students enrolled at the university, as recorded by the Office of the Registrar, are members of and shall be eligible to participate in Student Government, unless otherwise specified in this constitution.

Sec. 1.3 GOOD STANDING REQUIRED TO CAMPAIGN AND HOLD ELECTED OFFICE. All students not on scholastic or disciplinary probation, as so recorded by the Office of the Registrar, shall be eligible to campaign for and hold elective office within Student Government.

Sec. 1.4 REQUIRED STUDENT BODY PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL GRADE POINT AVERAGE. The student body president and student body vice president must have an overall grade point average above 2.5.

Sec 1.5 FULL-TIME STATUS REQUIRED TO CAMPAIGN. A student must be registered as a full-time student, as so defined by the Office of the Registrar, to file for and campaign for elective office within Student Government.

Sec. 1.6 FULL-TIME STATUS REQUIRED TO HOLD ELECTED OFFICE. During term of office, the student body president and vice president must be registered for at least six semester hours if an undergraduate student, or three semester hours if a graduate student; unless the officeholder is a graduating student who need only take the courses necessary for graduation.

Sec. 1.7 RESIDENCE STATUS REQUIRED TO HOLD EXECUTIVE BOARD, ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVE, AND SUPREME COURT POSITION. To hold the office of an executive board, assembly representative, or supreme court position, a student must physically reside in a location that allows them to be regularly available to attend in-person board, assembly, committee, and other required meetings.

- a. Hardship exceptions can be authorized by the Office of the Dean of Students for temporary residence status outside the local area when necessary.

Sec. 1.8 SEPARATE BRANCHES OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT. The governing structure of The University of Texas at Austin Student Government shall consist of the following three separate branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.

Article II: Finances

Sec. 2.1 STUDENT SERVICES BUDGET COMMITTEE FUNDING. Student Government shall apply for annual funding from the Student Services Budget Committee.

Sec. 2.2 ADOPTION OF OPTIONAL STUDENT FEES FOR REVENUE. Funding may also be generated through optional student fees in accordance with approved procedures for optional student services fees.

Sec. 2.3 ADDITIONAL REVENUE. Additional revenue may be generated as Student Government deems appropriate or necessary in accordance with established university policy.

Article III: The Executive Branch

Sec. 3.1 VESTMENT OF EXECUTIVE POWER. All enumerated executive powers shall be vested in the executive branch of Student Government.

- a. Powers not expressly provided are outside of the authority of the executive branch.
- b. The student body president shall serve as the chief executive and shall represent Student Government and the student body of The University of Texas at Austin.

Sec. 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF ENACTED LEGISLATION. A primary responsibility of the executive branch shall be the timely implementation of all legislation enacted by the assembly under the purview of Student Government.

Sec. 3.3 GOVERNING STRUCTURE OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The governing structure of the executive branch of Student Government shall consist of the executive alliance, appointed members of the executive board, the executive staff, and the cabinet of policy directors.

Sec. 3.4 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. Sitting members of the executive board shall include the student body president and student body vice president, who together form the executive alliance, the chief of staff, financial director, administrative director, communications director, and advocacy director. The speaker of the assembly shall serve as an ex-officio member.

Sec. 3.5 STUDENT BODY PRESIDENTIAL TERM OF OFFICE. The student body president shall serve a one-year term to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 3.6 STUDENT BODY VICE PRESIDENTIAL TERM OF OFFICE. The student body vice president shall serve a one-year term to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 3.7 EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS' TERMS OF OFFICE. Appointment of executive board officers are effective upon appointment by the student body president pursuant to Section 3.9 (e).

- a. All executive board officers, other than the student body president and student body vice president, shall serve until their respective replacements are appointed.

Sec. 3.8 ELECTION OF THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT. The student body president shall be elected by the student body at-large during the annual spring campus-wide general elections.

Sec. 3.9 STUDENT BODY PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The student body president shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Enact resolutions and bills passed by the assembly by signing them, or refer resolutions and bills back to the assembly for reconsideration by vetoing them.
- b. Faithfully execute all enacted legislation.
- c. Represent the student body and Student Government before external entities, including but not limited to, the administration of The University of Texas at Austin, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, the City of Austin, and the Texas Legislature in a manner consistent with the enacted policies, positions, and stances of Student Government.
- d. Serve on, or send a representative to, the committees, boards, and legislative bodies of which the student body president is a regular standing member.
- e. Appoint students to serve on the executive board. Appointment of executive board directors are effective upon appointment and do not require assembly approval.
- f. Appoint with the approval of the assembly, students to serve as a policy director on the cabinet of policy directors.
- g. Appoint, with the approval of the assembly, students to serve on external campus committees and boards that require or request Student Government representation.
- h. Form temporary presidential ad hoc advisory committees and taskforces to assist during their administration to conduct the business of Student Government when deemed necessary and proper.

- i. Assign without the approval of the assembly the members of such temporary presidential ad hoc advisory committees and taskforces.
- ii. Such presidential committees, taskforces, and their members will serve at the pleasure of the student body president.
- iii. The term of presidential ad hoc advisory committees and taskforces will expire the first Tuesday in April, unless earlier terminated by the student body president.
- iv. Presidential committees, taskforces, and their members can be renewed by and at the discretion of the succeeding student body president.
- i. At each meeting of the assembly, give information on the state of the university and Student Government, and recommend for their consideration such measures judged necessary and proper.
- j. On extraordinary occasions, convene the assembly in emergency session, giving public notice at least 72 hours before the convening of the emergency session.

Sec. 3.10 ELECTION OF THE STUDENT BODY VICE PRESIDENT. The student body vice president shall be elected by the student body at-large during the annual spring campus-wide general elections.

Sec. 3.11 STUDENT BODY VICE PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The student body vice president shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Serve on the committees, boards, and legislative bodies of which the student body vice president is a regular standing member.
- b. Assist the student body president with assigned responsibilities.
- c. Assume the student body presidency in the event that the student body president is unavailable to fulfill the duties of the office.

Sec. 3.12 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF. The chief of staff shall be appointed by the student body president.

Sec. 3.13 CHIEF OF STAFF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The chief of staff shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Monitor all operations of the executive branch of Student Government as defined by the student body president.
- b. Recruit and train new officers of the executive branch.
- c. Provide continuity during the transition of Student Government administrations.
- d. Together with the speaker of the assembly and chief justice of the supreme court, the chief of staff shall be responsible for organizing and implementing a single event to train new Student Government officers in skills necessary for operating the Student Government.
- e. Oversee the policy directors and all Student Government appointments to external campus committees and boards.

Sec. 3.14 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR. The communications director shall be appointed by the student body president.

Sec. 3.15 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The communications director shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Facilitate the internal and external communications of Student Government.
- b. Represent Student Government in communications consistent with the enacted policies, positions, and stances of Student Government.

Sec. 3.16 APPOINTMENT OF THE FINANCIAL DIRECTOR. The financial director shall be appointed by the student body president.

Sec. 3.17 FINANCIAL DIRECTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The financial director shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Manage the finances of Student Government according to university rules and regulations.
- b. Manage sources of funding including events, endowments, and initiatives.
- c. Develop the annual budget and fiscal reports and present the annual budget to the Student Services Budget Committee.
- d. Investigate and suggest methods of acquiring additional sources of funding for Student Government.
- e. Present to the assembly a report and recommendation based on the fiscal impact of all bills with the appropriations of funds.

Sec. 3.18 APPOINTMENT OF THE ADVOCACY DIRECTOR. The advocacy director shall be appointed by the student body president.

Sec. 3.19 ADVOCACY DIRECTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The advocacy director shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Lead advocacy initiatives within Student Government.
- b. Oversee executive officers and external campus appointments who advocate for the student perspective.
- c. Oversee Student Government initiated, authorized, or endorsed focus groups, student led forums (such as town hall meetings), and joint meetings with student organizations (collectively "forums").
 - i. Before a student led forum can take place, a student led forum request must be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students for consultation and review.
- d. Oversee the conduct of student opinion surveys to seek student perspective, input, and feedback on specific issues within the scope of Student Government authority.
 - i. Student opinion surveys must be authorized by legislation adopted by the assembly in advance and conducted in partnership with the Office of the Dean of Students (see Sec 4.23 m).

Sec. 3.20 APPOINTMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR. The administrative director shall be appointed by the student body President.

Sec. 3.21 ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The administrative director shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Create and maintain a record of the activities of Student Government.
- b. Distribute all enacted legislation to the appropriate individuals and entities.
- c. Serve as an ex-officio member of all assembly committees.

Article IV: The Legislative Branch

Sec. 4.1 VESTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE POWER. All enumerated legislative powers and authority shall be vested in the duly constituted assembly of Student Government each year.

- a. The term of the assembly as a body each year shall be for one year to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end on the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 4.2 COMPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLY - TERM. The legislative branch shall be composed of the Student Government assembly which shall be made up of:

- a. college and school representatives
- b. university-wide representatives
- c. at-large graduate representatives
- d. transfer representatives
- e. international representatives
- f. first-year representatives

Sec. 4.3 SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY. The assembly shall be chaired by the speaker of the assembly, elected from the sitting membership of the assembly.

Sec. 4.4 LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE OF THE ASSEMBLY. The assembly board shall serve as the leadership committee of the assembly.

Sec. 4.5 COMPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLY BOARD. Sitting members of the assembly board shall include the speaker of the assembly, who shall serve as the presiding officer, and the chairs of the standing committees of the Assembly.

Sec. 4.6 COLLEGE AND SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES - DETERMINING NUMBER AND PROPORTIONALITY. The total number of college and school representatives shall be annually determined proportionally to the total number of students enrolled in each college at The University of Texas at Austin.

- a. The total number of college and school representatives shall be determined by the speaker of the assembly based upon the enrollment data available from the enrollment figures from the previous fall term of each school year as published by the university's Institutional Reporting, Research, and Information Systems.

- b. The total number of college and school representatives shall be determined based upon a 1:1500 ratio of college and school representatives at-large to students.

Sec. 4.7 COLLEGE AND SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES - TERM. Each college and school shall have a number of apportioned representatives to be elected by and charged with representing the students of that college or school.

- a. The representatives will serve for one-year terms to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 4.8 COLLEGE AND SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES - MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS IN-RESIDENCE ELIGIBILITY. Representatives from the colleges and schools must have completed a minimum of 12 semester hours if an undergraduate student or nine hours if a graduate student in-residence at the university.

Sec. 4.9 COLLEGE AND SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES - ENROLLMENT IN COLLEGE OR SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY. Representatives must be enrolled in a major in the college or school that they represent while filing and while holding office.

Sec. 4.10 UNIVERSITY-WIDE REPRESENTATIVES. Eight university-wide representatives shall be elected at-large by the student body and serve one-year terms in the assembly to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 4.11 MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS IN-RESIDENCE ELIGIBILITY FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE REPRESENTATIVES. University-wide representatives must have completed a minimum of 12 semester hours if an undergraduate student or nine hours if a graduate student in-residence at the university.

Sec. 4.12 TRANSFER REPRESENTATIVES. Two transfer representatives shall be elected from the undergraduate transfer student body, as defined by the Office of the Registrar, and serve one-year terms in the assembly.

Sec. 4.13 MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFER REPRESENTATIVES. Transfer representatives must have completed a minimum of 30 semester hours at a previous institution of higher education.

Sec. 4.14 AT-LARGE GRADUATE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES. Two representatives shall be elected from the entire graduate school class at-large and serve one-year terms in the assembly to begin at noon on the first Tuesday of April and to end the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 4.15 MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS IN-RESIDENCE ELIGIBILITY FOR AT-LARGE GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVES. At-large graduate representatives must have completed a minimum of nine semester hours in-residence at the university.

Sec. 4.16 INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE. One International student representative shall be elected from the entire international student body, as defined by the Office of the Registrar, and serve a one-year term in the assembly.

Sec. 4.17 MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS IN-RESIDENCE ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE. International student representatives must have completed a minimum of 12 semester hours if an undergraduate student or nine hours if a graduate student in-residence at the university.

Sec. 4.18 FIRST-YEAR REPRESENTATIVES. Two representatives shall be elected from the incoming class of undergraduate first-year students (including first-year freshmen and undergraduate transfer students to the university as so defined by the Office of the Registrar).

Sec. 4.19 FIRST-YEAR REPRESENTATIVES' TERMS OF OFFICE. First-year representatives shall begin their terms at noon on the first Tuesday of October and end at noon the following first Tuesday of April.

Sec. 4.20 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSEMBLY. Ex-officio members of the assembly include all members of the executive branch and the judicial branch.

- a. Ex-officio members of the assembly also include the presidents of the Senate of College Councils, the Graduate Student Assembly, and Campus Events and Entertainment.

Sec. 4.21 NAMING OF ADDITIONAL EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY. The speaker may, with the approval of the assembly, name additional ex-officio members of the assembly outside of those listed within this constitution.

Sec. 4.22 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSEMBLY TERMS OF OFFICE. Ex-officio members of the assembly shall serve a term of office to begin from the time they are officially recognized as such and end at noon the first Tuesday in April. Ex-officio members of the assembly serve without a vote in the assembly.

Sec. 4.23 DUTIES, POWERS, AND AUTHORITY OF THE ASSEMBLY. The Student Government assembly shall possess the following enumerated duties, powers, and authorities:

- a. Action outside of these enumerated duties, powers, and authorities is void.
- b. The assembly shall pass legislation to represent the official voice of the student body in matters directly affecting students and define official Student Government policies, positions, and stances.
 - i. Final action on legislation must be completed within a current term of the assembly as a body.
 - ii. Matters that are not passed and approved within the annual term of each assembly are considered expired.
- c. The assembly shall represent and advocate on behalf of all students in university-related matters directly affecting students at the university before all audiences including, but not limited to, the administration of The University of Texas at Austin, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, the City of Austin, and the Texas Legislature.
- d. The budget of the Student Government must be presented to and approved by the assembly.

- e. The assembly shall be responsible for the proper and prudent distribution of Student Government funds.
- f. The assembly shall maintain funds for distribution to student organizations and for special Student Government projects.
- g. The assembly shall be responsible for approval of the policy directors.
 - i. The assembly will vote on each presidential appointment that requires assembly approval by the second assembly meeting of the new academic year.
 - ii. The assembly may deny approval of an appointment only for good cause shown.
- h. Any appointment approved by the assembly may be reversed for good cause shown by a two-thirds majority of total sitting representatives of the assembly.
- i. The assembly shall have the power to create a temporary assembly ad hoc advisory office or committee when deemed necessary and proper.
 - i. The term of all assembly advisory offices or committees expires at noon the first Tuesday in April, unless earlier terminated by a simple majority vote of the assembly.
- j. No formal action can be taken by the assembly without a quorum present, which shall consist of two-thirds of the total sitting representatives in the assembly.
- k. The assembly shall have the power to convene itself by written request approved in writing by one-third of total sitting representatives in the assembly and to not convene itself by written request approved in writing by two-thirds of the total sitting representatives in the assembly.
 - i. Requests under this section are actionable upon delivery to the assembly clerks.
- l. The assembly shall meet at least every two weeks during the fall and spring semesters, on a specific day and time to be set by the speaker of the assembly.
 - i. The first meeting of the new assembly body each year shall be on the first Tuesday in April at a time to be set by the incoming student body president.
 - ii. The final meeting of the outgoing assembly body each year shall adjourn sine die before the first Tuesday in April on a specific day and time to be set by the outgoing speaker of the assembly.
- m. The assembly shall have the authority to adopt legislation to authorize the executive branch to conduct a student opinion survey, assessment, questionnaire, petition, or poll (collectively "survey") to seek student perspective, input and feedback on specific issues within the scope of Student Government authority, in the manner provided in these governing documents.
 - i. Surveys to seek student perspective, input, and feedback on issues within the scope of Student Government authority must be conducted in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students.

- ii. Surveys take the form of written or electronic questionnaires but do not include in person interviews or focus groups. A questionnaire or petition will be considered a survey based on the information it elicits, regardless of its length.
- iii. Even one-question surveys are subject to review by the Office of the Dean of Students if they ask for information about university community members' attitudes or experiences with the intent of analyzing the information to understand broader patterns.

Sec. 4.24 COLLEGE OR SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE VACANCIES. Vacancies of a representative seat of a college or school shall be filled by the respective college council, within a period of 30 days after the seat becomes vacant.

- a. Within the period of 30 days after a seat becomes vacant, college councils may refer the vacancy back to the Assembly Board to fill the vacancy by appointment subject to the approval of the assembly.

Sec. 4.25 UNFILLED VACANCIES, UNIVERSITY-WIDE, AT-LARGE GRADUATE, TRANSFER, INTERNATIONAL, AND FIRST-YEAR VACANCIES. If a vacancy longer than 30 days cannot be filled by the appropriate college council; or if within the 30-day period the appropriate college council refers the vacancy back to the assembly board; or if the vacancy is in a university-wide, at-large graduate, transfer representative, international representative, or first-year representative seat; the assembly board shall fill the vacancy by appointment, subject to the approval of the assembly.

Sec. 4.26 APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE REQUIREMENTS. All appointed representatives must meet the same requirements as the elected representatives.

Sec. 4.27 PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE. The assembly may determine the rules of its proceedings and parliamentary procedure.

Sec. 4.28 ONE VOTE PER REPRESENTATIVE. Each representative shall have one vote.

Sec. 4.29 NO SECRET BALLOTS. No secret ballots shall be taken by the Student Government assembly nor any of its sub-entities and committees.

Article V: The Judicial Branch

Sec. 5.1 VESTMENT OF JUDICIAL POWER. All enumerated judicial powers and authority shall be vested in the judicial branch.

- a. Powers not expressly provided are outside of the authority of the judicial branch.
- b. The judicial branch shall have the power to interpret and enforce the Student Government governing documents (constitution and code of rules and procedures) and the Student Government specific election code, and to review the authority and procedural consistency of actions taken within the jurisdiction of Student Government.

Sec. 5.2 COMPOSITION OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH. The judicial branch shall be comprised of the supreme court of Student Government and judicial clerks.

Sec. 5.3 COMPOSITION OF THE SUPREME COURT. The supreme court shall consist of five justices appointed by the student body president subject to approval by a two-thirds majority vote of total sitting representatives in the assembly.

Sec. 5.4 ELECTION OF CHIEF JUSTICE. The supreme court shall elect a chief justice from among its members at the first meeting of the supreme court each year which shall convene at noon on the first Tuesday in April.

- a. The duties of the chief justice include responsibility for organizing and presiding over judicial reviews, appeals and questions to ensure that the rules of the supreme court set forth in the code of rules and procedures and the governing practices for the court are always followed.
- b. If the office of chief justice becomes vacant, the court shall immediately elect a new chief justice from among its members.

Sec. 5.5 PROHIBITION ON CONCURRENT SERVICE OUTSIDE OF THE SUPREME COURT.

Justices shall not hold any concurrent position within the executive or legislative branches of Student Government.

Sec. 5.6 MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS IN-RESIDENCE ELIGIBILITY FOR JUSTICES. Justices must have completed at least 12 semester hours in-residence at the university if an undergraduate or nine hours in-residence if a graduate student.

Sec. 5.7 GOOD STANDING REQUIRED TO SERVE ON SUPREME COURT. Justices must not be on academic or disciplinary probation at the time of appointment or while serving.

Sec. 5.8 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF LAW STUDENTS SERVING AS JUSTICES. No more than three justices shall be students enrolled in the School of Law.

Sec. 5.9 ACADEMIC LIFETIME APPOINTMENT. Justices shall serve for the entire duration of their enrollment until they resign, become ineligible to serve, or are removed for material failure to fulfill the duties of office.

Sec. 5.10 APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICES. The student body president shall appoint justices to fill vacant positions subject to approval by a two-thirds majority vote of total sitting representatives in the assembly.

- a. The sitting justices of the court may make a recommendation to the student body president for a nominee to fill a vacancy; however, the student body president has the final authority on all nominations to the appointment process.

Sec. 5.11 FAMILIARITY WITH RESOURCES. All nominees for justices must be familiar with the resources required to perform the duties of the position, including, but not limited to, the Student Government constitution, the code of rules and procedures, the Student Government specific election code, and the rules of parliamentary procedure used by the assembly.

Sec. 5.12 TRAINING OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH. The chief justice shall work with the Office of the Dean of Students to organize and schedule all training necessary for effective functioning of the

judicial branch.

Sec. 5.13 ANTICIPATED VACANCIES ON THE SUPREME COURT. If a vacancy on the court is anticipated, the student body president may initiate nomination and confirmation proceedings up to six months in advance of the anticipated vacancy.

- a. A nominee confirmed in this way shall not begin serving as a justice until a vacancy in the court arises.

Sec. 5.14 CLERKS. The supreme court may select up to five non-voting clerks for the school year to aid the court.

Sec. 5.15 DUTIES, POWERS, AND AUTHORITY OF THE SUPREME COURT. The Student Government supreme court shall possess the enumerated following duties, powers, and authority:

- a. Action outside of these enumerated duties, powers, and authority is void.
- b. No formal action may be taken by the court without a quorum present which shall consist of at least three sitting justices.
- c. In conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students, the supreme court shall have original jurisdiction in all cases over which Student Government has control arising under this constitution, the Student Government code of rules and procedures and governing practices for the court, as well as any matter concerning controlling authority upon the acts of Student Government.
- d. The court shall hear all cases in which any student, faculty member, staff member, administrator, or student organization at The University of Texas at Austin brings an actionable complaint where there is sufficient good cause to believe there has been a material failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities mandated in the Student Government constitution, the Student Government code of rules and procedures, other official governing documents or controlling authorities.
 - i. Beyond cases where there is good cause to believe there has been a material failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities mandated in the Student Government constitution and Student Government code of rules and procedures, the court has no authority to investigate or take any form of action against a student accused of any violation of any rule or regulation of The University of Texas at Austin or The University of Texas System.
- e. Upon a finding that there has been a material failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities mandated in the Student Government constitution and Student Government code of rules and procedures approved by a two-thirds majority vote of total sitting representatives in the assembly, the supreme court shall have the power to issue appropriate decisions and rulings to remedy the violation and bring Student Government into compliance in all matters properly brought before it.

- f. The supreme court shall certify the validity of signatures of all petitions filed with Student Government for referendum or initiative in a timely manner.

Sec. 5.16 PERSUASIVE VALUE OF SUPREME COURT OPINIONS. Published opinions and rulings of the supreme court shall have persuasive, but not controlling, precedential value in subsequent proceedings of the supreme court.

Sec. 5.17 PRECEDENTIAL VALUE OF SUPREME COURT OPINIONS. Published opinions and rulings of the supreme court shall have binding precedential value over subsequent proceedings of the Election Supervisory Board.

Sec. 5.18 ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPREME COURT RULES AND REGULATIONS. The supreme court order of proceedings shall be governed by the rules of the supreme court set forth in the code of rules and procedures.

- a. The supreme court may establish its own non-substantive procedural practices for the court, as may be necessary and shall make the procedural practices for the court publicly available on the official Student Government website.

Sec. 5.19 SUPREME COURT JOURNAL AND OPINIONS. The supreme court shall maintain an official journal of its proceedings and shall issue written opinions in all cases brought before it.

- a. The court shall make all opinions it has rendered publicly available on the official Student Government website.
- b. A court opinion shall be made publicly available within one week of the court's decision in each case.

Article VI: Elections

Sec. 6.1 ANNUAL SPRING CAMPUS WIDE GENERAL ELECTIONS. Campus wide general elections shall be held on the Monday and Tuesday of the week two weeks before the start of the university's Spring Break as reflected by the official university academic calendar, in accordance with the Campus Wide Election Code.

- a. In conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students, the Election Supervisory Board shall oversee the spring general campus wide elections for Student Government.

Sec. 6.2 PUBLIC NOTICE OF ELECTABLE SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY. The speaker of the assembly shall submit the number of electable seats within the assembly (including university at-large seats) to the editor of *The Daily Texan* at least four weeks before the annual spring general election.

Sec. 6.3 VOTE ELIGIBILITY BY THE STUDENT BODY IN GENERAL ELECTIONS. Each student may vote for candidates running for student body president and student body vice president, candidates running for their respective college or school in the Assembly, and candidates running for university-wide representative.

- a. Each transfer, international, and graduate student as defined by the Office of the Registrar may vote for candidates running in those respective representative elections.

Sec. 6.4 ANNUAL FALL FIRST-YEAR STUDENT GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS. Elections for the two representatives by and from the incoming class of undergraduate students shall be held on one weekday during the third full week of September.

- a. In conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students, the Election Supervisory Board shall oversee the annual fall first year student elections of the first-year representatives.

Sec. 6.5 FILING FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENT ELECTIONS. Filing shall begin the day before the first full day of classes of the fall term and last for three full weeks.

Sec. 6.6 CAMPAIGNING FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENT ELECTIONS. Campaigning shall begin the day after the filing deadline and last for one full week.

- a. All campaign regulations shall be determined by the election code of the Student Government.

Sec. 6.7 VOTE ELIGIBILITY BY THE STUDENT BODY IN FIRST-YEAR ELECTIONS. First-year students may vote for the first-year representative candidates from the incoming class of undergraduate first-year students.

Sec. 6.8 CALLING SPECIAL ELECTIONS. The student body president or the assembly by a three fourths vote shall have the power to call one special election each year in April.

Sec. 6.9 CERTIFYING RESULTS OF SINGLE-WINNER ELECTIONS. In calculating the votes of any single-winner race, the candidate(s) who receives the most votes shall be certified in the respective position.

Sec. 6.10 CERTIFYING RESULTS OF MULTIPLE-WINNER ELECTIONS. In calculating the votes of any multiple-winner race, a single transferable voting system will be used as enumerated in the election code.

- a. The candidates who receive the most votes shall be certified in the respective positions.
- b. If, at any point in the count, the number of continuing candidates equals the number of remaining unfilled positions, the continuing candidates shall be certified in the respective positions.

Sec. 6.11 NO MINIMUM NUMBER OF VOTES. There shall be no constitutional provision requiring a minimum number of voters participating in any general or special election to validate that election.

Sec. 6.12 ADHERENCE TO CAMPUS-WIDE ELECTION CODE AND RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY FOR STUDENT GOVERNMENT-SPECIFIC ELECTION CODE. Student Government shall adhere to the provisions of the Campus-Wide Election Code, as annually published by the Office of the Dean of Students, in so far as much as it does not contravene the standing provisions of the Student Government specific election code.

Sec. 6.13 PROHIBITION ON IMPLEMENTING RULES WITHIN EIGHT WEEKS. No Student Government specific election code election rules may be enacted within eight weeks before an election, unless otherwise determined by the Office of the Dean of Students.

Sec. 6.14 ORIGINAL JURISDICTION OF ELECTION SUPERVISORY BOARD. Election disputes and

grievances shall first be heard by the Election Supervisory Board organized by the Office of the Dean of Students.

Sec. 6.15 SOLE APPELLATE AND SUPREME ELECTION JURISDICTION. The following bodies shall have the stated election jurisdiction:

- a. The Election Supervisory Board shall possess primary review jurisdiction in all Student Government election disputes.
- b. The Student Government supreme court shall possess appellate jurisdiction in all Student Government election disputes.
- c. The Office of the Dean of Students will have the final determination in all election disputes.

Sec. 6.16 APPEALS OF ELECTION SUPERVISORY BOARD DECISIONS. Decisions of the Election Supervisory Board may be appealed and heard by the supreme court on the basis that the appellant brings forth an actionable complaint regarding an action or ruling of the Election Supervisory Board.

- a. The rulings by the Election Supervisory Board in election disputes may have persuasive, but not controlling, precedential value in appeals to the supreme court.

Article VII: Impeachment and Removal of Officers

Sec. 7.1. GENERAL. Impeachment and removal of the officers listed in Section 7.2 occurs in a two-step process. First, the Assembly must pass impeachment legislation pursuant to Section 7.3.

Second, the Assembly must hold a removal hearing pursuant to Section 7.4.

Sec. 7.2 QUALIFICATIONS FOR IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE. Student Government officers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches may be impeached and removed from office for a material failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities mandated in this constitution. The impeachment and removal process can only be used for the Student Government officers listed in this section.

- a. Executive branch officers for this section consist of the elected student body president, student body vice president, and the executive board directors.
- b. Legislative branch officers for this section consist of the speaker of the assembly and standing committee chairs.
- c. The Judicial branch officers for this section consist of the supreme court justices.
 - i. Should the chief justice be impeached solely for a material failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities mandated for the office of the chief justice, they shall not be removed as a justice of the supreme court.

Sec. 7.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPEACHMENT LEGISLATION. Impeachment legislation must be sponsored by a voting member of the assembly.

- a. A three fourths majority vote of total sitting representatives in the assembly shall be necessary for impeachment.

Sec. 7.4 REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS. In the event of impeachment, removal hearings shall take place in the next meeting of the Assembly as the first order of business.

- a. The chief justice of the supreme court shall preside at such hearings unless the chief justice is the subject of the hearing; in which case the procedural rules of the supreme court and governing practices for the court shall determine the presiding officer.
- b. A three fourths majority vote of total sitting representatives in the assembly shall be necessary for removal.

Sec. 7.5 OPEN IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS. Impeachment and removal hearings shall be open to the public.

Article VIII: Initiative and Referendum

Sec. 8.1 STUDENT BODY GOVERNING DOCUMENT INITIATIVE PROCESS. Any member of the student body at large may call for a vote of the student body to adopt, amend or repeal specific provisions of this constitution, the Student Government code of rules and procedures, and Student Government Specific Election Code by means of a call for governing document initiative petition.

- a. Any one governing document initiative petition shall pertain to one specific subject.
- b. A valid petition initiates the call for governing document initiative.
 - i. To be valid, the call for governing document initiative petition must be signed by 30 percent of the total number of valid ballots cast by students in the most recent general election of Student Government.
 - ii. To be valid, the call for governing document initiative petition must be approved by the Office of the Dean of Students and contain the exact wording in its entirety.
- c. Once a petition seeking a governing document initiative has been found to be valid, the proposition to adopt, amend or repeal specific provisions of the Student Government constitution, code of rules and procedures or specific election code shall be presented to a vote of the student body at the next scheduled election, where a majority of the students voting shall be needed for approval.
- d. Amendments to the Student Government constitution, code of rules and procedures, or specific election code adopted by student governing document initiative shall not take effect before the first class day of the fall term following final approvals for governing document amendments outlined within Sections 9.1 and 9.2 of this Article IX, unless otherwise dictated by the Office of the Dean of Students.

Sec. 8.2 STUDENT BODY LEGISLATION REFERENDUM PROCESS. Any member of the student body at large may call for a vote of the student body to amend or repeal specific legislation enacted by the assembly by means of a call for referendum petition.

- a. Any one petition to amend or repeal legislation shall pertain to one specific legislation enacted by the assembly. A valid petition initiates the call for referendum.

- i. To be valid, the call for referendum petition must be signed by 30 percent of the total number of valid ballots cast by students in the most recent general election of Student Government.
 - ii. To be valid, the text of the call for referendum petition must be approved by the Office of the Dean of Students and must contain the exact wording of the referendum in its entirety.
- b. Once a petition seeking a referendum on a piece of legislation enacted by the assembly has been found to be valid, that piece of legislation shall be suspended pending the outcome of the referendum election.
- c. The referendum shall be presented to a vote by the student body at the next scheduled election, where a majority of the students voting shall be needed for approval.
- d. Legislation adopted by student body vote through a referendum shall not be subject to presidential veto, nor can it be repealed by the assembly until at least one calendar year has passed since the elections at which it was enacted.
- e. Legislation adopted by student body vote through a referendum shall not take effect before the final administrative approvals required for Assembly legislation outlined in the Student Government constitution or code of rules and procedures.

Sec. 8.3 ASSEMBLY ACTION TO CALL A STUDENT OPINION REFERENDUM. The assembly, by majority vote, may pass a bill calling for a poll of the student body at large at a general or special election to assess student opinion on any pending action over which Student Government has authority.

- a. To be valid, a bill calling for a poll of the student body at large at a general or special election must go through regular order with appropriate committee referral, review, and report.
 - i. Fast track of a bill calling for a poll of the student body at large at a general or special election is not permitted.
 - ii. To be valid, the text of the pending action, the bill calling for a poll of the student body at a general or special election, and the ballot language for the student opinion referendum must be approved in advance by the Office of the Dean of Students.
 - iii. To be valid, the ballot language of any student opinion poll referendum must be approved for meaningful statistical validity by the Office of the Dean of Students.
- b. A valid call for a poll of the student body at large may be presented to the student body at the next general or special election.

Article IX: Amendments

Sec. 9.1 APPROVAL PROCESS FOR STUDENT-LED AMENDMENTS TO THE GOVERNING DOCUMENTS. Elements of the Student Government governing documents may not be suspended by action of any component of Student Government. Amendments to the Student Government

governing documents shall undergo the following process in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System:

- a. The text of proposed amendments to the Student Government governing documents must be approved by the Office of the Dean of Students before introduction and proposal in the Student Government assembly.
- b. The text of a bill of amendment to the Student Government governing documents as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, must be made publicly available with the assembly agenda on the official Student Government website by 12 noon, on the Friday not less than one week before its introduction on first reading at an assembly meeting.
- c. Legislation on proposed amendments to the Student Government governing documents must go through regular order with appropriate committee referral, review, and report.
 - i. Termination of committee process of reviewing, researching, editing, and reporting a bill of amendment legislation after its assignment by the speaker, and placement on the assembly agenda for second reading by "discharge petition," is not permitted.
- d. The text of bills amending the Student Government governing documents must be made publicly available with the assembly agenda on the official Student Government website by 12 noon, on the Friday not less than one week before its introduction on second reading for approval at an assembly meeting.
- e. Proposal and approval on second reading by a two-thirds majority of total sitting representatives of the Student Government assembly,
- f. Submit a finalized copy of the updated Student Government governing document with proposed changes noted, a copy of the current Student Government governing documents, notes from the rules and procedures committee and/or other committees involved, and minutes from the Student Government assembly meeting in which the vote for approval was taken for review to the student governance organization advisor,
- g. Approval of the finalized copy of the updated Student Government governing documents with proposed changes noted by The University of Texas at Austin Office of the Dean of Students,
- h. Approval by The University of Texas at Austin vice president for student affairs,
- i. Ratification of amendments by a simple majority vote of students at the next scheduled Student Government campus-wide election, and
- j. Approval of amendments by the president of The University of Texas at Austin.

Sec. 9.2 ENACTMENT OF GOVERNING DOCUMENT AMENDMENTS. Upon receiving final approval by the Student Government assembly, ratification in a student body referendum, and final approvals required within Section 9.1 of this article, all proposed governing document amendments shall take effect on the first class day of the fall term following their adoption and approval unless the vice president for student affairs of the university and the president of the university determine that

there are compelling circumstances essential to the operation of Student Government that require an earlier effective date.

Sec. 9.3 PUBLIC INSPECTION OF GOVERNING DOCUMENT AMENDMENTS. Any proposed amendment to the Student Government governing documents shall be made available for public inspection a minimum of two weeks before the election.

- a. A proposed amendment, together with the parts of the governing documents affected, shall be submitted to the editor of *The Daily Texan* at least one week before the election.

Sec. 9.4 AUTHORITY TO CORRECT ERRORS WITHOUT REFERENDUM. The assembly may adopt legislation according to this constitution and the Student Government code of rules and procedures to make technical changes to the governing documents by a two-thirds majority of total sitting representatives, limited to spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors.

- a. Amendments to this constitution, the Student Government code of rules and procedures, and specific election code to make such technical changes shall take effect upon approval by the vice president for student affairs and the president of The University of Texas at Austin.

Sec. 9.5 UNIVERSITY AUTHORITY OVER AMENDMENTS. In accordance with The University of Texas System Rule 50203: Participation in Student Government (see 2.1.3), the Office of the Dean of Students and University President have the power to amend or repeal any provision in the Student Government governing documents.

Article X: General Provisions

Sec. 10.1 NO DEFICIT EXPENDITURES. No expenditures shall be allowed that would result in a deficit in any Student Government account.

Sec. 10.2 OATH OF OFFICE. Each officer of Student Government, before entering the execution of their office, shall take the Student Government Oath of Office.

- a. The Oath of Office shall read, "*I _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of _____ of The University of Texas at Austin Student Government, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of the Student Government.*"

Sec. 10.3 PROHIBITION ON SERVING IN TWO ELECTED POSITIONS OR DUPLICITY OF OFFICERS. Two elected offices shall not be held simultaneously by the same person, nor shall two persons simultaneously hold the same elected office.

Sec. 10.4 PROHIBITION OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT ENDORSEMENTS. Student Government, as an entity, may not make any endorsements in any student elections.

Sec. 10.5 CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY. This constitution supersedes all previous constitutions of the Student Government.

Sec. 10.6 CONSISTENCY OF TRANSITION. All officials elected under the requirements of a previous constitution shall remain in their respective offices if they do exist and shall exercise their

corresponding duties and responsibilities as set forth in this constitution until their terms of office have expired.

- a. Any new offices shall be filled at the soonest possible time.

Sec. 10.7 RECOGNITION OF HIGHER CONTROLLING AUTHORITIES. This constitution and its associated rules, regulations, and amendments are subject to provisions of the rules and regulations of The University of Texas at Austin, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, laws of the State of Texas, and laws of the United States of America.

Sec. 10.8 MAINTENANCE OF SPONSORED STUDENT ORGANIZATION STATUS. The University of Texas at Austin Student Government is recognized as a sponsored student governance organization and the student body president and speaker of the assembly shall be jointly responsible for ensuring that recognition and official sponsorship of Student Government by the Office of the Dean of Students is maintained.

- a. Regents' Rules and Regulations Rule 50202 (Student Organizations) and Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities Chapter 6 (Student Organizations) provide that a student organization that wants to exercise any of the rights and privileges listed in Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities Chapter 6, Section 6-301, must apply annually to the Office of the Dean of Students to be recognized as a sponsored student organization and must meet the requirements and adhere to the standards of conduct, expectations, and responsibilities in Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities Chapter 6 and Chapter 11 (Student Conduct and Academic Integrity), together with any expectations and conditions of sponsorship required by the official sponsor.
- b. Registration or sponsorship may be reviewed, withheld, or withdrawn from organizations that violate university regulations, criteria for sponsorship, or sponsor directions.
- c. The University of Texas at Austin Student Government shall comply with all campus policies as set forth in the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

Sec. 10.9 PROHIBITION OF HAZING POLICY. State law and Section 6-404 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities define hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

- a. This behavior is strictly prohibited; therefore, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government and its officers are barred from participation in this practice, and a material failure to comply with this provision warrants a removal of individuals' membership statuses pursuant to Section 7.2 of this constitution.