

# The Constitution of the Student Government Association of Colgate University

## Preamble

We, the students of Colgate University, have come together as a self-governing body, the Student Government Association, in order to improve our experience by providing the means to advocate for our interests. As such, this Association will forge relationships that strengthen our ties with the rest of the Colgate community while uniting us as a student body. This Association will be accountable to us, transparent in its initiatives, policies, and methods, and continuous from year to year, senator to senator, and executive to executive. Through self-governance we will develop our leadership, entrepreneurial, and life skills that will serve us in our years to come.

## Article I: Definitions

The **Student Government Association**, or “the Association” or “the SGA” means the whole system of student government at Colgate, referring to all members (as defined in Article II) and leaders of the Association, as well as all institutions that comprise that government.

The **Government** means all of the branches of the governing bodies of the Association: the Executive, the Senate, the Parliamentarian, the Treasurer, the Budget Allocations Committee and Liaison.

The **Executive Board** or “the Executive” means the branch of government headed by the President, and refers to the President, the Vice-President, and all positions appointed by the President, permanent and provisional.

The **Legislature** means the branch of government consisting of the Senate, the Parliamentarian, the Treasurer, the Budget Allocations Committee (BAC) and Liaison.

The **Senate** means the representative body of the Association, and refers to all Senators, including the Speaker and all Chairs except the Liaison.

The **SGA Government Leadership** or “Leadership” means those in leadership positions within the Government: all members of the Executive, the Parliamentarian, the Treasurer, the Speaker, and all Chairs of Senate Committees.

The **Budget** refers to the sum of funds collected by the Association through the Student Activities Fee, collected each year from each member of the Association.

The **By-Laws** refer to binding and enduring resolutions of the Senate that accompany, complement, or clarify this Constitution or direct the workings of institutions within the Government.

## **Article II: Membership**

The membership of this Association shall include all current undergraduate and graduate students of Colgate University. Every member shall retain the following rights:

1. To vote in Senatorial elections, Presidential elections, and referenda.
2. To run for a Senator position, a Governance Board position, a Class Officer position, or any other position for which he or she meets the respective qualifications.
3. To have access to his or her respective Senator(s) and to have his or her concerns or ideas put forth in Senate by that Senator.
4. To attend and speak in debate at all non-closed Senate meetings, so long as he or she is not a member of the Executive, and to proxy for an absent Senator per his or her request and assume all the powers thereof.
5. To form a student group or task force and apply for BAC funding.
6. To join any non-exclusive SGA-recognized student group.
7. To attend any inclusive event.

## **Article III: The Executive Board**

### **Section I: Purpose and Composition**

The purpose of the Executive is to represent the Association to outside parties and to promote the agenda of the students. The Executive may not directly introduce legislation, but they may work with Senators to advance their agenda. The Executive shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the two Elections Commissioners, the Recording Secretary, and the Press Secretary. The President has the power to create other positions as he or she sees fit, so long as Senate approves the creation of those positions, and so long as the responsibilities and powers of those positions remain within the scope of the Executive. The Executive shall then also consist of those additional positions, which shall expire at the termination of the President's term in office.

### **A. The President and Vice President**

The President and Vice President shall be the primary figures in charge of representing the Association and its members to administrators, faculty, trustees, alumni, and all others.

The President shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To speak on behalf of the Association and the Government.
2. To attend, or to send the Vice President or some other representative of the Executive to governance board meetings.
3. To meet regularly with administrative and academic departments.
4. To keep in close contact with the Board of Trustees, and to read and report to Senate the contents of the minutes from Board meetings.
5. To attend all Senate meetings.

6. To coordinate and organize the initiation and training of Senators and other Government members at the commencement of each academic year to ensure that they possess the skills and knowledge to be effective student government leaders.
7. To set the time and designate the place for Leadership meetings, as well as to preside over Leadership meetings.
8. To appoint the Elections Commissioners, Recording Secretary, and Press Secretary, subject to Senate confirmation, and dismiss the occupants of those positions.
9. To speak in debate in the Senate on behalf of the Executive.
10. To veto any resolution passed by the Senate, which may be overridden by a two-thirds majority of Senate votes.
11. To compile a report on the past accomplishments, present state, and future goals of the Government once per semester, to be submitted to the Senate and the student body by the last Senate meeting of each semester.
12. To address the Senate at each meeting.

The Vice President shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To speak on behalf of the Association and the Government.
2. To attend Governance Board meetings when appropriate.
3. To meet regularly with administrative and academic departments.
4. To attend all Senate meetings and all Leadership meetings.
5. To publish the Senator Handbook, that shall include the Constitution, all by-laws of the Government, and any other pertinent information.
6. To cast a tie-breaking vote in the Senate.
7. To form, at the request of Senate or any administrative or faculty department, fair and balanced focus groups for the purpose of relaying student opinion and sentiment.
8. To assume the role of the Parliamentarian at Senate meetings in the event of the Parliamentarian's absence.
9. To assist the President in his or her duties generally.
10. To serve in the place of the President in his or her absence and assume the duties thereof.

#### **B. The Elections Commissioners**

The two Elections Commissioners shall oversee the Student Government Association Presidential elections, Senator elections, Class Council elections, the elections for Parliamentarian, Treasurer, Liaison, Speaker and Governance Board elections according to the rules and guidelines established herein. They shall jointly retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To set the entry deadlines and dates of elections.
2. To create and collect entry petitions of candidates.
3. To determine the eligibility of candidates according to the qualifications set by the election rule by-laws.
4. To document and report complaints or allegations during the election period to the Parliamentarian.

5. To create ballot forms and/or conduct the election.
6. To tally votes. For the Student Government Association Presidential elections, they shall tally the votes under the supervision of the Parliamentarian.
7. To attend all Leadership meetings.

### **C. The Press Secretary**

The Press Secretary is the point person for communication of the activities of the Government. He or she shall retain the following rights and responsibilities:

1. To make available to the Association all goings on of the Government.
2. To liaise with all media sources on and off campus.
3. To make a committee as he or she deems fit for assistance in accomplishing his or her job.
4. Attend all leadership meetings.

### **D. The Recording Secretary**

The Recording Secretary shall document the actions and proceedings of the Senate and Leadership meetings. He or she shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To publish the agenda, created by the Leadership, to all Senators prior to each meeting of Senate, along with any resolutions, by-laws, or amendments up for consideration during that meeting.
2. To take and prepare minutes of Senate meetings and relay them to the Press Secretary for public knowledge.
3. To keep records of attendance at Senate meetings, and to inform delinquent senators and their constituents of unexcused absenteeism.
4. To take, prepare, and submit minutes of Leadership meetings to the Leadership.

## **Section II: Officer Selection**

The President and Vice-President shall run together on a single ticket in an Association-wide election, and must receive a plurality of votes. In the event of a tie, a run-off will be held.

The President shall appoint the Elections Commissioners, the Press Secretary, the Recording Secretary, and any other positions which he or she may create. All appointments are subject to Senate confirmation. The President and Vice President shall serve one term, one academic year in length. They shall assume office on the last day of spring classes, though the President-elect may submit creations of new Executive positions and appointments of members of the Executive to Senate any time after they are elected.

## **Section III: SGA Government Leadership Meetings**

Leadership meetings shall provide the forum for collaboration between the branches of Government, although the leadership meetings shall be under the direction of the Executive. The permanent and voting members of the Leadership shall be the Executive, the Parliamentarian, the Treasurer, the Speaker, and all committee Chairs including the Liaison. All ad-hoc executive board members, ad-hoc committee chairs and all invited

guests may not vote at Leadership meetings. The President may invite others at his or her discretion. Following majority vote, leadership meetings may be open to the public.

The Leadership has the duty to set the agenda for the upcoming Senate meetings.

## **Article IV: Legislature**

### **Section I: Purpose and Composition**

The purpose of the Legislature is to facilitate student action through resolutions and agreements, to approve student groups, to allocate funds in the budget, and generally to improve the experience of members of the Association.

#### **A. The Speaker of Senate**

The Speaker shall serve as the representative of the Senate, and shall be responsible for the efficiency and the fairness of Senate. As a Senator, he or she shall retain all the powers and responsibilities of a Senator in general, as well as these in addition:

1. To set the time and designate the place for Senate meetings, which in normal circumstances shall occur once per university week, and to call special meetings of the Senate.
2. To chair and preside over meetings of the Senate while retaining the right to speak and vote.
3. To assist Senators and Committee Chairs in carrying out their duties.
4. To assign Senators to committees, and to form ad hoc committees, meaning temporary committees of Senate for select purposes, as needed.
  - a. Committee assignments shall be dually determined by Senator preference and assurance that all committees contain experienced Senate members.
  - b. The Speaker shall also assign first-time Senators mentors within their respective committees.
5. To speak on behalf of the Senate.

#### **B. The Parliamentarian**

The Parliamentarian shall keep order in Senate meetings and uphold the letter of this Constitution. He or she shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To advise all members of the Executive and Legislature on issues of constitutionality.
2. To decide on issues of constitutionality and legality, and generally uphold the Constitution and its by-laws.
3. To chair and preside over Senate meetings in the event of the absence of the Speaker of the Senate.
4. To resolve any disagreement between the two Election Commissioners.
5. To attend all Senate and Leadership meetings.

The Parliamentarian may hold no other positions in the Government.

#### **C. The Senate**

The Senate shall consist of a total of 48 Senators. Each class year will be represented by 12 elected Senators. The Senate is divided into committees, each with a designated Chair. The Senate shall collectively retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To promote the interests of the Association among administrators, faculty, students, village residents, and anyone else.
2. To pass or reject legislation and resolutions on behalf of the Association and to amend SGA Bylaws with a simple majority vote.
3. To override a Presidential veto with two-thirds support.
4. To overrule a Parliamentary ruling with regards to the Constitution, a procedural rule, or a by-law already in place, he or she may issue a challenge in front of Senate and the Senate may overrule the Parliamentary with a simple majority vote.
5. To create binding by-laws for any part or function of the Government.
6. To grant and revoke SGA-recognition of student groups and task forces.
7. To confirm or deny any budget allocation in excess of seven percent of the semester's Budget.
8. To close certain meetings from everyone except Senators, the Parliamentarian, the President and the Vice-President.
9. To elect the Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Liaison, Speaker, and Governance Board members.
10. To confirm executive appointments.
11. To hold impeachment proceedings and to subsequently remove any member of the Government from his or her position.
12. To amend this Constitution by a two-thirds vote.

The Senate shall be composed of committees fulfilling the following roles:

**a. Student Affairs**

A Committee shall discuss and resolve issues that relate to student life on campus. The Chair shall, in addition to his or her general powers and responsibilities granted to all chairs by the Senate, attend all Student Affairs and Campus Safety Governance Board meetings. Student members of the Student Affairs Governance Board shall attend all meetings, but may not vote in the committee as Senators.

**b. Academic Affairs**

A Committee shall discuss and resolve issues that relate to academics and faculty relations. The Chair shall, in addition to his or her general powers and responsibilities, attend all Academic Affairs Governance Board meetings. Student members of the Academic Affairs Governance Board shall attend all meetings, but may not vote in the committee as Senators.

**c. Government Affairs**

A Committee shall review and advise on resolutions, amendments, and by-laws coming before the Senate, and shall continually review the by-laws and workings of the Senate, the Budget Allocations Committee, and the Executive, as well as the elections procedures. The Chair shall assume all general powers and responsibilities.

**d. Student Organizations**

A Committee shall work with current and prospective groups and task forces on campus to get approval and funding. The Committee shall introduce each new group or task force's constitution to the Senate for approval. The Committee shall also be in

charge of managing and keeping records on the activity and events of groups and task forces. Additionally, the Committee shall work with groups receiving funds from the Budget to become more efficient and cost-effective. They shall also perform auditing duties to ensure that funds are spent correctly and appropriately. The Committee must report its findings to the Budget Allocations Committee upon request. When necessary, they shall recommend dissolving of inactive student groups to the Senate. The Chair, known as the Liaison, shall, in addition to his or her general powers and responsibilities, retain the powers prescribed in this document. The Chair is not a Senator, and must be elected by the outgoing Senate in the spring prior to his or her taking office.

**e. External Affairs**

A Committee shall discuss and resolve issues that relate to village businesses and residents, including off-campus students. They shall be informed of and make recommendations to the Association on issues involving the neighboring community, and shall organize events and services which will facilitate and maintain positive relations between the University and the neighboring community. The Chair shall, in addition to his or her general powers and responsibilities, attend all Bookstore Governance Board meetings and all Hamilton village town hall meetings. He or she shall be the primary liaison to the mayor and police chief, and shall therefore meet regularly with both. He or she shall also act as the chief correspondent to the student governments of other colleges and universities.

**D. The Senator**

The Senator is a representative of his or her class to the Student Senate. He or she shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To speak in debate on the Senate floor.
2. To introduce legislation and resolutions in the Senate.
3. To serve on appointed committees.
4. To vote on all matters before the Senate.

No Senator may concurrently serve as the Treasurer, the Parliamentarian, the Liaison or as a member of the Executive.

**E. The Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall oversee the Budget Allocations Committee. He or she shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To set the time and designate the place for BAC meetings.
2. To set the agenda of BAC meetings and keep order.
3. To attend all meetings of a Student Organizations Committee pertaining to SGA Organization finances.
4. To propose and sponsor relevant by-laws on the floor of the Senate.
5. To manage and keep books on the Government Operating Account.
6. To attend all Senate and Leadership meetings.

The Treasurer may hold no other positions in the Government.

**F. The Budget Allocations Committee**

The Budget Allocations Committee shall consist of seven members. Six members, diverse in their group affiliations and interests, shall be chosen through an application process. These members shall serve staggered one-year terms, with three beginning at the commencement of the school year and three at the calendar year. The remaining member will be a delegate chosen every semester by the Senate as they see fit. The Budget Allocations Committee shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To allocate funds to SGA-recognized student groups, the COVE, Class Councils, SGA-recognized Task Forces, the SGA Government, Maroon News, CUTV, and WRCU.
2. To approve budget allocations that constitute seven percent or less of that semester's Budget and to propose budget allocations to the Senate that are in excess of seven percent of that semester's Budget.

#### **G. The Liaison to Student Organizations**

The Liaison shall oversee SGA Student Organizations and Task Forces. He or she shall retain the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To set the time, designate the place, and preside over all joint meetings of the Presidents and leaders of SGA-recognized groups.
2. To subpoena receipts and financial records of any group receiving funds from the Budget.
3. To chair a Committee dealing with issues pertaining to Student Organizations in the Senate.

The Liaison may hold no other positions in the Government.

### **Section II: Officer, Senator, and BAC Member Selection**

All terms for these positions are one academic year in length, unless otherwise specified.

**A. The Speaker** shall be elected by the incoming Senate every semester, and shall serve a term of one semester. Any current Senator may run for the position; the winning candidate must win a plurality of votes. In the event of a tie, run off elections will be held. To qualify, the Speaker must have served at least two prior semesters in Senate or on the Executive Board. If less than two qualified individuals declare candidacy for Speaker, then the election for that position will be open to any current Senator.

**B. The Parliamentarian and Treasurer** shall be elected the academic year prior to their taking office by the outgoing Senate and the outgoing permanent Executive, who, for this election and this election only, may participate in the debate and vote. The outgoing Parliamentarian and Treasurer are invited to give formal recommendations to the Senate and Executive in regards to the candidates for the two positions. Each shall run separately; to win, each candidate must win a plurality of votes. In the event of a tie, run off elections will be held. To qualify, the Parliamentarian must have served at least two semesters in Senate. The Treasurer must have served at least one semester on the Budget Allocations Committee. Any member of the Association, including those not currently serving in the Government in any capacity, may run for either position so long as he or she is qualified. If less than two qualified individuals declare candidacy for a position, then the candidacy for that position will be open to any member of the Association.

**C. The Liaison** may be any member of the Association but may not serve in any other Government position during his or her term. The outgoing Liaison is invited to give a formal recommendation to the Senate in regards to the candidates for the position. Any member of the Association, including those not currently serving in the Government in any capacity, may run for either position so long as he or she is qualified. If less than two qualified individuals declare candidacy for a position, then the candidacy for that position will be open to any member of the Association.

**D. Senators** shall be elected by their respective class years at the beginning of each academic year. The top 12 candidates receiving pluralities of the vote per class year shall be declared the winners. Each student shall be allowed to vote for up to 6 candidates from his or her respective class year. In the event of a tie between the twelfth, thirteenth, or more candidates, a run off will be held.

**E. Senator Vacancies or Removal:** If a given constituency is not satisfied with their respective Senator, they can call a new election by submitting a petition stating their wishes signed by one-twelfth of the constituents. At that point, the Senator shall retain his or her position until the Elections Commissioners conduct a new election, which shall occur as soon as possible. The relinquished Senator reserves the right to run in that election. If a Senator resigns his or her position for any reason, the Elections Commissioners shall immediately conduct an election to fill his or her space.

**F. The Chair of each Senate Committee** shall be elected by that Committee at the commencement of each academic year, with the exception of a Student Organizations Committee, which shall be chaired by the Senate-elected Liaison.

**G. Budget Allocations Committee Members** must apply and are selected the semester before they assume their positions. A Student Organizations Committee shall run and oversee the application process, and also screen applications. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, Liaison, Parliamentarian, and Speaker shall jointly select the members from among the screened applications and present them for Senate confirmation. The seventh member must be a delegate chosen by the Senate the semester before he or she assumes his or her position and will serve a term of one semester. The BAC may not consist of any members of the Executive. Membership in the BAC does not confer the title or status of Senator to its members.

## **Article V: SGA-Recognized Organizations**

There are two types of organizations: Student Groups and Task Forces.

Student Groups must form around some common interest or goal. They must produce a written constitution describing their mission and inner-workings, including officer selection procedures. They may not discriminate on the basis of creed, sexual orientation, race, physical disability, age, nationality or ethnicity. Exclusive or selective Student Groups must receive a special designation as such, which the Budget Allocations

Committee shall consider when allocating funds to that group. Each student group must complete and return all written requests by the Senate's Student Organizations Committee to maintain its status as SGA-recognized.

Task Forces must form around some common goal, and are temporary by nature. They must produce a written plan of action describing their mission and designating those individuals responsible for carrying out that mission, as well as any leadership positions within the task force. They must also designate a date of termination. The mission of the Task Force must be inclusive, meaning every member of the Association is welcome to take part in the planning if feasible, and every member of the Association is welcome to attend the event planned or enjoy the end product. Task Forces do not have memberships per se. Nonetheless, they may not discriminate on the basis of creed, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or gender.

## **Article VI: Governance Boards**

Governance Board members shall be elected in the spring of the academic year prior to their taking office. Students unable to commit for an entire year may run in complementary pairs. Members of the Association shall declare their candidacies for Governance Board positions by submitting limited statements to the Senate. On Election Day candidates shall have the opportunity to address Senate. Each Senator shall be designated one vote per Governance Board position open. Those candidates receiving the most votes shall assume the designated number of positions on their respective Governance Boards. The Elections Commissioners shall oversee these elections.

Candidates for the University Student Conduct Board shall be screened and vetted by the University Conduct Officer, Vice President and Parliamentarian, and those remaining shall be elected by the Senate. The term shall be one academic year in length.

Student members of the Student Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board must attend all Senate meetings throughout the year, and attend all respective Senate committee meetings. No student may serve on both the Student Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board concurrently.

The student members of each Governance Board, with the exception of the University Student Conduct Board, must collectively submit a report of that Board's goals and accomplishments to the President and the Speaker by the eighth week of each semester.

If the Senate becomes aware of the habitual delinquency of a Governance Board member, they may remove him or her and hold a new election to fill that vacancy. Prior to taking action, the Senate must consult with the chair of the delinquent member's Governance Board.

## **Article VII: Class Councils**

Each class shall elect four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and five class council members. The Elections Commissioners shall oversee these elections.

These Class Councils shall act as coordinating and event-planning bodies. Students involved in class councils shall work with the Executive and the Dean of the College staff.

### **Article VIII: Conduct and Responsibility of Elected Members of the Government**

The Leadership, Senators, Budget Allocations Committee members, Governance Board members, and Class Council members shall always act in the best interest of the Student Government Association. They shall conduct themselves in a manner becoming of an elected official, and shall always treat one another with respect. They shall be honest and forthright with their peers and their superiors. Finally, they shall respect this Constitution and carry out its letter fully and without exception.

### **Article IX: By-Laws**

This Constitution shall be accompanied by a full set of By-laws under which the governance structure shall operate.

### **Article X: Amendments**

Amendments to the Constitution may be introduced and sponsored by Senators. Each requires a two-thirds vote by the Senate, not subject to veto by the President. A period of at least 13 days must pass between the introduction of the Amendment to the Constitution and the vote on that Amendment, during which time Senators may consult their respective constituencies and other members of the Association. Any amendments shall be dated and cited in this section of this Constitution.

A majority vote is required to make amendments to and to implement By-laws.

### **Addendum:**

This Constitution shall be put into effect May 4, 2007.