



**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION**

*Approved by the Student Senate: April 2020
Ratified by the University President: May 2020*

MISSION: *Student Senate will cultivate a student body that is engaged, healthy, and empowered.*

PREAMBLE:

We, the members of the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, being determined to ensure the conveyance of the student voice to University governing bodies, the administration, and the Board of Trustees in matters of institutional policies; to establish an effective, efficient, responsible, and responsive student government; retain the authority to appoint student representation to University Committees at the request of faculty governance or University administration; to be a body of dedicated, proactive leaders; to represent all students and their diverse, ever-changing needs; do hereby ratify this Constitution.

Article I. MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Section I.01 Meetings of the General Assembly shall be defined as a meeting of members of the entire Student Senate, including the Cabinet, consisting of a quorum of the members.*
- Section I.02 All meetings of the General Assembly shall be open.*
- Section I.03 The Student Senate speaks on behalf of the student body through formal votes on issues that come before the Student Senate, discussed in an open process.*
- Section I.04 A quorum shall be defined as fifty-percent plus one (50%+1) of members elected or appointed, currently serving, in attendance. So long as a quorum has been established and maintained, a majority of the General Assembly shall be fifty-percent plus one (50%+1) of those members present.*

Article II. MEMBERSHIP

Section II.01 All members of the Student Senate must:

- a. Be a currently enrolled student at Grand Valley State University during the semester in which they serve.
- b. Be elected during the annual elections process or appointed by the membership of the General Assembly.
- c. Maintain a minimum of a two-point-two-five (2.25) cumulative grade point average on a zero (0) to four-point-zero (4.0) scale.
 - i. Members of the Cabinet must maintain a minimum of a two-point-five (2.5) cumulative grade point average.
- d. Remain available to attend meetings of the General Assembly.
- e. Remain in good standing with the Student Senate.
- f. Meet these requirements, or the member will be removed.

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Section II.02 Senate Composition

- a. The Student Senate will be composed of fifty (50) members, forty-four (44) to be elected to one year terms by the Grand Valley State University student body at large. Six (6) seats will remain reserved for students in their first semester at Grand Valley State University.

Article III. CABINET

Section III.01 Mission

- a. The Cabinet shall act as an advisory board, making suggestions and recommendations to the General Assembly, including the Student Senate operating budget, yearly goals, objectives, and ongoing committee operations.

Section III.02 Defining the Cabinet

- a. The Cabinet will be elected by the General Assembly.
 - i. Elections for Cabinet positions will occur not more than two (2) weeks after the General Election.
- b. The Cabinet of the Student Senate shall include the President, the Executive Vice President, Vice President for Senate Resources, Vice President for Allocations, Vice President for Public Relations, Vice President for Campus Affairs, Vice President for Educational Affairs, Vice President for Diversity Affairs, and Vice President for External Relations.
- c. Cabinet members will remain active once they are elected and sworn in until the end of the winter semester or until their successor is elected, whichever comes later. Cabinet members are required to assist in the transition of the newly elected Cabinet.
- d. Vacancies of a Cabinet member shall be elected from the General Assembly.

Section III.03 Cabinet Roles and Responsibilities

- a. All Cabinet members shall serve as voting members of the Student Senate, with the exception of the Chair.
 - i. The Chair will only vote in the case of a tie.
- b. All Cabinet members shall serve as voting members of the Cabinet, with the exception of the Chair.
 - i. The Chair will only vote in the case of a tie.
- c. After Cabinet elections have concluded, the new Cabinet shall appoint Senators-elect to the Student Senate Standing Committees.
- d. The Cabinet shall be able to enter into closed session during an open meeting of the Cabinet by a majority vote (50%+1) of present Cabinet members to:
 - i. Appoint Senators to the Student Senate Standing Committees or transfers, only if directed by the requesting Senator.
 - ii. Appoint Subcommittee Chairs.
 - iii. Consider the disciplining of Senate members.

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- iv. Consider the selection and/or evaluation of the Student Senate Executive Assistant.
- v. Consider the relationship between the Student Senate and the staff advisor.
- vi. Hear personal concerns by a requesting Senator.
- e. The Cabinet may determine who may remain in the room during a closed session, with the input of the requesting Senator, if applicable.
- f. In keeping with the confidential nature of closed sessions, no member of the Cabinet shall disclose the content of discussions that take place during such sessions. The only exceptions will be discussions with the staff advisor, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, or University legal counsel.

Section III.04 President

- a. The President for Student Senate must have fulfilled one (1) elected term on the Student Senate General Assembly prior to their election to the position of President.
 - i. An elected term is defined as one (1) year beginning with the General Elections held the previous academic year.
- b. The President is responsible for formulating the agenda and chairing the General Assembly.
 - i. Although the President is given the sole authority to formulate the agenda, in the case of a vote by the General Assembly to add or remove items from the agenda, the President may not have the power to overturn their decision.
- c. The President shall chair the Cabinet of the Student Senate.
- d. The President shall act as an ex-officio member to each of the Student Senate Standing Committees, voting only when needed for quorum.
- e. The President has the ability to make temporary appointments to the Student Senate Standing Committees until approved by the General Assembly.
- f. The President or designee shall serve as spokesperson of the students and convey the Student Senate's position on concerns of the student body to the Faculty Governance, the Administration, and the Board of Trustees.
- g. The President shall be the student representative and shall coordinate the delegation of other student representatives to the University Academic Senate and the Executive Committee of the Senate.
- h. The President shall call a special meeting of the General Assembly if petitioned by a Senator who is supported by the signatures of at least one-third (1/3) of the voting members or if directed by a voting majority of the Cabinet.

Section III.05 Executive Vice President

- a. The Executive Vice President for Student Senate must have fulfilled one (1) elected term on the General Assembly prior to their election to the position of Executive Vice President.
 - i. An elected term is defined as one (1) year beginning with the General Elections held the previous academic year.

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- b. The Executive Vice President will help maintain the internal operations of the Cabinet and the General Assembly.
- c. The Executive Vice President will be vested with the powers of the President in the absence of, or at the request of, the President.
- d. The Executive Vice President shall be responsible for overseeing Subcommittees.
- e. The Executive Vice President shall be responsible for the accuracy of all the Student Senate minutes and act as parliamentarian for the General Assembly.
- f. The Executive Vice President shall serve as an ex-officio member to each of the Student Senate Standing Committees, voting only when needed for quorum.
- g. The Executive Vice President will serve as the Vice President for a committee, should the Vice President resign or otherwise leave their position, until a new Vice President is elected.
- h. The Executive Vice President or designee shall be responsible for overseeing and updating and codifying the Student Senate's Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures.
- i. The Executive Vice President shall be responsible for tracking and cataloging all legislation and ensuring that all legislation meets the required format.
- j. The Executive Vice President shall be responsible for coordinating and ensuring files are within the archives at the end of each semester.

ARTICLE IV: STANDING COMMITTEES

a. SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Senate Resources and six (6) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To develop and maintain an effective Student Senate and to ensure efficiency within this organization by providing the internal services of the Student Senate, in addition to enforcing its established rules.
- iii. The Senate Resources Committee shall be the only Standing Committee allowed to enter into closed session. The Committee shall abide by the same regulations for closed sessions as the Cabinet.

b. ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Allocations and six (6) additional Senators, to be internally appointed from existing Standing Committees, with no more than two (2) Senators from a single Standing Committee.
- ii. Mission: To recommend the allocation of funds to currently registered student organizations for the purpose of sponsoring educational, recreational, cultural, and social activities that benefit the Grand Valley State University community.

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c. PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Public Relations and seven (7) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To inform the Student Senate of public opinion and concerns of the student body, to ensure an accurate image of the Student Senate, to create student awareness of important campus issues, and to inform the student body of Senate activities.

d. CAMPUS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Campus Affairs and seven (7) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To monitor all campus-oriented issues, to inform the Student Senate and administration of these issues and to act as the voice of the students ensuring that their best interests are fulfilled.

e. EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Educational Affairs and seven (7) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To remain informed on the changing system of education at Grand Valley State University, to maintain communication with University academic committees, and to ensure a strong student voice in the shaping of academic policies.

f. DIVERSITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for Diversity Affairs and seven (7) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To consider and act upon intercultural policy, practices, and issues, to make recommendations to the Student Senate and University administration, to create open dialogues that have intercultural interests or focus, and to facilitate awareness and open communication.

g. EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- i. Membership: Will consist of the Vice President for External Relations and seven (7) additional Senators.
- ii. Mission: To act as a liaison between the Student Senate and the external community beyond the university, ensuring that Grand Valley State University's student body has its interests represented in local government, other student governments, and all other external capacities of the Student Senate.

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Article V. FUNDING

- a. The Student Life Fund as allocated by the Student Senate is subject to the paramount authority of the University President through the administrative officers of the University. The Student Senate allocates the Student Life Fund monies by means prescribed by the Funding Rules. Any excess funds in the Student Life Fund account shall be carried over to the next fiscal year.
- b. The President in conjunction with the Vice President for Allocations is responsible for recording and auditing all Senate expenditures.
- c. The Cabinet shall vote on any internal operating budget requests. Members of the Cabinet shall be able to request funds from the internal operating budget.
- d. The maximum funds that the Cabinet may allocate on behalf of the General Assembly when the Student Senate is not in session in reserve requests is \$10,000. The General Assembly must be notified at the first meeting of the fall semester of all external allocations made by the Cabinet during the spring and summer semesters.
- e. Any reserve request over \$10,000 will require a vote of the General Assembly.

Article VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section VI.01 Proposed amendments to the Constitution must:

- a. Be presented to the General Assembly at least three (3) General Assembly meetings before a vote may be taken.
- b. Contain the original wording as it appears in the document to be amended, the proposed wording change, and rationale.
- c. Be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the General Assembly then sitting.

Section VI.02 In accordance with Board of Trustees policies, the Student Senate Constitution requires approval by the University President.

Section VI.03 No constitutional changes may take effect until the approval of the University President.

Section VI.04 The Student Senate has the authority to establish its procedures through the use of Bylaws.

- a. No portion of the Bylaws may supercede or conflict with any portion of the Constitution.

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Article VII. NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

- a. The Student Senate shall follow the University's Non-Discrimination policy.
 - i. In accordance with applicable state and federal law and Board of Trustees policies, acts of discrimination or harassment by members of the campus community are prohibited if they discriminate or harass on the basis of any and all personal qualifiers including but not limited to: age, color, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, veteran or active duty military status or weight.

Article VIII. SEVERABILITY

- a. In case any provision in this document should be held invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the validity, legality and enforcement of the remaining provisions shall not in any way be affected or impaired thereby.