

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION

Ratified by Student Senate: January 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article I. Mission, Vision, and Values..... 2

Article II. The General Assembly..... 2

Article III. Membership..... 2

Article IV. The Executive Branch..... 3

Article V. The Legislative Branch..... 3

Article VI. The Judicial Branch..... 4

Article VII. Elections..... 5

Article VIII. Funding..... 5

Article IX. Amendments..... 5

Article X. Constitutional Provisions..... 6

Article I. Mission, Vision, and Values

1. *Vision Statement*
 - a. Through building meaningful relationships within the GVSU community, Student Senate will cultivate an environment that elevates student voices and leaves a lasting impact.
2. *Mission Statement*
 - a. As a representative and partner of the student body, Student Senate advocates for the diverse needs of the GVSU community.
3. *Values*
 - a. The Student Senate's values include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Accountability, Adaptability, Collaboration, Empathy, Initiative, Integrity, Transparency, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Article II. The General Assembly

1. *Meetings of the General Assembly*
 - a. All meetings of the General Assembly will be open to the public.
 - b. The General Assembly will require fifty percent plus one of its total membership to reach quorum for all official business.
 - c. The Student Senate speaks on behalf of the student body through formal votes on issues that come before the General Assembly, discussed in an open process.

Article III. Membership

1. *Eligibility*
 - a. To be eligible to serve on the GVSU Student Senate, members of the General Assembly and the Judiciary Committee must satisfy the following requirements:
 - i. Be currently enrolled as a student at GVSU during the semester in which they serve.
 - ii. Be elected during the annual elections process or appointed by the membership of the General Assembly.
 - iii. Maintain a minimum of a 2.25 cumulative grade point average.
 - iv. Remain available to attend meetings of the General Assembly.
 - v. Remain in good standing with the Student Senate.
 - b. Senators must meet and maintain these requirements, or they will be subject to removal.
2. *Composition*
 - a. The composition of the Student Senate will be divided between proportional representation of each college, at-large seats, and select interests.
 - b. The General Assembly will consist of up to forty (40) members, including Senators and Cabinet members.
3. *The Student Senate Cabinet*
 - a. The Cabinet will serve as an advisory board that makes suggestions and recommendations to the General Assembly.
 - b. The Cabinet will consist of the President, Vice President, Chief of Staff, and each of the Officers of the Student Senate.
 - c. The Cabinet will have a higher standard for eligibility and must also satisfy the following:
 - i. Maintain a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative grade point average
 - ii. Remain available to attend meetings of the Student Senate Cabinet.

Article IV. The Executive Branch

1. *The President of the Student Senate*
 - a. The President will be responsible for maintaining the connection between the Student Senate and its partners within University administration and faculty governance.
 - b. The President will serve as the Chair for all Cabinet and General Assembly meetings.
 - c. The President will be the primary contact for the Student Senate.
2. *The Vice President of the Student Senate*
 - a. The Vice President will be responsible for overseeing the Cabinet and legislative process.
 - b. The Vice President will serve as the Vice Chair for all Cabinet and General Assembly meetings.
3. *The Chief of Staff of the Student Senate*
 - a. The Chief of Staff will be responsible for overseeing the personnel and judicial oversight.
 - b. The Chief of Staff will serve as the Parliamentarian for all Cabinet and General Assembly meetings.
 - c. The Chief of Staff will serve as the Chief Justice of the Judiciary Committee.
4. *Line of Succession*
 - a. In the case that the President is absent or unable to serve, the Vice President will serve as the Chair.
 - b. In the case that both the President and Vice President are absent or unable to serve, the Chief of Staff will serve as the Chair.
 - c. In the case that the Vice President or Chief of Staff are absent or unable to serve, the Chair will designate another Senator to serve as Vice Chair or Parliamentarian.
 - d. If any member of the Executive Branch is unable to fulfill the responsibilities of their position, those responsibilities will be divided between the remaining members as they decide is appropriate.

Article V. The Legislative Branch

1. *The General Assembly*
 - a. The General Assembly will be the legislative body of the Student Senate.
 - b. The General Assembly will have the opportunity to write and pass legislation by majority vote of members present following discussion in a public setting.
 - c. All Senators and Cabinet members will be eligible to introduce and vote on motions, except for the Chair of the General Assembly.
 - i. The Chair may only vote in the case of a tie.
2. *Officers of the Student Senate*
 - a. The Allocations Chair
 - i. The Allocations Chair will oversee matters related to budgeting and appropriating money from the Student Life Fund and ensure funding policies represent student needs and interests.
 - ii. The Allocations Chair will facilitate meetings of the Allocations Committee.
 - iii. The Allocations Chair will work in conjunction with the Office of Student Life to administer the allocations process.
 - b. The Public Relations Chair
 - i. The Public Relations Chair will oversee matters related to gathering student opinion and communicating the Student Senate's goals and actions with the public.
 - ii. The Public Relations Chair will facilitate meetings of the Public Relations council.
 - iii. The Public Relations Chair will meet with the corresponding offices across the University to fulfill the related goals.

- c. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair
 - i. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair will oversee matters related to facilitating awareness and open communication surrounding the diverse backgrounds and perspectives carried by students.
 - ii. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair will facilitate meetings of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging council.
 - iii. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair will meet with the corresponding offices across the University to fulfill the related goals.
- d. The Policy Chair
 - i. The Policy Chair will oversee matters related to the various issues that affect the students, their academics, and their experience at GVSU.
 - ii. The Policy Chair will facilitate meetings of the Policy council.
 - iii. The Policy Chair will meet with the corresponding offices across the University to fulfill the related goals.
- e. The Events Chair
 - i. The Events Chair will oversee matters related to the programming and facilitation of events that are organized by the Student Senate.
 - ii. The Events Chair will facilitate meetings of the Events council.
 - iii. The Events Chair will meet with the corresponding offices across the University to fulfill the related goals.

Article VI. The Judicial Branch

1. The Judiciary Committee

- a. The Judiciary Committee will be the judicial body of the Student Senate and will provide oversight for actions taken by any individual or collective members of the General Assembly and Cabinet.
- b. The Chief of Staff, serving as Chief Justice, will chair all meetings of the Judiciary Committee.
 - i. If the Chief Justice is absent or unable to serve, the Vice President will chair meetings of the Judiciary Committee.
- c. The Judiciary Committee will require fifty percent plus one of its total membership to reach quorum for all official business.
- d. The Judiciary Committee will make decisions by majority vote of members present.
- e. All Justices will be eligible to introduce and vote on motions in Judiciary Committee meetings, except for the Chief Justice.
 - i. The Chief Justice, or respective Chair, may only vote in the case of a tie.
- f. Except for the Chief Justice, no Justice will receive voting or speaking rights at General Assembly or Cabinet meetings.

2. Composition

- a. The Judiciary Committee will consist of five (5) Justices that are unaffiliated with the Student Senate.
 - i. If there is no interest from the students, the Executive Branch may hold interviews and select Senators to fill the vacant seats as a temporary measure.

Article VII. Elections

1. *General Election*
 - a. The general election will take place during the winter semester of each academic year.
 - b. Selected candidates will be eligible to serve until after the general election of the following academic year.
2. *Presidential Election*
 - a. The President and Vice President will run on a joint ticket and will be elected at-large by the student body.
 - b. The Presidential election will be held concurrently with the annual general election.
 - c. A candidate is required to have served on Student Senate for fifteen academic weeks, and to be in good standing with the Student Senate in order to run for President or Vice President.
 - d. The General Assembly will elect members to be President or Vice President if either position becomes vacant.

Article VIII. Funding

1. *The Student Life Fund*
 - a. The Student Life Fund is subject to the authority of the University President and University administration.
 - b. The Student Senate will appropriate funds from the Student Life Fund following the procedures outlined in the Funding Guidelines.
 - c. Excess funds from the Student Life Fund that are not appropriated by the Student Senate will carry over into a reserve for the next fiscal year.
 - d. When the Student Senate is not in session, the Cabinet may only appropriate up to \$10,000 in funds for any budget request.
 - e. The General Assembly must be notified at its first subsequent meeting of any and all external appropriations made by the Cabinet while the Student Senate was not in session.
 - f. Any funding request over \$10,000 will require a majority vote of members present at a General Assembly meeting.
2. *Internal Operating Budget*
 - a. The Student Senate Cabinet will vote on any internal operating budget requests on behalf of the Student Senate.
 - b. Any member of the Cabinet may request funds from the Student Senate's internal operating budget.
 - c. The Allocations Chair, in conjunction with the President, will be responsible for recording and auditing all expenditures made by the Student Senate.

Article IX. Amendments

1. *Constitutional Amendments*
 - a. Amendments to the Constitution must be presented at two (2) separate General Assembly meetings prior to being voted on.
 - i. A proposed amendment must contain the original wording of the Constitution, the proposed change in wording, and rationale for making the change.
 - b. Amendments to the Constitution must receive the votes of at least two thirds of the total membership of the General Assembly in order to pass.
 - c. Amendments to the Constitution must receive the signature of the University President in order to be ratified.

Article X. Constitutional Provisions

1. *Student Senate Bylaws*
 - a. The Student Senate has the authority to establish its procedures using Bylaws; however, no portion of the Student Senate Bylaws may supersede or conflict with any portion of the Student Senate Constitution.
2. *Non-Discrimination*
 - a. 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, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or weight.
3. *Severability*
 - a. In the case that any provision in this document is deemed invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the validity, legality, and enforcement of the remaining provisions will not be affected or impaired in any way.