



**Huston-Tillotson University
Student Government Association
Constitution & By-Laws
2011-2012**

PREAMBLE

The Student Government Association considers a student's education at Huston-Tillotson University to be focused on the total development of the individual. Involvement in co curricular programs, activities and events is essential to students' intellectual growth and personal development. Just as the classroom experience provides a forum for new thoughts, ideas and opinions, so does the co-curricular program through exposure to a variety of programs, student leadership opportunities and civic engagement. Students' involvement in the governance of the University as well as the various clubs and organizations is essential to enhancing the quality of student life. We, the students of Huston-Tillotson University, in order to promote responsibility, involvement, understanding, cooperation, service and the overall mission of the university, among students, faculty and staff, do hereby establish this constitution for the Student Government Association.

Article I – Name

The name of this organization is the Student Government Association of Huston-Tillotson University, hereafter referred to as the “SGA”.

Article II - Institutional Relationship

2.1. - SGA is the official representative voice of the students to the faculty and administration. SGA, in this role, is subject to all the institutional and departmental policies and procedures of the University.

2.2. - SGA is the umbrella governing student organization for all students and recognized student organizations on the campus of Huston-Tillotson University. All legislation, resolutions, referenda, and mandates enacted by SGA are recognized as enforceable policy to its constituents.

Article III – Purpose

The Student Government Association shall be the official student organization to act in the common interest of the student body by:

- a)** Communicating all student body issues and concerns to the University community.
- b)** Promoting unity, involvement, awareness and school spirit on the Huston- Tillotson University campus and surrounding community.
- c)** Advising and participating in the decision-making process for establishing University policies and/or setting priorities in matters pertaining to student life.
- d)** Serving as the liaison between the university administration and the student body.

- e) Aiding in the development of self-direction and academic excellence for students.
- f) Promoting the best possible understanding between faculty, administration and students. In all its endeavors, the Student Government Association shall strive to represent the best interest of the student body as a whole and maintain creditably with the university.

Article IV – Mandate

The charge of the SGA, as relevant to carrying out the purpose of the organization, is to carry out the execution of the following mandates, in order to fulfill its duties:

- a) Provide bi-weekly, open Student Government Association meetings at which members of the student body can raise issues and concerns, and present solutions.
- b) Deliver services to groups of students that are traditionally underrepresented to provide an atmosphere where students can socialize and advocate for those issues specific to the constituency. Recognizing and celebrating the diversity and the historic relevance of the University and its community, the Student Government Association supports and welcomes students of all ages, races, genders, abilities, religions, sexual orientations, and nationalities.
- c) Assess, on an annual basis, the functions of the Student Government Association, in developing appropriate goals for each academic year.
- d) Develop an annual budget, based on Student Government fees charged through the registration process and allocate those funds for use by SGA, Campus Life as well as Mr. and Miss HT.
- e) Serve as the student body component of Homecoming, Black History Month, University Day and other campus events.
- f) Ensure student representation on appropriate University -wide, departmental, or ad-hoc committees.
- g) Support initiatives related to local, state and federal elections.
- h) Sponsor and promote programs that provide intellectual growth, personal enrichment and opportunities for civic engagement among HT students.

Article V – Membership

All full or part-time undergraduate students of Huston-Tillotson University are members of the Student Government Association and are eligible to vote in general and special elections, as defined in Article IX.

Article VI – Governance

All powers of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the following branches:

Executive Board
Senate
Assembly

Neither branch shall exercise the powers herein granted the other.

6.1 - Executive Board

6.1.1 – Membership

- a)** President
- b)** Vice President
- c)** Secretary
- d)** Treasurer
- e)** Chief Justice
- f)** Mister /Miss HT

6.1.2 - Powers and Duties

- a)** Serve as a temporary quorum to decide matters pertaining to SGA business when the full SGA is not in session;
- b)** Meet to prepare agenda for SGA meetings;
- c)** Communicate proposals and concerns between the Student Government Association and SGA Advisor;
- d)** Develop a budget plan;
- e)** Represent the Student Government Association at Executive Cabinet, Board of Trustees, or other meetings requiring official student representation, and
- f)** Apprise SGA Advisor in timely manner of events, programs, and incidents related to SGA.

6.1.3 - Qualifications and Selection

- a)** Executive Board members must maintain a 2.5 cumulative and semester grade point average and full-time enrollment status during candidacy for office, election, and while holding office. Failure to maintain this standard shall result in immediate removal from office.
- b)** Executive Board members must have completed 30 hours of college credit to be eligible for candidacy, with at least 15 hours taken at HT.
- c)** Executive Board members must be in good disciplinary standing with Huston-Tillotson University during candidacy for office, election, and while holding office. Disciplinary standing is to be verified through the office of Campus Life. Failure to maintain this standard will result in immediate removal from office.

- d)** All members of the Executive Branch, excluding Mister & Miss HT and the Chief Justice, shall be elected at the end of the Spring semester. In the event that any office, other than that of President, becomes vacant, the Executive Board will select a replacement. All Executive Board officers are eligible for re-election provided they meet the requirements for candidacy.
- e)** If the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President assumes the position of President.
- f)** If the offices of President and Vice-President become vacant concurrently, the Chief Justice will serve as the presiding chair. An emergency election should be held for the position of President within fourteen (14) of the vacancy. Following the installation of the President, the Chief Justice will relinquish the Chair, and the Executive Board will nominate and elect a Vice- President, subject to confirmation by majority vote of the Executive Board.
- g)** Mister & Miss HT are selected through a separate process in the Spring of each year.
- h)** The Chief Justice is appointed by the President, in cooperation with the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of Campus Life. This appointment is then confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

6.1.4 - Officer Duties

- a)** The President shall perform the following duties:
 - 1)** Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Election Committee.
 - 2)** Serve as presiding officer and member of the Executive Branch.
 - 3)** Serve as presiding chair of executive, general, and special meetings of the SGA.
 - 4)** Vote in meetings in case of a tie.
 - 5)** Serve as the Election Committee Chair when the President and Vice-President are running for offices.
 - 6)** Be empowered to establish such bodies, such as an ad hoc committee, subsidiary to him/her as he/she deems necessary to aid him/her in the performance of his/her duties; to issue orders to the committees and to require written reports from them.
 - 7)** Appoint Standing Committee chairs with a majority vote confirmed by the Executive Board.
 - 8)** Call and preside at meetings of the student body;
 - 9)** Sign all necessary University paperwork such as funds requisitions and facilities requisitions.
 - 10)** Prepare agendas to be distributed at meetings with assistance from the Secretary.
 - 11)** If needed, make a State-of-the-Campus address to the student body.
 - 12)** Serve as the official representative of the Executive Board of the Huston-Tillotson University SGA in dealings with the students, faculty and administration from other universities on matters regarding student representation.
 - 13)** Assist with indoctrination and transition of the President-elect.

- b) The Vice-President will perform the following duties:**
- 1) Serve in the role of the President if the President is absent, unable to serve, or if the office of President is vacated.**
 - 2) Attend and vote in Officers meetings. Attend and vote in meetings, except when Vice-President is chairing the meeting in absence of the President. On these occasions, the Vice President only votes in case of a tie.**
 - 3) Define all duties and responsibilities to committee chairpersons and provide any assistance to the chairpersons in the fulfillment of their duties.**
 - 4) Serve as the chair of the Election Committee, except when running for office in same election.**
 - 5) Serve as an ex-officio member on all SGA committees in the absence of the President.**
 - 6) Coordinate orientation of new officers.**
 - 7) Carry out duties and responsibilities assigned by the President.**
 - 8) Assist with the indoctrination and transition of the Vice-President elect.**
- c) The Secretary will perform the following duties:**
- 1) Record, correspond, and maintain all minutes of all meetings. Minutes should be made available at least 24 to 48 hours after each meeting.**
 - 2) Assist President in preparing and distributing an agenda.**
 - 3) Maintain an active file of all SGA correspondence.**
 - 4) Assist the President with official correspondence of the organization.**
 - 5) Prepare a roster each semester to include the home address, email address, and telephone number of each member.**
 - 6) Keep a revised copy of the constitution available for members at all times and distribute to the membership.**
 - 7) Assist with the indoctrination of the Secretary-elect.**
- d) The Treasurer will perform the following duties:**
- 1) Collect all funds for the SGA and reconcile deposits.**
 - 2) Be responsible for receiving and accounting for all fees and other monies belonging to the SGA Treasury.**
 - 3) Maintain an active record of all SGA accounts in conjunction with the SGA advisor and be prepared to report on the financial condition of the SGA Treasury at SGA meetings or as requested by the SGA.**
 - 4) Attend and vote in SGA meetings.**
 - 5) Assist with the indoctrination of the Treasurer-elect.**
- e) The Chief Justice performs the following duties:**
- 1) Assume the duties of President in the absence of both the President and the Vice-President.**
 - 2) Participate in Judicial hearings as requested by the Dean of Students.**
 - 3) Assist in the indoctrination of the Chief Justice-elect.**

- f) Miss & Mister Huston-Tillotson University will perform the following duties:**
- 1) Represent the university with respect, pride, and dignity through his or her words, actions, and deeds.**
 - 2) Be responsible for carrying out his or her social cause.**
 - 3) Serve as the official host and hostess of SGA.**
 - 4) Represent the University and/or SGA at the request of the University or SGA President.**
 - 5) Assist in the indoctrination of Mister & Miss Huston-Tillotson University - elect.**

6.2 – Senate

6.2.1 - Membership

- a) Four (4) class presidents: First-year, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior**
- b) Four (4) class vice presidents: First-year, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior**

6.2.2 - Powers and Duties

- a) Meet for SGA meetings to carry out purpose, mandates, and agenda of SGA.**
- b) Attend SGA meetings and vote on matters of business.**
- c) Serve on at least one standing committee.**
- d) Accept assignments from Executive Board.**

6.2.3 - Qualifications and Selection

- a) Must maintain a 2.25 cumulative and semester grade point average during office. Failure to maintain this standard shall result in immediate removal from office. Due to the absence of an earned grade point average, first-semester incoming students (first-year and transfer) are exempt from this policy.**
- b) Members should strive to maintain good disciplinary standing with Huston-Tillotson University during office. Disciplinary standing is to be verified through the office of Campus Life. Failure to maintain this standard may result in disciplinary sanctions that restrict participation in SGA.**
- c) Members excluding the First-years will be elected during the Spring semester, by members of their class, in accordance with SGA policy. Members of the First-year Class will elect officers during the fall semester, in accordance with SGA policy.**
- d) Any office that is not filled will be declared vacant. In the event that an office becomes vacant, the President can nominate a candidate and the Executive Board will confirm the nomination by a majority vote.**

6.3 – Assembly

6.3.1 - Membership consists of chairs of the following committees:

- a) Public Relations**
- b) Information Technology**
- c) Student Activities**
- d) Food Services**

e) Elections

6.3.2 - Powers and Duties

- a) Attend all student body meetings.**
- b) Carry out responsibilities of respective committees.**

6.3.3 - Qualifications and Selection

- a) Standing Committee Chairs will be appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board.**
- b) Must maintain a 2.25 cumulative and semester grade point average during office. Failure to maintain this standard shall result in immediate removal from selected position. Due to the absence of an earned grade point average, first-semester incoming students (first-year and transfer) are exempt from this policy.**
- c) Members should strive to maintain good disciplinary standing with Huston-Tillotson University during office. Disciplinary standing is to be verified through the office of Campus Life. Failure to maintain this standard may result in disciplinary sanctions that restrict participation in SGA.**

6.4 – Advisory

6.4.1 - The Director of Campus Life serves as the advisor of the Student Government Association.

6.4.2 - The SGA Executive Board may select a full-time employed HT faculty/staff member to serve as the secondary advisor. The secondary advisor must be confirmed by the Director of Campus Life.

6.4.3 – Duties

- a) Offer advice and counsel as needed to the Student Government Association.**
- b) Meet regularly with the President and Vice President.**
- c) Attend Executive and full SGA meetings as an ex-officio member.**

6.5 - Conditions of All Offices

6.5.1 - Terms of office

- a) SGA offices are full-year commitments and should not be entered into under any other understanding.**
- b) Terms shall officially begin at the close of the Spring semester and shall end at the end of the following Spring semester.**
 - 1) Officers elected or appointed in the Fall hold also office through the end of the Spring semester.**

6.5.2 - Recall of elected officials

- a) In order to remove, for just cause, an elected official from office, a petition, signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the student body, must be presented to the SGA. The elected official shall only be removed if two-thirds (2/3) of the entire**

membership of the current officers vote in favor of removal. The official shall be notified of the action being taken at least twenty four (24) hours before said vote takes place.

b) Any officer serving on the Executive Board of the SGA can be removed, with just cause upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire SGA, and be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours before said vote takes place.

c) Any appointed officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the entire SGA, or in cases of expediency, by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

6.5.3 – Resignation

a) A member who seeks to withdraw from SGA membership must submit a letter of resignation to the Vice-President. At the next scheduled Executive or SGA meeting, the resignation will be considered effective immediately.

b) If a member is not a full time student for part or the whole of a semester, said member must resign.

Article VII – Meetings

7.1 - The regular time for SGA and Executive Board meetings will be determined by the SGA Executive Board.

7.2 – Notice

7.2.1 - Members must be notified of the meeting at least 48 hours in advance.

7.2.2 - The agenda for the SGA meeting must be made available to all officers and the advisor prior to the start of the meeting.

7.3 - All regular SGA meetings shall be open to any currently enrolled student, or to any current faculty, staff, or administrator, except in instances covered by constitutional item.

7.4. - Non-voting observers may speak when recognized by the presiding officer, but shall not vote or make motions.

7.4.1 - The SGA shall have the power to call an Executive Session upon two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership, or upon unanimous vote of the Executive Board. During Executive Session, there shall be no taking of minutes and the meeting shall be closed to all persons except Executive Board members, and those members the Executive Board requests to be present, when discussing matters it deems necessitate an Executive Session.

7.5 - The SGA Executive Board shall have the power to call an Emergency Meeting of the SGA, provided notice is given twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting.

Members that cannot attend Emergency Meetings shall not be penalized for absence, as noted in constitutional item 7.6.

7.6 – Attendance

7.6.1 - All members are expected to be in attendance at respective Executive, SGA, and/or committee meetings.

7.6.2 - Six (6) unexcused absences from any combination of meetings within a one year period, beginning with the start of the term of office through the completion of said term, or more than three (3) absences during the course of one semester, may constitute the removal of a member from office.

a) In order to be counted in attendance, each member must answer the first and last roll call.

b) Only absences involving family emergencies, work responsibilities, class or furthering one's education beyond normal syllabi requirements (i.e. University-related business, conferences, field trips, internships, etc.) shall be considered for excused absences. The member shall be responsible for notifying the Vice-President by email or phone one **(1)** hour prior to the start of the meeting. The burden of proof shall rest upon the member requesting the excused absence.

7.7 – Quorum

7.7.1 - Quorum at SGA meetings is a simple majority of voting members. A regular meeting may be held, provided the stipulations for notice are met, according to constitutional item 7.2.

7.7.2 - Quorum at Executive Board meetings is reached when a majority of SGA Executive Board members are present.

7.8 - Order of Business will be

- 1) Call to order
- 2) First roll call
- 3) Review of previous minutes
- 4) Officers' reports
- 5) Committee reports
- 6) Final roll call
- 7) Unfinished business
- 8) New business
- 9) Announcements
- 10) Adjournment

Article VIII – Legislation

8.1 - Campus Policy Legislation

8.1.1 - A proposal which receives a two-thirds majority vote from SGA can be submitted by the Executive Board to the Director of Campus Life and the Dean of Student Affairs.

8.1.2 - The Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Campus Life may take action, or forward the proposal on behalf of the Student Government Association to the appropriate University council, committee, or administrative office.

8.1.3 - The council, committee, or administrative office should respond to the Executive Board within a reasonable period of time regarding action on the proposal.

8.1.4 - A proposal can be sent back to the Executive Board at any time in order to clarify questions or issues or to include suggestions.

8.2 - In regards to campus policy legislation, proposals can result in constitutional amendments and by-law revisions being brought forth to the SGA officers for a vote. The procedure for amending the Constitution is stated in Article XI.

Article IX – Elections

9.1 - All candidates for SGA office are subject to this constitution and the accompanying Election Code.

9.2 - Election Committee - All elections for SGA office are to be held under the direction of the Election Committee and the Director of Campus Life.

9.2.1 - The Election Committee will consist of the Chair and the following members:

a) Members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Executive Board. These appointees must be members of SGA.

9.2.2 - The Election Committee will be activated by the Executive Board towards the end of the Spring Semester, no earlier than the beginning of March and no later than the beginning of April.

9.2.3 - The Elections Committee shall be responsible for orientation and certification of all candidates who wish to run for Student Government offices.

a) Orientation shall entail the following:

1) Candidates will receive a copy of this Constitution and description of expected duties to read, and to familiarize responsibilities before the election.

2) A series of orientation meetings will be held for all candidates. At these meetings any questions concerning the Constitution will be answered by the Election Committee. This meeting shall be mandatory for those seeking office, elected or appointed for the first time.

3) Candidates will each sign a document attesting that they have received, read, and have a general understanding, of the Constitution of SGA.

4) Should candidates decide that they would be unable to carry out the duties and responsibilities contained in the Constitution following the orientation meetings, they may withdraw their candidacy to avoid the possibility of later removal.

b) Certification entails confirmation of required GPA and hourly course load standards and confirmation of disciplinary standards for all candidates.

c) Any appointments made after the election shall have the same above requirements.

9.3 - General Elections

9.3.1 - Elections for the following offices will be held during the end of the Spring Semester:

- 1) President**
- 2) Vice President**
- 3) Secretary**
- 4) Treasurer**
- 5) Sophomore, Junior, and Senior class officers**

9.3.2 - Elections for the following offices will be held during the start of the Fall Semester:

- 1) First-year at-large representatives**
- 2) First-year class officers**
- 3) All unfilled elected offices**

9.3.3 - The exact dates of the election shall be determined by a majority of the SGA Executive Board with the advice of the Election Committee. - Election schedules must be determined and submitted by the Election Committee to the Executive Board at least four weeks prior to the election date.

9.3.5 - Applications for all elected offices shall be made available to the student body two weeks prior to the election.

9.3.6 - All elected offices will be decided by majority vote of ballots cast for that position.

a) In the event of a tie-vote in any of the elected offices, those candidates receiving the same number of votes will have a run-off election.

9.3.7 - Any vacancies created shall be filled in compliance with the relevant items of this constitution.

9.3.8 - In the event that a valid candidate is not put on the ballot or if there is a violation of the Election Code, the candidate or petitioner of the election rule violation or error,

must make a complaint concerning the event known to the Chair of the Election Committee within 12 hours of the end of the voting period. The Election Committee shall make a ruling on the event within 12 hours of the complaint. The ruling of the Election Committee may be appealed to the Executive Board within 24 hours of the decision of the Election Committee.

9.4 - Special Elections - Special elections or referendum votes that may be called by the SGA will be coordinated by the Elections Committee, in compliance with the Election Code. Terms and content of special elections must be announced to the student body two weeks prior to balloting.

Article X – Budgeting and Funding Procedures

10.1 - Budgetary Process

10.1.1 - The budgetary process is initiated by the Executive Board prior to the start of the new semester as part of the setting of goals and objectives for the each semester of the administrative term. The Executive Board should complete a budget that meets the needs of the SGA.

10.1.2 - The budgetary goals and objectives are to be completed by the Executive Board with input from the Director of Campus Life and finalized before the second full week of the Fall and Spring Semesters.

10.1.3 - There shall be three (3) budgets established from the Student Government Account.

- a)** Student Government Budget– funds objectives and programs of the SGA and of all recognized University student organizations
- b)** Office of Campus Life Budget – funds objectives and programs of the Office of Campus Life and of all recognized University student organizations
- c)** Mr. & Miss HT Budget – funds objectives and programs of Mr. & Miss Huston-Tillotson University

10.1.4 - The Executive Board has the responsibility of creating a working budget for SGA based on funds available. This budget should be completed prior to the start of the Fall and Spring Semesters. The Executive Board will present the budget at the first SGA meeting of each semester.

10.2 - Educational and Cultural Funding

10.2.1 - ECF appropriations are decided by the SGA Executive Board along with the Director of Campus Life on case by case bases.

10.2.2 - In order to be eligible for funding, campus clubs and organizations must be registered with the Office of Campus Life and follow all guidelines as listed in the Student Organization Handbook.

10.2.3 - The funding of clubs and organizations shall be the responsibility of the SGA President, Vice President and Director of Campus Life.

10.2.4 - Applications and regulations for the solicitation and use of ECF funds are available in the Office of Campus Life.

10.2.5 - The SGA shall allocate funds from the collection of the Student Government fees. These appropriations are limited to campus clubs and organizations. All appropriated funds shall be used by the close of the academic year.

10.2.6 - All allocated funds must be used as specified by the SGA.

- a)** If specifically allocated funds are misused by any organization, the Executive Board may recall funds from that club/organization or place that organization on probation, with the approval of the Dean of Students and the Director of Campus Life.
- b)** If any action is taken by the Executive Board regarding the misuse of funds, SGA must be notified.

10.2.7 - Activities eligible for funding include those which meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a)** Be of probable interest to a broad segment of the student population.
- b)** Assist students in furthering specific career objectives.
- c)** Further the educational objectives of HT.
- d)** Enhance students' cultural awareness.

10.2.8 - All organizations and activities should be funded consistently and fairly. The following criteria shall be considered in determining funding:

- a)** Number of students benefited.
- b)** Quality of student participation.
- c)** Organization's previous use of funds.
- d)** Efforts by organizations to generate funds or provide services for students.

10.2.9 - SGA may fund clubs/organizations for conferences/conventions provided that all of the following stipulations are met:

- a)** The organization has demonstrated a clear and present need for the funding.
- b)** The organization has demonstrated that the conference/convention will provide literature and/or information that will benefit the organization and HT in the future.

10.2.10 - Funding of a campus club/organization activity is to be made obvious by affixing the following to all publicity materials:

- a)** Full Funding: "Funded in full by HT SGA Educational and Cultural Fund."

b) Partial Funding: "Funded in part by HT SGA Educational and Cultural Fund."

10.2.11 - The following are not eligible for funding: Club/organization/activity currently subsidized by other University funds

- a)** Activity which is restricted to a club/organization's members.
- b)** Club/organization/activity which discriminates on the basis of age, race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and/or nationality.
- c)** Club/organization/activity which is limited to a single political partisanship.
- d)** The purchase of alcohol.
- e)** Charitable contributions or donations.
- f)** Club/organization/activity which requests funds to be spent specifically and solely on food or beverages for a general meeting.
- g)** Club/organization/activity which provides a service or program more appropriately performed by an HT department. If such a service or program is denied funding or partial funding by the more appropriate department, the SGA may approve such funding by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

10.3 - Evaluation of ECF Appropriations

10.3.1 - For each club/organization, per item/activity allocated from the ECF, a representative from the club/organization will be required to complete an "Evaluation of Educational and Cultural Funds Form" within one (1) week of the item/activity. (In most cases, this evaluation will be required for "programming events" to serve the purpose of determining the number of students benefited and the quality of participation).

10.3.2 - This form shall be made available in the Office of Campus Life and shall require the name of club/organization, item/activity, date of item/activity, estimated number of people in attendance, and approximate number of students in attendance. Forms shall be returned to the SGA Vice President.

10.3.3 - These forms shall be kept on file with the Office of Campus Life for a period of three (2) years.

10.3.4 - Any campus club/organization failing to abide by this section may be ineligible for funding the following year.

Article XI – Amendments

The Student Government Association reserves the right to amend this constitution by the following procedure:

11.1 - An amendment should be referred to the SGA Executive Board for review and consideration.

11.2 - The amendment will then be submitted to the SGA officers for discussion and a vote to be taken on the amendment.

11.3 - Amendments so initiated and read must receive two-thirds of the votes cast.

11.4 - Editorial changes may be made at the discretion of the SGA officer by majority vote.

11.5 - Amendments that are accepted will be enacted immediately following the meeting in which they are passed.