

Constitution of the State University of New York, College at Cortland Student Government Association

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Preamble

With this Constitution, the students of the State University of New York, College at Cortland, do hereby establish an organization of self-government to represent and advocate on behalf of the students of this college, so as to advance their general welfare, ensure academic and social freedom and success, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and protect the rights of the student body.

Article I: Opening

Section 1: Title & Membership

This organization shall be called the Student Government Association of the State University of New York, College at Cortland, hereafter known as the Student Government Association, or the Student Government. All students, both full-time and part-time, of the State University of New York, College at Cortland, hereafter SUNY Cortland, are its members, hereafter the student body. This constitution shall be the highest authority within the Student Government Association. Any policies or bylaws adopted by the Student Government Association must not contradict with any provisions within this document, and any such actions shall be null and void. Any part of this constitution, or any rule or bylaw adopted by this association that contradicts the policies of the State University of New York or SUNY Cortland or any State and Federal laws shall be null and void.

Article II: The Executive Branch

Section 1: The Executive Board

The powers of the executive branch of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall be chaired by the President. The Executive Board shall have the power to create and amend its own rules by a 2/3rds majority and to form lesser offices or boards in order to assist the Executive Board in the performances of their duties. Quorum shall require all members of the Executive Board to be present. The default rules of the Executive Board shall be the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order; however, the bylaws of this association and the rules voted on by the Executive Board shall have precedence. The Executive Board shall meet at least once a month during the spring and fall semester, and shall uphold and enforce the constitution and bylaws of this association.

Section 2: Officers of the Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, the Vice President, and the Chief Financial Officer, as well as the Secretary as an ex officio, non-voting seat. All members of the Executive Board must be a member of the student body and none may hold an executive position in any Student Government Club. Appropriations shall be made for fair compensation of every Executive Board member. The Executive Board, with the exception of the Secretary, shall be elected by the student body in the spring semester of each year, no later than five weeks before the last day of classes. The term for the Executive Board, and the standard term for any office within the Student Government unless otherwise specified, shall begin on June 1st of the year of their election and end on the following May 31st.

Section 3: The Secretary

The Secretary shall have the following duties: to collect, maintain, and make available all the records of the Student Government; to take the minutes of Senate, the Judicial Board and the Executive Board; and to uphold and enforce the Constitution and bylaws of this association.

The Secretary shall be nominated and elected by the Senate from the Student Body and serve until the end of the standard term.

Section 4: The President

The President shall have the following duties: to serve as the Chair of the Executive Board and set the Executive Board schedule and agenda; to serve as the Chair of the Cabinet and set the Cabinet schedule and agenda; to serve as the representative of the student body and the Student Government Association on Faculty Senate, or to any other outside body, or to appoint a representative in their stead; to report any decisions of importance made by any of the bodies the Student Government has a seat in to the Executive Board and Senate in a timely manner; and to uphold and enforce the constitution and bylaws of this association.

Section 5: The Vice President

The Vice President shall have the following duties: to serve as the Chair of the Senate; to set the Senate agenda and schedule; to serve as the chief liaison between the Student Government Clubs and the Executive Board; to coordinate with, and provide support for all Student Government Clubs; and to uphold and enforce the Constitution and bylaws of this association.

Section 6: The Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer shall have the following duties: to oversee, steward, and scrutinize all Student Government finances; to ensure financial stability and compliance of the Student Government; to advise the Senate, the Executive Board, and the Student Government Clubs on financial activities and policies; to administer the executive budget in consultation with the other officers of the Executive Board; to give regular reports of SGA financial matters to the Executive Board and Senate; and to uphold and enforce the constitution and bylaws of this association.

Section 7: The Cabinet

The Cabinet shall consist of all staff who report directly or indirectly to all or part the Executive Board. When a Cabinet position is proposed, the proposal must contain guidelines for the duties of that office and suggestions on how to properly execute that office.

The Executive Board shall have the power to create and amend Cabinet structure unanimously; appoint candidates to paid cabinet positions by a 2/3rds majority, with majority approval from Senate; and appoint students to unpaid cabinet positions by a 2/3rds majority, without any need for approval from Senate.

Article III: The Legislative Branch

Section 1: The Senate

The legislative powers of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Senate. The Senate shall have the power to amend the bylaws of the Student Government Association by a majority vote, subject to the consent of the Executive Board. If the Executive Board vetoes an amendment to the Bylaws, the Senate has the power to override the veto and amend the bylaws by a 2/3rds majority.

The Senate shall also have the power to form Senate committees, and to set their own rules by a 2/3rds majority. The default rules of the Senate shall be the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order; however, the bylaws of this association and the rules voted on by the Senate shall have precedence.

The Senate shall meet at least once per month during the spring and fall semesters, and work to facilitate and improve the functioning of the Student Government and SUNY Cortland.

Section 2: Members of the Senate

The Senate shall consist of a Senator representing each Student Government Club, On-Campus and Off-Campus Senators, a faculty representative, the Student Government Association Advisor, and all members of the Executive Board. All officers of the Senate, with the exception of the Student Government Advisor and the Faculty Representative, must be members of the student body. Every officer of the Senate shall uphold and enforce the Constitution and bylaws of this association.

Section 3: Club Senators

Each Student Government Club must nominate a representative to serve in the Senate, in accordance with their own constitutions, and the bylaws of this association. Club Senators shall be full, voting members of the Senate and shall serve as the liaison between each club and the larger Student Government. There shall be no more than 85 clubs, and thereby 85 Club Senators. No Club Senator can represent more than one club. The formation or dissolution of any Student Government club must be approved by Senate.

Section 4: On-Campus & Off-Campus Senators

There shall be five senator seats apportioned to off-campus students and five apportioned to on-campus students. Students living in campus residential facilities will be eligible for on-campus seats while students living anywhere else shall be eligible for off-campus seats. Senators shall be elected by the students within their respective area. No On-Campus or Off-Campus Senator may vote on behalf of a club or serve as a Club Senator. Any Senator that has not attended a sufficient number of Senate meetings in a semester, as specified by the bylaws, shall be eligible for removal from office.

Section 5: Faculty Representative

The Faculty Representative shall be selected by SUNY Cortland, from their current faculty. The Faculty Representative shall be a full, voting member of the Senate.

Section 6: Student Government Advisor

The Student Government Advisor shall be appointed, per the State University of New York Guidelines, as a designee of the President of SUNY Cortland. The Student Government Advisor shall not be voting member of the Senate and may not introduce resolutions or motions. The Advisor may participate in the Senate only in an advisory capacity. The Advisor shall also be an ex officio, non-voting member of the Executive Board, Judicial Board, and all other bodies within the Student Government.

Section 7: The Executive Board in Senate

Executive Board members shall have the power to introduce resolutions and make motions in Senate. Executive Board members shall not have a vote in the Senate, except the Vice President, who may vote only in order to make or break a tie. The Vice President shall have the power to call a special session of the Senate if there is sufficient reason to do so.

Article IV: The Judicial Branch

Section 1: The Judicial Board

The Judicial Board shall be responsible for the adjudication of any violations of Student Government policies, and resolving any disputes internal to the SGA. The Judicial Board shall have the authority to mandate any remedy or sanction, within the powers of the Student Government, that they see fit for a violation of any SGA policy, including temporarily or permanently reducing a club's budget or an officer's stipend. The Judicial Board shall not have the ability to dissolve a club or remove an officer from their position, but they may recommend this action to the Senate. The Judicial Board may set their own rules. The default rules of the Judicial Board shall be the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order; however, the bylaws of this association and the rules voted on by the Judicial Board shall have precedence. Any actions of Judicial Board may be overridden and amended or voided by the Senate by a 3/4ths majority.

Section 2: Membership of the Judicial Board

The Judicial Board shall consist of seven members, nominated by the Executive Board from the student body and approved by the Senate by a 2/3rds majority. The Executive Board shall nominate candidates for members of the Judicial Board no later than the third week of the fall semester and they shall serve until they resign or are no longer eligible for the position.

Section 3: Chair of the Judicial Board

The Chair of the Judicial Board shall be selected by the Judicial Board from amongst their members. The Chair shall be responsible for conducting Judicial Board meetings as well as conducting investigations into complaints filed by members of the student body. The Chair shall have the power to temporarily freeze club budgets for violation of Student Government policy, until the Judicial Board can review the case.

Section 4: Proceedings

The Judicial Board shall have the power to create and amend its own rules by a 2/3rds majority. The default rules of the Judicial Board shall be the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order; however, the bylaws of this association and the rules voted on by the Judicial Board shall have precedence.

Proceedings shall begin when a member of the student body files a formal complaint to the Chair, which should include as many details about the violation as possible. The Chair shall conduct an investigation and notify the accused individual within one week of the complaint being filed. The Chair shall then call a meeting of the Judicial Board. All parties must be granted sufficient notice prior to the meeting. After hearing both the Chair and the accused, the Board shall decide on whether the violation occurred, and what, if any, sanction or remedy to apply. The Board must notify any relevant parties within 48 hours of the conclusion of the Judicial Board meeting.

Article V: Removal from Office and Succession

Section 1: Impeachment

The Senate shall have the power to remove from office any officer within the Student Government that has been found to be in violation the policies of this association, of any club of which they are an officer, or of SUNY Cortland by a 3/5ths majority vote.

Section 2: Recall

Any Student Government Association officer may be subject to removal from office by recall by the Senate for any reason the Senate may deem reasonable. The Senate may be forced to vote on the removal of an officer by a petition of ten percent of the Student Body. Upon a 2/3rds majority vote of the Senate in favor of removal, the officer shall be deemed removed from office, and the office shall be considered vacant.

Section 3: Executive Removal

Paid officers of the Cabinet may be removed from their post by a unanimous vote of the Executive Board members. Unpaid officers of the Cabinet may be removed by a 2/3rds majority of the Executive Board.

Section 4: Presidential Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of the office of President, or the absence of the President for any reason, the Vice President shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Presidency until the President can resume their duties or a new President is elected. In the case of the vacancy of the office of President, the election of a new President shall take place in the Senate within one month of the vacancy of the office of President.

Section 5: Vice Presidential Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of the office of Vice President, or the absence of the Vice President for any reason, the President shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Vice Presidency until the Vice President can resume their duties or a new Vice President is elected. In the case of the vacancy of the office of Vice President, the election of a new Vice President shall take place in the Senate within one month of the vacancy of the office of Vice President.

Section 6: Chief Financial Officer Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of the office of Chief Financial Officer, or the absence of the Chief Financial Officer for any reason, the Executive Board shall appoint an interim replacement who shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the position of Chief Financial Officer until the Chief Financial Officer can resume their duties, or a new Chief Financial Officer is elected. In the case of the vacancy of the office of Chief Financial Officer, the election of a new Chief Financial Officer shall take place in the Senate within one month of the vacancy of the office of Chief Financial Officer.

Section 7: Summertime Vacancies & Interim Officers

In the event that an Executive Board position is vacant with the commencement of a new Board's term (i.e. June 1st) , the outgoing Executive Board shall appoint an interim officer to serve until an election can be held within the Senate. Such an election must occur within one month of the first day of classes of the fall semester.

Section 8: Secretary Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of the office of Secretary, or the absence of the Secretary for any reason, the Executive Board shall appoint an interim replacement who shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the position of Secretary until the Secretary can resume their duties, or a new Secretary is elected. In the case of the vacancy of the office of Secretary, the election of a new Secretary shall take place in the Senate within one month of the vacancy of the office of Secretary.

Section 9: On-Campus & Off-Campus Senator Vacancy

In the case of a vacancy of an On-Campus or Off-Campus Senator seat, the seat shall remain vacant until another Senator is duly elected and assumes the office.

Section 10: Other Cabinet Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of any appointed officer of the Cabinet, a new candidate shall be nominated by the Executive Board according to the standard procedure for Cabinet appointments.

Section 11: Club Officer Vacancy

In the case of the vacancy of any Club executive officer, a new officer shall be selected in accordance with that club's bylaws and constitution.

Article VI: Rights & Restrictions

Section 1: General Restrictions

There shall be no bylaws passed that retroactively prohibit or mandate any action , and no sanctions levied more than once for the same incident in violation of any policy.

Section 2: Rights of the Student Body

All meetings of the Senate shall be open to any member of the student body, and all members of the student body shall have the right to vote in all Student Government elections and referenda.

Section 3: An Equal Student Government

The SUNY Cortland Student Government Association shall not discriminate on the basis of, and shall advocate for the elimination of any discrimination on the basis of: race, color, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex, age, national origin, or disabilities.

Article VII: Amendment

Section 1: Amendment

An amendment to the Constitution may be placed on the ballot by written petition of ten percent of the Student Government Association members or by a 2/3rds vote of the Senate. Any amendment shall be ratified through referendum by an 11/20ths majority the of Student Body voting.