

Gustavus Adolphus College
Student Senate Constitution
As of February 26, 2024

We, the student body of Gustavus Adolphus College, in order to uphold the values of Excellence, Community, Justice, Service, and Faith; to safeguard the rights of students; to foster an atmosphere in which students may freely pursue their academic endeavors; and to elevate the general welfare of the campus community, do hereby establish this constitution of the Gustavus Adolphus College Student Senate. The responsibilities and procedures of the Senate shall be designated solely by this constitution and the by-laws passed pursuant to it.

Article I: Definitions

1. Senate: the body representing all students (also known as Student Senate)
2. Student: any person taking courses at Gustavus Adolphus College, either full time or part-time
3. Member: a student constitutionally elected by the student body or appointed to any Senate position
4. Senator: a student serving a specific constituency (Hall, Class, or International Students)
5. Absence: the failure to attend a scheduled meeting of the full Senate, subject to the discretion of the Administrative Director
6. Half absence: arriving late at or leaving prior to adjournment of a scheduled meeting of the Senate, subject to the discretion of the Administrative Director
7. Community comment: an opportunity for any member of the Gustavus community to address the Senate at each full Senate Meeting
8. Student-at-large: any student not currently holding, or seeking election to, a Senate position
9. Delegate: a student serving as a student-at-large to the full senate
10. Full Senate Quorum: a majority of all elected Senators
11. Committee Quorum: a majority of the voting committee membership
12. Voting: All motions must be passed by a majority vote unless otherwise prescribed within this Constitution
13. College-Owned Houses: These houses will be the constituents of the Off-Campus Senators. These houses include the Lundgren House, the Johnson House, the Peterson House, the Ten-O-Nine House, the Adolphson House, the Walker House, and others.

Article II: Purpose and Responsibilities

Section 1: Policies

The Senate shall follow and uphold all policies delineated in the “Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct Procedures” section of the most recent Gustie Guide, and shall ensure and protect all rights of students listed in this section. The Senate shall be subject to the “All-College Policies” listed in the Faculty Book and shall act in accordance with them. The Senate shall be subject to and follow all local, state, and federal laws.

Section 2: Student Rights

The Senate shall also recognize the following rights:

1. The right of students to vote in any election or referendum conducted in accordance with this Constitution.
2. The right of students to participate in the formulation of policy concerning the education and welfare of the student body.

Section 3: Purpose

The Senate shall serve as the voice of the student body, acting as liaison and advocate for the interests of the student body to the College Administration, Board of Trustees, Faculty, and Staff. The Senate shall review policies and procedures of the College and make student goals, concerns, and interests known to the College Administration during the formulation of College policy.

Section 4: Fees and Allocations

The funds collected from the student government fee shall be allocated to student organizations, student events, and items of special interest to the student body pursuant to this constitution and its by-laws.

The amount of the student government fee shall be set by the Budget Committee of the College, upon recommendation of the Senate. The Senate shall only recommend a fee increase after approval from the majority of students voting in a referendum.

Allocation of the funds collected is subject to the discretion of the Senate. Any student who feels that the Senate has allocated monies in a manner conflicting with this Constitution or its by-laws may file a complaint with the Senate Ombudsperson.

Article III: Composition

Section 1: Requirements

The Senate shall be composed of the following members who shall carry out the duties described in the by-laws. All members must be in good academic standing and full-time students, as defined by the Registrar. No student who has ever been placed on disciplinary probation for or suspended for a Title IX offense may serve on Senate.

Section 2: Co-Presidents

One Co-President will chair each full Senate meeting and will not vote. The other Co-President will only cast a vote to break a tie and retains full speaking privileges. Co-Presidents shall assume office at the end of the last full Senate meeting of the spring semester and shall perform all duties prescribed in the by-laws.

Section 3: Co-Presidents Elect

Two students shall be elected in the spring semester as Co-Presidents for the next academic year. Immediately following the election, the Co-Presidents Elect begin carrying out their duties prescribed in the by-laws. The Co-Presidents Elect have full speaking privileges but no voting privileges and must resign from any other Senate positions unless they are a current Co-President.

Section 4: Appointed Cabinet Positions

The Co-Presidents Elect shall appoint students to the following Cabinet positions: Administrative Director, Parliamentarian, Finance Director, Controller, Technology Director, and Public Relations Director. The Co-Presidents Elect and Diversity Leadership Council Co-Chairs shall appoint one student to the Inclusive Excellence Chair. Each appointment requires a two-thirds vote in favor of confirmation from the Senate. When a student is appointed and confirmed, they will assume their appointed position at the end of the academic year and serve for a term of one year.

Section 5: Committee Chairs

The Ombudsperson will serve as chair of the Ethics and Elections Committees, the Finance Director will serve as chair of the Finance Committee, the Inclusive Excellence Chair will serve as the chair of the Inclusive Excellence Committee, and the Public Relations Director will serve as chair of the Public Relations Committee. At the first full meeting of the academic year, all other standing committees shall elect a committee member to serve as chair of their committee for the year.

In full Senate meetings, representatives elected as Chairs retain their full speaking and voting rights. Chairs shall lead their committee meetings, appoint students-at-large as allowed in the by-laws, and address matters within their jurisdiction in accordance with Article VII.

Section 6: Ombudsperson

At the first full Senate meeting in April, the Senate shall nominate and select an Ombudsperson for the following year. The Ombudsperson shall assume their position at the end of the last full Senate meeting of the academic year. This person shall ensure that Senate is functioning ethically and in accordance with its Constitution and by-laws. The Ombudsperson has full speaking privileges but has no voting privileges.

Section 7: Senate Speaker

At the first full Senate meeting of the academic year, the Senate shall nominate and select a Senate Speaker from its body to represent the Senate's interests on Cabinet. The Speaker will retain all duties, rights, and responsibilities of a Senator.

Section 8: Hall Senators

Hall Senators must be members of the constituency they represent when elected and for the duration of their term. The following Hall Senators shall be elected by their constituencies in the fall of every year to serve a one-year term: Carlson International Center and Swedish House, Pittman, Prairie View, Rundstrom, Sohre, Southwest, Off-Campus, and Uhler. Each of the following halls shall be represented by two Senators: Complex (North, Gibbs, and Sorensen), Norelius, and The Views (Arbor View, Chapel View, College View).

Section 9: Class Senators

Class Senators shall be elected by members of their class to serve one-year terms. There shall be a maximum of two Class Senators for each class. The class of each student for the purpose of the Senate will be class-in residency and shall be limited to the following: First-Year, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior.

Section 10: International Senator

One senator shall be elected by the international students in the fall of every year to serve a one-year term. An international student is any student who does not hold United States citizenship.

Section 11: Delegates

The Co-Presidents shall appoint one student to each Delegate position: Student Athlete Delegate and Student in the Arts Delegate, subject to confirmation by the Senate by a two-thirds vote of members present. The Student Athlete and Student in the Arts Delegates will have full speaking privileges but no voting privileges. These positions will assume their seats at the end of the academic year preceding their term.

Section 12: Cabinet

The Cabinet shall be composed of the Co-Presidents, Committee Chairs, Finance Director, Controller, Administrative Director, Parliamentarian, Ombudsperson, Co-Presidents Elect, Technology Director, and Senate Speaker. The Cabinet is responsible for setting the agenda at all full Senate meetings as well as any other duties prescribed in the by-laws. No person may hold more than one Cabinet position concurrently. Responsibilities of individual cabinet members are listed in the by-laws.

Article IV: Impeachment, Resignation, and Vacancies

Section 1: Disciplinary Action

Any member of the Gustavus community has the right to bring a complaint to the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson shall call a meeting of the Ethics Committee for a disciplinary hearing if any member of Senate fails to perform their duties as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws. The Committee shall hear the case and may recommend disciplinary action.

This action may include:

1. Informal reprimand by the Ombudsperson.
2. Formal reprimand by the Ombudsperson, signed by the disciplined member and acknowledged by the Senate body.
3. Suspension of speaking privileges for a period recommended by the Ethics Committee and voted upon by the Senate body.
4. Impeachment and removal from office.

Discipline shall be designed to match the gravity of the offense and cannot exceed impeachment or any punishment which outlasts the member's term of office. Any action taken of greater severity than a reprimand or censure shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the full Senate. When a member is impeached and removed, they shall immediately be dismissed from office.

Section 2: Resignation

To resign from office, a member of Senate must submit a letter in writing or via email to the Administrative Director, who will announce the resignation at the next full Senate meeting.

Section 3: Vacancies

1. If an Appointed Cabinet position is vacated, the Co-Presidents shall appoint students for the position in a timely manner. If an appointed student is confirmed with a two-thirds vote from the Senate, they will assume the position immediately and serve for the rest of the academic year.
2. If an elected Committee Chair position is vacated, a new Committee Chair must be confirmed with a two-thirds vote from the Senate and will serve the rest of the academic year.
3. If a Hall, Class, or International Representative position is vacated, the Election Committee must publicize the opening to the position's constituency and hold an election, which must be carried out according to the stipulations and timelines set forth in the by-laws.
4. In the event of a mid-term vacancy of a senator, the Ethics Committee must publicize the opening to the position's constituency and hold an election, which must be carried out according to the stipulations and timelines set forth in the by-laws. An election is not necessary if a seat is vacated less than 3 weeks before the end of Fall Semester or if a seat is vacated less than 6 weeks before the end of Spring Semester. In these circumstances, an election for vacant seats will be held in the beginning of the next term in which the Student Senate convenes.
5. In the event of a mid-term vacancy of the Ombudsperson, a Senator may nominate a student to be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate. Upon confirmation, the Ombudsperson will serve the rest of the academic year.
6. In the event of a Co-Presidential vacancy, the remaining Co-President will nominate a student to fill the vacancy subject to confirmation by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.
7. In the event both Co-Presidential positions are vacant, the Senate Speaker shall fill one of the vacancies and nominate a student to the other Co-President position, subject to confirmation by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.
8. If a vacancy election does not yield a representative, the Co-Presidents may appoint a student who fulfills the criteria necessary to fill the position. This appointed student must be confirmed with a two-thirds vote from the Senate and will assume the position immediately and serve for the rest of the academic year. Like all representatives, this appointed student will retain full speaking and voting rights.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: Senate Orientation

The Senate must hold an orientation prior to the first full Senate meeting of the academic year. At the retreat, the Senate shall review their previous work, learn the role and duties of a Senator, determine interest in committee membership, and become familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 2: Full Meetings

The full Senate shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks. The first meeting of the academic year will take place as prescribed in the by-laws. The duration of meetings shall be limited to two hours following the completion of community comment. Meetings may be extended by a majority vote of the Senate. An audio recording shall be made of all full Senate meetings.

Section 3: Other meetings

The Cabinet shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks. The Finance Committee shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks. The Ethics Committee shall convene monthly during the academic year and as called by the Ombudsperson for the consideration of grievances. Ad-hoc committees shall convene as needed by determination of the chair. Proxies are not allowed.

Article VI: Elections

Section 1: Adherence to By-Laws

All elections must be carried out according to the stipulations and timelines set forth in the by-laws.

Section 2: Election Committee

The Ombudsperson shall chair the Election Committee. For the fall elections, the Elections Committee shall also include both Co-Presidents, the Public Relations Director, the Administrative Director, and two students-at-large selected by the Ombudsperson. For all subsequent elections, the Election Committee shall be composed of members of the Ethics Committee. The Election Committee shall ensure that all elections are compliant with the by-laws. No member of the Election Committee may formally endorse any person running for any Senate position through oral, written, or electronic means.

Article VII: Committees

Section 1: Committee Structure

The Senate shall have both standing and ad-hoc committees. Senators must serve on committees as outlined in the by-laws. Each committee must meet at least once per month.

Section 2: Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee shall be composed of the Ombudsperson (Chair), Parliamentarian, Senate Speaker, Two Senators selected by the Ombudsperson, one Student-at-large, and the Senate Advisor (non-voting). The purpose of the Ethics Committee is to see that the operations of Senate are carried out in an ethical manner in accordance with this Constitution, the by-laws, and College Policy. All Ethics Committee meetings shall be closed, and all actions require the consent of a majority of the Committee's membership. In the event a member of the committee has a conflict of interest with a specific issue, a Co-President will serve as that person's substitute for that specific issue.

The Ethics Committee shall review the Constitution and its by-laws annually during the fall semester, make any recommendations for amendments to the full Senate, and hear all ethics complaints.

Section 3: Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be composed of the Finance Director (Chair), Controller (vice-chair, non-voting), four Senators, and two Students-at-large. The purpose of the Finance Committee is to allocate the student government fee to student groups in their pursuit of quality organizations and events for the entire college community. Any member of Senate may attend Finance Committee meetings, but the meetings shall be closed to the public.

The Finance Committee shall:

1. Review all student organization budget requests and forward them to the full Senate with a recommendation.
2. Assist the Finance Director with the annual budgeting process.

Section 4: Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee shall be composed of the Public Relations Director (Chair), the Senate Speaker, at least one Co-President, and at least two Senators. The purpose of the Public Relations Committee is to inform the student body about relevant Senate business.

The Public Relations Committee shall:

1. Maintain the Student Senate board in the Student Union and all Senate social media accounts.
2. Inform the student body of new Senate projects and initiatives.
3. Organize tabling shifts and office hours.

Section 5: Standing Committees

The following committees maintain a permanent status within Senate:

1. Student and Academic Affairs
2. Environmental Sustainability
3. Health and Housing
4. Inclusive Excellence

The responsibilities of these committees and their chairs are listed in the by-laws.

In the case there is no chair elected from the senate, the Co-Presidents will select an appointment.

Section 6: Ad-hoc Committees

The Senate may create Ad-hoc Committees, with a majority vote, to address specific issues. Membership in an Ad-hoc Committee is open to all who wish to be included. Members of the committee shall elect a Chair. The Chair of any ad-hoc committee leads the meetings and may appoint students-at-large to serve on the committee with the approval of a majority of the committee.

Article VIII: Amendments

Section 1: Consideration of Amendments

Any voting member may bring a constitutional amendment to the Senate for a vote. Consideration shall be granted by two-thirds of the Senate body via a roll call vote. A petition bearing valid signatures of at least five percent of the student body shall be sufficient to grant consideration of any amendment. If an amendment is granted consideration, the Elections Committee shall publicize the proposed amendment no later than two weeks before the proposed amendment is to be voted upon. A copy of the proposed amendment will also be submitted to the Dean of Students, Senate Advisor, and other relevant College offices.

Section 2: Ratification of Amendments

The student body must ratify amendments to this Constitution by a majority of votes cast. Referendums for constitutional amendments shall be brought before the student body during the Co-Presidential election in the spring semester. A referendum may be held on a different day by a two-thirds vote of Senators. The voting procedures for all referendums must adhere to the election procedures prescribed in the by-laws.

Article IX: Supremacy

Section 1: By-Laws and Robert's Rules

This Constitution shall dictate the actions and operations of the Senate, superseding all by-laws. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, by-laws, and any special rules of order the Senate may adopt.

Section 2: Disputes

A special body may be convened at the request of the Ombudsperson to be the final arbitrator of any disputes arising from this Constitution that cannot be rectified by the Senate's Ethics Committee. The body will be convened by the Dean of Students and shall consist of one college employee and two students. All decisions issued by the body shall be binding on the Senate.

Article X: By-laws

Section 1: Ratification

The Senate shall establish and maintain a set of by-laws. The Senate may amend the by-laws with a two-thirds majority. Any proposed changes to the by-laws must be presented to the Senators at least one week before a vote may take place.

Article XI: Stipends

Section 1: Allocation

The Co-Presidents shall each receive a stipend of \$500 per semester. The Finance Director, Controller, Administrative Director, and Technology Chair shall each receive stipends of \$250 per semester. In the event of a mid-term vacancy in one of these positions, the Finance Committee will determine prorated stipends for the departing and incoming students.

Section 2: Adjustments

All stipends must be included in the Constitution. Any adjustments to stipends will not take effect until the academic year following their enactment.