

Student Government Association Constitution
(Revised by ballot approval 8-31-23)

Preamble

We, the students of Harding University, in order to provide for closer cooperation with the administration and faculty in promoting the Christian principles on which Harding University was founded and is maintained, and to furnish a systematic plan for participation in the responsibilities of this institution, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Student Government Association of Harding University.

Article I. Name.

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of Harding University.

Article II. Membership.

Section 1. Active membership in this association shall be given to all regularly enrolled undergraduate students on the Searcy campus of Harding University.

Section 2. In this Constitution, Student Government Association shall henceforth refer to the governing council of the student body, consisting of all elected or appointed positions.

Section 3. The Student Government Association shall consist of 3 primary student groups: The Executive Council, The Senate, and The Cabinet. A Faculty Advisor(s), appointed by the President of the University, shall also serve as a faculty member of the Student Government Association.

A. The objectives of the Student Government Association shall be to perpetuate the goals of the university, acting as liaison between the administration and students, creating and maintaining the spirit and morale of the university through various activities, supply leadership for the student body and acting as a catalyst for social and spiritual growth.

Article III. Executive Council.

Section 1. The Executive Council shall be composed of the officers of the Student Government Association. These executive council positions include the President, Vice President, Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Executive Council to provide leadership toward the fulfillment of the goals and purposes of the association as stipulated in this Constitution.

Section 3. The officers of the Executive Council shall hold office for one school year beginning the day after spring graduation.

Section 4. Officers of the Executive Council.

A. **President:** It shall be the duty of the President to preside over all meetings of the Student Government Association and to serve as presiding officer of the Executive Council. It shall also be the duty of the President to present a report to the Student Body each semester summarizing Council activities for the past period. It shall be the duty of the President to serve as the Elections Commissioner, unless otherwise decided by the Faculty Advisor(s) and Dean of Students. The Elections Commissioner Shall: Enforce campaign regulations, tabulate votes, provide intents-to-file, petitions, and ballots for elections, and see to the operation of voting on Election Days.

B. **Vice-President:** It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to preside over the meetings of the Association in the absence of the President and to serve as a member and Vice-President of the Executive Council. The Vice-President shall also oversee standing committees as directed by the President of the Executive Council.

C. **Secretary:** The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:

- i. To keep a record of all official proceedings of the Association and the results of the election.
- ii. To display in some appropriate place the minutes of each Executive Council meeting for the benefit of the Association members.
- iii. To serve as Secretary of the Executive Council.

D. **Treasurer:** The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:

- i. To keep a record of all finances of the Association and to pay bills approved by the Executive Council, with payment having been approved by the Faculty Advisor(s) of the Association.
- ii. To submit to the Association, no later than the third week of each semester, a detailed budget for the current year.
- iii. To make a financial report to the Association any time he is requested to do so by the Executive Council.
- iv. To serve as Treasurer of the Executive Council.

v.To regulate all transactions pertaining to the Student Government Association

Section 5. Qualifications of the Executive Council: The qualifications of the officers to the Executive Council of the Student Government Association shall be as follows:

- A. The President and Vice-President shall have completed 82 semester hours of university work by the end of the semester they are nominated, 30 of which shall have been done at Harding University. They must possess a scholastic level of not less than a 2.5 grade point average and be in good standing with the university's Student Life Office. The President may not succeed himself.
- B. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall have completed 60 semester hours of university work by the end of the semester they are nominated, including 30 completed at Harding University. They must possess a scholastic level of not less than a 2.5 grade point average and be in good standing with the university's Student Life Office.

Section 6. Election of Executive Council Officers.

- A. Candidates for Executive Council positions must submit an Intent to File form to the Elections Commissioner by 5 p.m., one week before the election. The names of those submitting Intents to File shall be presented for approval by the Executive Council and the Dean of Students no later than Wednesday one week before the election.
- B. A candidate must be nominated by a petition signed by not fewer than 50 students. The petitions must be signed and presented to the Elections Commissioner by 5:00 p.m. Friday, the week prior to the election.
- C. Upon approval by the Dean of Students, the names of all candidates shall be announced to the Student Body the week of the election.
- D. Electronic ballots on which are listed the names of all candidates for the respective offices shall be made available to all eligible voters on the morning of Election Day.

- E. Regular elections of the officers of the Association shall be held on the first Wednesday of April; if deemed necessary it may be moved one week in either direction at the direction of the President by two-thirds vote of the vote holding members of the Student Government Association.
- F. Voting shall be done by electronic ballot. The Elections Commissioner shall be responsible for overseeing the process on Election Day.
- G. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast in order to be elected to a given office. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, a runoff election shall be held within one week of the regular election between the two having the largest number of votes. In the event of ties in any election, a special election shall be arranged by the Elections Commissioner.
- H. If the Office of the President, Vice-President, the Secretary or the Treasurer becomes vacant, such vacancy shall be filled by a special election under the direction of the Elections Commissioner, or the next highest ranked officer if necessary, in a fashion he or she deems appropriate, subject to the approval of the Student Government Association, and the Dean of Students prior to the announcement of candidacy.

Article IV. The Senate.

Section 1. The Senate of the Student Government Association must be re-elected every year. The members of the Senate all reserve a vote at Student Government Association Meetings.

Section 2. It is the goal of the Senate to represent their classes, organizations, or nationalities for which their position demands. The members of the Senate include: Senior Male and Female Representative, Junior Male and Female Representative, Sophomore Male and Female Representative, Freshman Male and Female Representative, International Representative(s), and any unforeseen Representative positions that future Student Government Associations deem necessary after unanimous vote by Student Government Association vote holding members. These unforeseen Representative positions can be added into the by-laws after receiving a unanimous vote until further constitution reconstruction.

Section 3. Members of the Senate are to be assigned to lead a Chair of the Cabinet committees.

Section 4. Qualifications of the Senate Representatives.

- A. The qualifications of the officers to the Senate of the Student Government Association shall be as follows:
 - i. The Senate Class Representatives must possess a scholastic level of not less than a 2.0 grade point average and be in good standing with the university's Student Life Office, with the exception of the Freshman Class Representatives who must only be in good standing with the university's Student Life Office.
 - ii. The Senate International Representative(s) shall have completed 60 semester hours of university work by the end of the semester they are nominated, including 30 completed at Harding University. They must possess a scholastic level of not less than a 2.0 grade point average and be in good standing with the university's Student Life Office. The Senate International Representative(s) must hold citizenship in a foreign country outside the United States.

Section 5. Election of Senate Representatives.

- A. Candidates for the Senate Representatives of the sophomore, junior, and senior classes, as well as the International representative(s) must first submit an Intent to File by 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, one week before the election to the Elections Commissioner. The names of those submitting Intents to File forms shall be presented to the Executive council and the Dean of Students, no later than Wednesday the week before the election.
- B. Candidates for Representatives of the sophomore, junior, and senior classes must be nominated by a petition signed by not fewer than 50 students from their classes and presented to the Elections Commissioner by 5:00 p.m. Friday, the week prior to the election.
- C. Candidates for International Representative(s) must be nominated by a petition signed by not fewer than 50 students and presented to the Elections Commissioner by 5:00 p.m., Friday, the week prior to the election.
- D. Upon approval by the Dean of Students, the names of all candidates shall be announced the week of the election.

- E. Electronic ballots on which are listed the names of all candidates for the respective offices shall be made available to eligible voters in the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes on the morning of Election Day.
- F. Each class member may vote for one man and one woman representative from his or her respective class.
- G. Electronic ballots with the listed names of all candidates for the International Representative(s) shall be made available to all eligible voters on the morning of Election Day
- H. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast in order to be elected representative. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, a runoff election shall be held within one week of the regular election between the two having the largest number of votes. In the event of ties in any election, a special election shall be arranged by the Elections Commissioner.
- I. Senate representatives for the freshmen class shall be elected at the beginning of the school year, following the procedures as outlined for the representatives of the other classes.
- J. If the office of a representative becomes vacant, such vacancy shall be filled by a special election arranged by the Elections Commissioner in a fashion he or she deems appropriate, subject to the approval of the Executive Council and the Faculty Advisor(s). The candidates must be approved by the Student Government Association and the Dean of Students prior to announcing their candidacy.

Article V. The Cabinet .

Section 1. The Executive Council may establish up to twelve standing Cabinet committees.

Section 2. Each standing committee Chairperson must be a member of the Executive Council or Senate nominated by the President of the Student Government Association and must be approved by two-thirds of the voting members of the Executive Council, the Faculty Advisor(s), and the Dean of Students. Each designated chairperson must then nominate a non-Student Government Association student to

serve as a Co-Chairperson. This must be approved by the President of the Student Government Association, Executive Council, and the Faculty Advisor(s).

Section 3. The duties of these committees are to be explained to the Chairperson, Co-Chairperson and/or the committee members by the Vice President , under direction of the President of the Student Government Association. Files of past activities of these committees are to be made available by the Secretary of the Student Government Association.

- A. The Chairperson of each committee is to maintain a record of its activities and file them with the Secretary of the Student Government Association.
- B. Each Chairperson or other designated member of the committee is to make regular reports to the Executive Council and Senate as requested by the President of the Student Government Association.

Section 4. Other temporary committees may be established for specific purposes and limited periods of time by the President and/or the Executive Council. Chairperson of these temporary committees shall be approved by the Faculty Advisor(s) if said Chairperson is not already a member of the Student.

Article VI. Meetings.

Section 1. There shall be at least one meeting of the Student Government Association in the Fall and Spring semesters of the school year open to any member of student body. The call for meetings must be made publicly at least two days prior to the time of the meeting with the purpose of meeting being stated.

Section 2. The time and number of meetings of the Student Government Association shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Council, providing not less than two regular meetings are held per month. Special meetings may be called by the President. The Faculty Advisor(s) or their representative is to be present at all meetings.

- A. A majority of the voting members of the Student Government Association shall constitute a quorum.
- B. Voting Members of the Student Government Association Shall include all members of the Senate, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The President of the Student Government Association shall not be considered a voting member unless needed, due directly to break a tie in voting results predetermined by the quorum present.

- C. At the beginning of the fall semester it shall be the duty of the Student Government Association to devote a portion of one meeting to the discussion and learning of parliamentary procedure under the guidance of a representative from a previous year's Student Government Association, or the faculty advisor(s).

- D. Meetings shall be used to present information of committees, budget balances, movements/resolutions, and discussion between members. The voting members of the Student Government Association must vote on anything pertaining to budget allocation/use of large fund amounts, resolutions offered, and large scale decisions. It is imperative that Senate members represent their classifications and committees they direct as co-chairpersons.

Article VII. Suspension of a member of the Student Government Association.

Section 1. If a member of the Student Government Association is deemed guilty of actions unbecoming to a Harding student, he may be suspended by the Faculty Advisor(s) or by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Student Government Association pending review by the Student Life Office.

Article VIII. Impeachment.

Section 1. The following procedure shall be used in the impeachment of a member of the Student Government Association.

- A. A member must submit a written complaint to a member of the Executive Council. The complaint must be based on malfeasance in office, actions unbecoming a student representative, or a serious departure from this constitution.

- B. The highest-ranked officer not involved shall appoint a committee to determine whether there is any validity to the charge. The committee is to use the highest level of Christian discretion possible.
- C. If the complaint is valid, the committee will present all pertinent facts at a hearing presided over by the highest-ranked officer not involved at the next regularly scheduled Student Government Association meeting.

- D. A vote shall be taken at that meeting, with a two-thirds majority of voting members being necessary to impeach this person.

Section 2. All precautions should be taken throughout this procedure to ensure that the personal reputation and character of the individual involved is not damaged.

Article IX: Amendment to the Constitution.

Section 1. Upon the recommendation of the Student Government Association, the President of the University must approve any proposed amendment before it is presented to the Student Body at a special election.

Section 2. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the Student Government Association members in a special election shall be necessary for the adoption of an amendment, provided there is a quorum present at the meeting.

Article X. Ratification.

Section 1. This charter shall be in full force and effect upon being submitted to the Student Government Association and receiving their approval as a recommendation to the President of the University, upon receiving the approval of the President of the University and ratification by the student body. A two-thirds majority vote of a quorum representing the student body, numbering 150 students, shall be required for final approval.

Article XI. Filing of Ratified Copy.

Section 1. For this constitution of the Student Government Association to be valid or for any amendment of By-law to be valid, it must be filed in the office of the Dean of Students. With the filing of this constitution or amendment or by-law, a statement must be filed stating the date and manner of approval of such constitution, amendment or by-law and signed by the officers of the Executive Council and the Faculty Advisor(s).

Article XII. By-Laws.

Section 1. The Executive Council shall maintain a system of By-laws governing election rules and Council procedure not already covered by the Constitution. All By-laws must be approved by the Faculty Advisor(s) and the Dean of Students before they are enacted.

Section 2. Any revision to the By-laws must be approved by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Student Government Association and be approved by the Faculty Advisor and the Dean of Students.

By-Laws of the Student Government Association

(August 24, 2009)

(Edited February 26, 2014)

Section 1. The Student Government Association is composed of twelve standing committees. The Cabinet and Executives reserve the right to modify the purpose of a standing committee or to replace a committee based on the specific responsibilities granted to the Student Government Association during the year they serve.

Standing Committees of the Student Government Association:

- A. **Academic Affairs Committee-** Works at improving study conditions, encourages academic excellence, and manages various aspects of the academic program. Interacts with university Registrar as student representatives for faculty committees.

- B. **Public Relations Committee-** Publicizes all programs and functions of the SA

- C. **Food Services Committee-** Reviews and processes all suggestions and complaints regarding food services and relays this information to the proper personnel.

- D. **Alumni Committee-** Works with the Alumni office to serve as a liaison between students and alumni, as well as to assist in the planning and preparation of events called be above stated office.

- E. **Special Projects Committee-** Their purpose is to organize and facilitate special projects as they arise.

- F. **Spiritual Life Committee-** The Committee works to enhance the spiritual atmosphere on campus. Its mission is to involve students in activities that lead to spiritual growth and development and to further their maturity as Christian leaders. A variety of activities and programs are planned.

- G. **Student Chapel Committee-** The committee works with the faculty chapel committee, university chapel coordinator, and the given student imposed ideas to strengthen chapel periods. The committee will use the Student Government Association appointed chapel dates to establish student guided chapel programs appropriate to the discretion of the Student Government Association.

- H. **First Year Experience Committee** – Made up of students focused on creating events and activities geared towards creating bonds and friendships for those experiencing their first year at the university this includes both freshman students as well as transfer students This committee will work with the director of 1st year experience from the university’s Center for Student Success.

- I. **Technology Committee** – The Committee works to enhance the technological usage and understanding between the Vice-President of IS&T and the student body. The technology committee will also focus on the maintenance of the Student Government Association’s website, as well as serving as student representatives to communicate with administration concerning university online programs: ex: Canvas, Pipeline.

- J. **Student Life Committee** –The goal of the Student Life Committee is to provide availability to listen and communicate student’s concerns or ideas with the Student Government Association President, as well as the Dean of Student Life; to generate and provide opportunities to build student spirit and morale; to build student involvement on campus; to voice and promote campus policy changes, when necessary, by direction of the Student Government Association President, acting as a liaison between the students and the Office of Student Life.

- K. **Athletic Committee** – Purpose is to work with the Athletic Director and coaches of the various sports to help promote school spirit and increase student attendance and participation.

- L. **International Committee-** The purpose of the international committee is to actively engage the international students at the university and provide events, involvement, and aid to these students to better their University experience.

Section 2. Elections By-Laws.

A. Elections Commissioner

- i. The President of the Student Government Association shall serve as the Elections Commissioner. The Elections Commissioner must first be approved by the Dean of Students and Faculty Advisor(s). If the Student Government Association deems the President to have violated their non-partisan role during the election process by a 2/3 vote by voting members of the Student Government Association, the president shall resign his role to the next highest ranked officer uninvolved.
 - ii. It shall be the responsibility of the Elections Commissioner to submit the eligible names to the appropriate Student Life Office for approval.
 - iii. It shall be the duty of the Elections Commissioner to see that all requirements of the following election rules are met.

B. Applicability

- i. These rules shall apply only to campus political offices.
 - ii. Campus political offices include the offices of the Senate representatives and officers of the Executive Council. Other elections under supervision of the Executive Council of the Student Government Association shall be conducted in a manner prescribed by the Executive Council and the Elections Commissioner.

C. Poll Regulations

- i. Voting for these offices shall be done via electronic ballots that are made available to all eligible students on Election Day.
 - a. No election official shall wear tags or caps or any such article showing support of any candidate.

- b. No election official shall advise or express a preference to any voter.

- ii. No undue pressure should be put on any student to cast an electronic ballot for one candidate or the other by accompanying them to a computer to vote.

- iii. The polls shall open on Election Day at 8:00 a.m. and shall remain open 24 hours unless in the opinion of the Executive Council unusual circumstances necessitate a change.

D. Voting

- i. Voting shall be by electronic ballot, and each ballot shall be traceable to the student that cast it in order to keep an accurate record of the voter turnout.

- ii. A voter shall be allowed to vote only for those candidates that his or her eligibility provides for as determined by his or her classification in the Registrar's office.

- iii. After marking his or her ballot to indicate clearly his or her preference, each voter shall submit his or her ballot via an electronic means that has been properly laid out and communicated by the Elections Commissioner.

- iv. Ballots unclearly marked shall be judged invalid and shall not be counted.

E. Ballots

- i. The order of listing of candidates on the ballots shall be determined by a drawing such that each candidate will have an equal chance to draw first place.

- ii. In the unlikely event that a computer error causes ballots not to be accurately accounted for, a revote shall be instituted to allow for complete fairness.

F. Vote Counting

- i. Votes shall be tabulated via an electronic means that coincides with the ballot process.
- ii. Candidates will not be allowed to see a running tally of the votes cast.
- iii. The tabulation of votes shall begin as soon after the polls close as is feasible. Results shall be posted as soon as they are determined.
- iv. Final judgment on any questionable ballot, unless the election is contested, shall be rendered by the Elections Commissioner, the Executive Council, and the Faculty Advisor(s).
- v. No ballot, valid or invalid, shall be disposed of until the period of time for contesting the election shall have been terminated.
- vi. A historical record shall be kept and saved of the ballots counted in order to provide documentation in the event of an unforeseen future problem.

G. Contesting Elections

- i. Any candidate who questions or doubts the returns given by the tabulating committee or who feels that the election was fraudulent shall submit his complaint in writing to the Student Government Association President within twenty-four hours after the results are posted.
- ii. If any candidate contests an election, the Student Government Association President shall call the Executive Council and Senate into special session to resolve the matter.

H. Violations

i. Any Candidate who violated any of the campaign regulations is subject to discipline by the Student Life Office upon recommendation by the Student Government Association.

- ii. Any student who commits any violation of a rule not covered in the constitution, votes twice, or tampers with the electronic voting is subject to review and discipline by the Student Life Office.

I. Campaign Regulations

i. No advertisements or written material except for regular news coverage in THE BISON of candidate platforms shall be allowed before campaigns, unless otherwise decided at the discretion of the Student Government Association and Faculty Advisor(s). Campaigns will begin at 7:00 p.m. Sunday before the election on Wednesday.

- ii. The Elections Commissioner will determine appropriate areas for posters and various campaign supplies every year prior to the campaigning period. This report will include locations on campus where it is allowed, as well as regulations concerning the materials they can be posted in and on.
- iii. Candidates cannot be held responsible for their supporters' violating a previously stated regulation without their knowledge. If a problem arises, both the party that caused the problem and the candidate should be made aware of the issue by the Elections Commissioner.
- iv. The Elections Commissioner reserves the responsibility to state and clarify campaign regulations unstated within this constitution. They reserve the responsibility to set a cap on candidate funds, determine the appropriateness of poster content, and regulate other unforeseeable needed guidelines concerning the campaign process, all at the discretion of the Student Government Association.

J. Miscellaneous

i. A Presidential candidate who has submitted his or her intent to file form and has completed the petitions requirement by 5:00 p.m. the Friday before elections shall be required to present their platform to the student body in chapel.

a. Presidential candidates shall be personally presented in chapel prior to the election with the presentation of all other candidates running for offices in the election cycle.

ii. Withdrawals

a. Withdrawals shall be made in writing and given to the Elections Commissioner before the polls close on Election Day.

b. Withdrawals terminate a candidate's eligibility for that particular race.

i. Any question not resolved by these by-laws shall be decided on by the Elections Commissioner under the supervision of the Executive Council.