



**Constitution of the Lipscomb University
Student Government Association
2024-2025**

PREAMBLE

We the Student Government Association establish this Constitution in furtherance of the following outcomes:

That we may facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation with Lipscomb University's faculty, staff, and administration on behalf of the University's undergraduate students.

That we may advocate for and enact the desires of our diverse student population in the spiritual, academic, and social spheres of Lipscomb University's affairs.

That we may work to support the success and growth of current student organizations and aid in establishing future student organizations.

That we may represent the interests of all students by a good-faith effort to work impartially on behalf of all constructive desires of our student body

And that we may daily realize a greater vision of our university by action, attitude, and conduct, while providing for student participation in its affairs.

For these reasons, we hereby establish this Constitution of Lipscomb University's Student Government Association.

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Name

This organization shall be known as the Student Government Association of Lipscomb University—hereinafter, SGA.

Section 2. Objectives

The objectives of this association shall be to promote the Christian values and principles of the university, to provide liaison with the administration, to sustain the spirit and the morale of the student body, to enable campus leadership, and to serve as a catalyst for spiritual, academic, and social growth.

Section 3. Motto

The SGA motto shall be 1 Kings 3:9, “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern these great people of yours?”

Section 4. Membership

SGA represents every regularly enrolled undergraduate student of Lipscomb University as defined by the student handbook.

ARTICLE 2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Section 1. Description

This association shall have four officers: The President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Section 2. Qualifications

- A. All Executive Officer candidates must have at minimum a 3.0 GPA, which must be maintained during their tenure as an Executive Officer.
- B. Every candidate for President must have completed at least six (Fall or Spring) semesters, four of which are in residence at this university, or achieved senior status (as defined by the registrar) prior to the beginning of the term for which they are running.
- C. Every candidate for Vice-President, must have completed at least four (Fall or Spring) semesters, two of which are in residence at this university, or achieved junior status (as defined by the registrar) before the beginning of the term for which they are running.

- D. Every candidate for Secretary and Treasurer must have completed at least two (Fall or Spring) semesters, in residence at this university, or achieved sophomore status (as defined by the registrar) before the beginning of the term for which they are running.
- E. All Executive Officer candidates must attend at least four Senate meetings before the day of election.
- F. All Executive Officer candidates must be able and willing to serve for a full academic year.
- G. All Executive officer candidates cannot be scheduled to graduate the December semester immediately following election. Rather, the earliest a candidate can graduate is the May (or two full academic semesters) following election.

Section 3: Duties

A. President

- a. The President shall appoint the chairperson and the other members of each committee, and he/she may, at his/her discretion; he/she shall have the authority to call a special meeting of any committee with approval of the SGA sponsor;
- b. He/she shall have the power to veto any measure by the Senate, provided he/she exercises his/her veto power within 48 hours of the actions by the Senate and notifies the Senate immediately and publicly at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting or calls a special meeting of the entire Senate.
 - i. In the event of a Presidential Veto, the Senate, after one week following the veto, shall have the power to override that action by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
- c. The President shall serve as the official voice and representative of SGA to the Lipscomb administration.

B. Vice President

- a. The Vice-President of the SGA shall, in the absence of the President, perform all other appropriate executive functions, and he/she shall, upon a vacancy in the office of the President, immediately succeed to the post and shall occupy it until the installation of the president's successor, at which time he/she shall resume his/her former office. The Vice-President shall retain his/her right to vote with the Senate even while acting as the President. The Vice President may only retain his/her right to vote in case of a tie.
- b. The Vice President shall handle parliamentary voting and maintain standard communication between the SGA Executives and Senators.

C. Secretary

- a. The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of all proceedings of the Senate and shall keep a copy available for student review. Senate Proceedings and the results of all votes shall be made available to all senators on Canvas.

- b. The Secretary shall create, manage, and distribute the content, messaging, and updates of SGA via social media platforms and graphics.
- c. The Secretary shall prepare meeting agendas in coordination with other Executive Officers.
- d. The Secretary shall have a vote in the Senate.
- e. The Secretary will be treated as a Senator with a vote as such, equal with all other SGA Senators.

D. Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer shall maintain the SGA budget, maintain a record of the financial affairs of the SGA, make a financial report at each senate meeting and shall post it in some appropriate place, and make the necessary arrangements for the payment of all SGA debts to the University through the business office.
- b. The Treasurer shall have a vote in the Senate.
- c. The Treasurer will be treated as a Senator with a vote as such, equal with all other SGA Senators.

Section 4. Terms

- A. Executive terms shall begin with the summer immediately after the election and end at the conclusion of the following spring semester.

ARTICLE 3. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Section 1. Senate

- A. As the SGA's legislative body, the Senate shall comprise 28 Senators.
- B. Each class shall be represented by 7 elected officials. (President, Vice President, Coordinator, and four At-large senators)
 - a. This structure excludes the Freshman class. Eligible members of the Freshman class can campaign to be elected to the Freshman Leadership Council, which is comprised on 7 equal members
 - b. At the onset of the spring semester, the Freshman Leadership Council will vote among themselves to name a freshman class President and Vice President, and Coordinator.
 - c. Voting rules and procedures for freshman leadership positions will be established by the executive team as they see fit.

Section 2. Qualifications

- A. Each Class official must be a member of the class which they seek to represent, determined by total college semesters completed
- B. Students who have a legitimate case that they would be better classified under a different class may present their case to the SGA sponsor, who will render a final decision in collaboration with the Executive Officers.

Section 3. Senatorial Power

- A. The Senate shall have the authority to organize and implement events aimed at enriching student life and fostering a positive campus environment.
- B. The Senate shall be responsible for the equitable distribution of its allocated funds to recognized student organizations and campus initiatives.
- C. The Senate shall have the authority to write, pass, and lobby legislation.
 - a. Legislation is defined as bills and projects.

Section 4. Duties of Class Executive Officers

- A. The Class Executive Officers shall lead their class in collaboration with the SGA Executive Officers
- B. The Class Executive officers shall enjoy the same rights and privileges as Class Senators.
- C. Class President
 - a. The Class President shall maintain communication with Executive Officers and delegate tasks to their class senators.
 - b. The Class President shall facilitate meetings and hold senators accountable to their tasks.
 - c. The Class President shall collaborate with the Executive Officers and Sponsor to further develop leadership skills.
 - d. The Class President shall confer with their constituents when considering events, projects, bills, and proposals to best represent their constituents' interests in the Student Government Association.
- D. Class Vice President
 - a. The Class Vice President shall assist the Class President in organizing and facilitating meetings.
 - b. The Class Vice President is responsible for assuring all graphics and communications regarding events are sent to the Executive secretary for social media posting.
 - c. The Class Vice President shall be responsible for communications among class senators and holding them accountable to their tasks.

- d. The Class Vice President confers with their constituents when considering events, projects, bills, and proposals to best represent their constituents' interests in the Student Government Association.
- E. Class Coordinator
 - a. The Class Coordinator shall assist the Class President and Vice President to provide organizational leadership support.
 - b. The Class Coordinator shall be responsible for emailing/booking events and maintaining the Presence page for their class.
 - c. The Class Coordinator shall confer with their constituents when considering events, projects, bills, and proposals to best represent their constituents' interests in the Student Government Association.
- F. Class At-large Senator
 - a. The Class At-large Senators shall serve as representatives of each grade level class.
 - b. They shall confer with their constituents when considering events, projects, bills, and proposals to best represent their constituents' interests in the Student Government Association.

Section 5. Term

- A. The session of the Senate shall coincide with the traditional academic year, starting at the beginning of each fall semester and ending at the conclusion of the following spring semester.

ARTICLE 4. ELECTIONS

Section 1. Executive Elections

- A. The election for the Executive Officers and Class Executive Officers shall occur on the first Tuesday of April.
- B. The student body shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to serve as the Executive board of SGA.
- C. Each class shall elect a President, Vice President and Coordinator to serve as a senator and represent their class.

Section 2. At-large Elections

- A. The election for at-large senators shall occur on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of April.
- B. If a candidate does not win their Class Executive Officer race, they may choose to have their name appear on the ballot for At-large Senators.

- C. Eligible students who only wish to run for a Senator at-large position shall be included on the at-large ballot on the Thursday Election.

Section 3. Election Procedure

- A. Rules governing the elections and campaigning procedures shall be adopted by the President in the form of either personally adopted said rules or through the appointment of an Election Commissioner to adopt said rules.
- B. All rules must be approved by the Sponsor.

ARTICLE 5. LEGISLATION

Section 1. Types of Legislation

- A. Bills: There are two types of legislation. A bill is a direct call to action from the Senate to the administration. There is a clear result of action on behalf of the administration. Bills do not require SGA funds.
- B. Projects: A project is a change made to campus, initiated by SGA and may (or may not) call for SGA funding. A project follows similar procedures as a bill, (as they both require a synopsis, first reading, administrative review, and majority approval from the senate). Projects, however, do not address issues related to Lipscomb policy.

Section 2. Requirements

- A. Representatives
 - a. Any article of legislation requires two members of the Senate to serve as representatives for the legislation.
 - b. Legislation may be presented to the Senate by any member of the Student Government Association, except for the Vice President.
- B. Timeline
 - a. Legislation must be completed and submitted in accordance with the timeline determined by the SGA Executives.

Section 3. Process

- A. The Vice President shall preside over the Senate's legislative powers and must maintain fairness, and professional moderation of discussion throughout the legislative process.
- B. The Vice President has the power to facilitate debate following any presentation of the legislation before the Senate.

Section 4. Process Steps

- A. **First Reading:** Each piece of legislation shall be presented before the senate on two separate occasions. During the first reading, a synopsis of the legislation will be presented. The senate may ask inquisitorial questions concerning the rationale behind the legislation, the research conducted, and any involvement of departments or students in its development. Senators may also offer recommendations to the group responsible for drafting the legislation.
- B. **Administrative Review:** Subsequent to the first reading, students involved in drafting the legislation shall meet with the Vice President of Student Life for an "Administrative Review." This meeting will allow for the presentation of the legislative synopsis and a discussion of its feasibility. The primary purpose of this review is to receive guidance and gain insight into the Administration's perspective before proceeding with finalizing the legislation.
- C. **Second Reading (Bill) or Project Pitch:** During the second reading, the legislation shall be presented to the Senate in its finalized form, which may include revisions. Senators are not obligated to adopt the recommendations proposed during the first reading or the administrative review. Upon the conclusion of the presentation, any senator may move to open the floor for discussion. During this period, senators will debate and express their support or concerns regarding the proposed legislation.

Voting

- a. Legislation shall be passed with a simple majority vote.
 - i. Bills approved by the Senate will be submitted to the SGA sponsor and subsequently forwarded to the Office of the President. No bills are binding until enforced by the administration. The passage of a Bill serves as strong, sophisticated, and professional suggestions to the administration regarding the needs and wants of students.
 - ii. Projects passed by the senate will begin the process of implementation. Representatives of the project will contact respective departments and initiate the project plan.
- b. Senators, including those serving as representatives of the legislation may vote on all legislation. Two-thirds (2/3) of eligible voters must be present for a vote to be conducted.

Section 5. Emergency Passage

- A. In circumstances where the representatives of a piece of legislation, in conjunction with the Senate, determine that the legislation requires immediate passage, a senator may move to proceed directly to the voting process following the first reading. This motion for emergency passage must be seconded, after which the Senate shall vote on whether to adopt the motion.

- B. For the legislation to be passed on an emergency basis, the motion must receive a supermajority vote. If the motion is approved, the Senate will immediately proceed to the voting process for the legislation in question.

ARTICLE 6. FINANCES

Section 1. Funding Proposals

- A. Any student from an officially recognized campus organization, club, or department may present a funding proposal before the senate.
 - a. Groups must follow the instructions set forth by the Executive Officers to schedule a time to propose to the senate.
- B. After presenting the funding proposal to the senate, senators may ask the requesting group inquisitorial questions.
 - a. The Vice President has the power to strike any inappropriate question as he or she sees fit.
- C. In the absence of the requesting group, discussion of the proposal will be conducted.
 - a. Senators may offer amendments to the requested amount, and the senate may vote on those amendments as discussion progresses.
 - b. The Vice President will moderate discussion appropriately.
- D. Senators will vote to approve funding proposals.
- E. A simple majority vote must be received for the funding proposal to be accepted and passed by the senate.
- F. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate must be present to hold a vote on monetary proposals.
- G. Any money not used by the requesters will be returned to the Senate's funding proposal budget. Requesters may not go over the senatorial allotted budget.

Section 2. Student Organization Seed-Funding

- A. Every registered student organization is eligible to receive \$200 to support their programs, events, and activities.
 - a. Student orgs must meet the standards required by the Office of Student Life to be eligible for this funding.

Section 3. Partnerships

- A. The Executive Officers establish the budget at the beginning of each semester and maintain the right to allocate portions of the budget to partnership with on-campus departments.
 - a. Departments seeking to partner with SGA are not required to propose before the senate for funding, however, funding a partnership requires majority approval by the senate.

- b. Two-thirds of the senate must participate in voting for the approval of a partnership.

ARTICLE 7. COMMITTEES

- A. To facilitate the interests of the SGA and the student body, the SGA may create non-standing committees dedicated to specific areas of student interest. Both the Senate (by majority vote) and the President (by executive action) shall have the power to create or dissolve these non-standing committees as they deem necessary.
 - a. Examples of these committees may include, but are not limited to: Formal Committee, Service Committee
- B. No committee chairperson shall ever abuse his/her authority by disregarding an idea brought before his/her group.

ARTICLE 8. DISCIPLINE AND VACANCIES

Section 1. Misconduct

- A. Any Executive Officer, Senator, or Representative who, whether in word or deed, impugns the reputation, impairs the efficacy, or otherwise inhibits the SGA will be subject to impeachment. This includes, but is not limited to, dereliction of one's SGA duties, failure to adhere to Lipscomb's standards of behavior & conduct, and other behavior that rises to such a level, as determined by the SGA sponsor.

Section 2. Absences

- A. SGA Senators are permitted two approved absences per semester.
 - a. Approved absences are absences in which the senator communicates the absence with the executives promptly before the absence.
 - b. Unapproved absences are absences which fail to be communicated with the executive team, or any absence exceeding the permitted amount (two).
- B. If two unapproved absences occur, the Senator, or Executive Officer in question will be terminated from office. The Executive Officers must utilize fair and sustainable methods of excusing absences.
- C. Under extenuating circumstances, additional absences may be permitted if approved by the Executive Officers and the SGA Sponsor.

Section 3. Vacancy

- A. When a Senator vacancy occurs during the academic year (which for this purpose includes Class Executive Officers), the Executive Officers will consider nominations from the Senate and any interested parties. The Executive Officers shall then appoint a replacement senator to complete that term in office, either from the nominations or

- otherwise at their discretion. The person selected by the Executive Officers must be approved by a majority of the Senate.
- B. When a Senator vacancy occurs during the summer, individuals seeking to fill the office will participate in the fall campaign process as outlined by the executive officers.
 - C. In the event of an Executive vacancy, the Executive Officers should seek counsel and nominations from other Senators. The Executive Officers shall then appoint an Executive Officer from the existing Senators to complete the vacated term. The Senator selected must be approved by a majority of the Senate.
 - D. Upon the successful confirmation of a Senator to an Executive position, the Executive Officers shall then nominate another student to fulfill the remainder of the term of the vacated Senate position in accordance with this section.

ARTICLE 9. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the following procedure:

- A. During the summer, executive officers may make any necessary amendments before the academic year begins.
 - a. All amendments made in this way must be agreed upon by all Executive members and the SGA Sponsor.
- B. During a given academic year, any Senator or Executive Officer may present an amendment before the Senate.
 - a. To pass, the amendment must receive a majority vote by the Senate.
 - b. If the Executive Officers approve the amendment, the amendment will be adopted & made part of the SGA Constitution.
 - c. If the Executive Officers fail to approve the Amendment Proposal, it passes back to the Senate.
 - d. The Senate may overrule the decision of the Executive Officers by a three-quarter majority vote, after which the Amendment Proposal will be adopted & made part of the SGA Constitution.

(Amended Fall Semester 1997)

(Amended Spring Semester 2000)

(Amended Spring Semester 2015)

(Amended Spring Semester 2020)

(Amended Spring Semester 2021)

(Amended Spring Semester 2024)

(Amended Summer 2024)