



**The University of Houston
Student Government Association
Bylaws**

Written January 2026

Table of Contents

TITLE I. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH	6
Article 1: Purpose.....	6
Section 1 – Composition.....	6
Section 2 – Authority and Responsibilities.....	6
Article 2: Terms of Office	7
Section 1 – Senators	7
Article 3: Senators	7
Section 1 – Responsibilities.....	7
Article 4: Officers of the Senate.....	8
Section 1 – Vice President/Speaker of the Senate	8
Section 2 – Speaker Pro Tempore.....	9
Section 3 – Senate Committee Chairs	10
Section 3.1 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Academic Affairs Committee Chair...11	
Section 3.2 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Administration & Finance Committee Chair	11
Section 3.3 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Student Life Committee Chair.....	12
Section 3.4 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Internal Affairs Committee Chair	12
Section 4 – Senate Clerk.....	13
Section 5 – Senate Committees	13
Section 5.1 – Powers, Composition, Structure, and Jurisdictions	14
Section 5.2 – Committee Responsibilities.....	14
Section 5.3 – Student Government Ad-Hoc Committees	15
Section 5.4 – Powers, Composition, Structure, and Jurisdictions	15
Article 5: Meetings.....	16
Section 1 – Meeting Protocol	16
Section 2 – Quorum.....	16
Section 3 – Voting Procedures.....	17
Section 4 – Special Sessions of the Senate.....	18
Section 5 – Order of Business	18
Article 6: Student Forum.....	19
Section 1 – Procedure of Student Forums	19
Article 7: Legislation.....	19

Section 1 – Introduction of Legislation	19
Section 2 – Formalities of Enactment.....	21
Section 3 – Enactment	21
TITLE II. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.....	22
Article 1: The Student Body President and Executive Committee	22
Section 1 – Purpose	22
Section 2 – Composition.....	22
Section 2.1 – Authority and Responsibilities.....	23
Section 3 – Terms of Office	23
Section 4 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the President	23
Section 5 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Chief of Staff	24
Section \6 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of Public Relations	25
Section 7 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of External Affairs	26
Section 8 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of Outreach	27
Section 9 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of University Standing Committees.....	28
Section 10 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the President’s Cabinet	29
TITLE III. JUDICIAL BRANCH.....	29
Article 1: Composition.....	29
Article 2: Eligibility and Terms of Service	30
Article 3: Authority and Responsibility of the Judicial Branch	30
Article 4: Counsel.....	30
Article 5: Standing	31
Article 6: Chief Justice, and Associate Justices	31
Section 1 – Chief Justice	31
Section 2 – Associate Justices:	31
Article 7: Chief Justice, and Associate Justice Removal or Resignation from Position	31
Section 1 – Grounds for Removal	32
Section 2 – Process of Removal	32
Article 8: Attendance Policy	32
TITLE IV. ATTENDANCE POLICY	32
Article 1: Attendance.....	32
Section 1 – Requirements	32

Article 2: Absences from Meetings	32
Section 1 – Absence Classification.....	32
Article 3: Summer Expectations	33
Article 4: Point System	33
Article 5: Termination Process	34
TITLE V. Fiscal Policies and Procedures	35
Article 1: Name and Purpose	35
Article 2: Budget Development and Procedure.....	35
Article 3: Fiscal Procedures	36
Section 1 – Donations.....	36
Section 2 – Submittal Procedures	36
TITLE VI. Code of Impeachment.....	36
Article 1: General Provisions	36
Section 1 – Definitions	36
Section 2 – General Impeachment Procedures	37
Article 2: Initiation and Notification of Impeachment Charges.....	37
Article 3: Impeachment Trial Procedure	38
TITLE VII. VACANCIES.....	38
Article 1: Senate Vacancy Rules	38
Section 1 – President	38
Section 2 – Vice President/Speaker of the Senate	38
Section 3 – Speaker Pro Tempore.....	39
Section 4 – Vacancies in the Senate.....	39
Section 5 – Senate Committee Chair Vacancies	39
Section 6 – Senate Clerk Vacancy	39
TITLE VIII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS	39
Section 1 – Amendments	39
Section 2 – Editorial Changes	40
TITLE IX. ELECTION CODE.....	41
Article 1: General Provisions	41
Section 1 – Purpose	41
Section 2 – Accountability of the Election Code.....	41

Section 3 – Compensation	41
Article 2: The Election Commission	41
Section 1 – Responsibilities	41
Section 2 – Appointment	42
Section 3 – Office Hours	42
Section 4 – Election Journal	43
Section 5 – Individual Duties of Commissioners	43
Section 6 – Removal from Office	44
Article 3: Candidates	44
Section 1 – Qualifications to be a Candidate	44
Section 2 – Limitations on Candidacy	45
Section 3 – Responsibilities of a Candidate	45
Section 4 – Filing for Candidacy	46
Article 4: Campaigning	47
Section 1 – Definition of Campaigning	47
Section 2 – Prohibitions on Campaigning	48
Section 3 – Campaign Materials and Endorsements	49
Section 4 – Campaign Ethics	50
Article 5: Voting	51
Section 1 – Voter Eligibility	51
Section 2 – Election Date	51
Section 3 – Polling Locations and Regulations	51
Section 4 – Ballots	51
Section 5 – General Election Results	52
Section 6 – Determination of Results	52
Article 6: Campaign Finance	52
Section 1 – Expenditures	52
Section 2 – Financial Disclosures	53
Article 7: Violations	54
Section 1 – Complaints and Reporting	54
Section 2 – Classification of Violations and Penalties	56

TITLE I. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Article 1: Purpose

This Title is adopted by the Senate consistent with its Constitutional power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers and all powers vested by the Constitution of the Student Government Association (SGA) or in any department or office thereof and in to specify the manner in which the Senate shall exercise its powers as the legislative body of the SGA (Constitution Article 5).

Section 1 – Composition

- A. All officers of the Senate shall be students elected or appointed to the Senate according to the SGA Constitution, Amendments, and Bylaws.
- B. All senators shall have equal votes as members of the Senate.
- C. Each college will be entitled to at least one representative. For each four (4) percent and/or part thereof that a college or school has of the university's total enrollment, that school or college will be entitled to one (1) representative.
 - i. Professional students will be considered graduate students.
 - ii. Post-baccalaureate students will be considered undergraduate students.
- D. The number of available seats for graduate and professional students for the Senate will be proportional to their enrollment in their respective college, which will be determined by enrollment numbers as of the fall semester before the election (minimum one seat per school or college). Applications would be accepted from only graduate and professional students until the first Senate meeting of the Fall semester. Afterwards students from any academic level can be considered for the vacancy, but graduate and professional students must still be given priority when choosing between candidates.
- E. The Parliamentarian is a non-voting Senate member responsible for ensuring Senate procedures are conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, maintaining decorum by removing unruly members and observers at the request of the Speaker of the Senate, and carrying out the actions to enforce appropriate conduct at meetings and enforce the Bylaws of the SGA. For the Senate, an Associate Justice from the SGA Judiciary will serve as the Parliamentarian and provide updates on Judiciary activities. If the Judiciary is unable to provide a representative to a Senate Meeting, either the Speaker Pro Tempore or a designee of the presiding officer shall assume the responsibilities of the Parliamentarian. A presiding officer may not simultaneously serve as the Parliamentarian for a meeting and must designate someone if neither a Justice nor Speaker Pro Tempore is present.

Section 2 – Authority and Responsibilities

- A. The Senate shall have the following powers and responsibilities:
 - i. Make laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying out all powers vested by these Bylaws and the Constitution in the SGA.

- ii. Approve appointments of the President. This must be done within twenty (20) business days, or the appointment stands. A rejection of a nomination must be based on the candidate's inability to meet the role's minimum qualifications.
- iii. Approve standing and ad hoc committees, commissions, or boards as needed.
- iv. Establish procedures for internal operation.
- v. Provide a voice for the student body in the academic, institutional, and community affairs to University administration.
- vi. Review reports from their respective standing committees.
- vii. Call a special meeting of the Senate upon a written petition signed by a simple majority of the members of that Senate.

Article 2: Terms of Office

The following bylaws apply to the University of Houston Senate.

Section 1 – Senators

- A. Senators shall serve terms commencing with the completion of the Inauguration to be held place prior to April 1st annually or from the meeting in which they are sworn in. Their term ends at the call to order of the next Inauguration the following spring, or at such a time as a duly elected senator involved in a disputed election is eligible to serve. Senators may serve more than one term with reelection. Inaugurations must take place before April 1st each year.

Article 3: Senators

Section 1 – Responsibilities

- A. Responsibilities of senators include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Attend regular Senate and committee meetings in person.
 - ii. Serve as a voting member of the Senate.
 - iii. Serve on various Student Government Association committees.
- B. May serve on various University Standing committees.
- C. Provide a voice for the student body in the academic and institutional affairs to the University administration.
- D. Meet at least once a semester with the administration of the College they are representing.
- E. Propose legislation on behalf of the student body.
- F. Seek student feedback, meet with administration to resolve issues, and recommend solutions to student issues.
- G. Establish procedures for internal operations.
- H. Review the expenditures and balance sheet of the Student Government Association.
- I. Review reports from each Senate committee.

- J. Actively participate in Student Government Association activities and events.
- K. Volunteering a minimum of 15 hours per semester (office hours, meeting with constituents, supporting events and programs on campus, etc.).
- L. Be enrolled with a minimum of twelve (12) credits as an undergraduate or six (6) credits as a graduate student during fall and spring semesters.

Article 4: Officers of the Senate

Section 1 – Vice President/Speaker of the Senate

- A. The Vice President/Speaker shall preside over the Senate as chairperson and shall only vote in the event of a tie. The Vice President/Speaker is an elected member and serves as a member of the Executive branch to ensure communication and collaboration.
- B. The Vice President/Speaker shall set the calendar of Senate meetings and call special meetings of the Senate to address urgent, time-sensitive, or extraordinary matters that cannot reasonably wait until a regularly scheduled meeting.
- C. In the absence of both the Vice President/Speaker and Speaker Pro Tempore, the following individual will take on the responsibilities of the Vice President/Speaker: campus standing committee chair(s) as designated by the Vice President/Speaker may also serve if the Vice President/Speaker and the Speaker Pro Tempore are both absent as identified by the Vice President/Speaker.
- D. The Vice President/Speaker shall serve on the SGA Cabinet.
- E. The Vice President/Speaker shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting member of each Senate standing committee.
- F. The Vice President/Speaker ensures that all legislation to be considered by the campus senate is in proper order and may direct legislation to be reviewed by a committee under the jurisdiction of the senate. If the Vice President/Speaker so designates, the legislation must be reviewed by the designated committee prior to being brought before the Senate.
- G. To forward all legislation signed or unsigned to the President for review/veto/signature.
- H. Determine the validity of absences from Senate Meetings.
- I. To provide transition resources to the next administration's SGA Vice President/Speaker of the Senate, to include:
 - i. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - ii. Recommendations for improvements
- J. . SGA advisors are responsible for hosting all retreats. The President and the Vice President/Speaker may be a part of the planning team but will not be solely responsible for planning and executing retreats and training for the SGA.

- K. The Vice President/Speaker of the Senate shall coordinate bi-weekly meetings of the Senate Executive Committee, including the Speaker Pro Tempore, and the Senate Committee Chairs.
- L. The Vice President/Speaker shall be required to maintain a minimum of twenty (20) working hours per week, Monday through Friday, during their term. Hours shall be defined as follows:
 - i. Twelve hours in the office, including regularly scheduled meetings with the Senate executive committee, constituents, and/or the advisor.
 - ii. Eight hours between all official meetings and events.
- M. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence.
 - i. The Vice President/Speaker is subject to all attendance policies and shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- N. The Vice President/Speaker of the Senate shall receive compensation for the position's duties during the term of office, the start date of which is the day of their inauguration. The SGA shall not initiate any increase or decrease in the Vice President/Speaker's stipend during the current Speaker of the Senate's term of office. All compensation provided in accordance with the provisions of this section shall be subject to reduction due to lack of performance, which is at the discretion of the President and Advisor.

Section 2 – Speaker Pro Tempore

- A. The Speaker Pro Tempore for the Senate and committee chairs must be nominated at the first meeting following the Inauguration. However, they can be elected and confirmed either at the first meeting following Inauguration, the fall retreat, or the first meeting of the fall semester.
- B. The Speaker Pro Tempore becomes the acting Vice President/Speaker of the Senate only in the absence of the Vice President/Speaker and until the return of the Vice President/Speaker, whether during a Senate meeting or if the Vice President/Speaker has a Leave of Absence.
- C. The Speaker Pro Tempore retains their senatorial position, and all duties and responsibilities assigned within. When serving in the role of Vice President/Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore will only vote in the case of a tie.
- D. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall be required to maintain a minimum of Six (6) working hours per week, Monday through Friday, during their term. Hours shall be defined as follows:
 - i. Three hours in the office, including regularly scheduled meetings with the Vice President/Speaker, Senators, constituents, or the advisor.
 - ii. Three hours between all official meetings and events.
- E. To provide transition resources for the next administration's Speaker Pro Tempore to include:

- i. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
- ii. Recommendations for improvements

Section 3 – Senate Committee Chairs

- A. The chairs of the SGA Senate standing committees shall be elected from the Senate, by the Senate members present. The elections will take place at the first Senate Session, which shall be held immediately following the Inauguration.
- B. All Senate committee chairs will have the following responsibilities:
 - i. Serve as voting members of the Senate.
 - ii. Hold regular committee meetings in person throughout the academic year, meeting no less than every two weeks in person.
 - iii. Call special meetings of their committees as needed, with a minimum of 24-hour notice (excluding Saturday and Sunday).
 - iv. Establish written goals and budgets for their respective committees and send these to the Vice President/Speaker and advisor for approval.
 - v. Be responsible for the development and follow-up of the legislation pertinent to their committee.
 - vi. Report to and assist the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate in carrying out their duties.
 - vii. Each committee chair is required to submit either a printed, written, electronic, or oral report to the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate at the Senate Executive Meetings. The reports shall include details on the work completed since the last meeting, an action plan for their committee and position, and other items related to the committee and position that are significant to the SGA.
 - viii. Each committee chair is required to submit both a printed and an oral report to the Senate at all scheduled Senate meetings that will include work completed since the last meeting, a plan of action for their committee and position, and other items related to the committee and position that are significant to the SGA.
 - ix. To provide transition resources for the next administration's Senate Committee Chairs to include:
 - a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - b. Recommendations for improvements
 - x. The committee chairs shall be required to maintain a minimum of ten (10) working hours per week, Monday through Friday, during academic terms. Office hours shall be defined as hours during which the committee chair is available in the SGA Office. Working hours and requirements are defined as follows:

- a. Five hours in the office, including regularly scheduled meetings with their committee, the Vice President/Speaker, or the advisor.
- b. Five hours between all official meetings and events.

Section 3.1 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Academic Affairs Committee Chair

The Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- A. Provide direction and goals to the Standing Committee on Academic Affairs which includes:
 - i. Identify and investigate University-Wide academic issues and draft and propose related legislation to the Senate, after working with the administration to identify possible solutions.
 - ii. Ensure legislation passed by the Senate pertaining to academic affairs reaches the appropriate Undergraduate Council.
- B. Report on activities of the Standing Committee on Academic Affairs to the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate and SGA Senate
- C. Serve as the student representative on the Undergraduate Council.
- D. Liaise with academic student organizations and departments.
- E. Meet once a week with the SGA Advisor during established office hours.
- F. Limits and Oversight
 - i. In no case shall the Academic Affairs Standing Committee or its Chair advocate a course of action to an effect contrary to SGA or University policy.
 - ii. Oversight of the Committee may be exercised by the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate, and the advisor, who shall have the power to review the records of the Committee, compel reports of its members, and make recommendations regarding its improvement.

Section 3.2 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Administration & Finance Committee Chair

The Administration & Finance Committee Chair shall have the following responsibilities:

- A. Provide direction and goals to the Standing Committee on Administration & Finance, which includes:
 - i. Identify and investigate university-wide issues pertaining to administration and finance services and operations, and create legislation to address these issues, after working with administration to identify possible solutions.
 - ii. Work with the Administration & Finance leadership to understand the many services and operations available to students and the campus community and make recommendations for improvements.
- B. Report on activities of the Standing Committee on Administration & Finance to the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate and SGA Senate.
- C. Liaise with registered student organizations.
- D. Meet once a week with the SGA Advisor during established office hours.

E. Limits and Oversight

- i. In no case shall the Administration & Finance Standing Committee or its Chair advocate a course of action to an effect contrary to SGA or University policy.
- ii. Oversight of the Committee may be exercised by the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate, and the advisor, who shall have the power to review the records of the Committee, compel reports of its members, and to make recommendations regarding its improvement.

Section 3.3 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Student Life Committee Chair

The Student Life Committee Chair shall have the following responsibilities:

A. Provide direction and goals to the Standing Committee on Student Life, which includes:

- i. Identify and investigate University-Wide issues pertaining to student services and create legislation to address such issues, after working with administration to identify possible solutions.
- ii. Work with the Student Life leadership to understand the many services and operations available to students and the campus community and make recommendations for improvements.
- iii. Maintain communications with staff and administrators to address student service concerns.

B. Facilitate feedback from the student body regarding any University services offered.

C. Meet once a week with the SGA Advisor during established office hours.

D. Limits and Oversight

- i. In no case shall the Student Life Standing Committee or its Chair advocate a course of action to an effect contrary to SGA or University policy.
- ii. Oversight of the Committee may be exercised by the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate, and the advisor, who shall have the power to review the records of the Committee, compel reports of its members, and make recommendations regarding its improvement.

Section 3.4 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Internal Affairs Committee Chair

The Internal Affairs Chair shall have the following responsibilities:

A. Provide direction and goals to the Internal Affairs Standing Committee, which includes:

- i. Review SGA appropriations.
- ii. Review Presidential nominations, within ten (10) business days, or the nomination will be sent to the Senate for review.
- iii. Conducts mid-semester or end-of-term evaluations of Senate member performance.
- iv. Collaborates with the Parliamentarian or Vice/President/Speaker to ensure Senate sessions are run according to parliamentary rules (e.g., Robert's Rules).

v. Works with the Judicial Branch (if necessary) for hearings or adjudication.

B. Limits and Oversight

- i. In no case shall the Internal Affairs Standing Committee, or its chair, advocate a course of action to an effect contrary to SGA or University policy.
- ii. Oversight of the Committee may be exercised by the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate, and an advisor, who shall have the power to review the records of the Committee, compel reports of its members, and make recommendations regarding its improvement.

Section 4 – Senate Clerk

The Senate Clerk is a non-voting member of the Senate and shall have the following responsibilities:

- A. Recording detailed minutes and agendas of the Senate meetings and posting them on the SGA website within 72 hours of the meeting in which they are approved.
- B. Keeping an attendance record of the Senate meetings, which should include any tardies and absences.
- C. Distributing any meeting-related supportive materials to the Senate, Cabinet, and the Judiciary.
- D. The meeting minutes from the prior Senate meeting must be distributed within at least three calendar days following the scheduled Senate meeting. The Vice President/Speaker of the Senate appoints an individual outside of the Senate to serve as the Senate Clerk. The Senate Clerk will serve at the pleasure of the Speaker of the Senate.
- E. The Senate Clerk shall be required to maintain a minimum of four (4) working hours per week, Monday through Friday, during academic terms. Office hours shall be defined as hours during which the Senate Clerk is available in the SGA office.
Working hours and requirements are defined as follows:
 - i. One hour in the office, including meeting with the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate or President as needed.
 - ii. Three hours between all official meetings of the Senate.
- F. To provide transition resources for the next administration's Senate Clerk to include:
 - i. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - ii. Recommendations for improvements

Section 5 – Senate Committees

- A. The provisions of this Article, unless otherwise specified, shall apply to all standing and select committees of the Senate.
 - i. No committee shall meet without at least two (2) business days advance public notice.

- ii. The chair of each committee shall notify the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate immediately after the time and place for a committee meeting has been set or a meeting has been called.
- iii. The committee chair and two committee members of any committee membership shall constitute a quorum, and no official action shall be taken upon any measure or recommendation in the absence of a quorum.

Section 5.1 – Powers, Composition, Structure, and Jurisdictions

- A. In order to assist the Senate in all aspects of analysis, administration, and execution of legislation to be enacted, each standing committee shall review all legislation, when its subject matter is within the jurisdiction of that committee.
- B. The Vice President/Speaker of the Senate nominates senators as members of the standing committees with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- C. A committee may, in its legislative review, amend legislation for the purpose of improving its appearance, presentation, and effect. The voting members of the SGA's standing committees must be members of the Senate who are not on probation.
- D. Standing committees of the Senate shall be: Academic Affairs, Administration & Finance, Student Life, and Internal Affairs.
 - i. The Chairpersons for the committees shall be elected from within the Senate.
 - ii. Vice Chairperson of each standing committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the appropriate committee. The Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.
- E. Each member of the Senate shall be required to serve on one of the standing committees, but not more than two of the aforementioned standing committees.
- F. Each committee may recruit and retain ex-officio members from outside the Senate.

Section 5.2 – Committee Responsibilities

- A. Shall address the following, and include, but are not limited to:
 - i. **Academic Affairs:** Faculty and course evaluations, degree program requirements and curriculum, academic standards, testing methods, academic advising and course selection, student access and success, student support services, academic policies and honor codes, University Libraries, Enrollment Services, other academic programs, services, and policies offered through the University of Houston Division of Academic Affairs and office of the Provost.
 - ii. **Administration & Finance:** Parking and Transportation Services, University Information Technology, Campus Services, budget and planning, Plant Operations and Facilities, University IT Services, Food Services, Bookstore, UH Police, and any other administrative programs, services offered through the University of Houston Division of Administration & Finance.

- a. **Safety and Infrastructure Subcommittee:** UH Campus Safety, UHPD and any law enforcement organizations directly impacting UH, safety education. This includes but is not limited to the safety walks, campus infrastructure, and housing.
- iii. **Student Life:** Student Center, Residence Life, Student Media, student organization involvement, civic engagement activities, interactions with government officials, leadership development, advising, student discipline, student health and wellness, any other student programs, services, and policies offered through the Division of Student Affairs.
- iv. **Internal Affairs:** Review SGA appropriations to ensure fiscal responsibility, transparency, and alignment with the organization's mission and governing documents. Review presidential nominations in a timely manner, completing its review within ten (10) business days. In collaboration with the Vice President/Speaker, conduct mid-semester and/or end-of-term evaluations of Senate member performance. In collaboration with the Parliamentarian and/or the Vice President or Speaker of the Senate, ensure that Senate meetings are conducted in accordance with established parliamentary procedure, including Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 5.3 – Student Government Ad-Hoc Committees

- A. The provisions of this Article, unless otherwise specified, shall apply to all standing and select committees of the Senate.
 - i. No committee shall meet without at least two (2) business days' advance public notice.
 - ii. The chair of each committee shall notify the SGA President immediately after the time and place for a committee meeting has been set, or a meeting has been called.
 - iii. The committee chair and two committee members of any committee membership shall constitute a quorum, and no official action shall be taken upon any measure or recommendation in the absence of a quorum.

Section 5.4 – Powers, Composition, Structure, and Jurisdictions

- A. The Vice President/Speaker nominates senators as members of the Senate standing or ad hoc committees.
- B. The Senate will confirm nominations within twenty (20) business days, or the nomination will stand.
- C. To assist the Senate in all aspects of analysis, administration, and execution of legislation to be enacted, each standing committee shall review all legislation, when its subject matter is within the jurisdiction of that committee.
- D. A committee may, in its legislative review, amend legislation for the purpose of improving its appearance, presentation, and effect.
- E. The voting members of the SGA standing or ad-hoc committees of the SGA must be members of the Senate who are not on probation.

- F. Each committee may recruit and retain non-voting members from outside the Senate.
- G. The committee should have at least one SGA representative from the Cabinet; however, it can include more than one member.
 - i. The Chairperson for a standing or ad-hoc committee shall be elected from among the SGA officers of the committee.
 - ii. A Vice Chairperson of each standing committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the appropriate committee. The Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.

Article 5: Meetings

Section 1 – Meeting Protocol

- A. Presiding Officers
 - i. Senate
 - a. The SGA Vice President/Speaker shall preside over the meeting.
 - b. In the absence of the SGA Vice President/Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore may be designated to preside over the meeting.
- B. The Senate shall assemble to initiate its annual session by the first week of April.
- C. Senate meetings will start the first Wednesday after the inauguration, and will be held bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- D. All official Student Government Association meetings shall be open to the public. Such meetings shall be advertised at least 1 week in advance.
- E. The Student Government Association of the University of Houston recognizes the Open Meetings Act. Summary notes and minutes will be posted to the SGA website. All members and visitors shall adhere to appropriate parliamentary procedures during meetings.
- F. The location for the Senate meetings will be in the SGA Student Senate Chamber (Student Center North) unless otherwise determined.

Section 2 – Quorum

- A. Quorum shall consist of at least 51 percent of the total current voting membership for the Senate Meetings. No official and binding votes can be taken at any session when a quorum is not present. If quorum is not reached, the session may be called to order, the roll called, announcements made, and then the session shall recess or adjourn.
- B. If a quorum has not been established at the start of a regularly scheduled meeting, the assembly may wait 15 minutes and then try again to establish a quorum. During this period of waiting, the assembly can only receive announcements; no business will be conducted. If a quorum is not established at the second attempt, the assembly may be dismissed, and the minutes reflect failure to establish a quorum, announcements, and attendance records.

- C. Any member of the Senate may request a determination of the presence of a quorum. Such a request shall suspend all business, and the only action at this point shall be a roll call to determine the presence of a quorum.
- D. Senators can participate virtually in Senate meetings only if they have requested to do so at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and have been given access to the audio, video, and voting technology. Senators must keep their video on; otherwise, they will be removed from the Senate meeting. A maximum of one (1) virtually approved meeting per semester will be allowed. The request must align with one of these considerations: academic or university-related obligations; health, medical, or wellness considerations; university-sponsored travel or representation; or emergency circumstances.

Senate meetings require senators to be physically present or pre-approved for virtual attendance for their vote to count towards quorum.

Section 3 – Voting Procedures

- A. All voting tallies shall be based on members present.
- B. No proxy or absentee votes will be allowed.
- C. A simple majority shall primarily determine the voting outcome unless otherwise specified.
- D. A “show of hands” will be the primary voting procedure, unless otherwise requested and adopted by the Senate. Voting by a “roll call” can be requested by a legislation’s author and/or sponsor upon introduction of the legislation.
- E. All voting tally results shall be interpreted as “passed” or “failed” motions based on the number of Yea and Nay votes.
- F. Abstaining from a vote will count as a vote not cast and will not be calculated in determining the majority or 51% simple majority voting outcome.
- G. For motions that require a 51% simple majority vote, the tally will be calculated using only the votes cast for Yea and Nay.
- H. A 51% simple majority vote shall be required:
 - i. To adopt and/or amend all bills and/or resolutions.
 - ii. To elect Committee Chairs
 - iii. To approve all nominations to SGA positions and University Standing Committees.
 - iv. As required by Parliamentary Procedures.
- I. For voting on legislation, the following applies:
 - i. For bills and amendments to bills, the final vote on all amendments to bills shall be by either hand vote or by voice vote. A roll call vote can be requested.
 - ii. When a roll call vote is taken, the individual votes will be recorded in the minutes from that meeting and in the footer of the final legislation on record.
- J. For motions that require a 75% majority vote, the tally will be calculated using only the votes cast for Yea and Nay.

- K. If a voting member of the Senate fails to attend a Senate meeting, that senator automatically forfeits their voting rights on legislation introduced during that meeting. If such legislation is tabled, the senator will still be unable to vote on it at subsequent meetings.

Section 4 – Special Sessions of the Senate

- A. A special session of the Senate can be called by the President of the SGA to address urgent, time-sensitive, or extraordinary matters that cannot reasonably wait until a regularly scheduled meeting. The Senate must be given seven days' advanced electronic notice of said meeting.
- B. The order of business for all such special sessions shall be determined by the President and matters for consideration shall be limited to those specified by the President.
- C. Special sessions may also be called by a majority vote (either in person or electronically) of the Senate. In such a case, the agenda order shall be the same as for a regular meeting.

Section 5 – Order of Business

The following shall be the order of business at each regular Senate meeting, and last no longer than two (2) hours:

- A. Call to Order by the presiding officer.
- B. Opening Call of the Roll / Determination of Quorum
- C. Reading and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
- D. Special reports, limited to 20 minutes (presentation and questions)
 - i. University Representatives wishing to address the Senate.
 - ii. Student Forum (Students wishing to address the Senate)
 - a. A student must submit a request to the Senate Clerk in writing to be placed on the agenda. The time limit will be 2 minutes maximum.
- E. Special Orders (Appointments/Charters)
 - i. The following types of legislation shall be automatically placed in this section: confirmation of appointments/nominations to the legislative branch, confirmation of appointments to the executive branch, bills of impeachment, questions for a referendum, and/or executive orders.
- F. One-minute report and/or speech by members of the Senate, which are SGA business-related.
- G. Cabinet Reports
 - i. Report of the President
 - ii. Report of the Vice President/Speaker
 - iii. Report of the Chief of Staff
 - iv. Report of the Director of Public Relations
 - v. Report of the Director of External Affairs

- vi. Report of the Director of Outreach
- vii. Report of the Director of University Standing Committees

H. SGA Senate Committee Reports

- i. Report of the Academic Affairs Committee Chair
- ii. Report of the Administration & Finance Committee Chair
- iii. Report of the Student Life Committee Chair
- iv. Report of the Internal Affairs Committee Chair
- v. Ad hoc Committee Reports

I. Advisor(s) Report

J. Old Business

K. New Business

L. Comments and announcements of the officers

M. Adjournment

Article 6: Student Forum

Section 1 – Procedure of Student Forums

- A. Students shall have the right to address the Senate at regularly scheduled meetings to express concerns and complaints about the campus community.
 - i. A student must submit a request to the Senate Clerk in writing to be placed on the agenda. The time limit will be 2 minutes maximum per student.
 - ii. Students who are on the Senate agenda must sign in with a valid Cougar ID at the beginning of the meeting.
 - iii. Anyone who is not a member of the SGA Senate or President's Cabinet shall only speak during SGA meetings through the process of the student forum.

Article 7: Legislation

Section 1 – Introduction of Legislation

- A. Legislation may not attempt to set policy or a course of action outside the purview of SGA and may not demand action by any entity outside of SGA.
- B. Any person or group can originate legislation (i.e., student, student organization, committee, etc.)
- C. All legislation shall be sponsored by at least one senator.
- D. All legislation must be submitted electronically to the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate (for campus legislation) no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the next Senate meeting.
- E. All legislation shall be titled, and the title shall be centered at the top of the first page.
- F. All legislation, not including special orders, must have a first and second reading.
- G. All legislation must be referred to a committee and receive a committee recommendation.

H. Labeling process for Legislation:

- i. Shall be referenced with the number of the current administration, followed by a two (2) letter code for the type of legislation (and if a special order a dash and the code for the type of special order), followed by a dash and the two (2) digits that are consecutively numbered for legislation.
- ii. Legislation Type Codes:
 - a. UB = University Bill
 - b. UPR = University Policy Resolution
 - c. USR = University Support Resolution
 - d. USO = University Special Orders
 - e. UL = Confirmation of members of the legislative branch
 - f. UX = Confirmation of members of the cabinet
 - g. UJ = Confirmation of members of the judiciary
 - h. FC = Formation of an ad hoc committee
 - i. BI = Bill of Impeachment
 - j. RQ = Referendum Question.

I. If a piece of legislation has been divided, a unique number shall be assigned to the portion of the legislation divided out of the original legislation.

J. Amendments to Legislation

- i. All amendments shall be referenced by a two (2) digit number, separated by a dash from the legislation suffixes.
- ii. If the amendment has been made through a motion to “Amend Something Previously Adopted,” the letter ‘A’ shall be attached to the end of the amendment number.
- iii. If an amendment has been divided, a unique number shall be assigned to the portion of the amendment divided out of the original amendment.

K. Procedures for Submitting Legislation for the Consideration of the Senate

- i. All legislation shall be submitted in the proper format, as determined by an Act of the Senate.
- ii. The Vice President/Speaker of the Senate shall refer legislation to one of the following committees:
 - a. Academic Affairs
 - b. Administration & Finance
 - c. Student Life
 - d. Internal Affairs
 - e. Ad-Hoc
 - f. Special orders will be placed directly on the agenda.
- iii. All referred legislation shall be sent back to the Vice President/Speaker either “favorably,” “with no bias” or “unfavorably” by the relevant committee.

- iv. All referred legislation shall be sent back to the Vice President/Speaker before the bill submission deadline seven (7) calendar days before the next Senate meeting.
- v. When returning legislation to the Vice President/Speaker with the committee's opinion on the bill(s) in question, the committee may also request that the Vice President/Speaker utilize their authority to set the agenda to postpone the second read of the bill, providing a rational basis exists for the request.
- vi. Should the referring committee request the delay of a bill's second read, the Vice President/Speaker shall confer with the primary and secondary authors of the bill to decide whether to grant the committee's request.
 - a. Should the fifteen (15) business period, with the exception of Presidential nominations which is ten (10) days, be granted to committees to review legislation exceed the limit of the legislative session, bills shall be returned to the Vice President/Speaker by committees prior to second read and the Vice President/Speaker shall put them on the agenda prior to the close of the legislative session.
- vii. Upon final receipt, the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate shall place the legislation on the agenda.

Section 2 – Formalities of Enactment

- A. The enacting clause of University Bills shall approximate the following form: "Be it enacted by the Senate of the SGA of the University of Houston."
- B. The resolving clause of SGA Resolutions shall approximate the following form: "Be it resolved by the SGA of the University of Houston."

Section 3 – Enactment

- A. General
 - i. Legislation shall become law in the following manner unless specifically stipulated for a particular legislation type below.
 - ii. Legislation shall be enacted with the following procedures:
 - a. Be presented by the Vice President/Speaker to the President within two (2) business days of passage by the Senate.
 - b. The President has exactly five (5) business days from the day of receipt, until 5 p.m. on the fifth (5th) calendar day to sign, not sign, veto, or line-item veto any legislation.
 - c. If the President approves the legislation, the President shall sign it, and it will be officially passed.
 - d. If the President vetoes the legislation, the President shall return it to the Senate along with the President's written objections, which shall be entered into the Senate Journal. The Senate shall then proceed to reconsider the legislation. If, after such reconsideration, three-fourths (3/4) of the Senate seated agree to pass the legislation, it will be official.

- e. If no action is taken by the President by 5 p.m. on the fifth (5th) calendar day, the legislation shall automatically pass without the President's signature.
 - iii. Campus and Policy Resolutions
 - a. Resolutions cannot direct action outside of SGA.
 - b. Opinion and Policy Resolutions are adopted when a 51% affirmative vote is received at a Senate meeting.
 - iv. University Bills
 - a. Legislation may not attempt to set policy or a course of action outside the purview of SGA and may not demand action by any entity outside of SGA.
 - b. If the legislation advances from the SGA President, it is forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs for review and forwarding to the appropriate UH official.
- B. Special Orders for Legislation
- i. Special Orders shall be passed on matters within the authority of that senate and the SGA, including SGA laws and appropriations.
 - ii. There are five (5) types of Special Orders:
 - a. Confirmation of Legislative Branch (CL) – used to confirm members of the legislative branch,
 - b. Confirmation of Judiciary Branch (CJ) - used to confirm members of the Judicial branch,
 - c. Formation of a Committee (FC) = used to form an ad hoc committee,
 - d. Bill of Impeachment (BI) - used to begin the impeachment process, and
 - e. Referendum Question (RQ) – used to request a question be placed on the Spring Election ballot.
 - iii. Special Orders shall require a 51% affirmative vote to enact new legislation.

TITLE II. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Article 1: The Student Body President and Executive Committee

Section 1 – Purpose

- A. This title is adopted by the Senate consistent with Article 5 of the SGA Constitution to expressly define the Executive Branch of the SGA (The Cabinet).

Section 2 – Composition

- A. The Cabinet shall be composed of the President, the Vice President/Speaker, the Chief of Staff, the Director of Public Relations, the Director of External Relations, the Director of Outreach, the Director of University Standing Committees, and the SGA Executive Branch Advisor (ex officio), as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2.1 – Authority and Responsibilities

- A. The Cabinet shall:
 - i. Perform any additional duties and reasonable functions to continue the essential business of the SGA as may be specified in this Constitution, its Amendments, and Bylaws.
 - ii. Submit to the Senate for approval nominations for vacancies within the Cabinet, the Senate, and the Judiciary.
 - iii. Submit to the Senate for approval nominations for the University Standing Committees.
 - iv. Annually approve Cabinet member role descriptions made by the President and delegate responsibilities to the cabinet members as needed.

Section 3 – Terms of Office

- A. The President, Vice President/Speakers of the Senate shall serve a concurrent one-year term commencing with the completion of the Inauguration to be held prior to April 1st annually.
- B. The Chief of Staff may be appointed and approved at the first Senate sessions held immediately following the Inauguration.
- C. The Directors shall be recruited, interviewed, and selected by the SGA President immediately after the spring semester election results are announced so they may be appointed and approved at the first Senate sessions held immediately following the Inauguration.

Section 4 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the President

- A. The Executive Power shall be vested in the President of the SGA.
- B. The President shall have the following powers:
 - i. To approve or veto legislation (to include University Bills, Resolutions, and any other form of SGA recommendations) pursuant to a fundamental policy or principle of the SGA within five (5) business days after the legislation passes the Senate.
 - ii. Appoint representatives of the SGA to the Cabinet, the Senate, the Judiciary, Special/Ad Hoc committees, and University Standing Committees which require Senate confirmation.
 - a. If the Senate rejects nominations to University Standing Committees, the President has the authority to appoint interim representatives.
 - b. A rejection of a Presidential nomination by the Senate must be based on the candidate's inability to meet the role's minimum qualifications.
 - iii. To enter into agreements with agencies and organizations outside the community, SGA organization by and with the approval and consent of the proper university authorities.
- C. The President shall have the following duties:

- i. To serve as the official representative of the student body in university matters.
- ii. To oversee the duties of the Cabinet and assign additional duties, as necessary.
- iii. To preside over any ad hoc committee responsible for amending the SGA Constitution, noting all amendments must be approved by the SGA Advisors to be introduced to the Senate for review and action.
- iv. To set and chair the Cabinet meetings at least twice a month.
- v. To order special meetings of the Senate when necessary.
- vi. To provide a minimum of \$5,000 transition resources for the next administration's President to include:
 - a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - b. Recommendations for improvements
- vii. The President shall be required to maintain a minimum of twenty (20) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours are the hours during which the President is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence. The President shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- viii. Working hours and requirements are defined below:
 - a. Ten hours in the SGA office, including regularly scheduled meetings with members of SGA, constituents, and the Executive Advisor.
 - b. Ten hours between all official meetings and events.
- ix. The President's Cabinet shall support the President in fulfilling their duties as outlined in the bylaws.

- D. The President shall receive compensation for their duties during their term of office. The SGA shall not initiate any increase or decrease of the President's stipend during the President's term of office. Any and all compensation provided in accordance with provisions of this section shall be subject to reduction at the discretion of the SGA Advisor for lack of performance or nonfeasance.

Section 5 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Chief of Staff

- A. Qualifications for appointment:
 - i. Applicants must have accumulated twelve (12) semester credit hours for undergraduate students or six (6) semester credit hours for graduate students at University of Houston.
 - ii. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and be in good standing.
- B. The Chief of Staff shall have the following responsibilities:
 - i. The Chief of Staff will be responsible for the coordination of the overall Executive Branch under the supervision of the President.

- ii. The Chief of Staff will coordinate the selection process for individuals to be appointed by the President.
- iii. The Chief of Staff will plan meetings of the Cabinet under the direction of the President.
- iv. The Chief of Staff will represent the President in cases where the President and Vice President/Speaker are unavailable.
- v. The Chief of Staff will perform specialized assignments delegated by the President.
- vi. The Chief of Staff is responsible for selecting members of the SJL Emerging Leaders Committee through an application process.
- vii. The Chief of Staff is required to plan an SJL Emerging Leaders training program within the first three months of the fall semester and an SJL Emerging Leaders Retreat, in conjunction with the Advising team, during the Spring semester for all chosen Emerging Leaders Committee members.
- viii. The Chief of Staff will coordinate the SGA Sheila Jackson Lee Emerging Leaders Program and serve as Chair of the Sheila Jackson Lee Emerging Leaders Committee. The Chief of Staff will provide opportunities for SJL Emerging Leaders to develop leadership skills and participate in the Student Government Association's ongoing business by assisting elected and appointed officials of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches with their duties as student leaders.
- ix. The Chief of Staff shall be required to maintain a minimum of twenty (20) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours are the hours during which the Chief of Staff is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor. The Chief of Staff shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- x. Working hours and requirements are defined below:
 - a. Ten hours in the SGA office, including regularly scheduled meetings with members of SGA, constituents, and the Executive Advisor.
 - b. Ten hours between all official meetings and events.
- xi. The President's Cabinet shall support the President in fulfilling their duties as outlined in the bylaws.

Section \6 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of Public Relations

A. Qualifications for appointment:

- i. Applicants must have accumulated twelve (12) semester credit hours for undergraduate students or six (6) semester credit hours for graduate students at the University of Houston.
- ii. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and in good standing.

- B. The Director of Public Relations has the following responsibilities:
- i. Oversee the public relations and marketing efforts of all of SGA, including:
 - a. Overseeing all activities regarding SGA public relations (providing students with the information they need to be aware of and participate in all of the programs, resources, and initiatives of the SGA).
 - b. Act as a Coordinator within the SGA to aid all other committees in the dissemination of information.
 - c. Maintain communications with all media groups in the University and/or work through University Marketing with local media.
 - d. Actively promote a positive image of the SGA throughout the University and greater Metro-Houston community.
 - e. Inform the student body of enacted legislation and information concerning SGA activities and programs.
 - f. Manage the imaging and branding of SGA within university requirements.
 - g. Inform the student body on SGA activities and projects, including, but not limited to, town halls.
 - ii. Report on the activities of Public Relations to the Senate.
 - iii. With the approval of the SGA Advisor, order promotional items and coordinate promotional events.
 - iv. Assist Senate members in promoting their constituent meetings.
 - v. Maintain and oversee all SGA social media accounts.
 - vi. Perform other duties as assigned or prescribed by the President.
 - vii. To provide transition resources for the next administration Director to include:
 - a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - b. Recommendations for improvements
 - viii. The Director of Public Relations shall be required to maintain a minimum of twenty (20) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours shall be defined as hours during which the Director of Public Relations is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor. The Director of Public Relations shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
 - ix. The Director shall serve at the direction of the SGA President.

Section 7 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of External Affairs

- A. Qualifications for appointment:
- i. Applicants must have accumulated twelve (12) semester credit hours for undergraduate students or six (6) semester credit hours for graduate students at the University of Houston.

- ii. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and be in good standing.

B. The Director of External Affairs:

- i. Oversee the external affairs efforts of SGA, including:
 - a. Serve as a liaison between the University of Houston Student Government Association and other universities, the City of Houston, Harris County, and the State of Texas.
 - b. In collaboration with the SGA President. Advocate for University of Houston students on issues related to higher education.
 - c. Assists the Student Government Association on matters regarding governmental and community relations.
 - d. Will lead all civic engagement efforts of SGA.
 - e. Will develop a strong relationship with the UH Government and Community Relations Office.
- ii. Report on the activities of the External Affairs to the Senate.
- iii. Perform other duties as assigned or prescribed by the President.
- iv. To provide transition resources for the next administration Director to include:
 - a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - b. Recommendations for improvements
- v. The Director of External Affairs shall be required to maintain a minimum of twenty (20) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours are the hours during which the Director of External Affairs is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor. The Director of External Affairs shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- vi. The Director shall serve at the direction of the SGA President.

Section 8 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of Outreach

A. Qualifications for appointment:

- i. Applicants must have accumulated twelve (12) semester credit hours for undergraduate students or six (6) semester credit hours for graduate students at the University of Houston.
- ii. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and be in good standing.

B. The Director of Outreach:

- i. Oversee the outreach efforts of SGA, including:
 - a. The Director of Outreach will serve as a liaison between the Student Government Association and Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), and University Sponsored Organizations (USOs).

- b. Assess areas of need among students and present them to the Student Government Association President.
- c. Will build a better sense of community and involvement among the Student Government Association and the student body.
- d. Will develop a strong relationship with the UH Center for Student Involvement.
- ii. Report on the outreach activities of the SGA to the Senate.
- iii. Perform other duties as assigned or prescribed by the President.
- iv. To provide transition resources for the next administration Director to include:
 - a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
 - b. Recommendations for improvements
- v. The Director of Outreach shall be required to maintain a minimum of fifteen (15) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours shall be defined as hours during which the Director of Outreach is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor. The Director of Outreach shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- vi. The Director shall serve at the direction of the SGA President.

Section 9 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the Director of University Standing Committees

A. Qualifications for appointment:

- i. Applicants must have accumulated twelve (12) semester credit hours for undergraduate students or six (6) semester credit hours for graduate students at the University of Houston.
- ii. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and be in good standing.

B. The Director of University Standing Committees:

- i. Oversee the SGA appointment process for University Standing Committees, including:
 - a. Seek, interview, and nominate candidates to serve on university standing committees.
 - b. Develop a standard application to be used for University Standing Committee applications.
 - c. Will review the actions of and report on all standing University Standing Committees to the Cabinet and the Senate.
- ii. Report on the activities of the Committee for Recruitment to the Senate.
- iii. Perform other duties as assigned or prescribed by the President.
- iv. To provide transition resources for the next administration Director to include:

- a. Transition materials – important contact information, calendar of tasks, meeting notes, summary of accomplishments, etc.
- b. Recommendations for improvements
- v. The Director of University Standing Committees shall be required to maintain a minimum of fifteen (15) working hours per week during academic terms. Office hours shall be defined as hours during which the Director of University Standing Committees is available in the SGA Office. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor. The Director of University Standing Committees shall not be eligible for compensation for the duration of the Leave of Absence.
- vi. The Director shall serve at the direction of the SGA President.

Section 10 – Powers, Duties, and Jurisdiction of the President’s Cabinet

- A. Assist the SGA President in the daily operations of the Student Government Association (SGA).
- B. Advise the SGA President on matters within their respective areas of expertise.
- C. Implement policies and directives issued by the President and the Cabinet.
- D. Serve as a liaison between the SGA President and SGA branches within their designated portfolio.
- E. Contribute to the development and execution of strategic initiatives and projects undertaken by the SGA.
- F. Fulfill specific duties assigned by the SGA President or the Cabinet.
- G. Attend meetings, prepare agendas, and coordinate schedules, as necessary.
- H. Conduct research and analysis on relevant issues affecting the student body and propose recommendations for action.
- I. Undertake special projects and initiatives as assigned by the SGA President or the Cabinet.
- J. Maintain regular communication with the SGA President and other Cabinet members to ensure effective collaboration and coordination.
- K. Members of the President’s Cabinet shall be appointed by the SGA President and confirmed by the Senate at the first meeting of the Inauguration. A rejection of a Presidential nomination by the Senate must be based on the candidate's inability to meet the role's minimum qualifications.
- L. Members of the President’s Cabinet serve at the pleasure of the SGA President.
- M. Members of the President’s Cabinet shall serve a concurrent term with the SGA President.

TITLE III. JUDICIAL BRANCH

Article 1: Composition

- A. SGA Judiciary shall consist of no more than seven (7) Justices, including one Chief Justice.
- B. The SGA President has the responsibility to interview and recommend candidates for nomination, with confirmation by the Senate. A rejection of a Presidential nomination by the Senate must be based on the candidate's inability to meet the role's minimum qualifications.
- C. Student Justices, nominated by the SGA President and confirmed by the Senate, may serve on the SGA Judiciary for the entire duration of their enrollment, as defined by the Student Code of Conduct, at the University of Houston. Justices' terms will end officially at the inauguration ceremony of their final semester of enrollment.

Article 2: Eligibility and Terms of Service

- A. To be eligible to serve as a Justice, a student must:
 - i. For undergraduate students, they must have completed thirty (30) semester hours to be eligible for appointment and, once in office, may serve until they graduate, unless they resign or are removed.
 - ii. For graduate students, they must have completed fifteen (15) hours to be eligible for appointment, and once in office, they may serve until they graduate, unless they resign or are removed.
 - iii. Be enrolled with a minimum of twelve (12) credits as an undergraduate or six (6) credits as a graduate student during fall and spring semesters, for the duration of their time in office.
 - iv. Must have and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher and must maintain good standing with the University.
- B. In upholding checks and balances within the organization, no student may hold office concurrently on the SGA Judicial Branch or any other branch of the SGA.
- C. Justices must renew their Judicial Oath at the Inauguration Ceremony or the first Senate meeting of each new administration.

Article 3: Authority and Responsibility of the Judicial Branch

- A. The SGA Judiciary shall have the authority to interpret the meaning and intent of this Constitution, its Amendments, and the Bylaws of the SGA.
- B. The SGA Judiciary shall hear all appeals of Election Commission decisions and affirm or reverse such decisions.
- C. SGA Judiciary Justices shall have the power to provide non-binding advisory opinions to all SGA Officers, upon request.

Article 4: Counsel

- A. Any candidate appearing before the Judiciary Branch has the right to counsel but must elect to be represented by counsel. Any candidate that elects representation by counsel will be bound to all actions and statements made by said counsel. Counsel must be a student in good academic and disciplinary standing with the University.
- B. Former or current officers of the Student Government Association who have previously been impeached will not be eligible to represent cases for other students.

Article 5: Standing

- A. Any aggrieved candidate who is a University of Houston student will have standing to bring a complaint before the Judiciary related to internal SGA issues.

Article 6: Chief Justice, and Associate Justices

Section 1 – Chief Justice

- A. The Chief Justice shall serve as spokesperson for the SGA Judicial Branch
- B. The Chief Justice shall organize and preside over regular meetings of the SGA Judicial Branch.
- C. The Chief Justice shall organize a campus-wide recruiting process for new Associate Justices.
- D. The Chief Justice shall preside over the impeachment hearings of any SGA Senate.
- E. The Chief Justice will be responsible for notifying Justices about meeting times and locations.
- F. The Chief Justice will be responsible for notifying all parties in writing of the hearing time and location.
- G. The Chief Justice will have the authority to assign duties to the members of the Supreme Court that are necessary to meet the objectives of the Court.

Section 2 – Associate Justices:

- A. The Associate Justices shall serve on the SGA Judicial Branch and other committees as designated by the Chief Justice.
- B. The Associate Justices shall arrange their schedule to ensure attendance at mandatory meetings and all scheduled hearing proceedings.
- C. The Associate Justices shall be familiar with the resources required to perform position duties (i.e., SGA Constitution, SGA Bylaws, etc.).
- D. The Associate Justices shall ensure a fair and impartial deliberation on cases presented at the hearing.
- E. The Associate Justices must provide a written notice of resignation from the SGA Judicial Branch to the Chief Justice.

Article 7: Chief Justice, and Associate Justice Removal or Resignation from Position

Section 1 – Grounds for Removal

- A. Failure to adequately meet and fulfill position responsibilities may result in removal from the position.

Section 2 – Process of Removal

- A. Any Justice may be removed from a position through the impeachment process, as defined by SGA bylaws.

Article 8: Attendance Policy

- A. Each Justice of the Supreme Court will attend all court hearings and meetings.
- B. The accumulation of more than three (3) unexcused absences will result in the automatic removal of that Justice.
- C. Excuses for missing meetings and hearings will be turned into the Chief Justice at least three (3) calendar days before the absence. Excuses for missing meetings and hearings must be supported by proof and a valid reason, such as illness or a scheduled test.
- D. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor.
- E. The court will meet regularly at the discretion of the Chief Justice.
- F. Justices will attend Student Government Association functions, as determined by the Chief Justice, to promote the Student Government Association and its functions. If a Justice has an absence from attending a function pursuant to this clause, that absence will be applied toward the total count of excused absences for expulsion.
- G. The Chief Justice will attend all meetings of the Senate. If the Chief Justice cannot attend a Senate meeting, the Chief Justice can appoint another Justice to attend.

TITLE IV. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Article 1: Attendance

Section 1 – Requirements

- A. Each SGA Officer shall be required to attend and be on time for all SGA meetings, training programs, and committees on which that officer serves.
- B. SGA Officers may request to join any SGA meeting using an online video connection. The officer presiding over the meeting may reject these requests at their discretion. Officers are required to have their video on and be visible in the meeting.

Article 2: Absences from Meetings

Section 1 – Absence Classification

- A. Excused absences shall be defined as any of the following documented reasons: severe illness, legal obligations, recent personal trauma, mental health crisis, extreme circumstances, unplanned work schedule conflict, or unanticipated academic obligations. All other absences shall be considered unexcused. Officers shall submit their request for an excused absence to their Supervisor no later than two (2) business days after an absence. In an extreme circumstance where the officer is unable to provide their documented excuse within two days, their direct supervisor may grant additional time. If a valid excuse is not provided, the absence will automatically be counted as unexcused. Direct supervisors are defined as SGA members who have supervisory and hiring authority over officers, volunteers, and emerging leaders. The advisors will be responsible for the President, Vice President/Speaker, Chief Justice, and Chief Election Commissioner.
- B. An automatic excused absence shall be granted to an officer whose absence is the result of SGA-sponsored business, provided they submit a request for an excused absence in writing to their direct supervisor three business days prior to the meeting. For a special session of the Senate, the request must be submitted 24 hours before the meeting.
- C. It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk to keep an attendance record of Senate and committee meetings, which should include any tardies and absences.
- D. Officers who must miss more than two (2) scheduled meetings must write to their respective SGA Advisor and their Supervisor to notify them of their situation as soon as they are aware of the forthcoming absences. Officers may take a leave of absence from their SGA responsibilities if they have a well-documented situation that falls under one of the listed excused reasons and cannot perform their duties for a period of less than one month but greater than five business days. Upon approval from an officer's Supervisor and SGA Advisor, a return date will be set, and no points shall be assigned during the period of absence for officers in leadership positions.
- E. Absence from mandatory office hours for two or more consecutive weeks shall constitute a Leave of Absence, approved by the President and appropriate SGA Advisor.

Article 3: Summer Expectations

- A. SGA Officers are encouraged to commit the time needed to fulfill all the responsibilities for their respective positions. Officers who do not receive a stipend are not required to work a minimum number of hours. They are still required to come to all scheduled meetings and training programs during the summer months.
- B. For May through July, the President and Cabinet must respond to emails within two business days, conduct a Cabinet meeting twice a month, attend the SGA Retreat, and attend the Executive Leadership Retreat.

Article 4: Point System

- A. A point system is used to determine when termination must be initiated. If an officer accumulates twenty-five (25) points, the termination process set forth in Title IV, Article 5 will commence. Points only reset at the end of an administration. If an officer holds multiple SGA positions, they will accrue points cumulatively from all positions.
- B. When points are assigned, the officer will receive documentation regarding their point total. Individuals who wish to appeal an assignment must request, in writing, an in-person meeting with their supervisor and SGA advisor within five business days of receiving the document. The SGA advisor makes the final determination of whether the points were properly assigned. The appropriate officer will have seven (7) business days from the date the violation occurred to assign points.
- C. Each officer has a direct supervisor who will approve excused absences and assign points to them. For Liaisons, this is their respective Speaker Pro-Tempore. For senators, committee chairs, Speaker Pro Tempore, and Senate Clerks, it is the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate. For Speakers and Directors, their supervisor is the SGA President. For the SGA President, their supervisor is the SGA Advisor.
- D. Points are assigned for the following:
 - i. 1 point for non-response after a set deadline from a superior officer regarding official SGA business. +1 point for each additional business day until a maximum of 5 total points.
 - ii. 1 point for each hour of unexcused missed office hours. A maximum of 8 points can be assigned for missed office hours within a given week.
 - iii. 1 point for unexcused tardiness 15 minutes or more for official meetings or events or for leaving a meeting prior to closing roll.
 - iv. 3 points for each unexcused absence from training programs, retreats, or committee meetings.
 - v. 3 points for missing a required submission deadline for reports, meeting minutes, and meeting agendas. +1 point for each additional day after the deadline up to a maximum of 6 points.
 - vi. 7 points for an unexcused absence from a Senate meeting or Executive Committee meeting.
 - vii. 13 points for an unexcused absence from an external training program or conferences. Examples include the UH Board of Regents and Big 12 activities. Depending on the cancellation date, students may be required to reimburse their share of the trip/training cost.
 - viii. 15 points for repeated (3 or more) documented failures to fulfill the duties of the pointed officer's position as outlined in the bylaws, which leads to the duties of other officers being prevented and/or disrupted. It must be distinctly separate from the actions listed above.

Article 5: Termination Process

- A. The termination process begins for an SGA officer either upon accumulating twenty-five (25) points, failing to meet the SGA Code of Ethics, or if they fail to meet the ongoing requirements to qualify as a candidate for their given positions as outlined in this document.
- B. To begin this process, the officer facing termination must be given an email notice by their supervisor outlining the reason they are being terminated. The officer will have three business days to respond to this notice with evidence or proof that they do not qualify for termination. The Supervisor or Advisor may place this process on hold to allow time for any appeals or Judiciary proceedings to be decided.
- C. For senators, Directors, Judiciary members, or election commissioners, their respective Advisor will review termination appeals and make a final decision. Upon review, the Advisor will either deny the termination or approve it.
- D. Once a termination is approved, that officer will immediately lose all powers and privileges that come with all the positions they hold in SGA. Officers who have been terminated cannot be elected or appointed to any position within the same administration and may not run for office in the election following their termination.

TITLE V. Fiscal Policies and Procedures

Article 1: Name and Purpose

- A. This Title shall be known, and may be cited, as the SGA “Fiscal Policies and Procedures.”
- B. The purpose of this title is to specify the manner in which fiscal policies of the SGA shall be carried out.

Article 2: Budget Development and Procedure

- A. The SGA budget shall consist of one singular budget submission to the University’s Student Service Fee Committee, submitted during the annual process.
- B. The President and Cabinet shall oversee the drafting of the budget request to be submitted to the Student Service Fee Committee for approval.
- C. The Student Government Association Budget will be developed by the President, and the Cabinet will be submitted to the Senate before August 15th of each year (Each fiscal year will start on September 1st and continue until the following August 31).
- D. The Senate will pass a budget Bill no later than September 15th of each fiscal year. The Budget Bill will grant the Executive authority to spend funds through the day it is passed.
- E. If the President fails to present/sign a budget Bill and/or the Senate fails to pass a budget Bill, the Student Government will be prohibited from making any form of transaction with discretionary/controllable money (not including stipends), and the Senate Agenda for each subsequent meeting will not include anything other than the Student Government Budget Bill until a budget Bill is passed by the Senate and signed by the President.

- F. Budget requests shall categorize spending by event/program/promotional item.
- G. The following must be approved by the Senate Finance Committee during the fiscal/academic year:
 - i. Budget amendments/clarifications
 - ii. Event or program changes directly impacting funding.
 - iii. Reallocations of funding

Article 3: Fiscal Procedures

Section 1 – Donations

- A. In accordance with Student Service Fee Policies, no donations of SGA funds can be made to any charities, churches/places of worship, or non-profit organizations.

Section 2 – Submittal Procedures

- A. All requests for expenditures must be made in writing to the President, or Vice President/Speaker (when the President is not available), describing the nature of the request at least one month in advance.
- B. The President or Chief of Staff shall make reports of all purchases at the next scheduled Senate meeting.
- C. All requests over \$2,500 can be subject to review with the discretion of the Senate Internal Affairs committee.
- D. The Advisor must approve expenses in accordance with the university's purchasing policy and process.

TITLE VI. Code of Impeachment

Article 1: General Provisions

Section 1 – Definitions

- A. Impeachment for nonfeasance and malfeasance shall be defined as proceedings against an elected or appointed official of the SGA for nonfeasance or malfeasance of office by the presentation of written charges entitled "SGA Bill of Impeachment."
- B. "Nonfeasance" shall be defined as the failure of any official, elected or appointed, to perform the duties, responsibilities, or functions of office.
- C. "Malfeasance" shall be defined as the improper (as described by the Code of Ethics) or unlawful conduct by any official, elected or appointed, in the performance of the duties, responsibilities or functions of the office which violates trust inherent in the office.
- D. A Bill of Impeachment shall consist of a written statement describing the charges and a petition signed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the seated Senate.

- E. The Committee of Investigation shall be defined as two (2) SGA Associate Justices, and the Vice President/Speaker (unless the Vice President/Speaker is facing impeachment, in which case the Chief of Staff will serve on the Committee), who will serve as a non-voting member.
- F. Double jeopardy shall be defined as the defense procedure that forbids a defendant from being tried on the same (or similar) charges after having been legitimately acquitted of said charges.

Section 2 – General Impeachment Procedures

- A. Any elected official can bring charges of Impeachment for malfeasance against any SGA Officer by submitting a Special Order of Impeachment to the Senate, the Chief Justice, and the President of SGA.
- B. The Chief Justice shall call and preside over an impeachment hearing of the Senate no earlier than ten (10) business days and no later than twenty-five (25) business days from the date of receipt of the Special Order of Impeachment by the Chief Justice.
- C. The Senate shall have the power to remove from office any officer of the SGA on the grounds of malfeasance. This removal may be enacted by a three-fourths affirmative vote of the Senate members present and shall be effective for the remainder of their enrollment at the University of Houston.
- D. Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than removal from office and disqualification to hold and enjoy an office of honor, trust, or profit under the current or future SGA.

Article 2: Initiation and Notification of Impeachment Charges

- A. If, after deliberation, the Committee of Investigation's opinion is favorable to the accused, it shall prepare a written statement exonerating the accused. The statement shall require no Senate action and shall be final and conclusive. The Committee shall enter upon the Special Order of Impeachment the words "NO SPECIAL ORDER."
- B. If, after deliberation, the Committee of Investigation finds probable cause, it shall report its finding on a Special Order of Impeachment to the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate. The Special Order of Impeachment shall be placed on the Senate agenda as a Special Order and shall be deliberated on within two regularly scheduled Senate meetings. If the charges of impeachment are for the Vice President/Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall place the Special Order of Impeachment on the Senate's agenda as a Special Order and shall be deliberated on at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting.
- C. The presiding officer shall notify the accused of the Special Order of Impeachment at least ten (10) class days prior to the designated Senate meeting, at which time the Senate shall decide on the matter. A certified letter, return receipt request, oral communication, or two public notices in the campus newspaper and/or the Senate Journal will be deemed proper notification by the presiding officer. The notification shall include the following information:

- i. The date, time, and place of the appointed Senate Meeting.
- ii. The right of the accused to a preliminary hearing with the Committee of Investigation, prior to the impeachment proceedings at the Senate meeting, to discover extenuating circumstances.
- iii. The right to the presence of counsel during the preliminary hearings.
- iv. The right of the accused to view the testimony of any witness after such testimony.
- v. The right of the accused to any evidence or testimony acquired by the Committee of Investigation favorable to the case of the accused.
- vi. The accused shall have the right, during the preliminary hearing, to petition the Committee of Investigation for an extension by which the proceedings should begin for not more than seven days, including weekends and holidays.

Article 3: Impeachment Trial Procedure

- A. The Chief Justice, or an Associate Justice, selected by the Chief Justice if they are unavailable, shall serve as the presiding officer during the impeachment trial.
- B. The trial will begin with the reading of the SGA Special Order of Impeachment by the presiding officer.
- C. The Committee of Investigation shall then report its findings to the Senate.
- D. After both the Bill of Impeachment and the Committee of Investigation reports have been read, the accused shall be given an opportunity to rebut the evidence presented.
- E. Upon presentation of all information concerning the original Special Order of Impeachment, the Senate will be given sufficient time to deliberate on its contents and merits before making a motion to vote. The Senate will then move to a Vote of Impeachment, which requires a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the Senate members seated.
- F. Provided the Special Order of Impeachment is upheld, the accused may appeal to an Associate Justice not involved in the original trial.
- G. Provided the Special Order of Impeachment fails, the accused shall retain all the rights and privileges of the office to which they were elected or appointed, and the SGA shall not place the accused in double jeopardy.

TITLE VII. VACANCIES

Article 1: Vacancy Rules

Section 1 – President

- A. If the SGA President is no longer able to serve, the Vice President/Speaker becomes the President. A new Vice President/Speaker will be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Section 2 – Vice President/Speaker of the Senate

- A. If the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate position is vacated, the Speaker Pro Tempore automatically becomes the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate until the end of their term.
- B. A new Speaker Pro Tempore is elected from within the Senate.

Section 3 – Speaker Pro Tempore

- A. If the Speaker Pro Tempore position becomes vacant, senators can nominate another senator or themselves to fill the position.
- B. The Senate should vote on the nominations by the first Senate meeting following the day the position is vacated, or one week, whichever is longer.
- C. The Senator who receives the most votes will become the Speaker Pro Tempore.

Section 4 – Vacancies in the Senate

- A. Vacancies in the SGA must be advertised, and applications for positions must be made available for at least seven days before nominations are made.
- B. Applications will be accepted at all times of the year via Get Involved.
- C. Nominations must fill seats from the college where the vacancy takes place.
- D. No personnel action will be taken on applications received between the deadline date for Spring ballot candidates and the conclusion of the Spring ballot election process.

Section 5 – Senate Committee Chair Vacancies

- A. If a Senate committee chair position becomes vacant, senators can nominate another senator or themselves to fill the position.
- B. The Senate should vote on the nominations by the first Senate meeting following the day the position is vacated, or one week, whichever is longer.
- C. The senator who receives the most votes will become the committee chair.

Section 6 – Senate Clerk Vacancy

- A. If the Senate Clerk position becomes vacant, the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate and Legislative SGA Advisor will screen candidates and conduct interviews to determine the candidate who will be nominated to fill the position.
- B. The Senate must confirm the nomination of the Senate Clerk appointee by a simple majority.

TITLE VIII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Section 1 – Amendments

Any amendment must be reviewed by the SGA Advisors prior to initiating these steps. The review will include, but not be limited to, alignment with University policy and maintaining organizational checks and balances. Without SGA Advisors' approval/review, no amendment may be considered. If approved to move forward. Amendments to the SGA Bylaws may be initiated in one of the following ways:

- A. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Senate seated.

- B. After the preceding step has been completed, the following process must occur in the specified order:
- i. Amendments to the SGA Bylaws require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the SGA Student Senate members seated.
 - ii. After passage by the SGA Student Senate, the changes must be presented to the SGA President for review/approval, following the process outlined in Article XII, Section 3

Section 2 – Editorial Changes

- A. Editorial changes, such as grammar, formatting, and non-substantive rewording, may be proposed by any member of the Senate at an official Senate meeting and are then approved and ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Senate members seated.

TITLE IX. ELECTION CODE

Article 1: General Provisions

Section 1 – Purpose

- Clause 1. This Election Code is hereby adopted by the Senate to fulfill the Constitutional responsibility of the Senate in Article 4, Section 7, Clause 3, “to prescribe times, places, and manners of holding elections.”
- Clause 2. The Student Government Association at the University of Houston supports student elections, student expression, student advocacy, and agency through this Code.

Section 2 – Accountability of the Election Code

- Clause 1. Every person who files for an office elected under the authority of the Student Government Constitution and Bylaws will have access to a copy of this document at the time of filing.
- Clause 2. All candidates, staff, and volunteers will be responsible for knowing its contents. Any questions regarding this document should be directed to the Election Commission.

Section 3 – Compensation

- Clause 1. The Chief Election Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Election Commissioner will receive monetary compensation during the annual Student Government Election.

Article 2: The Election Commission

Section 1 – Responsibilities

- Clause 1. The Election Commission is responsible for the administration of the Student Government Association elections, as well as the administration of additional events at the discretion of the Election Commission that aim to promote the elections, inform the student body about the elections, provide the candidates with information, allow candidates an opportunity to promote themselves, or otherwise contribute to a fair, efficient, and publicized election.
- Clause 2. The Election Commission must act impartially in any candidate’s participation in the Student Government Association Election.
- Clause 3. The Election Commission must act in accordance with the Student Government Election Code, the Student Government Bylaws, and the Student Government Constitution.
- Clause 4. The Election Commission must ensure, to the best of its ability, that all information provided by its members regarding the Student Government Association Elections is correct.
- Clause 5. If a constitutional amendment to be voted on by the student body is submitted by the Student Government Association Senate to the Election Commission, the

Election Commission is responsible for ensuring the amendment is placed on the ballot correctly.

- Clause 6. The Election Commission must attempt to respond to any questions posed to the Commission through the designated and public email address in a timely manner, defined as within twenty-four (24) hours (one business day) of the message being sent.
- Clause 7. The Election Commission will commence the election campaign on the second Monday in February and conclude the election on the last day of voting.

Section 2 – Appointment

- Clause 1. The Chief Election Commissioner must be selected by the Election Commission Advisor.
- Clause 2. Members of the Election Commission must be students currently enrolled full-time (twelve [12] credit hours for an undergraduate student and six [6] credit hours or more for a graduate student), have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5, and be in good standing with the University.
- Clause 3. If, at the time of appointment, a member of the Election Commission is already an officer of the Student Government, they will automatically resign their position upon confirmation by the Election Commission.
- Clause 4. Members of the Election Commission may not pursue any elected or appointed position within the Student Government Association until their term on the Commission has ended.
- Clause 5. The official term of each Election Commissioner begins at the time of confirmation by the Senate and ends on March 31st of the calendar year that the election is held.
- Clause 6. The Deputy-Chief Election Commissioner will automatically become the Chief Election Commissioner should the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner become vacant between December 1st and March 31st of any given calendar year.
- Clause 7. The Election Commission Advisor will select, without confirmation, a Chief Election Commissioner should both the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Office of the Deputy-Chief Election Commissioner be/become vacant between November 1st and March 31st.

Section 3 – Office Hours

- Clause 1. At least one member of the Election Commission must be present in a designated office for the Election Commission for at least twenty (20) hours each week.
- Clause 2. If more than one member of the Election Commission is present at the same time in the designated office, it counts as only one hour toward the twenty (20) hour total.
- Clause 3. These hours may be held on any day, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

- Clause 4. These office hours requirements take effect exactly four weeks before the planned election date and end at 8:00 p.m. on the second Monday after the election.

Section 4 – Election Journal

- Clause 1. The Election Commission must prepare and submit to the Student Government Association Elections Advisor a collection of all documents, correspondence, , and all other materials related to the election in order for the members of the Commission to successfully conclude their duties. This journal must give an accurate and detailed description of events and must also be submitted to both the President and the Vice President/Speaker of the Senate.
- Clause 2. This journal must include, at a minimum: all complaints and responses to complaints, election results, any results from the Student Government Association Judicial Branch, ideas for upcoming commissions on improving the election process, the budget breakdown of the Election Commission, and other pertinent information. A copy of the Election Journal will be offered to the Student Government Association Elections Advisor, and this copy will be published online and viewable by the public.
- Clause 3. The election journal should be an electronic file and uploaded to the Election Commission Teams folder.

Section 5 – Individual Duties of Commissioners

- Clause 1. The Chief Election Commissioner is the administrative head of the election process and must ensure that all duties of the Election Commission are carried out as detailed in Article 2, Section 1 of this Election Code.
- Clause 2. The Chief Election Commissioner may delegate both tasks and authority to the Deputy-Chief Election Commissioner, as necessary.
- Clause 3. If necessary, the Chief Election Commissioner may enlist the help of Election Commission Assistants without the confirmation of the Senate. These assistants have no authority in the election process and will not be compensated.
- Clause 4. The Chief Election Commissioner is responsible for making sure the topics to be discussed at the Candidate Seminar will include but are not limited to: The Election Rules and Regulations, University Policy relating to the election, Election Schedule, Structure and functions of the Student Government Association, and the duties and responsibilities of the elected officers of the Student Government Association.
- Clause 5. The Election Commission will maintain electronic accounts, such as email accounts and social media pages, to carry out its duties. All official electronic correspondence from the Commission will come only from the Election Commission's official UH email account.
- Clause 6. Any Commission-related correspondence received by a personal email account or personal social media account will be immediately forwarded to the Commission's official account.

- Clause 7. The Election Commission may provide a voter guide to all voters, provided all candidates are given an equal opportunity to be included and each candidate is allocated the same space, based on the position they are running for. This guide will be posted on the SGA website.
- Clause 8. The Election Commissioner must test the election system 24 hours after a sample ballot is approved to ensure it is operating properly prior to the start of voting. All candidates will receive a test ballot.
- Clause 9. If a system error is identified that prevents voters from casting a ballot, the Election Commissioner shall suspend voting until the error is rectified. The Election Commissioner has the authority to extend voting based on the length of the delay.
- Clause 10. The Election Commission shall include QR codes for voting in all marketing materials, along with step-by-step voting instructions and any advertisements it may send during the election period. In addition to the QR code, a link to the online ballot page and step-by-step voting instructions must be included in any advertisement or email from the Election Commission.
- Clause 11. The Chief Election Commission, with the support of its Advisor, shall send a campus-wide email notifying students of the start of voting at the beginning of the election period. This email will include a link to the online ballot and step-by-step voting instructions.

Section 6 – Removal from Office

- Clause 1. Failure to fulfill the duties or responsibilities as outlined in this document will constitute grounds for removal. Removal from the Election Commission will be facilitated by the Election Advisor.

Article 3: Candidates

Section 1 – Qualifications to be a Candidate

- Clause 1. A “candidate” is defined as a student eligible to run for an elected position.
- Clause 2. A student is eligible to run for an elected position if they are currently enrolled at the University of Houston, are in good academic and disciplinary standing, as defined by University Policy, and are eligible under the requirements of Clause 5 and Clause 6 of this section. Senators may be enrolled part-time. The President and Vice President/Speaker of the Senate must be enrolled full-time (twelve [12] credit hours for undergraduate students and six [6] credit hours for graduate students). All candidates must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5.
- Clause 3. The right of a University of Houston student to be a candidate for any Student Government Association office will not be denied by the Student Government Association on the basis of race, color, sex (including gender and pregnancy), genetic information, religion, age (over 40), national origin, ethnicity, disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity or status, gender expression, or any other legally protected status except where such distinction is required by law.

- Clause 4. If a candidate does not meet the requirements established in the Election Code by the close of the filing deadline, they are immediately disqualified from running in the election and must be notified no later than three (3) business days after filing. Candidates will have twenty-four (24) hours to appeal this decision to the SGA Judicial Branch.
- Clause 5. For any senate position, a candidate must be enrolled at the time of filing in the college that they are seeking to represent. A candidate must be majoring in a subject that falls under the domain of that college. Students with only minors in a college are not eligible to run for that college position. Failure to meet these requirements can result in disqualification or removal.
- Clause 6. Eligible students in pre-graduate or pre-professional programs, even if they have not yet begun graduate or professional coursework, will be eligible to run for graduate and professional College seats. Eligible students in this circumstance need only confirm with their academic advisor that their career track includes a stated professional or graduate program in the future, prior to filing to run for office.
- Clause 7. All candidates must be able to serve for at least two (2) full academic semesters, not including the summer after the election. The two full academic terms will be the fall and spring semesters following the election. If a student's degree plan does not indicate that they will be attending the University for at least two more full academic semesters, they must submit a letter with their application for candidacy from their academic advisor stating that their degree plan will continue through the term for which they are seeking to be elected.
- Clause 8. The SGA Election Commission Advisor is responsible for verifying that each candidate meets the eligibility requirements set forth in this document.
- Clause 9. No member of the Election Commission or member of the Student Government Association Judiciary may be a candidate for elected or appointed office.

Section 2 – Limitations on Candidacy

- Clause 1. The only requirement for a student to hold and seek elective office is that the student will be in good academic and disciplinary standing, with certain exceptions. Students who previously served sanctions for offenses, either violent or sexual in nature, are not permitted to seek or hold office in the Student Government Association. These include, but are not limited to, sanctions regarding sexual assault, physical assault, and sexual harassment.

Section 3 – Responsibilities of a Candidate

- Clause 1. All candidates are held accountable to the provisions of this code, the Student Government Association Constitution and Bylaws, and all other University policies. All candidates, by way of registering and running for office, agree to abide by potential sanctions and policies the Election Commission and/or Judicial Branch deem appropriate based on their interpretation of the Student Code of Conduct and University Policy. No sanction will extend beyond the context of an

individual's involvement with the Student Government and/or Student Government practice.

- Clause 2. All candidates must attend a candidate seminar to be held no later than five (5) business days after the filing deadline. At the time of filing, each candidate will be informed of the seminar's time and location. The Election Commission will be wholly responsible for the organization and execution of this seminar.
- Clause 3. Failure to attend the Candidate Seminar will result in disqualification unless the absence is requested by the candidate and approved by the commission no later than twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting, or twelve (12) hours after the meeting, for emergencies with proper documentation.
- Clause 4. The official method of communication between the Election Commission and candidates is through their university-provided email. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide the Election Commission with their university-provided email address and other contact information. Any information that is missed due to a lack of reading or any other unstated reason is the sole responsibility of the candidate and not the Election Commission.

Section 4 – Filing for Candidacy

- Clause 1. A student may file as a candidate by filing their intention for candidacy by completing registration with the Election Commission during the filing period set by the Chief Election Commissioner.
- Clause 2. The filing period for candidacy must be at least fifteen (15) business days.
- Clause 3. In the General Election, each candidate must file for only one position. Should a candidate wish to amend their original filing, they need only indicate so to the Chief Election Commissioner in writing (email only; texting, social media, or virtual communication is prohibited) before the final ballot is released.
- Clause 4. Available positions for filing include President and Vice President/Speaker of the Senate (as a ticket) and Senate seats, based on each college's enrollment apportionment.
- Clause 5. A Presidential ticket will be deemed to be candidates for Student Government Association President and Vice Presidential/Speaker of the Senate.
- Clause 6. If a President, Vice-President/Speaker candidate drops out within three (3) days of voting, no replacement will be allowed on the ballot. A President or Vice President/Speaker candidate who withdraws their candidacy will give the remaining candidate twenty-four (24) hours to decide on a replacement.
- Clause 7. The Election Commission may publicly announce the total number of candidates who have filed for candidacy, and/or the total number of candidates for each position at any stage during the filing period.
- Clause 8. The Election Commission shall not disclose the names of any candidate or affiliated individuals, without their consent, before the filing deadline.

- Clause 9. Candidates may switch their position registration (for example, an Engineering Senator candidate may switch to running for President) so long as they confirm the change in writing to the Chief Election Commissioner and the change occurs before the final ballot is confirmed.

Article 4: Campaigning

Section 1 –Definition of Campaigning

- Clause 1. Campaigning is defined as the intentional direct or indirect solicitation of votes, the purposeful bolstering of one’s personal brand and/or name, and/or any form of personal, group, or mass advertising initiated by a known and/or prospective candidate or campaign staff member with the purpose of affecting the election outcome.
- Clause 2. “Active campaigning” or a “direct solicitation of votes” is defined as an attempt to obtain votes through personal communication or contact. Examples include, but are not limited to, speaking directly with students, sending direct messages, or calling students to ask them to vote for you.
- Clause 3. “Non-active campaigning” or “indirect solicitation of votes” is defined as an intentional attempt to obtain votes through materials that can be seen or heard by potential voters. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: posting campaign graphics on social media, hanging flyers around campus, or wearing campaign-branded shirts asking students to vote for you.
- Clause 4. In the case of ambiguity related to whether an activity constitutes “campaigning,” the decision is at the discretion of the Election Commissioner. This decision must be consistent between different candidates and campaigns.
- Clause 5. A “campaigning staff member” is any individual who is retained to do a job for the campaign. A campaign job is an assigned task under the candidate's direction.
- Clause 6. All candidates must campaign and promote the SGA Elections in a positive manner and raise awareness of their platforms. Negative campaigning, or “mudslinging,” is not appropriate in any medium (including, but not limited to, posters, stickers, email, and social media). Issues may be discussed candidly, but personal attacks on candidates are not tolerated. Candidates should be mindful of their potential liability for statements that may not be fully supported by factual evidence; such statements could be considered slander.
- Clause 7. Candidates will be held responsible for any activities by their supporters that are in violation of the provisions of the SGA election code if there is explicit evidence that supports that a candidate authorized or requested such activities or if evidence supports that a candidate had actual or constructive knowledge of illicit activities and/or authorized or acquiesced in such activities. Explicit evidence is defined as physical proof of the activity. Examples include text messages, emails, videos, etc.

- Clause 8. Campaigning does not include any actions taken by known and/or prospective candidates or campaign staff to organize or recruit campaign staff on a peer-to-peer basis before the close of the filing deadline.
- Clause 9. Candidates shall not contact the leadership of registered student organizations (RSOs) privately to request endorsements before the start of the campaigning period.

Section 2 – Prohibitions on Campaigning

- Clause 1. All campaigning is subject to the authority of the entities or individuals that have jurisdiction over the location where campaigning occurs and to the University of Houston Student Code of Conduct. If any complaint is filed concerning whether campaigning in a certain building is permissible, the filer must prove that a prohibition on campaigning within said building is (1) in writing and (2) well-communicated to students/candidates before the alleged violation took place.
- Clause 2. No campaign may be on or use personal or intellectual property without the consent of the owner.
- Clause 3. No campaign may interfere with the online voting system.
- Clause 4. No candidate may campaign door-to-door in residence halls or take any other action that violates the University of Houston Student Housing & Residential Life Policy.
- Clause 5. No campaigning may occur before the official campaigning period begins, as dictated by the Election Commission.
- Clause 6. The Election Commission may not place the start of the campaigning period before the end of the candidate filing period.
- Clause 7. No university-sponsored (department, division, office, organization, etc.) social media accounts will be used for campaigning. This includes tagging individuals involved in the election on social media posts.
- Clause 8. No candidate will utilize any materials or resources provided by the University (excluding sanctioned university postings and resources provided by the Election Commission) or Registered Student Organization for campaign activities, storing campaign materials, or housing materials. This prohibition includes the SGA office. No university-sponsored department, division, office, etc., shall use social media for the purposes of campaigning. This includes tagging candidates involved in the election in social media posts.
- Clause 9. No candidate or authorized person thereof may, in the course of campaigning, disrupt any academic function.
- Clause 10. No candidate, or authorized representative thereof, may distribute or make available any campaign material prior to the commencement of the campaign period. This also applies to the creation and availability of any website, social networking group, or other online campaigning tool.

- Clause 11. No university academic system, such as Canvas, may be used to promote, aid, or advertise any individual campaign. This includes mass emails to students.
- Clause 12. Campaigners cannot offer anything of monetary value to a voter on the condition that the voter casts a vote for said campaigner or said campaigner's team. Anything given to voters by candidates must be unconditional in nature. (a) Any campaign giveaway must be publicly disclosed as open to voting, even if the individual is not voting for that specific candidate.
- Clause 13. Campaigning within the walls or within fifteen (15) feet from the entrances of UH libraries, student centers, recreation and wellness centers, residence halls, dining halls, and/or within any dining establishment owned/operated by the University of Houston is prohibited. This does not protect non-active campaigning once it becomes active campaigning. Non-active campaigning will be classified as active campaigning if a candidate, volunteer, or campaign staff member approaches someone with the intention to solicit votes, draws attention to oneself with the intention to solicit votes, draws attention to other material within the building that is intended to solicit votes, or engages in manners that are not respectful to the people or building and out of the norm to solicit votes.
- Clause 14. Campaigns may not ask or require an individual to disclose confidential student information. This includes, but is not limited to, PeopleSoft IDs, personal records, and birthdates.
- Clause 15. Campaigning is limited to 7 A.M. Monday through 10 P.M. Friday during the election period. Social media postings are exempt from this limit.

Section 3 – Campaign Materials and Endorsements

- Clause 1. All physical and online campaign materials must comply with the Student Government Association's governing documents.
- Clause 2. All physical and non-physical campaign materials, including but not limited to flyers, social media, stickers, buttons, and t-shirts, must be original and cannot be reused within a 5-year period. Non-physical materials, such as social media, may not be reused.
- Clause 3. Individual candidates have a right to their likeness, and any attempt to copy an individual's likeness is prohibited. A complaint regarding this clause must prove that opposition marketing materials are too close to be easily distinguished.
- Clause 4. Candidates that are found to have presented a false claim of endorsement by any individual, organization, or business are subject to penalties following a formal complaint.
- Clause 5. If a Registered Student Organization chooses to endorse a candidate, the candidate will be held responsible for the activities of the endorsing student group regarding activities intended to physically, mentally, or emotionally inhibit the candidate.

- Clause 6. Registered Student Organizations must submit documentation to the Election Commission showing that they held a vote among their membership, with 51% of the votes cast for the individual they wish to endorse.
- Clause 7. Students running on a ticket for President and Vice President/Speaker may not endorse any other candidates.
- Clause 8. Senators cannot endorse any officers running on a ticket.
- Clause 9. All complaints related to social media posts for approval/disapproval must be forwarded to the Chief Election Commissioner.
- Clause 10. Candidates shall not accept, post, or otherwise utilize endorsements from individuals or organizations who are not currently enrolled students at the University of Houston.

Section 4 – Campaign Ethics

- Clause 1. Candidates must comply with all Student Government Association governing documents.
- Clause 2. No candidate or campaign staff member may interfere with the campaign materials of an opposing candidate.
- Clause 3. All candidates must campaign and promote the SGA Elections in a positive manner while creating awareness in the candidate's platform. Negative campaigning or "mudslinging" is not appropriate through any media (including, but not limited to: posters, stickers, email, social media, etc.). Issues may be discussed candidly, but personal attacks on candidates are not tolerated. Candidates should be mindful of their potential liability in making statements that may not be able to be fully supported with factual evidence; the statements could be considered slander.
- Clause 4. No candidate or campaign staff member may offer anything of monetary value nor threaten or promise any particular action to a member of the Election Commission with the intention of incentivizing or causing undue influence in the election process. The Election Commission reserves the right to file a complaint against any individual who violates this clause.
- Clause 5. No candidate or campaign staff member will physically or emotionally abuse campaign team members.
- Clause 6. No candidate or campaign staff member may make threats towards any individual or group. This includes but is not limited to: physical threats, emotional threats, social threats, or any threat which might prove distressful to an individual or group's physical, emotional, and/or financial well-being.
- Clause 7. No candidate or campaign staff member shall request proof that an individual voted for a candidate that they claim to have voted for.
- Clause 8. No candidate or campaign staff member shall encourage or require campaign team members to campaign in lieu of fulfilling academic obligations.

Article 5: Voting

Section 1 – Voter Eligibility

- Clause 1. Each member of the Student Body, as defined by the University of Houston's Registrar's Office, will be entitled to vote in the Student Government Elections.
- Clause 2. Each voter must agree to the UH Computer Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct to access the online voting system.

Section 2 – Election Date

- Clause 1. General Election voting will be open on the fourth Monday in February or the first Monday in March, depending on Spring Break dates. Voting will be open from Monday at 12:00 A.M. through Thursday of the same week at 11:59 P.M.

Section 3 – Polling Locations and Regulations

- Clause 1. Voting will take place online through an online voting system.
- Clause 2. The Election Commission shall host an in-person voting option on the University of Houston main campus. This is intended to provide guidance on how to vote or answer questions about the Election. All votes must be submitted via the online voting system.

Section 4 – Ballots

- Clause 1. All ballots will be cast online through the online voting system.
- Clause 2. The number of seats available in each Senatorial Contest will be placed on the official ballot.
- Clause 3. The Election Commission will post the sample ballot for the purpose of correcting errors the day after the mandatory candidate's meeting by 5:00 P.M. If a candidate does not appeal any error on the sample ballot by 5:00 P.M. on the following day, they lose their right to contest the error.
- Clause 4. The sample ballot will not be used for any voting. It will only be used for a candidate to verify that their name has been properly recorded for the election process, and for other administrative purposes as needed by the Election Commission.
- Clause 5. The Election Commission will post the final ballot for any election at least five (5) business days prior to the voting period on the Student Government Association website.
- Clause 6. Candidates' ballot positions will be randomly ordered as a pre-set for each voter (i.e., the list of candidates' names, per ballot, will be randomly ordered once, and that random order will be the fixed order of candidates each voter will see). Candidates have the right to know the process for how the ballot was randomly ordered.
- Clause 7. Any Constitutional Amendments and/or referendums will be placed at the bottom of the ballot.

- Clause 8. The SGA President may place, with the advice and consent of the SGA Senate, University-related items requiring a student body vote at the end of the ballot, after all Constitutional items.
- Clause 9. No candidate shall assist a voter in the use of an online voting system other than by providing instructions on how to access the online ballot page. Once the potential voter has received instructions and opened the online ballot, candidates shall not be involved further in the individual's voting process.

Section 5 – General Election Results

- Clause 1. The winners of the races for executive positions (President and Vice President/Speaker) shall be determined by plurality vote of the votes cast for each position.
- Clause 3. In Senate elections, the candidate(s) receiving the highest number of valid votes cast within that college shall be declared elected. Seats shall be awarded in descending order of vote totals until all allocated positions for that college are filled. In the event of a tie, a runoff election between the candidates with the same number of votes shall be held for that college.
- Clause 4. In the event of a tie for executive tickets, the ticket with the most votes are elected. If there is a tie, a runoff election will be held consisting of the ticket(s) with the highest number of votes in the general election.

Section 6 – Determination of Results

- Clause 1. Regardless of complaints or appeals, the unofficial results and voter demographics will be released by the Chief Election Commissioner on the business day after the General Election no later than 5:00 P.M. After all complaints and appeals are processed and resolved through the process of the courts, the official results will be posted publicly the day after the final complaint or appeal is closed no later than 5:00 P.M.
- Clause 2. If no complaints or appeals are registered within eight (8) hours of the announcement of election results, all election results will be deemed final.

Article 6: Campaign Finance

Section 1 – Expenditures

- Clause 1. Candidates running for a Student Government Association Senator position for a specific college shall be limited to campaign expenditures totaling no more than five hundred (\$500) dollars.
- Clause 2. Presidential and Vice Presidential/Speaker tickets shall be limited to campaign expenditures totaling no more than one thousand two hundred (\$1,200) dollars.
- Clause 3. Candidates are strictly prohibited from accepting donations of funds or in-kind services from any non-University of Houston individual, organization, or entity that is politically affiliated. Only current students can provide financial or in-kind support to election campaigns.

Section 2 – Financial Disclosures

- Clause 1. Each candidate for office is required to keep accurate and up-to-date records of all campaign expenditures. Members of the Election Commission may request to view these records at their discretion, and candidates must present these records to the Election Commission within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the request in writing.
- Clause 2. Any good or service purchased or paid for by the candidate for their campaign will be reported at the actual value expended by the candidate for the given good or service. All goods or services purchased by a candidate must have a reported value reasonably close to a market value (i.e. if a candidate is offered to buy one hundred fliers for \$1, they still need to apply a reasonable market value to the fliers and reporting \$1 on their campaign finance expenditure form would be a violation.) If items were bought on discount or on sale, the discount/sale must be proven to be:
- (a) Reasonably well-advertised to the public *and*
 - (b) Universally available to all who might wish to participate. Candidates must provide receipts via email to prove the actual value of each good or service purchased or paid for. If the Election Commission requests such, the candidate must provide the original receipt(s) in person.
- Clause 3. Candidates are required to file a statement of financial disclosure weekly on each Monday from the first Monday after the start of the campaigning period until and including the first Monday after the end of all elections. The Chief Election Commissioner has the discretion to change the day that these financial disclosures are due to the commission.
- Clause 4. The first statement of financial disclosure must detail the names, and dollar amounts of all expenditures the campaign has made to date. Each subsequent statement of financial disclosure must detail the names and monetary values of each expenditure the campaign has made since the submission of the last statement.
- Clause 5. The Election Commission must keep running totals for the expenditures of each candidate to ensure that the limits presented in Section 1 of this article are not exceeded.
- Clause 6. Statements of financial disclosure as well as running expenditure totals are public record. This information may be requested at any time. The Election Commission must provide this information in a timely manner. The Election Commission must post all financial disclosure forms once they have been submitted. These will be made available on the Student Government Association website within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt.
- Clause 7. No candidate or campaign staff member will falsify any entry on a statement of financial disclosure.

Clause 8. For each election, each candidate listed on the ballot will be required to submit a 'donation list' with their weekly financial disclosure form, containing a list of individuals who have donated to their campaign.

Candidates who received no donations are still required to submit this list to the Election Commission. The Election Commission will provide this form on its website before the registration period, with the form including the following sections:

- (a) Names of those responsible for the donation;
- (b) The fair market value of the donation; *and*
- (c) The date the donation was received.

Clause 9. Financial disclosures of costs of candidates must be submitted and provided with their expense report, the invoice, or receipt of the transaction.

Clause 10. All donations, both tangible and intangible, financial or non-financial, must be disclosed on an individual's donation list and counted as part of their expenditures, limited by the campaign expenditure limits. All non-financial contributions/donations to an individual or President and Vice President/Speaker ticket (this includes but is not limited to: printed materials, signage, t-shirts, etc.) must be assessed at a fair market value and included on both the weekly donation list and the financial disclosure form. Any funding a candidate uses to finance their campaign must be reported on the weekly donation list.

Article 7: Violations

Section 1 – Complaints and Reporting

Clause 1. The Election Commission and Judicial Branch may not establish office hours which contradict the time constraints set forth in the Election Code (for example, if an individual receives a decision from the Court on a complaint at 7:00 P.M., the respondents have until the next day at 11:00 P.M. to submit an appeal to the court, and the court will have forty-eight (48) hours from that point to determine whether or not to hear the case, regardless of any established office hours but the entities above).

Clause 2. Any University of Houston student, faculty, or staff member may file a complaint.

Clause 3. The filer of the complaint has three (3) calendar days after the incident to file the complaint. No complaints filed more than three (3) calendar days after the incident will be reviewed by the Election Commissioner. Additional non-merited complaints will result in a Class B violation.

Clause 4. An official complaint must first be filed with the Student Government Association Election Commissioner. The Election Commissioner will then reach out to the accused, in the cases of alleged Class B and Class C violations (and cases of alleged Class A violations which place no one at risk of harm) and provide them the option to submit a Statement of Defense, to be submitted within four (4) hours of the Election Commissioner reaching out (extensions shall be provided at the

discretion of the Election Commissioner). If the Election Commissioner solicits a Statement of Defense after 8:00 P.M., then the accused will have until 12:00 P.M. the following day to provide the Statement of Defense. The Election Commissioner will then investigate said complaint.

- Clause 5. The Election Commissioner will make a decision pertaining to the merit of the complaint and provide substantive reasoning based on the Election Code, Constitution, Bylaws, Student Code of Conduct, and/or any other University policies.
- Clause 6. The Election Commissioner will decide within one (1) business day whether a complaint has merit. If the complaint is deemed legitimate, the Election Commissioner may penalize the candidate(s) or individual (s) in accordance with the penalties prescribed in the Election Code.
- Clause 7. Candidate(s)/individuals may appeal their penalty or its severity before the Student Government Association Judicial Branch. A decision regarding a lack of merit cannot be appealed to any court and is final when the Election Commissioner determines it.
- Clause 8. Should any petitioner or respondent wish to appeal a decision of the Election Commissioner to the Judicial Branch, they must file the appeal within four (4) hours of receiving the decision from the Election Commissioner. Should a decision from the Election Commissioner or the Judicial Branch be delivered between 8:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M., the petitioners (of the appeal) will have until 12:00 P.M. to file their appeal.
- Clause 9. If an appeal is sent on time to the Judicial Branch, the court will have eight (8) hours to determine whether or not to hear the case. Should an appeal be filed between 8:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M., the court will have until 10:00 A.M. to decide whether or not to hear the case. If the respective court does not decide whether or not to hear an appeal on time, the appeal will be considered fully rejected, and the decision by the Election Commissioner will be enforced.
- Clause 10. If an appeal is rejected by the Judicial Branch, the Election Commissioner's ruling on the violation is final, and the penalty will be immediately enforced.
- Clause 11. The Judicial Branch will have its decision on hearings made public by 9:00 A.M. the following morning of any hearing the court schedules. The full write-up will be made available at the court's discretion.
- Clause 12. If the Student Government Association Judicial Branch chooses to hear the appeal, the Court must meet within forty-eight (48) hours to rule on the appeal. The Election Commissioner's ruling will be considered final if the Court is unable to meet the specified timeframe, except in cases of disqualification decisions or recommendations. In the case of a potential disqualification, the court will have an additional seventy-two (72) hours to meet in addition to the allotted forty-eight (48) hours. In the case of a potential disqualification, the Election Commissioner's ruling will be considered final if the Court is unable to meet within five (5) calendar days (120 hours) from receiving the appeal.

- Clause 13. If the Student Government Association Judicial Branch chooses to hear an appeal, the court may suspend enforcement of the penalties at issue until a final ruling is made.
- Clause 14. The Election Commissioner will make final complaint decisions public within one (1) business day after delivering the final decision to the relevant individual. All fruits of investigation will be made available upon request, including but not limited to the original complaint filing, any written correspondence (including email), and all evidence supporting and/or negating the complaint. The Election Commissioner has the discretion to withhold names should the Election Commissioner determine it necessary to protect an individual's identity.
- Clause 15. In the case that a known and/or prospective candidate, or campaign staff, is found to have violated the Election Code before the campaign period has begun, any penalties decided upon by the Election Commissioner will be put into effect after the campaign period begins, with the Election Commissioner's discretion on the exact time (for example, if a student is found to be posting campaigning materials such as flyers in September, and the Election Commissioner decides to suspend their campaign for twenty-four (24) hours, the Election Commissioner must ban them from campaigning at the twenty-four (24) hour interval within and after the start of the campaign period.)
- Clause 16. No one outside of current UH students may play any role in the adjudication process of any election-related complaints. This includes but is not limited to serving as representation for a candidate or campaign staffer or drafting a complaint.

Section 2 – Classification of Violations and Penalties

- Clause 1. The SGA Judicial Branch will have the discretion to consider the severity of each violation in its final ruling of punishment.
- Clause 2. The following chart should not be construed as an exhaustive list of all violations.
- Clause 3. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct and University Policies may be classified as Class A, B, or C, at the discretion of the Election Commissioner. Only the most egregious Student Code of Conduct or University Policy violations will merit a class A classification, worthy of potential disqualification. (a) The Election Commissioner has 48 hours to respond to Class B and C violations.
- Clause 4. "Election Fraud" is defined as the unauthorized tampering, altering, or abuse of the voting process or system.
- Clause 5. Class A complaints are not subject to time constraints.

Clause 6. Campaign staff and volunteers are subject to the same violations and penalties as candidates. The Election Commissioner and SGA Judiciary will have jurisdiction to decide whether or not it is necessary to penalize the candidate for a violation of its staff/volunteer members.

Clause 7. Class D violations apply when a candidate who is already suspended from campaigning due to a previous violation engages in any form of campaigning during the imposed suspension period. The Election Commissioner has the authority to immediately disqualify the candidate from the election. Candidates may appeal a Class D violation by the Election Commissioner to the SGA Judicial Branch for final review and determination.

SGA Election Code — Summary of Violations & Penalties

Violation Type	Definition / Description	Examples (Included but not Limited To)	Sanctions
Class A Violation	Most serious violations involve threats to election integrity, safety, or major misconduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election fraud - Identity theft - Falsifying campaign documents - Violations of the Student Code of Conduct involving violence or harassment - Severe ethical violations (e.g., bribery, threats) 	Immediate disqualification and automatic referral to the Dean of Students. No time limit for filing complaints.
Class B Violation	Significant misconduct affecting fairness or integrity but not rising to Class A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destroying/altering another campaign's materials - Exceeding spending limits - Obstructing the Election Commission - "Mudslinging" or negative campaigning - Not appearing for Judicial Branch hearings 	Temporary suspension of campaigning , length determined by the Election Commissioner. Appeal allowed. Escalates to Class A with repeated offenses.
Class C Violation	Minor procedural or administrative violations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-campaigning - Missing required meetings - Failure to submit required documents - Improper posting/approval issues 	1st violation: Written warning Subsequent violations: Temporary suspension of campaigning Becomes Class B after three occurrences.
Class D Violation	Violation of a campaigning suspension by a candidate already on Election Probation.	- Any campaigning activity during a suspension period by a candidate, campaign staff, or volunteer	Immediate disqualification from the election.