

**Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Senate
at
Teachers College, Columbia University**

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NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Continuing its long-standing policy to actively support equality for all persons, the Teachers College, Columbia University Student Senate does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability or any other criterion specified by federal, state, or local laws. Rather the Student Senate affirms that it serves students regardless of race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability or any other criterion specified by federal, state, or local laws and thereafter accords them all the rights and privileges generally made available to students or employees at the college.

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization is Teachers College, Columbia University Student Senate herein after referred to as the Student Senate.

ARTICLE II PURPOSES

Section 1. The purposes of the Student Senate shall be to:

- a. ensure the rights of students by functioning as the officially elected Student Senate, effectively representing the student body in the initiation, development, establishment, and reform of policies, programs, and finances at Teachers College, Columbia University;
- b. promote the social and general welfare by serving as the representative, advocate of, and liaison to the student body of Teachers College and Columbia University, herein referred to as the University Community (including administration, faculty, staff and alumni);
- c. gather and express student opinion regarding college-wide issues while fostering communication and collaboration between the students, administration, faculty, staff and alumni;
- d. dedicate the Student Senate activities to the college's mission to embrace and promote the diversity, community, and civility of the student body;
- e. encourage student organizations to develop and implement activities that serve Teachers College students and the larger University;
- f. discuss matters concerning the broader University Community and present conclusions to the Student Senate and the University administration; and,
- g. honor the authority vested by the Dean of the College and Student Senate advisors that is necessary and proper for the Student Senate to carry out its enumerated purposes.

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ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition. The Student Senate shall be composed of up to thirty (30) elected students including:

- a. at least one (1) Department Representative for each Teachers College academic department;
- b. one (1) Teachers College student “observer” seat and one (1) Teachers College student “voting” seat in accordance with the Columbia University Senate Statutes and Bylaws;
- c. chairpersons of each standing committee;
- d. Executive Board (President, Vice President, Parliamentarian, Communications Officer, and Treasurer).
- e. Each of these positions are elected positions as per the guidelines established within this document.

Section 2. Qualifications

- a. Students shall be in good standing enrolled in a degree granting program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
- b. Students must maintain active registration during elected period of service as a Student Senators and/or officer.
- c. Senators must sign a “Statement of Obligation” every academic year (Appendix A).

Section 3. Election of Senators

- a. Students must submit a statement of intent to the Election Committee (Article X, Section 3) by the deadline in order for the student’s name to appear on the ballot as a candidate.
- b. General elections for Student Senators shall be held once a year and shall take place no later than three (3) weeks after the fall semester begins.
- c. University Senate Representative shall be elected in accordance with Columbia University Senate statutes.

Section 4. Term of Office

- a. Senators shall begin their term of office upon election.
- b. Senators shall serve until graduation or the election of their successor.
- c. Students elected as Senators can only complete his/her term of office after graduation pending admission into another degree granting program at Teachers College.

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Section 5. Resignations

- a. A resignation must be submitted in writing either electronically or in letter format to the Student Senate President and include the date, reason(s) for the resignation and the person's signature.
- b. A verbal resignation will not be accepted nor considered official until received as stated in Article III, Section 5. a.
- c. The Student Senate President shall confirm in writing either electronically or in letter format acceptance of the written resignation within forty-eight (48) hours to the resigning Senator and copy the acceptance to the Student Senate clerk.
- d. Upon acceptance of the resignation the position becomes vacant and shall be filled in accordance with Article III, Section 7.
- e. All resignations are final once confirmed by the President.

Section 6. Expulsion

- a. Expulsion means the removal from a position on the Student Senate and any committee appointments, including on Student Senate, College-wide or University-wide committees.
- b. A Senator expelled from the Student Senate shall not be eligible to attend closed and/or special meetings.
- c. Senators with at least three (3) unexcused absences shall be reviewed for expulsion.
- d. Senators who fail to serve on a Student Senate committee or an appointed college/university committee shall be reviewed for expulsion.
- e. Senators who fail to adhere to the obligations as stated in the Statement of Obligation (Appendix A) shall be reviewed for expulsion.
- f. Senators may be expelled for reasons other than those stated above by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate at a special meeting.
- g. A motion for expulsion may only be introduced by written petition stating the reasons for expulsion and signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the Student Senators.
- h. All Senators including the Senator being reviewed for expulsion must receive written notice of the motion for expulsion at least seven (7) days prior to the Special Meeting.

Section 7. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy in a non-officer position shall be filled by the next runner(s)-up from the last election until the next regularly scheduled election.
- b. If there is no runner-up, or if the runner-up declines, the Executive Board can hold a special election.
- c. If the position remains vacant following a special election, then the position remains vacant until a general election is held in the fall and the position shall not count toward the quorum.
- d. In the event that an active Senator runs for an open position and is not elected to the new position, the Senator shall return to his or her original position.

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ARTICLE IV DUTIES OF THE STUDENT SENATE

Section 1. The Student Senate:

- a. shall establish and appoint the chairpersons of ad hoc and special committees; non-Senators may be appointed as a co-chair;
- b. shall adopt a budget for the following academic year;
- c. may, with the consent of the administration, introduce concessions or hold events for the Teachers College and/or University Community in order to generate revenue;
- d. may, at its discretion, authorize the expenditure of funds, to further the purposes of the Student Senate, to students and student organizations who have applied to the Student Senate for funding.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION

Section 1. Composition

- a. Officers shall be President, Vice-President, Parliamentarian, Communication Officer and Treasurer.
- b. Officers must adhere to the same qualifications of all Senators during their term of office (Article III, Section 2).

Section 2. Election

- a. Officers shall be elected by ballot at a Student Senate meeting held no later than the next to last regular meeting of the Spring semester.
- b. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Student Senators.
- c. Run-off elections shall be held, if necessary.
- d. Elections shall be presided over by the Vice President, if he/she is not a candidate.
- e. The President may vote in an election only in the case of a tie.
- f. The Election Committee and the Student Senate Advisor(s) shall certify the election results.

Section 3. Term of Office

- a. Officers shall serve for twelve months from their election or until a successor is elected with the exception of the President and Vice President who shall serve two year terms or until a successor is elected.

Section 4. Resignations

- a. An officer resigning must follow the same procedure for resignation of a Senators, (Article III, Section 5) with the exception of the President.
- b. If the Student Senate President resigns, resignation must be submitted electronically or in letter format to the Vice President and copied to the Student Senate clerk and advisors.

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Section 5. Removal from office

- a. Officers may be removed from office for any reason by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate at a Special Meeting.
- b. Motions for removal from office must be accompanied by a written petition stating the reasons for removal and signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the Senators or four-fifths (4/5) of the Executive Board.
- c. All Senators must receive notice of the removal petition at least seven (7) days prior to the Special Meeting.
- d. If reasons for removal from office are egregious the member may be expelled from the Student Senate by the process outlined in Article III, Section 6.

Section 6. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy in the office of President shall be filled by the Vice President until the next Executive Board election.
- b. An officer who no longer holds student status as per Article III, Section 2. a. and b. must resign and the office shall be filled at a special election. The new officer's term shall terminate at the final Spring meeting of the academic year in which elected.
- c. A vacancy created by the resignation of an officer other than the President shall be filled by special election of a current Senator. If no current Senator agrees to run for the vacant position, then the position shall be filled by a runner-up from the Fall election. If the position remains vacant, it shall be filled by an election from the entire student body.
- d. Responsibilities of vacant positions can be delegated to another Senator by the President until an election is held.
- e. In the event that an active Senator runs for an open position and is not elected to the new position, the Senator shall return to his or her original position.

ARTICLE VI DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall:

- a. be the chief executive officer of the Student Senate;
- b. preside at Student Senate and Executive Board meetings;
- c. be responsible for the prompt and orderly execution of all Senate resolutions;
- d. represent the Student Senate at official functions;
- e. serve as the official Student Senate spokesperson to the administration and college community;
- f. serve on the following committees: Board of Trustees, Long-range Financial Planning, and President's Inauguration;
- g. prepare the agenda for Student Senate meetings;
- h. call all Student Senate meetings including the Executive Board and Special Meetings;
- i. appoint an Election Committee in consultation with the Executive Board with the Vice-President as Chairperson;

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- j. designate another Senator to preside over the Election Committee if the Vice-President is a candidate for office;
- k. appoint Senators, in consultation with the Executive Board, to serve on College Committees;
- l. hire and supervise the Student Senate clerk.

Section 2. The **Vice President** shall:

- a. preside over the Student Senate and Executive Board meetings in the absence of the President;
- b. represent the Student Senate at official functions, as designated by the President;
- c. succeed to the office of Student Senate President in the event a vacancy occurs in that office until the next Executive Board election;
- d. chair the Election Committee as designated by the President unless a candidate;
- e. oversee all Student Senate standing committees.

Section 3. The **Parliamentarian** shall:

- a. assist in the orderly operation of meetings;
- b. clarify the Constitution and Bylaws;
- c. oversee all Student Senate ad hoc committees;
- d. report to the Student Senate concerning ad hoc committees;
- e. coordinate training sessions regarding parliamentary procedure for the Student Senate.

Section 4. The **Communication Officer** shall:

- a. maintain communication between the Student Senate and the University Community;
- b. update the Student Senate website and post other public correspondence as necessary;
- c. supervise the publicity of Student Senate activities;
- d. document Student Senate activities.

Section 5. The **Treasurer** shall:

- a. be the fiscal officer of the Student Senate;
- b. draft a budget in consultation with the Executive Board and Student Senate advisor(s);
- c. submits the budget for adopted by the Student Senate and to the advisors for approval after adoption;
- d. collect and distribute Student Senate funds as authorized by the Senate or Executive Board;
- e. keep complete records of all financial transactions;
- f. present financial reports to the Student Senate at each meeting;
- g. create budget allocation after officer elections, with the advice of the Student Senate advisor(s) for the following year;
- h. complete all financial paperwork relating to Student Senate activity.

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ARTICLE VII DUTIES OF SENATORS AND STUDENT SENATE CLERK

Section 1. All Senators shall:

- a. be elected by the student body;
- b. attend an orientation after the Fall college-wide elections (Article IX, Section 2. f. i).
- c. attend all meetings of the Student Senate;
 - i Absences from meetings must be approved within forty-eight (48) hours of the scheduled meeting by the President and/or Chairperson of the meeting unless there is a medical or family emergency.
- d. serve on a Student Senate committee as appointed by the Executive Board (Article IX, Section 2. a.) except University Senators who are not required to serve on Student Senate committees;

Section 2. The University Senator shall:

- a. serve on the University Student Affairs Committee and other University-wide committees as necessary;
- b. attend the monthly University Senate Plenary sessions and report to the Student Senate at its bi-monthly meetings.

Section 3. The Department Representative(s) shall:

- a. organize and carryout at least two (2) departmental contact activities throughout the academic year;
- b. serve as the liaison between Student Senate and department constituency, including but not limited to department faculty, staff, and students;
- c. provide a report of activities at the department representative meetings with the Student Senate President in attendance.

Section 4. The Community Life Senator shall:

- a. attend to Student Senate business that pertains to quality of life issues in areas of the College such as student services, health services, career services, and enrollment services.

Section 5. The Diversity Senator shall:

- a. serve as a member of the Student Life Committee;
- b. promote and enhance the mission of the Student Senate to ensure that diversity is embraced and incorporated within its programming and outreach efforts.

Section 6. The Financial Aid Senator shall:

- a. serve as a member of the Institutional Affairs Committee;
- b. attend to Student Senate business as it pertains to student support and advocacy in financial aid matters.

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Section 7. The Student Organization Senator shall:

- a. serve as a member of the Student Life Committee;
- b. attend to Student Senate business as it pertains to student organizations
- c. serve as liaison between the Student Senate and the Office of Student Activities and Programs regarding student organizations.

Section 8. The Special Projects Senator shall:

- a. serve as a member of at least one unspecified standing committee;
- b. attend to Student Senate business as recommended by the Executive Board.

Section 9. The Clerk shall:

- a. be hired and supervised by the President;
- b. work closely with the Communications Officer to carry out his/her duties;
- c. keep minutes of all Student Senate meetings;
- d. take attendance at every Student Senate meeting;
- e. maintain a record of Senators' attendance at meetings;
- f. post a copy of the minutes as approved by the Student Senate by the following meeting on the Student Senate webpage and bulletin board;
- g. forward all correspondence addressed to the Student Senate to the President;
- h. process Student Senate correspondence as delegated by the President or the Student Senate;
- i. maintain Student Senate correspondence;
- j. assure the efficient operation of the Student Senate's office;
- k. be responsible for the orderly transmission of all Student Senate records and history to the newly-appointed Clerk;
- l. serve office hours and attend Student Senate events as designated by the President.

ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings of the Student Senate

- a. The first meeting of the Academic Session shall be held after college-wide elections in the Fall semester. The final meeting of the year shall be after the election of new officers.
- b. The Student Senate shall meet bi-monthly at a time and place that is convenient for and accessible to Teachers College students.
- c. Regular meetings shall not be held on holidays recognized by Teachers College or during the week of finals, unless deemed necessary by the President.
- d. The Student Senate calendar shall be set at the end of the Teachers College Spring academic semester.

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Section 2. Special meetings

- a. *Special meetings can only be called by the President and are closed unless otherwise specified by the President.*
- b. *A Senator may make a motion to object to the President's call for a Special Meeting or Executive Session. A vote of 2/3rd is required to override the President's call for a Special Meeting.*
- c. *Any Senator may request a Special Meeting or Executive Session; a vote of 2/3rd is required.*

Section 3. Meetings may be held in person, by telephone conference or through other electronic communication media so long as all members may simultaneously communicate with each other and fully participate during the meeting.

Section 4. Summer Session shall:

- a. commence after the first meeting of the new Executive Board in the Spring semester and end upon the election of Student Senators in the college-wide elections in the Fall.
- b. conduct business when a regular meeting is posted and announced within seven (7) days prior to the meeting but may not vote on Constitution and Bylaw revisions and amendments.

Section 5. Agenda

- a. The agenda shall be set by the President.
- b. Any Senator may submit an addition to the agenda to the President seven (7) days prior to the Student Senate meeting during Regular Session and five (5) days prior to the meeting during Summer Session.
- c. The Student Senate agenda shall be:
 - i. Call to Order
 - ii. Roll Call
 - iii. Adoption of the Agenda
 - iv. Approval of Minutes
 - v. Gallery Comments
 - vi. Executive Board Reports
 - vii. Unfinished Business
 - viii. New Business
 - ix. Reports of Senate Committees
 - x. Reports of College Committees
 - xi. Advisor(s) Report
 - xii. Announcements
 - xiii. Adjournment

Section 6. Quorum

- a. A majority of the voting members of the Student Senate shall constitute a quorum.

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ARTICLE IX EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President, Parliamentarian, Communications Officer, and Treasurer.

Section 2. The **Executive Board** shall:

- a. appoint Student Senators to at least one Student Senate committee;
- b. determine procedures for the meeting;
- c. establish an attendance policy for Student Senators and Officers;
- d. review Student Senators' attendance to be sure they are in compliance with the policy (Article III Section 6. c.);
- e. send written notification of attendance review to a Student Senator after his/her third unexcused absence;
- f. hold an orientation after the Fall college-wide elections, which shall include:
 - i. information on membership expectations and responsibilities, parliamentary procedure, the Student Senate mission, structure and history, and college structure;
- g. hold an orientation for new Executive Board members after their election and before the new Student Senate Academic Session begins which shall include:
 - i. information on expectations, responsibilities, parliamentary procedure and the transmission of information regarding Executive Board experiences and specific duties of their positions;
 - ii. leadership building activities pertinent to the expectations, duties and responsibilities of their positions.

Section 3. Special Meeting and/or Executive Sessions

- a. Special Meetings and/or Executive Sessions shall be called by the Student Senate President before or during a meeting, be on the Student Senate agenda or by any Senator.
- b. Special Meetings and/or Executive Sessions shall be attended only by voting members of the Student Senate unless designated otherwise by the President.
- c. A Senator may make a motion to object to the President's call for Special Meeting/Executive Session. A vote of 2/3rd is required to override the President's call for a Special Meeting.

Section 4. Meetings shall be called by the President.

- a. Meetings may be held in person, by telephone conference or through other electronic communication media so long as all the members may simultaneously communicate with each other and fully participate during the meeting.
- b. A meeting must be called by the President if he or she is provided a petition by a majority of the members of the executive board.

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Section 5. Quorum

- a. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a. The standing committees shall be Election, Student Life, Academic Affairs, Institutional Affairs, and University Affairs.
- b. Members of Standing Committees shall be appointed by the Executive Board.
- c. Any currently enrolled student with active registration may serve on a Student Senate committee and serve as co-chairperson with the approval of the Executive Board.
- d. Meetings may be held in person, by telephone conference or through other electronic communication media so long as all the members may simultaneously communicate with each other and fully participate during the meeting;
- e. All committee work is the property of the Student Senate.
- f. Any published committee work must credit the Student Senate as a co-sponsor.
- g. Additional standing committees shall be established by the Student Senate as necessary.
- h. Meetings must be held at least once between regularly scheduled Senate meetings.

Section 2. Chairpersons of Standing Committees shall:

- a. be elected by the Student Senate;
- b. serve two year terms;
- c. report to the Student Senate only items that have been discussed at a committee meeting;
- d. oversee drafting of bills from their committee;
- e. report all committee work and recommendations to the Student Senate for review and approval before information is disseminated to the University Community.

Section 3. Election Committee shall:

- a. be appointed by the Student Senate President in consultation with the Executive Board;
 - i. Candidates for election may not serve on the Election Committee;
- b. be chaired by the Vice President, unless a candidate for election;
 - i. if the Vice President is a candidate for election, the President shall designate another Senator to Chair the committee.
- c. establish voting procedures for accepting proxies, length of speeches, length of Senators' comments, questions to candidates and deadline for statements of intent to be submitted;
- d. announce the procedures to all eligible voters;
- e. notify all students of the election;

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- f. provide seven (7) days before the deadline for candidacy statements;
- g. conduct the elections;
- h. certify the election results along with the Student Senate advisor and report the results to the Student Senate immediately;
- i. render a decision on any alleged improprieties regarding qualifications or legitimacy of a candidate:
 - i. The decision can be appealed to the Student Senate;
 - ii. A two-third (2/3) vote of the Student Senate can reverse the decision;
 - iii. The Student Senate decision shall be final.

Section 4. The **Student Life Committee** is responsible for taking the leading role in gathering the information and building the relationships necessary to improve Student Life and build community among TC students. As such, the Student Life Committee is responsible for dealing with student life issues of collective student concern, empowering student organizations to create appropriate programming for students, organizing and implementing Senate-sponsored events, and working with the Office of Student Life and other offices as needed.

Section 5. The **Academic Affairs Committee** is responsible for taking the leading role in gathering the information and building the relationships necessary to make progress on the academic issues of collective interest to TC students. Such issues include course offerings, colloquiums, advisement, degree requirements, and course evaluations, among others. As such, it is the responsibility of the chair and the committee to **explore additional opportunities that contribute to the overall Teachers College community** through improving the academic climate of the institution.

Section 6. The **Institutional Affairs Committee** is designed to address issues concerning the Institution, meaning the internal and external operations of Teachers College. These issues can relate to the building and administrative facilities of the college. Administrative facilities can be defined as the Registrar, Financial Aid, Cafeteria, Library, Residence Halls, and other support functions of the Administration that impact the student experience. Other topics the IA committee may wish to address relate to the safety of the school and its surrounding areas, space for social gatherings, classroom and overall building conditions. As such, it is up to the chair and the committee to find ways to contribute to the overall Teachers College community by improving the operations of the Institution.

Section 7. The **University Affairs Committee** shall act as the liaison to the University wide community. It is responsible for taking the leading role in representing, gathering and disseminating information, and building relationships necessary to make progress on University-wide student concerns. These concerns may include but are not limited to areas of student-life, academic affairs, and facilities. Where student interests are closely related to the interests of other areas in the Senate, the Committee shall forward or work closely with the appropriate committees. The University Affairs Committees jurisdiction shall be limited to matters of University-wide student concern.

Section 8. The Student Senate shall establish ad hoc/special committees as necessary.

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ARTICLE XI DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, all accrued funds and assets shall revert to the Office of Student Activities and Programs (OSAP).

ARTICLE XII PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or any special rules of order the Student Senate may adopt.

ARTICLE XIII `AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section 1. This Constitution and Bylaws may be revised or amended if approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate.

- a. Revisions or amendments may be proposed by a petition signed by at least one-half (1/2) of the entire Student Senate and certified by the Parliamentarian.
- b. The petition must be presented at a Student Senate meeting at least fourteen (14) days prior to the vote.
- c. At least fourteen (14) days written notice must be posted on the Student Senate bulletin board and website, and an email sent to each Student Senator prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken.
- d. Amendments shall take affect upon adoption unless otherwise stated in the amendment or revision.