

Bemidji State University Student Association Constitutional Bylaws

Article I – Definitions

Section 1: An “office hour” shall be defined as an hour of which the student must be available in the Student Senate Office, or in which the student is tabling for Student Senate, during the “office hour week” which is defined as Sunday through Saturday.

Section 2: “Absences” shall be defined as not present at a meeting for the majority of that meeting. This shall be decided upon by the President on a situational basis.

Section 3: “Excused absences” shall be defined as any absence required due to class or an emergency as approved by the chair.

Section 4: An “Ad Hoc Committee” shall be defined as a committee that is created for a specific amount of time in order to deal with a specific issue.

Section 5: A “Sub Committee” shall be defined as a committee that is created to deal with certain topics within the area of concern in a Committee.

Section 6: A first year senator shall be defined as a student in the student’s first year of post-secondary education. A second year senator shall be defined as a student in the student’s second year of postsecondary education. A third year senator shall be defined as a student in the student’s third year of post-secondary education. A fourth year senator shall be defined as a student in the student’s fourth year of post-secondary education. A fifth-plus year senator shall be defined as a student in the student’s fifth-plus year of post-secondary education. A graduate senator shall be defined as a student admitted to the School of Graduate Studies. An at-large senator shall be defined as any member of the BSUSA, regardless of year in school.

Section 7: “University Committee” shall be defined as any committee outside of Student Senate in which the BSUSA makes the appointment.

Section 8: “Executive Session” shall be defined as a period of discussion and voting for internal matters that only voting members may be present for.

Article II – Composition

Section 1: The Student Senate shall consist of twenty-three (23) student senator seats, which will be filled by three (3) fourth year, three (3) third year, three (3) second year, four (4) first year, one (1) graduate student, one (1) fifth year, five (5) at-large students, one (1) Birch/Linden

Cedar/Pine Hall resident, one (1) Oak Hall resident and one (1) Tamarack Hall/ University Heights resident. Requirements placed on the candidates, are provided for in the Constitution in Article IV-

Section 3: When a class standing senator seat becomes vacant, that position will be filled by a student who is currently holding an at-large senator seat. The student with the at-large seat must have the same class standing as the seat they will fill in order to be appointed to the vacant seat. If there is more than one eligible at-large senator, a senator shall be appointed at the discretion of the President.

Article III – Housing & Residential Life Seats

Section 1: All student senator seats representing Birch Hall, Linden Hall, Tamarack Hall, Cedar Hall, Pine Hall, Oak Hall and University Heights shall be recognized as Housing & Residential Life seats. Student senators serving on these seats shall be recognized as a Housing & Residential Life (HRL) Senator.

Section 2: To be eligible for election or appointment, as well as continued service as a Housing & Residential Life (HRL) Senator, a candidate must:

- A) Have a valid contract for the current academic year with the BSU Department of Housing & Residential Life.
- B) Be a resident of the specific residence hall(s) their position represents.
- C) All other eligibility requirements are provided for in Article IV of the Constitution.

Section 3: Upon termination of the contract with BSU Department of Housing & Residential Life, the HRL senator may fill a vacant senator seat if eligible. If the HRL senator meets the eligibility requirement for more than one vacant senator seat, they shall be appointed at the discretion of the President.

Section 4: In addition to the duties outlined in the Constitution Article IV, an HRL Senator shall be responsible for:

- A) Fairly representing the interests and concerns of the residents.
- B) Coordinating with their respective Hall Council(s) and Housing & Residential Life staff. If no Hall Council is in place for their respective residence hall(s), they shall coordinate with the appropriate Housing & Residential Life staff.

Article IV - Student Senator Duties

Section 1: Student Senators shall fulfill the obligation of office hours per an office hour week as follows: President: Ten (10); Vice President: Eight (8); Chief of Staff: Four (4); Office Manager: Four (4); Committee Chair: Four (4); Senator: One (1).

Section 2: Student Senators shall fulfill the obligation of one (1) hour of Student Senate tabling per academic semester.

Section 3: Student Senators shall fulfill the obligation of two (2) hours of community service per academic semester.

Article V – Attendance

Section 1: Each member of the Student Senate shall be allowed two (2) excused absences from a Student Senate meeting per academic term without incurring any points. Members of Cabinet will be allowed excused absences for a Cabinet Meeting. Each member of the Student Senate shall also be allowed two (2) excused absences from their committee meeting per academic term without incurring any points. The point system will be as follows:

- A) Three (3) points will be given for any unexcused absence from a Student Senate meeting and any absence after the allotted two (2) excused absences.
- B) Three (3) points will be given for any unexcused absence from a Cabinet meeting.
- C) Two (2) points will be given for any unexcused absence from a Senate or University committee meeting and any absence after the allotted two (2) excused absences.
- D) One (1) point will be given for any missed office hour. Missed office hours must be made up before the next office hour week in order for a member of the Student Senate to incur no points.
- E) One (1) point will be given for each hour a senator fails to complete their obligations of Student Senate tabling and/or community service hours.
- F) Each member of the Student Senate shall be allowed ten (10) points per semester, with points resetting at the beginning of the next academic semester, with exception to points received from Student Senate tabling and/or community service hours, before being subject to removal as stated in the Constitution, Article VII.

Article VI – Elections

Section 1: All students running in the Fall General election shall run under their current class standing. The Cabinet will oversee running the Fall General Elections. All students running in the Spring General election shall run under their class standing for the following fall semester. The Elections Commission will oversee running the Spring General Elections.

Section 2: The Fall General election shall be held within the first four (4) weeks of the academic term. The dates of the Spring election shall be chosen by the Elections Commission starting no earlier than the first Academic day following the end of Spring Break and will last a maximum of five academic days.

Section 3: In the Spring General election the following seats will be placed upon the ballot: graduate, second year, third year, fourth year, fifth year, HRL seats, and three (3) at-large.

Section 4: In the Fall General election the following seats will be placed upon the ballot: (4) first year, two (2) at-large seats and all vacant seats.

Article VII – Election Campaign Guidelines

Section 1: The purpose of these guidelines is to create a clear and non-partisan set of rules for each candidate and campaign staff to follow. All guidelines should be followed when a candidate and/or campaign staff takes any action with their campaign. This guideline is in addition to any policy outlined by BSU or MinnState. This guideline should be used in conjunction with any policy outlined on the BSU website. Student Senate reserves the right to make any changes to the guidelines below. Changes can only be made with a 2/3 majority vote of the Student Senate. All changes shall be made and communicated to the candidates before the start of the election campaign season. Any questions or concerns outside the scope of these guidelines will be directed to the Elections Commissioner, or Cabinet if not appointed, who shall make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Section 2: Election Campaign Guidelines can be found here: [Election Campaign Guidelines](#)

Article VIII – Committees

Section 1: An Ad Hoc Committee can be formed at the request of the President and is approved by a majority vote of the Student Senate. The Chair of this Committee will be appointed by the President.

Section 2: A Sub Committee can be formed at the request of the Standing Committee Chairs. This request must be approved by a majority vote of the Standing Committee they are the chairs of.

Section 3: A Constitution Committee shall only be convened in order to deal with proposed amendments to the Constitution or its Bylaws. It shall be chaired by the Student Senate President, Vice President or Chief of Staff and its membership will be open to all who are interested. The committee will have at least four (4) people serving on it and at least one (1) of the four (4) people shall be a cabinet member. It shall operate like any other committee.

Article IX – Reports

Section 1: Cabinet members are recommended to provide a report to the full Student Senate at each Student Senate meeting and shall be required to do so if requested.

Section 2: A report may be delivered to the Student Senate by someone who has been designated by the authors of the report in the event of their absences. Reports may be written and distributed in advance of the meeting.

Article X – Appointment to Vacancies

Section 1: Individuals wishing to be appointed to any vacant Student Senate position must attend two (2) consecutive Student Senate meetings prior to becoming eligible for appointment. At the end of the second meeting the individual will be voted on.

Section 2: After this individual has met the above requirements, and the requirements for eligibility as stated by the Constitution in Article IV, the President may bring up the prospective senator's name during the Points for the Good of the Order section of the agenda. The appointee will have time to answer questions brought forth by the Student Senate. The Senate will then vote with a paper ballot and a majority will decide the appointment. The potential appointee will be notified of the vote results by a cabinet member within twenty-four (24) hours.

Article XI - Student Senate Agenda

Section 1: Items for the Student Senate Agenda must be given to the Office Manager forty-eight (48) hours prior to the Student Senate meeting. Items not submitted within the time frame may only be added by amending the agenda during the meeting. Items must be time sensitive.

Section 2: Bills, Resolutions, Committee recommendations, and other Student Senate business will be read, discussed, and voted on during the Old and New Business sections of the agenda.

Article XII – Bills and Resolutions

Section 1: Bills shall be used for external issues on which the Student Senate will give recommendations.

Section 2: Resolutions shall be used for internal issues in which the Student Senate amends its internal procedures or acts on internal issues.

Section 3: Bills and Resolutions shall be numbered in a distinguished order. This numbering system shall abbreviate the Bills or Resolutions in question. Bills and Resolutions will be formatted with the following process:

A) Senate Bill or Senate Resolution-last two (2) numbers of the Academic Year and letter (F – Fall; S – Spring) of the Academic Term-sequential order of the bill during the Academic Year. For example, the third bill considered during the Academic Year of 2019-2020, Spring Semester would be abbreviated as follows: SB-20S-03.

Section 4: For legislation to pass, it must go through the requirements laid out in Article IX, of the Constitution. Legislation shall be considered in the order it was introduced.

Section 5: The responsibility for follow-up, such as but not limited to a memo, on Student Senate legislation shall fall on the author(s) of the legislation unless some other individual volunteers to do so or the legislation passes with a clause requiring a specific individual to complete the follow-up.

Section 6: Bills and Resolutions shall be discussed and voted on in at least one (1) Student Senate Committee meeting before coming to the full senate.

Article XIII – Student Senate Stipends

Section 1: Members of the Student Senate will receive stipends each semester based on the following criteria:

A) The President of the Student Senate shall receive a stipend of \$1,200 per semester, to be received while school is in session during the academic year.

- B) The Vice President of the Student Senate shall receive a stipend of \$1,000 per semester, to be received while school is in session during the academic year.
- C) The Committee Chairs, the Office Manager, and the Chief of Staff shall each receive a stipend of no more than \$400 per semester.

Article XIV – Evaluations of Student Senate Members

Section 1: The following evaluations will take place:

- A) All senators will evaluate their committee chairs once per academic term.
- B) All Committee Chairs will evaluate their committee senators once per academic term.
- C) The members of the Cabinet will evaluate members of Cabinet once per academic term

Section 2: Each evaluation shall only contain information relative to Student Senate performance and the format shall be decided upon by the Cabinet.

Article XV – Presidential Rights

Section 1: The President shall have veto power regarding any motions, resolutions, or bills that are passed. The President shall provide a memo to the Student Senate within 48 hours on the reason for the veto. The veto can be overturned by a 2/3 majority vote within the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Article XVI – Vice Presidential Rights

Section 1: The vice president will have the power to arrange the placement of Student Senate members during Student Senate meetings with Cabinet approval. Failure from a member to adhere to the Vice President's placement during a Student Senate meeting shall result in the member's removal from the meeting, as well as four points added to the member. Failure to vacate the meeting shall prompt an automatic motion for removal from Student Senate along with an additional four points. Student Senate will then follow the procedures described in Article VII of the Constitution.

Article XVII – Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee (SAFAC) Consultation

Section 1: SAFAC will create a draft budget to bring to the Student Senate Cabinet at least three weeks prior to the finalization of the budget. All work in progress shall remain confidential.

Section 2: The Student Senate Cabinet shall have the opportunity to ask SAFAC questions on the draft budget and make recommendations.

Section 3: SAFAC will consider recommendations and bring back any changes at least two weeks prior to the finalization of the budget.

Section 4: SAFAC shall present an overview of the budget to the Student Senate once it has gone through the consultation process with the cabinet.

Section 5: The Student Senate President shall write a letter to the Vice President of Finance on how the consultation process went. The Student Senate President shall also be given the opportunity to share, in writing, any points of disagreement with the budget with the Vice President of Finance for review.

Section 6: The Vice President of Finance shall have final authority regarding the budget.

Section 7: All clubs and organizations shall have the opportunity to appeal any decisions made regarding their respective budget, as outlined in the SAFAC handbook.

Article XVIII– Amendment

Section 1: Proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall first be submitted to the Constitution Committee, as defined in Article VII, of the bylaws.

Section 2: If the proposed amendment(s) make it through the Constitution Committee, the Student Senate shall consider the proposed amendment(s). A two-thirds (2/3) vote is needed for approval.

Section 3: The amendment will become effective immediately upon Student Senate approval.

Article XIX – Ratification and Implementation

Section 1: This set of Bylaws shall supersede all previous Bylaws of the Student Senate Constitution.

Section 2: A two-thirds (2/3) vote is needed for approval of the Bylaws.

Section 3: Once approved, this document may not be changed except as outlined in Article XVIII of this document, or by rewriting the Student Senate Constitution and reconvening of the Constitution Committee.