

# **Student Government Association of Middle Tennessee State University Senate By-Laws**

## **Preamble**

We, the members of the Student Government Association Senate of Middle Tennessee State University, in order to promote the welfare of the student body to which we belong, establish democratic principles of self-governance, provide the means for educated and open debate relating to issues affecting student welfare, and encourage student action in the same do hereby establish these Senate by-laws.

## **Article I. Name**

**Section 1:** The name of this assembly shall be the Student Government Association of Middle Tennessee State University. The Constitution will act in accordance with the MTSU Student Code of Conduct. In case of conflict, the Student Code of Conduct will take precedence.

**Section 2:** The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Senate in all cases concerning parliamentary procedure; the Senate may adopt additional rules and regulations upon favorable passage.

## **Article II. Membership**

**Section 1:** Seats in the Senate will be apportioned according to Article 5, Section 2 of the SGA Constitution. Each Senator will possess one vote. The Speaker of the Senate will also appoint, with approval from the body, a secretary/clerk and a parliamentarian, each of whom will be non-voting members of the Senate body.

## **Article III. Officers**

**Section 1:** The Executive Vice President of the Student Government Association shall serve as the Speaker of the Senate and preside over its meetings.

**Section 2:** The Speaker of the Senate shall appoint, from within the Senate, a Speaker Pro Tempore. The Speaker Pro Tempore will serve as the Speaker and preside over the meeting of the Senate in the absence of the Speaker of the Senate. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall retain his/her privilege of voting except when he/she is presiding over the meeting. The Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate.

**Section 3:** The Speaker of the Senate, with approval from the Senate, shall also appoint chairpersons to the five standing committees (See Article 4, Committees).

**Section 4:** The Secretary of the Senate shall record the minutes of each meeting and keep a file of them, and shall be in charge of recording the roll. The Secretary shall have the same attendance requirements as a Senator. The Secretary shall also maintain a list of each Senator's absences. If a Senator reaches the maximum number of unexcused absences, the Secretary shall report this matter to the Speaker of the Senate and Internal Affairs Chairman and the impeachment proceedings shall start in accordance with the SGA Constitution. This person shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Senate, and shall not be a senator. The Secretary of the Senate shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate.

**Section 5:** The Parliamentarian position for the Senate shall see that Senate meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. This person shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Senate. The Parliamentarian shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate.

#### **Article IV. Eligibility**

**Section 1:** The Senators shall be comprised of undergraduate students enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University at the time of election and remainder of their term, with the exception of Graduate Senators, who will be enrolled in post-graduate work at the time of election and remainder of their term. Other eligibility shall be in concordance with the Constitution and Electoral Act.

**Section 2:** The Student Government Association of Middle Tennessee State University shall have bystander training be a requirement for all incoming and current Senators.

**Section 3:** The Student Government Association Executive Vice President shall be responsible for coordinating training with the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (June Anderson Center).

#### **Article V. Committees**

**Section 1:** There shall be five (5) standing committees of the Senate consisting of Academic Affairs, Internal Affairs (also referred to as the Judiciary Committee), External Affairs, Student Life and Public Relations.

**Section 2:** Legislation shall be submitted the Speaker of the Senate which will then distribute legislation to the appropriate committee. The legislation must find a favorable majority vote in order to reach the Senate floor. It is the responsibility of the appropriate committee to fix all typographical mistakes, so as not to alter the intent of the legislation. The Legislation must be returned to the Speaker of the Senate within five (5) work days in order to be placed on the following agenda.

#### **Article VI. Meetings of the Senate**

**Section 1:** The Senate shall meet bi-weekly. A majority of all sworn-in members of the Senate shall constitute quorum. Absentee voting shall be allowed provided that the Senator is away on University business. Those voting by means of absentee will not count toward the total to reach quorum. Freshman Council and Senate shall meet in a staggered meeting type. Freshman Council shall adjourn before the Senate.

**Section 2:** If any senate member schedules class during the time period designated for weekly Senate meeting, that senator will be forced to resign. A new senator shall be appointed to his or her position.

**Section 3:** Senators must render all excuses for senate meeting absences to the Executive Vice President. Only excuses that are received within two business days after the missed senate meeting will be considered by Internal Affairs. If an excuse is not received within two business days of the missed senate meeting, the absence will be marked unexcused and will be subject to reversal only under extreme circumstances.

## **Article VII. Attendance**

**Section 1:** Any member who shall miss any three meetings or two consecutive meetings within the same semester shall be subject to impeachment. An Academic University sanctioned event or medical emergency, with proper documentation, shall be the only excused absences. An excused absence shall not count towards the total number of absences obtained for that semester.

**Section 2:** If any senate member schedules class during the time period designated for weekly Senate meeting, that senator will be forced to resign. A new senator shall be appointed to his or her position.

**Section 3:** Senators must render all excuses for senate meeting absences to the Executive Vice President. Only excuses that are received within two business days after the missed senate meeting will be considered by Internal Affairs. If an excuse is not received within two business days of the missed senate meeting, the absence will be marked unexcused and will be subject to reversal only under extreme circumstances.

**Section 4:** The Executive Vice President, along with the Secretary, shall keep an active record of attendance of all Senators which shall be posted on the SGA webpage. The Internal Affairs Committee Chair shall have access to this record at all times to ensure excuses are entered into the record.

## **Article VIII. Senator Hours**

**Section 1:** Each Undergraduate Senator shall be required to complete at least twelve Senate hours per semester of their term. Each Graduate Senator shall be required to complete at least eight Senate hours per semester of their term. Any Senator who does not serve for a full term

shall follow the prorated hour requirements laid out in the following Subsections. Senators may acquire these hours working in an SGA capacity for SGA Cabinet members or by working on any approved Student Government project or activity. The cabinet member is required to get the hour opportunity pre-approved by the Speaker of the Senate, and shall keep track of the hours each Senator earns through them and relay that information to the Speaker of the Senate. Any Senator who does not complete the required Senator hours shall go before the Internal Affairs Committee for disciplinary action.

- A. Senators who are appointed more than six full weeks into the academic semester will be required to complete the half their required SGA approved hours.
- B. No Senator shall be appointed or confirmed within the last four full weeks of the academic class schedule

**Section 2:** If a senator has signed up to work an event, they are required to provide 24 hour notice if they are no longer able to fulfill their commitment. Email notification must be sent to the individual responsible for the event and to the Executive Vice President, notifying them of their absence. Failure to provide appropriate notice would result in a reduction of senate hours equal to those that he or she volunteered to work. The senator may choose to find a replacement to avoid a reduction of senate hours. In the event that the replacement senator does not show up for the event, they will be subjected to the same reduction of hours.

- A. After three violations of this policy, the senator will be up for impeachment.

**Section 3:** At least one open forum will be held each year hosted by the Senators and Executive Officers of the Student Government Association. The External Affairs Committee will be in charge of planning the forum and the Public Relations Committee will be responsible for promoting it. The Senate and Executive Officers will be informed of the date at least two weeks in advance. The Senators that plan and attend the forum will receive senate hours equal to the time they contribute.

**Section 4:** If a Senator does not complete the required minimum Senate hours, they will be up for impeachment and will have to go before the Internal Affairs Committee.

- A. Any senator that does not complete their minimum required senate hours will not be able to rerun for a position with the SGA, earn an SGA graduation stole, or receive any benefits or rewards thereof affiliated.

## **Article IX. Order of Business**

**Section 1:** The following shall become the order in which the Senate conducts business:

- A. Call to Order
- B. Special Guest Speakers
- C. Roll Call
- D. Reading of the True Blue Pledge
- E. Reading of the Minutes
- F. Approval of Minutes
- G. Committee Reports
- H. Agenda for current meeting
- I. Old Business

- J. New Business
- K. Announcements
- L. Adjournment

**Section 2:** The fourth order of business at the start of the formal meeting of the Student Government Association, all Senators, Executive Members or any individual present will recite the True Blue Pledge at the opening of the meeting

### **Article X. Introduction and Debate of Bills**

**Section 1:** Legislation may be introduced by any senator per the procedures set forth in the SGA Constitution. He/she shall arrange with the presiding official to have his/her legislation placed on the agenda prior to the meeting of the Senate.

- A. Only the legislation placed on the agenda for a given meeting shall be given priority at that meeting.
- B. Other legislation introduced shall be placed on the agenda for subsequent meetings.
- C. The Speaker of the Senate shall have the authority to decide the priority of legislation to be considered for the Agenda.
- D. The Speaker of the Senate shall have the authority to adjust the agenda in order to consider legislation not previously placed on the agenda.

**Section 2:** The Senator introducing the legislation shall have the right to speak on behalf of that legislation immediately following the introduction of the legislation. Further debate may take place after the legislation is presented.

- A. Debate shall alternate equally between the advocacy of the legislation and the opposition, when it exists.
- B. The presiding official shall recognize those Senators desiring to participate in debate and shall grant them the privilege of speaking in an orderly fashion.
- C. The right of debate shall not be denied any member of the Senate unless the Speaker of the Senate permits it.
- D. The presiding official shall have the right to call on individuals who are not members of the Senate to present information pertinent to the legislation under the discussion, provided this individual can relate information not already known to the Senate.
- E. The delegate presenting the legislation may petition to show support of a particular piece of legislation.

### **Article XI. Recognition**

**Section 1:** The Senate may bestow recognition upon any member of the University Community in the form of a Resolution of Student Opinion.

### **Article XII.**

## Awards

### Section 1: The Bob Womack Distinguished Faculty Award

- A. The name of this award shall be the Bob Womack Distinguished Faculty Award. This award shall be named after Dr. Bob Womack who has significantly contributed to Student Life and Middle Tennessee State University.
- B. The purpose of this award is to recognize a Middle Tennessee State University faculty member who has made a significant contribution in the classroom.
- C. The award shall be administered in accordance with the following guidelines:
  1. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs shall oversee the award process along with the President of the SGA.
  2. The process of selecting the recipient will be performed as follows:
    - a. An advertisement campaign shall be designed by the Vice President of Marketing to notify members of the Middle Tennessee State University community of the award. Possible means of advertisement shall include: notification to Department Chairs, Sidelines, Student Organizations, Pipeline-MT, the SGA website, etc.
    - b. Applications will be submitted to a selection committee that consists of the SGA Advisor, SGA President, SGA Executive Vice President / Speaker of the Senate, SGA Vice President of Marketing, and one SGA Senator from each college as a nominee.
  3. The recipient(s) shall have their portrait(s) and a brief biography displayed in the Student Union Building.
  4. Recipients of the Bob Womack Distinguished Faculty Award will have \$1000 in books donated in their name to the James E. Walker Library.
  5. To be eligible for consideration for this award an individual must be a tenured or tenured track professor that has made significant contributions in the classroom at Middle Tennessee State University.

### Section 2: The John T. Bragg, Sr. Distinguished Service Award

- A. The name of this award shall be the John T. Bragg, Sr. Distinguished Service Award. This award shall be named after John T. Bragg, Sr. who has defined service with his distinguished career at Middle Tennessee State University.
- B. The purpose of this award is to recognize a Middle Tennessee State University faculty or staff member who has made a significant contribution in service to MTSU.
- C. The award shall be administered in accordance with the following guidelines:
  1. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs shall oversee the award process.
  2. The process of selecting the recipient will be performed as follows:
    - a. An advertisement campaign shall be designed by the Vice President of Marketing to notify members of the Middle Tennessee State University community of the award. Possible

means of advertisement shall include: notification to Department Chairs, Sidelines, Student Organizations, Pipeline-MT, the SGA website, etc.

- b. Applications will be submitted to a selection committee that consists of the SGA Advisor, SGA President, SGA Executive Vice President / Speaker of the Senate, SGA Vice President of Marketing, and a SGA Senator from the same college as that of the nominee.
3. The recipient(s) shall have their portrait(s) and a brief biography displayed in the Student Union Building.
4. To be eligible for consideration for this award an individual must be a full time faculty or staff member that has made significant contributions to the State of Tennessee, Community, Middle Tennessee State University, and/or Student Life on campus.

### **Article XIII.**

#### **Student Government Sponsored Travel**

**Section 1:** The American Student Government Association is the nation's professional association serving and supporting Student Government members, leaders, and advisors. Conferences provided by the association are vital in the further development and success of the Student Government Association.

- A. Up to eight members of the Student Government Association shall be sent to ASGA each year. Eligible participants will be members of the Executive Branch and Cabinet.
- B. ASGA expenses shall be incorporated into the yearly budget by each SGA President.
- C. Fee payments, travel expenses, and meal stipends shall be provided to each member out of the approved ASGA budget.

**Section 2:** The Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (TISL) is an annual gathering of student teams from colleges within the state of Tennessee. During a four-day session, students sponsor legislation on state issues and attempt to persuade their colleagues in the House and Senate to join their point of view.

- A. The Student Government Association may send representatives from the Middle Tennessee State University student body to participate each year in TISL. Participants will be selected using the following criteria:
  1. To be considered, participants should be current members of the Executive Branch, the Cabinet, or the Senate.
  2. Non SGA associated students may be considered if they possess adequate knowledge of Parliamentary and Legislative procedures.
  3. Contributions to the SGA and MTSU will be considered when selecting participants.
  4. Participants should have at least one more semester of coursework at MTSU.

- B. TISL expenses shall be incorporated into the yearly budget by each SGA President.
- C. Fee payments, travel expenses, and accommodations shall be provided to each participant out of the approved TISL budget.

**Section 3: Student Regent Nomination**

- A. Applications shall be developed by the SGA Advisor in agreement with the SGA Executive Officers.
- B. Applications shall be returned to the SGA office with copies forwarded to the SGA Advisor.
- C. A committee comprised of the SGA Executive Vice President, the SGA Advisor and three SGA Senators shall review the applications and conduct a personal interview. The committee shall agree on one nominee and one alternate.

**Article XIV.  
Amendments**

**Section 1:** Amendments to the Senate by-laws shall be presented to the Senate at one meeting and upon favorable passage by 2/3 of those members present; the amendment(s) shall go into effect at the following meeting.

**Article XV.  
Budgets**

**Section 1: Student Right to Know Act.** There shall be published on the SGA website, in Portable Document Format (PDF), a Senate-approved budget summary, detailing all SGA expenditures, revenues, and expenses; this document shall be published no later than sixty-five (65) calendar days into every fall and spring semester.

**Article XVI .  
Code of Ethics**

**Section 1:**

- A. Members of SGA have a strong understanding that SGA exists primarily for the student's benefit and will further demonstrate this by actively listening to constituents and tailoring their work around their needs and concerns.
- B. Members of SGA will respect the university, their peers, and themselves.
- C. Members of SGA will hold themselves to the highest professional standards.
- D. Members of SGA will perform their duties to the fullest of their ability.
- E. Members of SGA will work together to provide meaningful opportunities for their peers and ensure that they are positively influenced by their actions.
- F. Members of SGA shall balance their personal and SGA commitments in a fair and responsible way.
- G. Members of SGA shall strive to empower students so that they truly have a voice.



- H. Members of SGA will constantly seek to better the university, and the student experience, through hard work and altruistic behavior.
- I. Members of SGA shall uphold the Standards of Conduct addressed in the Student Handbook and always strive to be True Blue.

- Section 2:** Consequences of members not abiding by the Code of Ethics are as follows:
- A. A member of SGA with questionable behavior regarding the Code of Ethics may be reported to the Executive Vice President. A letter with any reasonable proof of questionable behavior must be sent by two or more witnesses of the SGA.
  - B. After considering a report and its validity, the EVP, upon his or her discretion, may forward the report to Internal Affairs for disciplinary action.

- Section 3:** This Code of Ethics must be upheld by all Senators and Executive SGA officers for the tenures of their terms in office.

**Article XVII.**  
**SGA's Commitment to Campus Nonviolence**

**Section 1: The Tina Stewart Campus Nonviolence Fund**

- A. Tina Stewart, an MTSU women's basketball player, left a profound legacy of nonviolence at MTSU after she was killed in a domestic violence dispute in 2011.
- B. To honor this legacy, SGA shall sponsor the Tina Stewart Campus Nonviolence Fund. MTSU student groups or campus departments may apply for these funds in the following circumstances:
  - 1. They are sponsoring or cosponsoring events whose goals are to prevent student violence, educate students on consent and safe dating, publicize campus resources for victims and bystanders, or other related goals.
  - 2. They are purchasing equipment, which will primarily be used to prevent violence on campus or surrounding areas, educate students on consent and safe dating, and publicize campus resources for victims and bystanders, or other related goals.
  - 3. They are creating public service announcements, social media campaigns, advertising or other communication which will encourage nonviolence on campus or surrounding areas, educate students on consent and safe dating, publicize campus resources for victims and bystanders, or other related goals.
- C. SGA shall budget no less than \$5,000 for the Tina Stewart Campus Nonviolence Fund.
- D. To apply for these funds, MTSU student groups or campus departments shall complete an application provided by the Center for Student

Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) office, detailing their plans and expected needs.

- E. The MTSU Campus Nonviolence Committee will review these applications and award funds based on their alignment with campus nonviolence goals. The SGA delegate shall report back to SGA with how the awards were granted.

**Section 2: Nonviolence Co-sponsorship.** The Student Government Association of Middle Tennessee State University shall actively seek opportunities to sponsor or cosponsor events whose goals are to prevent student violence, educate students on consent and safe dating, and publicize campus resources for victims and bystanders, or other related goals.

### **Article XVIII. Enactment**

**Section 1:** Upon passage, by 2/3 majority vote of the sworn in members present, these bylaws shall be enacted.

### **Article XIX. SGA Seal**

**Section 1:** The SGA Seal includes the official MTSU blue, white, and black coloring. It will consist of a shield inscribed with the MT logo surrounded by laurels. It will also boast the university's "I am True Blue" identity as indicated in the graphic below.



*Revised 07/20/2021*