

**Rules and Procedures
of the
Sam Houston State University
Student Government Association
Fall 2007**

RULE 1. MEMBERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND OBSERVATION

A. The members of the Student Senate shall be those duly elected as officers or senators to the Student Senate.

B. In all meetings of the Student Senate, the members of the Senate shall have the following privileges:

1. To vote (presiding officer does not vote unless there is a tie vote)
2. To introduce and sponsor legislation.
3. To serve on committees of the Student Senate
4. To make or second motions
5. To address meetings of the Student Senate or committees
6. To raise Parliamentary Points
7. To have all other general rights, privileges and responsibilities granted to members of the Student Senate

C. Membership of the Student Government Association shall be those duly elected or appointed as per the Student Government Association Constitution.

D. Observers shall be all individuals who are not members of the Student Senate

E. In all meetings of the Student Senate observers shall have the following privileges:

1. To address such meetings when not specifically on the agenda when a majority of the members give their consent.

2. To participate in a debate when, recognized by the chair and a Senator yields the floor.

3. The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) shall have the ability through control of the Senate agenda to place any Senator or observer on the agenda to address the Senate. It is not within the power of the DIA to deny the right to address the Senate to any Senator who wishes to do so and so requests the DIA to place him on the agenda.

4. Speak in accordance with provisions of Rule 16 of the Student Senate during open forum.

F. Any person attending a meeting of the Student Senate or a meeting of a Department, or having being granted the privilege of addressing such meetings, shall conform to, abide by, and be subject to all rules, laws, customs and regulations propounded by these bodies for governing the conduct of its members and business.

RULE 2 MEETINGS OF THE SENATE

A. The Senate shall meet regularly each Tuesday evening at 6:00 PM during the Fall and Spring semesters at a place designated by the Department of Internal Affairs of the Student Senate. Summer Senate meeting times and places shall be set by the Summer Senate. All Senators shall be informed in writing of the time and place of the first Senate meeting of the Fall semester.

B. The President of the Student Government Association as presiding officer of the Senate shall have the power to call special meetings of the Senate when he deems such meetings advisable.

C. The Senators shall have the power to call special meetings of the Student Senate as stated in the SHSU SGA Constitution

D. A Senator, after absenting himself from a total of three meetings per semester or two consecutive meetings, shall be requested to come before the appropriate school caucus. It shall be the duty of the caucus to make a reasonable effort to contact the Senator and inform him of the caucus meetings, at which time his absences will be discussed. The Chairman and the caucus members will examine the reasons for absenteeism. It shall be the duty of the caucus to determine whether such reasons are valid or invalid. The following excuses will be considered legitimate for the purpose of missing Senate meetings, committee meetings and other required SGA activities:

1. Personal Illness,
2. Serious illness of a family member of the immediate family,
3. Death in the immediate family,
4. Work - (Compensatory) other than homework,
5. University excused absences,
6. Other excuses shall become legitimate with the approval of the Senators appropriate caucus chair. Once this approval has been granted, the caucus chair must notify the Chief of the Department of Internal Affairs and the Secretary. It shall take a simple majority vote of the caucus present and voting to make a recommendation to expel the Senator. If the Senator misses four meetings in one semester it shall be the option of the Department of Internal Affairs to consider removal of the Senator. It shall take a 2/3 vote of the Senate present and voting to expel the Senator. The appropriate school caucus shall meet to nominate a replacement.
7. Senators are required to serve a minimum of one office hour per week, two missed weeks of office hour will be considered the equivalent of one absence from regular Senate meetings.

E. A majority of the members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum for all meetings of the Student Senate, (Article III Section 10 of the Sam Houston State University Student Government Association Constitution) except in the case of the Summer Senate.

F. No business of the Senate shall be conducted at any meeting when a quorum is not present (except that the meeting may be called to order, the roll called, and the meeting recessed or adjourned). Any Senate meeting which begins without a quorum is recognized; at that point the only motions in order are to call the roll and recess or adjourn.

G. The order of business in the Senate shall be:

1. Call to order by the presiding officer.
2. Roll Call.
3. Reading and/or approval of the Senate minutes.

4. Report of the President (when required as in Article IV Section 3 and 5).
5. Report of the standing committees.
6. Agenda as prepared by the Department of Internal Affairs.
7. Old business.
8. New business.
9. Announcements.
10. Adjournment.

H. If a person becomes so disruptive that the business of the Senate cannot continue, the President shall warn the Senator or observer that he or she is being a disruption to the Senate and if the offender is warned twice and continues to be a disruption, the President shall order the Sergeant-at-Arms, or Parliamentarian to remove that person from the floor of the Senate for the remainder of the consideration of that bill or resolution and all motions and/or amendments pertaining to it. If the ruling of the chair is appealed a 2/3 vote of the Senate present and voting is required to sustain the ruling. If the person returns to the Senate after consideration of that issue and continues to be disruptive he or she may be expelled for the rest of the meeting.

RULE 3 STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

- A. Each Senator must serve on at least one Standing Committee.
- B. Each committee shall fix regular meeting times (either weekly or every other week) for the transaction of business before the committee. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman of each committee as he shall deem necessary.
- C. Each such committee shall keep a record of all committee action, copies of which shall be filed with the Secretary of the Student Government Association.
- D. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of each such committee to report or cause to be reported promptly to the Senate, in writing, and measure approved by a majority vote of his committee.
- E. Standard Operating Procedures for Committees

1. The Standard Operating Procedures for Committees shall be the governing guidelines for all standing committees.
2. To become a voting member of a standing committee, you must attend two consecutive meetings; and all attendants of the first meeting of each semester will automatically be recognized as a voting member of the Committee.
3. A quorum of two voting members not including the Chair must be present in order for business to occur; and
 - a. The Chair votes in the case of tie.
 - b. The Chair may veto any business brought before the committee for a vote.
 - c. The committee may overturn a veto by a 2/3 vote.
4. Voting members of the committee shall be Sam Houston State University Students in good standing.
5. If a member, not including the Committee Chair, misses two consecutive committee meetings or three meetings within the semester, the member will no longer be recognized as a voting member of the Committee.
6. The chair may appoint an assistant chair with the approval of 2/3 vote of the committee members present and voting.
 - a. The assistant chair will be responsible for all chair duties explicitly stated in the Student Government Association Constitution and bylaws during the absence of the committee chair.
 - b. The assistant chair will also be responsible for all duties delegated by the committee chair and approved by a simple majority of those present and voting.
7. The committee chair may appoint a secretary.
 - a. The secretary must be a member of the stated committee.
 - b. The duties of the secretary will be to handle committee minutes and sign up lists that may be necessary for the proper functioning of the committee; and
 - c. Any duties assigned by the Chair.

8. All bills going before the respected department (ie: Depart of Internal Affairs, External Affairs, Student Affairs, & University Affairs) must be voted on and passed by a majority vote of members present and voting and approved by the committee chair.

9. Rule 4, Section E may not be suspended at any time.

F. Each standing committee shall determine its own rules of precedence, so long as they do not conflict with other provisions of the Constitution or these Rules and Procedures.

RULE 5 CLASSIFICATION OF LEGISLATION

A. Amendments

1. Amendments to the Constitution must be introduced no later than ten days prior to an election in order to be considered by the Senate. All amendments submitted later than ten days prior to an election and proposed by the Senate shall be withheld from the ballot until the next election.

2. Constitutional amendments considered by the Senate shall be proposed for entry on the ballot following approval by a 2/3 vote of the membership of the Senate present and voting.

B. Senate Bills

Senate bills shall be introduced when action is required only by the Student Senate or when the effect affects only the members of the Student Government Association. Senate bills shall include those allocating moneys, creating position, revising, adding to or amending documents (except the Constitution).

C. Resolutions

1. Resolutions shall be introduced when the Senate wishes to state a fundamental and continuing policy or theory of the Student Government Association or wishes to express itself on some issue on behalf of the student body.

2. Condolences regarding any student, faculty or staff member who has passed away will be filed as a resolution.

3. Resolutions require a majority vote of the Senate present and voting and are NOT subject to Presidential veto.

D. Sense of the Senate Resolutions

1. Sense of the Senate resolutions shall be introduced when the Senate wishes to express itself on some issue, speaking as a body, but not for the Student Government Association or student body.
2. Sense of the Senate resolutions require a majority vote of the Senate present and voting and are NOT subject to Presidential veto.
3. The Senate shall consider Sense of the Senate Resolutions when first introduced although the Senate reserves the right to refer such resolutions to committee.

E. Proclamations that honor any individual or entity that has clearly brought national recognition to this university or are in recognition of a death of a university member may be brought before the Senate.

F. Amendments or Repeals of Existing Legislation

1. Amendments or repeals of existing legislation must be presented to the Senate as clearly as possible explaining their intent and ultimate effect.
2. Amendments and repeals shall be processed in the manner appropriate to the class of legislation to be amended or repealed, so far as applicable.

RULE 6 THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

A. Origination of Legislation

1. Legislation may be proposed or suggested by several means, including reports from the officers, senators, senate committees, faculty, administration or students.
2. However, legislation shall be introduced or sponsored in the Senate for its consideration only by the members of the Senate.
3. Legislation may be passed by the appropriate committee prior to reaching the senate floor. It will then go before the DIA where it may be referred to a different committee if a majority of the members present and voting feel the proposed legislation originated in wrong committee.
4. The Senate may be recessed for the purpose of a committee to compose legislation. Once composed, it will be eligible for consideration.

B. Time of Introduction

1. Legislation that has not been passed by a committee may be introduced in the following ways during Senate Meetings.

a. All new legislation will be introduced during New Business.

b. All legislation will be read by the chair once during new business.

2. Legislation may be written in committee and once passed by the committee. The secretary will place it on the agenda under New Business. It will then be eligible for full consideration at the next meeting.

C. It is the duty of the SGA Secretary to see that the Campus News Media gets a copy of all Legislation introduced in the Senate.

D. If the bill has not passed through committee and the sponsor feels that his bill or resolution is non-controversial and has no opposition, he may request that the measure be approved by consent. The chair shall ask if there is any objection. If there is an objection, the measure shall continue through the normal legislative process.

E. Following referral of the Legislation, that committee shall proceed to consider the legislation, and shall be empowered to take the following actions:

1. Report the legislation out of committee favorably in its original form.

2. Report the legislation out of committee favorably in amended form.

3. Vote against the legislation, disapproving the measure by a majority vote in which case it may be brought to the floor of the Senate only by discharging procedures.

4. Take no action and allow the measure to remain in committee.

F. Following passage of the legislation in committee, the Chairman of the committee shall file a copy of the legislation with the SGA Secretary.

1. The SGA Secretary shall prepare sufficient copies of the measure and/or report for distribution to the members of the Student Senate. The President and/or the Department of Internal Affairs shall be responsible for checking the classification of the legislation and shall place it on the agenda of the Student Senate meeting.

G. When the legislation is reported out by the committee and placed on the agenda in accordance with the above provisions, the Student Senate shall proceed to consider the legislation at the appropriate time in the following manner:

1. The presiding officer or his designate shall read the legislation in its complete form as reported.
2. The Student Senate shall proceed to discuss the measure as provided under Rule 8: Debate.
3. When debate has concluded, the presiding officer shall read the legislation by title only and the Senate shall proceed to vote on the measure.

H. The legislation shall be passed by the Student Senate if it receives a favorable majority vote of the Senators present and voting (the exception is an amendment to the Constitution, which requires a 2/3 majority vote of the membership of the Student Senate).

I. Discharge Procedure

1. Legislation may be discharged from (forced out) committee only through the issue if a discharge petition.
2. Fifty percent of the Student Government Association Student Senate must sign the discharge petition.
3. Senators must sign their name along with their position.
4. The petition must name the legislation to be discharged.
5. The completed petition must be delivered to the SGA Secretary within ten (10) days of its beginning.
6. After the SGA Secretary has informed the proper committee chairman of the completed petition, the chairman must report on the legislation at the next regular meeting of the Student Senate.
7. It is not proper to start a discharge petition on the same day that the legislation is assigned to committee or introduced in committee.

J. NO friendly amendments shall be applied to Senate Bills.

RULE 7. PROCEEDINGS ON NOMINATIONS

A. The Senate shall have the power to advise and consent to certain nominations for appointment by the President and Senators and College Caucus as provided for in the SHSU SGA Constitution

B. When nominations are made by the President they may be referred to the appropriate committee at a meeting of the Student Senate, except as noted.

C. A committee shall duly consider such nominations and report its actions on such nominations in accordance with these procedures:

1. It shall be announced by the presiding officer at the appropriate place on the agenda

2. Any debate will follow

D. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required for confirmations on SGA Presidential appointments.

E. All nominations confirmed or rejected by the Senate, will be recorded in the Official Senate Minutes.

F. Committee Chairman appointed by the President shall be approved by the Student Senate without referral to committee.

RULE 8. DEBATE

A. Recognition

1. To obtain the floor, a member must rise after the floor has been yielded and address the presiding officer (Mr./Madam President or Mr./Madam Chairman) or he must raise his hand.

2. Immediately upon being recognized by the presiding officer, the member shall stand and state his name and title.

3. An observer shall seek the floor through a Senator who shall yield the floor to the observer.

4. If an observer wishes to formally address the Senate on a particular issue, he must first ask the Department of Internal Affairs to place him on the agenda.

5. The SGA President may recognize an observer to speak.

6. The President may speak on a point of information during debate upon requesting a Senator to yield the floor to the President (Will a Senator yield the floor?). If at any time a Senator feels the President is speaking from a point of persuasion, the Senator may call a point of order. If the President wishes to continue, a non-debatable simple majority vote will be taken to determine if the President should step down.

B. Procedure

1. There shall be no limit on the number of Senators or observers who shall be allowed to speak on an issue, unless the Senate chooses to limit debate.

2. The Senate can limit debate only after two pro-speakers and two con-speakers have been heard on each issue.

3. Each speaker shall be limited to five (5) minutes.

4. The presiding officer shall, in recognizing speakers, give primary consideration to those members not having previously spoken on the question before the Senate.

5. The Right of Immediate Reply shall be preserved. Anyone may be given the floor who has been mentioned in the speech of the previous speaker. The person wishing the floor for rebuttal must call a point of order and be recognized to speak by the presiding officer. The point must be called before the next speaker has spoken.

6. Any person addressing the Student Senate must allow the Senate the pleasure of a thirty (30) minute question and answer period.

C. Relevance and other restrictions

1. Debate must be limited to the immediately pending legislation or question as stated by the presiding officer.

2. The presiding officer shall rule out of order any speaker failing to adhere to the subject of discussion.

3. When an amendment has been moved and seconded, no other primary amendment may be discussed until the amendment under consideration has been disposed of.

4. It is, however, possible to give notice of further amendments without discussion on the notice.

5. The presiding officer may exercise the privilege of ruling out of order any amendment he feels is irrelevant.

6. No member of the Senate may conclude a speech by moving an undebatable motion.

D. Serial Consideration

1. In consideration of items of policy or amendments with clearly distinct parts, the Senate may choose to consider it seriatim, that is, section by section.

2. If considered seriatim, a question shall be discussed and amended section by section and then accepted or rejected or rejected by a single vote (unless the question shall have been previously divided).

E. Closure of Debate

1. Debate may be ended in two ways:

a. By the presiding officer, when debate appears to be finishing inquiring if the Student Senate is ready for the Question. If, after a reasonable pause, no one rises to claim the floor, the presiding officer shall assume that no member wishes to speak, and proceed to put the Question.

b. By a member moving the previous question, and the Senate consenting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

2. If there is an objection to a motion for the previous question, before there have been at least two speakers in favor and two speakers opposing the matter under debate, the motion for the previous question shall not be entertained.

RULE 9. PRIVILEGE POINTS

A. When Order

1. Points of order:

a. Points of order must be heard at all times except during the act of voting, when they must relate to voting procedures.

b. They must relate to such matters as:

c. Any breach of the Constitution, Standing Rules, other applicable parliamentary authority, or superior law.

d. Breaches of decorum.

e. Departures from the orders of the day.

f. Irrelevancy of debate.

2. Points of personal privilege

a. A point of personal privilege must deal with the personal comfort of the session or

b. With the clear slander of an individual or group.

3. Parliamentary inquiry

a. A parliamentary inquiry is a question directed at the presiding officer, requesting information about the presently existing parliamentary situation.

b. It may be made when another has the floor.

c. It should not interrupt a speech any more than is necessary to do justice to the inquirer.

4. Query of the Speaker

a. Queries must concern matters of fact and not interruption.

b. Queries may be heard only at the discretion of the speaker being queried and may not interrupt his remarks.

c. If a speaker consents to a query, the time consumed shall come out of the speaker.

B. On appeal from a ruling of the presiding officer, a minimum of two speakers shall be heard for sustaining the ruling and two speakers for reversing before closure may be imposed. The presiding officer may speak freely in support of his ruling and make the final remarks on any appeal to his decision.

RULE 10. MOTIONS AND RECONSIDERATION

A. Motions listed and precedence thereof. During discussion of a motion or amendment, the following motions are in order and can be accepted in the following order of precedence:

1. Adjourn (simple majority)
2. Recess (simple majority)
3. Lay on the table (simple majority)
4. Previous question (2/3 majority)
5. Limit Debate (2/3 majority)
6. Extend Debate (simple majority)
7. Postpone definitely (simple majority)
8. Commit or refer to committee (simple majority)
9. Amend (simple majority)
10. Postpone indefinitely (simple majority)

B. Reconsideration

1. A motion to reconsider shall be in order at any time during the meeting at which the vote to be considered was taken or at the next meeting of the Senate.
2. It must be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side.
3. The calling up of a reconsideration shall not interrupt the pending item of business, but shall have preference over all other business after the pending item of business is concluded.
4. In all cases reconsideration requires a simple majority vote.

C. Withdrawal of Motions

1. Until a motion has been stated by the presiding officer, the mover may withdraw his second. After the presiding officer has stated the question, it is in the possession of the Senate, and the mover can neither withdraw nor modify it without the majority consent of the Senate.

RULE 11. VOTING PROCEDURES

A. Votes shall be taken in one or more of the following ways:

1. Voice vote (affirmative answer aye, negative answer nay).
2. Division of the Senate (members raise their hands or stand) can be demanded by any member of the Senate.
3. All Senate Bills and Senate Resolutions upon final passage through the student senate shall be voted upon using a roll call vote and can include the opinion of the majority and/or minority vote.
4. A vote by ballot shall not be ordered except in the case of trials of the members.

B. Recorded Votes

1. Any member may request that his vote be entered on the record in the minutes, and in all such cases the President shall instruct the Secretary to do so.

C. Pairing is allowed in the Senate.

1. Those Senators being paired must be of opposite persuasion on the issue being considered.
2. The pairing must be prepared in writing and delivered to the Secretary of the Student Government Association.
3. The pairing may not be broker without the signatures of both Senators concerned.

RULE 12. THE SUMMER SENATE

A. The Summer Senate shall consist of all the Senators able to attend during the Summer Semester.

B. The quorum shall be determined at the last meeting of the Spring Semester.

C. The Summer Senate shall be granted the full powers of the Student Senate for any actions, which are necessary for the normal functioning of the Association during the period between the final Senate meeting of the Spring Semester and the first such meeting of the Fall Semester.

D. The Summer Senate shall be responsible for the formulation and adoption of its own rules of procedure, and shall not be bound by the Standing Rules.

RULE 13. AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES

A. The Standing Rules of the Senate from the preceding session of the Senate shall continue to be the Standing Rules for each session unless changed as provided in these Rules.

B. The Senate may amend these rules by a 2/3 vote.

RULE 14. SUSPENSION OF THE STANDING RULES

A. On a motion to suspend the Standing Rules, the object of the suspension must be specified, and nothing else can be done under the suspension.

B. Debate on a motion to suspend the Standing Rules shall be limited to two speeches in favor and two speeches opposed thereto not exceeding one minute each.

C. The Standing Rules may be suspended by a 2/3 vote of the Senators present and voting.

RULE 15. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

A. The Rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, these Standing Rules, and the statutes of the Sam Houston State University Student Government Association.

RULE 16. IMPEACHMENT PROCEDURES

A. All elected and appointed students by the Sam Houston State University Senate shall be liable to removal from office through the impeachment process.

B. Any member of the student body eligible to vote in a Student Government Association election shall be empowered to levy charges of impeachment.

C. Impeachment charges shall consist only of dereliction of duty, gross inefficiency of malfeasance.

D. The accused shall be granted all rights of due process including, but not limited to: a fair and speedy trial; the right to counsel, prepare a defense; the confrontation and presentation of witnesses; and the protection against self incrimination.

E. To impeach any elected or appointed officer, Senator, or Senate approved position, 10 of the appropriate constituency of 40 of the Senate must bring a petition to the Senate stating the charges and calling for impeachment. The petition is then given to the Department of Internal Affairs, when feasible, to initiate action.

F. The Committee will inform the accused of the petition and the charges to be brought against him. Within three Senate meetings after the presentation of the petition of the Committee, the trial shall be put on the Senate agenda.

G. The Attorney General shall act as prosecutor in the interest of the Student Government Association, unless he is the accused or cannot conscientiously fulfill this duty, and in such case, a prosecutor shall be appointed by the President with advice and consent of the Senate. The Student Government Association President will act as presiding officer unless he is the accused. In such case, the Vice-President will preside over the meeting. In any case where the President is the accused, and there is a need to appoint a prosecutor, the Vice-President will make the appointment with the advice and consent of the Senate.

H. Conviction requires a 2/3 vote of the Senate present and voting. Conviction carries with it the automatic penalty of removal from the office and the rights and privileges thereof. Anyone relieved of office by the Senate may appeal that decision to the Supreme Court.