

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE

We, the students of Valparaiso University, in order to provide a place to discuss issues and have a means to take action on these issues in a positive, effective fashion, do hereby adopt this, the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate, as a means and tool for governance.

ARTICLE I Executive Offices of the Student Body

Section A President of the Student Body

Clause 1 Qualifications:

At the beginning of the term of office, the President of the Student Body shall have at least the rank of Junior in the College in which enrolled. The President shall also have completed at least forty-five (45) credit hours at Valparaiso University and have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above. The President will also be a full time student and may not hold any other salaried position funded by student activity fees.

Clause 2 Duties:

- a) The President of the Student Body shall act in an executive and advisory capacity.
- b) The President of the Student Body shall be a voting member of the University Council and shall inform the University Council about matters of student concern.
- c) The President of the Student Body shall be the Chairperson of the Student Senate Executive Committee.
- d) The President of the Student Body shall have veto power over the Student Senate within one week of any action approved by the Student Senate.
- e) The President of the Student Body shall retain the services of, but not limited to the following: Executive Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Coordinator, and Parliamentarian.
- f) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to appoint ad hoc committees.
- g) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to appoint and remove executive aides.
- h) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to call special meetings of the Student Senate, and must if requested by five Senators.
- i) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to call Open Forum Meetings and must if requested by a majority vote of the Student Senate.
- j) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to call a referendum and must if requested by a majority vote of the Student Senate. (Referendums asking for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall not be valid under this subsection).

- k) The President of the Student Body shall fulfill the responsibilities granted by non-Student Senate organizations and appoint student officers to said organizations if requested.
- l) The President of the Student Body shall have the power to appoint University Council alternates.
- m) The President of the Student Body shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of all standing committees of Student Senate.
- n) The President of the Student Body shall submit a quarterly report to the President of the University to be placed with the agenda materials for the Quarterly Report to the Board of Directors.

Clause 3 Impeachment:
 If the President of the Student Body is charged with misconduct or negligence of duty, impeachment procedures shall be initiated as stated in Article VII.

Section B Vice President of the Student Body

Clause 1 Qualifications:
 At the beginning of the term of office, the Vice President of the Student Body shall have at least the rank of Junior in the College in which enrolled. The Vice President shall also have completed at least forty-five (45) credit hours at Valparaiso University and have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above. The Vice President will also be a full time student and may not hold any other salaried position funded by student activity fees.

- a. The Vice President will be mandated to have a minimum of one semester of Student Senate experience by the first day of the academic year in which the office will be held.
- b. The one semester prerequisite for the Vice Presidential Office may be waived for a potential candidate with no Student Senate experience, if the candidate is brought before the Screening Committee to be granted the ability to run for Vice President. The Screening Committee must agree by simple majority that the potential candidate has sufficient knowledge about the Student Senate to enable adequate performance of the Vice President's duties, even though the candidate has not met the one semester prerequisite outlined in Article 1, Section B, Clause 1, Sub-point a.). A potential candidate who has no Student Senate experience is entitled to meet with the Screening Committee for the purpose of securing an exception.

Clause 2 Duties:

- a) The Vice President of the Student Body shall act as the Chairperson of the Student Senate.
- b) The Vice President of the Student Body shall, subject to the authority of the President of the Student Body, be responsible for the internal

operations of the Student Senate and will act in an Executive capacity to accomplish such tasks.

- c) The Vice President of the Student Body shall be responsible for the proper execution of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Senate by its membership, though culpability for improper execution of those documents shall be the sole responsibility of the errant individual.
- d) The Vice President of the Student Body shall call all regular meetings of the Student Senate.
- e) The Vice President of the Student Body shall set the agenda for all meetings of the Student Senate subject to the approval of Student Senate.
- f) The Vice President of the Student Body shall attend at least two (2) meetings of each of the Administration Committee and of the Finance Committee and shall be required to attend a meeting of any other Standing Committee if notified by the Chair of that committee that an issue has arisen that requires the Vice President's attention.
- g) The Vice President of the Student Body shall meet at least weekly with the President of the Student Body to discuss, in detail, occurrences within the Student Senate.
- h) The Vice President of the Student Body shall be responsible for the management, repair, and control of all Student Senate property and shall keep a record of the location of all property at all times.

Clause 3 Impeachment:

If the Vice President of the Student Body is charged with misconduct or negligence of duty, impeachment procedures shall be initiated as stated in Article VII.

ARTICLE II Valparaiso University Student Senate Membership

Section A Composition:

The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall consist of voting members chosen by the electors of their respective districts. Elections shall be carried out as set forth in Article VI.

Section B Qualifications:

- a) All Student Senators must have maintained a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above and be full time students.
- b) All Student Senators, with the exception of freshmen and transfer students, must also have completed at least twenty-four (24) credit hours.

Section C All Student Senators must be representative of their specific constituencies for the duration of the term of office. All Student Senators must be a member of the district that they represent.

- Section D Duties:
- Clause 1 All Student Senators must attend and participate in all meetings of the Valparaiso University Student Senate and any Standing Committees of which they are members.
- Clause 2 All Senators shall prepare and submit a quarterly constituency report in a manner to be defined by the Vice President. This report will include, but not be limited to, the concerns of the Senator’s constituency with responses to the current Valparaiso University issues involving Student Senate.
- Clause 3 All Student Senators shall hold and maintain a minimum number of office hours, a number that is set by the Vice President of the Student Body.
- Clause 4 Impeachment:
If a Student Senator is charged with misconduct or negligence of duty, impeachment procedures shall be initiated as stated in Article VII.
- Clause 5 Resignation
A Student Senator who wishes to resign their respective position at any time may on two conditions:
- a) The Student Senator submits a formal letter of resignation to the Student Body Vice President.
 - b) The Student Senator has informed the Screening Committee of the vacancy that their resignation will make.
- Section E No Senator shall simultaneously serve in any Executive role set forth in Article I or any Executive role set forth in the Bylaws. This shall not prevent Senators from properly serving on the Executive Committee. No Senator may simultaneously hold more than a single seat in the Student Senate. No Senator may ever serve in a capacity such that it would afford the Senator an ability to cast multiple votes in a single meeting or in a meeting of a Student Senate committee.

ARTICLE III Powers of the Valparaiso University Student Senate

- Section A The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to regulate, coordinate, and discipline the functioning of any activity, organization or concern delegated to the Student Body in Article III of the Instrument for Internal Governance of Valparaiso University.
- Section B The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to establish and maintain committees and organizations in order to best serve the needs and interests of the student body of the University.

- Section C The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to draft proposals and make recommendations that are out of its specific jurisdiction. The President of the Student Body shall present such proposals to the University Council or appropriate body.
- Section D The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to propose or recommend the specific action or general principle to any member of the University community,. Such proposals shall be sent through the President of the University.
- Section E The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to override a veto of the President of the Student Body by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the entire Student Senate.
- Section F The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall have the power to make and amend its own Constitution and Bylaws.
- Section G The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall, in the course of the execution of all functions, operations, and activities, follow any and all applicable guidelines as stated within University policy and governing documents, including but not limited to:
- Nondiscrimination and Equality of Opportunity Policy
 - Social Media Policy
 - Student Guide to University Life
 - University Political Activity and Events Policy

ARTICLE IV Meetings of the Valparaiso University Student Senate

- Section A The Valparaiso University Student Senate shall hold regular meetings, at least biweekly, throughout the academic calendar year. Such meetings shall be open to all members of the Student Body. If it is deemed necessary to close a regular meeting of the Valparaiso University Student Senate, it may be closed by a proper motion and a two-thirds vote.
- Section B At least fifty-one (51) percent of all voting members and the Chair must be present to constitute a quorum at a meeting during the academic year. Voting membership does not include the Chair. Quorum must be maintained for the extent of any meeting.
- Section C At least two-thirds of all voting members must be present to constitute a quorum at a special meeting, which is called by the President of the Student Body. Voting membership does not include the Chair. Quorum must be maintained for the extent of any meeting.

Section D Voting

Clause 1 Voting members are defined in Article II, Section A. The Chair shall serve as a nonvoting member of the committee, except in the case of a tie.

Clause 2 Majority

- (a) Voting is defined among the voting members present as the explicit definition of “yea” or “nay,” and thereby excludes abstentions of those voting members present and the explicit input of those voting members not present.
- (b) A simple majority is defined upon the explicit agreement of more than 50% of those voting, which does not include those abstaining from the vote.
- (c) A 2/3 majority is defined upon the explicit agreement of more than 2/3 of those voting, which does not include those abstaining from the vote.
- (d) In like form, therefore, all other majority definitions are defined accordingly.

Section E The Student Senate term for each academic year shall last from the fall organizational meeting until the Student Senate adjourns *sine die* in the spring semester. The Student Senate will be divided into two sessions, one for the fall semester (beginning on or after the fall organizational meeting and lasting until the final day of the fall semester), and one for the spring semester (beginning on or after the spring organizational meeting and lasting until the Student Senate adjourns *sine die* in the spring semester).

ARTICLE V Finances of the Valparaiso University Student Senate

Section A The Student Senate is authorized by the University’s Board of Directors to collect the Student Activities (Student Senate) portion of the general fee at 1% of the College of Arts and Sciences tuition up to a maximum of \$19,000 tuition and .6% (six/tenths of 1%) above \$19,000 per student. The University will cap the amount of money Student Senate receives from the Student Activities (Student Senate) portion of the general fee at \$622,455, which represents the amount transferred for fiscal year 2009. If any additional fees are collected by the University related to the Student Activities (Student Senate) portion of the general fee, said funds shall be used to reimburse the University for any funds it pays to the City of Valparaiso for the V-Line bus service. If sufficient fees are collected relating to the V-Line bus service, the additional fees will be transferred to the Student Senate.

Section B The accounts of the Student Senate shall be in the name of Valparaiso University Student Senate and monies shall be deposited only to the accounts of the Student Senate.

Section C The budget of Student Senate shall be formulated for each academic year during the preceding spring semester based on projected student fees. The budget must also be ratified during the spring semester. Modifications to the budget due to the actual amount of student fees will be made in the fall semester of the budgeted academic year.

Section D The Student Senate financial policies with regard to recognized organizations will be determined in the Bylaws pertaining to said policies enacted by the Student Senate.

Section E The Finance Committee of the Student Senate shall review the status and amount of the Student Activity Fee every four years. Changes in policy must receive final approval from the University's Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI Elections of the Valparaiso University Student Senate

Section A The elections of the Student Senate shall be run and regulated in the manner set forth in the Bylaw named "Student Senate Elections." Amendments to the Bylaw named "Student Senate Elections" shall follow the procedure outlined in Article IX of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate.

Section B The Student Senate shall appoint a committee every two years to review the existing districts and representation in the Student Senate, in the fall semester of every even numbered year.

Section C Any vacated office, with the exception of the Office of the President of the Student Body and the Office of the Vice President of the Student Body, shall be filled following the procedure outlined in the Duties of the Screening Committee.

Section D In the case of a vacancy of an Executive Officer of the Student Body, the office shall be filled in accordance to the procedures outlined in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate.

ARTICLE VII Impeachment

Section A Definition:

Clause 1 If a voting member of the Student Senate feels that one of the Executive Officers or Student Senators is guilty of misconduct or negligence of duty, that member shall initiate the impeachment procedures outlined in the following section of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate.

Clause 2 For all Senators and Executive Officers, negligence includes, but is not limited to, three (3) absences per semester from regular Student Senate meetings,

excessive absences from Standing Committee meetings, subcommittee meetings, Senate Retreats, Senate Summits, or abuse of power of one's office.

- Clause 3 For the office of President of the Student Body, negligence shall include all offenses listed in clause 2 in addition to excessive absences from University Council meetings.
- Section B Procedure
- Clause 1 In accordance with Bylaw XIII, The Grievance Committee has exclusive jurisdiction over grievance proceedings.
- Clause 2 A formal grievance, which may only be filed by a Senator or Executive Board member, must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Grievance Committee.
- Clause 3 Once a grievance is filed, the Grievance Chair must notify the Vice President within 24 hours. The Vice President is then given 48 hours to inform the accused of the nature of the charges and supply a written copy of the grievance to the accused with the name/signature of the accuser expunged.
- Clause 4 The formal grievance must be read at the General Assembly meeting following the Vice President's notification of the filed grievance to the accused. General Assembly discussion must follow this first formal reading.
- Clause 5 The grievance is then referred to the Grievance Committee, which will meet to investigate and deliberate about the grievance. The Committee first will meet for one closed session. This meeting is intended to allow the committee members to gather facts and evidence.
- Clause 6 The grieved will have the opportunity to meet with the Grievance Committee after the Grievance Committee's initial meeting. This meeting must also occur after the Grievance Committee has collected the necessary evidence, but before the grievance is formally voted upon. If the accused desires to be, the Committee must allow for their presence to be included in the Committee's final meeting.
- Clause 7 The Grievance Committee must submit a Resolution to the Senate within 10 academic days from the first formal reading. At the forthcoming General Assembly meeting, a second formal reading of the grievance must then be presented to Senate in concert with the Grievance Committee's Resolution. The accused is afforded the right to present a formal defense to the Senate at that same General Assembly meeting. Voting must occur immediately following this formal defense and subsequent discussion.

- Clause 8 The Grievance Committee shall, in their proposed Resolution, upon majority vote, have the explicit discretion to recommend sanctions on Student Senators or Executive Officers in violation of the Student Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
- Clause 9 A 3/4 affirmative vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Senate shall be necessary to adopt any Grievance Committee Resolution.
- Clause 10 If the accused is a voting member of Senate, that individual must abstain from voting on their pending case.
- Clause 11 If a member of Student Senate is impeached, they shall be ineligible to run for any Student Senate position and student offices on University Council in the future. An impeached salaried member of Senate shall be removed from office and shall forfeit all forthcoming salary at the time of removal from office.
- Clause 12 If the Vice President of the Student Body is the recipient of the charges, then the Grievance Committee Chair shall perform the Vice President's grievance related duties as outlined in Article VII, Section B, Clause 3 in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article VII, Section B.
- Clause 13 If the Vice President of the Student Body is accused of misconduct or negligence of duty, the line of succession applies as outlined in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate. The Student Senate shall elect a Senator or Executive Committee member to serve as the Chairperson at all subsequent meetings concerning the impeachment.
- Clause 14 If the Grievance Chair is the recipient of the charges, then the Grievance Committee will meet and elect a new Chairperson and continue the grievance process.
- Clause 15 All impeachment procedures shall be conducted in closed sessions.
- Section C If a member of Student Senate is found guilty of misconduct or negligence of duty, that member shall be immediately removed from office and shall be ineligible to run for any Student Senate position and student offices on University Council in the future. Executive officers removed from office shall forfeit all forthcoming salary at the time of removal from office.

ARTICLE VIII Successions of Powers

- Section A In the event that the President of the Student Body is determined to be unfit for office per Article I, Section A, Clause 1, or Article VII of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate or resigns from office, the duties shall be assumed by the Vice President of the Student Body.

- Section B In the event of the absence of the Vice President of the Student Body due to assumption of the Presidential duties or if determined to be unfit for office per Article I, Section B, Clause 1 or Article VII of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate, or resignation, a member of the voting body of the Student Senate Executive Committee shall be elected Student Senate Chair *Pro Tempore* of the Student Senate.
- Section C In the event of the absence of the Vice President of the Student Body due to illness or other excusable reason, the Parliamentarian of the Student Senate shall serve as Student Senate Chair *Pro Tempore*. In the event of the absence of the Parliamentarian of the Student Senate for any reason, the Executive Secretary of the Student Senate shall have the power to call to order a regular meeting of the Student Senate and call for an election of a Student Senate Chair *Pro Tempore*. Nominees must be a voting member of the Student Senate Executive Committee and cannot be the President of the Student Body.
- Section D Any remaining duties of the Vice President shall be assumed by the Student Senate Executive Committee per Bylaw VI, Section B, Clause 5.
- Section E In the event that both the Office of the President of the Student Body and Vice President of the Student Body are vacant because of the events described in Article VIII, an emergency meeting of the Student Senate Executive Committee shall be called by the Executive Secretary of the Student Senate where members of the committee will do the following:
- a) Elect a temporary Chair to conduct the emergency meeting. This person cannot be a nominee to fill the offices of the President or Vice President. The Chair shall not have a vote.
 - b) Nominate any Senator or Executive Officer of the Student Senate who meets the requirements to be the President of the Student Body as outlined in Article I, Section A, Clause 1.
 - c) Nominate any Senator or Executive Officer of the Student Senate who meets the requirements to be the Vice President of the Student Body as outlined in Article I, Section B, Clause 1.
 - d) Once all nominations have been made and have been deemed eligible to hold the office they are nominated for the floor shall be closed to nominations.
 - e) A vote shall then be held to fill the Office of President of the Student Body. Voting shall be conducted in accordance with Bylaw VI, Section B, Clause 8 and with the procedures set in Robert's Rules of Order.
 - f) The nominee who received a majority vote of the Student Senate Executive Committee shall hereby become the President of the Student Body for the remainder of the un-expired term of that office. Should no nominee receive a majority vote of the committee the nominee with the least amount of votes

shall be eliminated from consideration and another vote shall be held until one nominee receives a majority vote of the committee.

- g) A vote shall then be held to fill the Office of Vice President of the Student Body. Voting shall be conducted in accordance with Bylaw IV, Section B, Clause 8 and with the procedures set in Robert's Rules of Order.
- h) The nominee who receives a majority vote of the Student Senate Executive Committee shall hereby become the Vice President of the Student Body for the remainder of the un-expired term of that office. Should no nominee receive a majority vote of the committee the nominee with the least amount of votes shall be eliminated from consideration and another vote shall be held until one nominee receives a majority vote of the committee.
- i) The committee shall then adjourn and the President-designate and Vice President-designate shall be sworn in at the beginning of the next meeting of the Student Senate.

ARTICLE IX Amendments to the Constitution

Section A A seven-eighths (7/8) affirmative vote in a single meeting is required to approve amendments to the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate. Student Senators must be given at least seven (7) days written notice prior to voting on proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student senate, and the proposed amendments must be presented and read aloud to Student Senate at least seven (7) days prior to be voted on.

Section B Amendments can also be made by a majority of affirmative votes cast by at least one-third of the student body in a referendum called by the President of the Student Body upon receipt of a petition bearing at least one-sixth of the Student Body.

Section C All amendments shall be validated when ratified by the Provost of the University.

ARTICLE X Non-Discrimination Policy

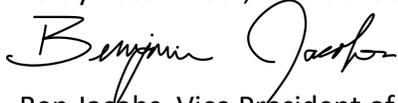
Section A The Valparaiso University Student Senate, consistent with its efforts to foster an environment of respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the University student community, prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment by all students. The Valparaiso University Student Senate reaffirms its commitment to maintaining an academic and working environment, which is fair, respectful, and free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. To these ends the following policy has been adopted: It is the policy of the Valparaiso University Student Senate to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, age, sexual orientation or national origin in administering its various programs and policies.

ARTICLE XI Adoption

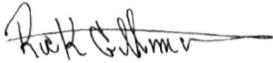
This Constitution shall become operative immediately upon ratification by the Valparaiso University Student Senate and the signatures of the following persons, each representing their appropriate source of power.



Kaitlyn Steinhiser, President of the Student Body



Ben Jacobs, Vice President of the Student Body



Rick Gillman, Interim Provost



Julie DeGraw, Vice President for Student Affairs

Revised: 08/2020