

HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

Spring 2017

Article I

The Student Government Association

- Section 1.** Name: The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association (SGA) of Howard Payne University (HPU).
- Section 2.** Membership: The SGA shall consist of the Executive Officers, Class Senators, Graduate Senator, Supreme Court Justices, and Organization Representatives. Members of the student body who do not hold offices outlined above are considered non-voting members of SGA.
- Section 3.** General Purpose: Serving the Student Body by following the example set in Psalm 86:11: seeking God's will in our decisions, implementing God's plan by encouraging each other, and uniting our hearts for His glory.
- Section 4.** Objectives:
- A. To promote a continuous exchange of ideas and opinions between the students, faculty, and the administration and to keep the student body informed about the activity and progress of the Student Government Association.
 - B. To cooperate with the administration in promoting the regulations and policies of the university.
 - C. Support the HPU Mission Statement: "Howard Payne University is a Christ-centered academic community dedicated to excellence by developing and equipping the whole person for intellectual inquiry, personal and professional integrity, and service to God and humanity." *Approved by the Howard Payne University Board of Trustees, July 27, 2010*

Article II

Organization and Duties

Section 1. The SGA shall have legislative power. It shall be composed of the Executive Officers, Class Senators, Graduate Senator, and Organization Representatives.

Section 2. Executive Officers

A. The executive officers of the SGA shall be: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Chaplain.

B. Office of the President

The President shall:

1. Be an official spokesperson and representative of the Howard Payne University Student Body unless otherwise specified.
2. Preside at all meetings of the SGA according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
3. Recommend such measures to the SGA as shall be judged expedient.
4. Appoint any committee or other officers not provided for in the Constitution with the majority approval of the SGA.
5. Have the power to recommend the dismissal of any committee member.
6. Fill vacancies occurring in appointive positions by the criteria set forth in this Constitution.
7. Cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.
8. Have the power to call special meetings.
9. Be an ex officio member of the SGA committees.
10. Appoint student representatives to University committees and SGA committees.
11. Appoint the Secretary and Chaplain with the approval of the SGA.

12. Prepare the agenda prior to each SGA meeting.
13. Be responsible for the use of various media platforms (including but not limited to social media, short videos, etc.) to communicate to the student body regarding the progress and activities of SGA.
14. Review, at the beginning of each academic year, the electronic HPU SGA History Document with all SGA officers in order to re-evaluate certain policies and improvement ideas.

C. Office of Vice President

The Vice President shall:

1. Perform the duties of the President upon the temporary or permanent absence or disability of that officer.
2. Attend all SGA meetings.
3. Be a voting member of the SGA.
4. Assist the President in coordinating all the facets of the SGA.
5. Act as the SGA Parliamentarian.
6. Serve as coordinator for all activities of the First-Year Class until election of class senators.
7. Assist the President with the use of social media for communication to the student body.

D. Office of Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

1. Keep accurate and complete records of all receipts and expenditures of the SGA in conjunction with the University Business Office and SGA Advisor.
2. Make a weekly report of all receipts and expenditures at the regular meetings of the SGA.
3. Coordinate all fundraising.
4. Attend all SGA meetings.

5. Be a voting member of the SGA.

E. Office of Secretary

The Secretary shall:

1. Call roll at all SGA meetings.
2. Take minutes at all SGA meetings.
3. Type the minutes at least twenty-four hours prior to the next regularly scheduled SGA meeting. Once approved, e-mail minutes to members and organization representatives within 24 hours following approval.
5. Create a simple, bullet-point version of the weekly minutes and work with the website administration, President, and Vice President to post those simplified minutes on the HPU SGA web page and on the SGA Facebook account.
6. Keep a list of all discussed ideas and the relevant discussion content organized by category and year in the electronic HPU SGA History Document.
7. Keep accurate records of each Senator's weekly office hour and will notify the SGA president and each Senator if they miss their required office hour.
8. Attend all SGA meetings.
9. Be a voting member of the SGA.
10. Type and distribute to the SGA all amendments to the Constitution.

F. Office of Chaplain

The Chaplain shall:

1. Lead a devotional at the start of every regular meeting.
2. Take prayer requests and continue conversation with members regarding the specific requests throughout the week.
3. Preside over all meetings with Chaplains of the other organizations

on campus.

4. Attend all SGA meetings.
5. Be a voting member of the SGA.
6. Be appointed by the President of the SGA.

Section 3. Each class shall be represented by four Senators, one of whom shall serve as Presiding Senator.

A. The Presiding Senator shall:

1. Be an official spokesperson and representative of his/her constituent class.
2. Hold meetings with his/her fellow class senators to work on class projects, fundraisers and other class issues as needed.
3. Maintain records from class meetings.
4. Attend all SGA meetings.
5. Be a voting member of the SGA.
6. Serve weekly in the SGA office as scheduled by the SGA President. Office hours shall not exceed two hours per week.

B. The Class Senators (3) shall:

1. Meet with their fellow class officers to work on class projects, fundraisers and other class issues as needed.
2. Attend all SGA meetings.
3. Be voting members of the SGA.
4. Serve weekly in the SGA office as scheduled by the SGA President. Office hours shall not exceed two hours per week.
5. In the event of temporary absence or disability of the Presiding Senator, select a senator to perform the duties of that office.

Section 4. Organization Representatives

- A. All organizations meeting the membership requirements of the SGA shall elect one representative by a plurality vote of all active membership no earlier than four weeks prior to the end of the Spring Semester. This representative may not hold concurrently any other position in SGA.
- B. According to the HPU Student Handbook, “Local Greek” and “Open” organizations must be represented at SGA meetings in accordance with this constitution. It is advisable for “Departmental/ National-Affiliated” organizations to opt in each semester for SGA meeting attendance, though not required. Organization representatives must attend the first SGA meeting of the month (unless otherwise published) and other meetings as directed by the President to remain in good standing with the University. Failure to attend will result in the organization’s censure, revocation of voting privileges, and inability to apply for SGA funds for the remainder of the semester in which the breach occurred.
- C. To be a voting member of the SGA, the organization must meet the following requirements:
 - 1. have an active membership as outlined in the student organization requirements set forth in the current version of the HPU Student Handbook;
 - 2. must be in good standing with the university;
 - 3. must petition the SGA to become a voting member. Once approved and provided the preceding requirements are maintained, franchise is automatically renewed each semester for "Local Greek" and "Open" organizations. “Departmental/ National-Affiliated” organizations must indicate their intent to participate in SGA at each semester’s Inter-Organizational Council meeting. Once a “Departmental/ National-Affiliated” organization has opted in for SGA attendance, it will be subject to the standard SGA attendance requirements for that semester.
- D. A member of the Resident Life Staff shall be in attendance at each weekly meeting of the SGA to represent the opinions and suggestions of the on-campus residents. This individual shall be chosen by the Residence Life Staff.

Section 5. Election, Qualification, and Term of Office for Class Senators

- A. Students running for the Executive Offices of Student Body President, Vice President and Treasurer must have three letters of recommendations from faculty or staff of Howard Payne University turned in to the Student Government Advisor according to the timeline set by SGA. Currently serving officers seeking reelection must apply, but need not submit letters of recommendation.
- B. All class senators shall be elected by plurality vote by the members of their respective classes.
- C. All senators shall maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- D. All senators must be members of the classes they are elected to represent. Classification is based on credit hours completed by the beginning of the fall semester for the academic year in which a senator is elected to serve. (Senators elected to represent the sophomore class for the upcoming academic year must have completed 30 hours by the beginning of the fall semester in which their service begins. Senators elected to represent the junior class must have completed 60 hours. Senators elected to represent the senior class must have completed 90 hours.)
- E. All senators' terms of office shall run for one year beginning no earlier than four weeks prior to the end of the spring semester.
- F. SGA officers and senators shall enter a pledge of service during the final SGA meeting of the academic year preceding the year for which they will serve, with the exception of those offices filled in the fall SGA elections and by appointment. Such officers shall enter the pledge of service upon attending an SGA meeting after their election or appointment.

The pledge shall be administered by the current SGA president as follows:

“As an officer/senator of the Student Government Association, I will do my best to serve the students, faculty, and administration of Howard Payne University. I will lead by example in volunteering my time and energy to enhance the flow of ideas at this university, and will faithfully perform the responsibilities of my office.”

- G. No elected or appointed officer or senator shall concurrently hold positions under this constitution.
- H. If an elected or appointed officer or senator does not return to the university to fulfill his/her elected term, the seat will be declared vacant.
- I. Any officer or senator wishing to resign from office must file a written

resignation with the Student Body President in advance of a regular SGA meeting. The resignation shall be effective at the close of that meeting without further consideration. The SGA does not vote on accepting the resignation.

Section 6 Student Government Association

The Student Government Association shall:

- A. Pass legislation to promote and enhance the general welfare of Howard Payne University.

Legislation proposals must be presented in the form of bills, which must be a typed page that details the specific nature of proposed projects, a suggested timeline, and the names of all officers and senators who initially proposed the bill. The format for bills may be determined by the executive officers and should be saved in the HPU SGA History Document for future reference.

- B. Determine the rules and procedures under which the SGA will operate.
- C. Appropriate SGA funds.
- D. Review and confirm or reject all presidential appointments.
- E. Initiate disciplinary action against any member of the SGA found in violation of this Constitution or related legislative articles.
- F. Govern the administration of all Student Body Elections.
- G. Approve or reject Organizations by a two-thirds vote after the organization has petitioned to become voting members of the SGA.
- H. Make further approval on all new organization's constitutions after approval by the Director of Student Activities.
- I. Decide after one week of study, by a 2/3 vote, whether or not to approve the constitution and by-laws. If approved, the club or organization will be recommended to the Office of Student Life for action. The Office of Student Life must then approve the club or organization and its constitution and by-laws.
- J. Have the power to recommend to the Office of Student Life the revocation of the constitution or charter of any existing club or organization. Such action must be by two-thirds vote.

K. Consider petitions from those organizations not meeting the membership requirements as outlined in the current Howard Payne University Student Handbook, and by two-thirds vote grant provisional active status to those organizations who present a report that includes:

1. A recruiting strategy that details a recruitment timeline and goals;
2. A calendar of proposed events for the academic year;
3. A list of fundraisers that the organization will accomplish.

Such provisional active status shall be valid for one academic year, after which those organizations not meeting the requirement must automatically be recommended for charter revocation to the Office of Student Life without further consideration by the SGA.

L. Abide by other rules and regulations pertaining to clubs and organizations that are outlined in the current Howard Payne University Student Handbook.

M. Appoint from among its membership or the Student Body a historian to be responsible for summarizing the activities of the SGA throughout the academic year and compile a summary report of these activities to be distributed to the students, faculty, and administration of HPU in the week prior to finals week in the spring semester. The historian shall also be responsible to see that SGA events are photographed when possible and that bulletin boards belonging to SGA are maintained.

Section 7. Meetings and Quorum

A. The SGA shall hold regular weekly meetings on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. unless alternatively scheduled to avoid conflicts with occasional University events. A schedule of meetings for the academic year will be published no later than September 1. A minimum of 24 hours prior notification will be required for called meetings.

B. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of elected and appointed officers and senators.

C. All organizations represented in SGA must hold at least one meeting monthly.

Section 8. Election Procedures

A. The SGA will be responsible for conducting the following elections: Homecoming, Non-Academic Awards, and the SGA.

- B. For any election held by the SGA, students will be classified according to total academic credit hours recorded by the HPU Registrar's office.
- C. In the event of a tie, a coin toss, called by the Student Body President, under the supervision of an SGA Advisor, shall be held. The result of the coin toss will be final. In such a case, the use of the coin toss will be kept private. This will apply to Homecoming and Non-Academic Awards elections only; any ties in an SGA election will result in a run-off.

Section 9. Absence Policies

- A. Any member of the SGA who, during the semester, accumulates three unexcused absences will, without notice, have their office declared vacant by the Student Body President.
- B. Two instances, per semester, that a member arrives after the roll call or leaves before adjournment, or any combination of the two, will constitute one unexcused absence.
- C. Each time an SGA member neglects to serve his or her weekly office hour will be considered 1/2 an unexcused absence, and will be in accordance with the above stated attendance policies.
- D. A committee composed of the Student Body President, the Secretary, and an Advisor will decide on an individual, case-by-case basis whether to excuse an absence, tardy, or early departure.
- E. Members are expected to attend every meeting of the SGA. If a representative must be absent for any reason, the secretary must be notified in writing or via e-mail no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.

Section 10. Vacancies of Student Government Association Members

Vacancies occurring after September 10 among the executive officers or class senators, except the office of President which will be filled by the Vice President, shall be filled by appointment. The President of the SGA will recommend the appointment to the Appointments Committee. The recommendation of the Appointments Committee must be approved by two-thirds vote of the SGA. All offices vacant prior to September 1 will be filled by general election at the time of Freshmen Elections.

Section 11. Advisor

The SGA advisors shall be the Dean of Students (or an appointed designee) and another qualified member of the HPU faculty or staff, and they shall exercise all privileges except voting. Said persons shall attend all SGA meetings unless providentially hindered.

Section 12. Parliamentary Authority

In questions of procedure not covered by the SGA Constitution or standing rules, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, will be the final authority.

Article III

The Supreme Court

Section 1. The judicial branch of the SGA is established in order that each student, regardless of position or personal belief, shall have absolute equality before the laws pertaining to this SGA. The judicial branch shall consist of the Supreme Court and any other court deemed necessary by the SGA.

Section 2. The Supreme Court shall consist of the Chief Justice and four Associate Justices. The Supreme Court shall be appointed by the Executive Officers with the confirmation of two-thirds vote of the SGA and approval of the Dean of Students.

Section 3. The Supreme Court shall:

- A. Rule in all cases of controversy arising under this Constitution or pertaining to the rules, regulations, and orders of the SGA, or in which the rights and privileges of the Student Association members are brought into question. This shall include but not be limited to:
 - 1. All Daze of Payne appeals forwarded from the Daze of Payne Committee.
 - 2. All election campaign violations.
 - a. The Court shall have power to levy fines of up to \$25 upon candidates found in violation.
 - b. The Court shall give a reprimand or recommend removal from office to the SGA upon candidates found in violation.
- B. Investigate complaints made against campus organizations as to whether said organizations are in violation of their constitutions. Any valid

complaint found shall be referred to the SGA and the Office of Student Life.

- C. Review, investigate, and adjudicate all cases of disciplinary action forwarded from the Dean of Students or Vice Presidents.
- D. Serve as the student representatives on the Student Life Appeals Committee.

Section 4. Qualifications and Term of Office

A. Chief Justice

- 1. The Chief Justice must be of the highest integrity and have completed sixty hours with a minimum of thirty hours taken at Howard Payne University.
- 2. The Chief Justice's term of office shall run for one year beginning no earlier than four weeks prior to the end of the spring semester.
- 3. The Chief Justice shall have, when appointed and subsequently maintain, a cumulative 2.5 GPA and be a qualified SGA member in order to remain in office.
- 4. No Chief Justice shall concurrently hold positions established under this Constitution.
- 5. The Chief Justice must have been an Associate Justice for at least one year prior to his appointment as Chief Justice; in the event that there is not a returning Associate Justice, the appointment of the Chief Justice will be in accordance with Article III, Sect. 2 of this Constitution.

B. Associate Justices

- 1. The Associate Justices must be of the highest integrity and have completed thirty semester hours with a minimum of fifteen hours taken at Howard Payne University.
- 2. The Associate Justices shall have, when appointed and subsequently maintain, a cumulative 2.5 GPA and be qualified SGA members in order to remain in office.
- 3. The Associate Justices' terms of office shall run for one year beginning no earlier than four weeks prior to the end of the spring semester.

4. No Associate Justice shall concurrently hold positions established under this Constitution.
5. The Associate Justices shall be appointed in accordance with Article III, Sect. 2 of this Constitution.

Section 5. Meeting and Quorums

- A. The Supreme Court shall meet at any time considered necessary by the Chief Justice, the President of the SGA, or the Dean of Students.
- B. A quorum shall consist of three members.
- C. Rules of procedure shall be established by the respective courts providing they do not conflict with the SGA Constitution.

Section 6. Resignation, Reprimand, Suspension, and Removal

- A. Any Chief Justice or Associate Justice wishing to resign from office must file a written resignation with the SGA President in advance of a regular SGA session. The resignation shall be effective at the close of that meeting without further consideration. The SGA does not vote on accepting the resignation.
- B. All members of the Supreme Court are subject to reprimand, suspension, and removal upon either a two-thirds vote of the SGA, by petition of twenty-five percent of the student body, or by ineligibility. Any such action must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the SGA. A reprimand is a verbal or written notice of formal reproof. A suspension is the temporary removal from the SGA sessions, committees, and functions.
- C. Within two weeks of the date of suspension, a special vote will be called by the SGA to determine whether the suspended member will be reinstated or removed from office. A removal decision will require a three-fourths vote of the SGA.
- D. Failure to return to Howard Payne University creates a vacancy.

Section 7. Vacancies

- A. A vacancy occurring in the office of Chief Justice shall be filled by appointment of the SGA President and must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the SGA and the Dean of Students.
- B. A vacancy occurring in the office of Associate Justice shall be filled by

appointment of the Chief Justice. The recommendation of the Chief Justice must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the SGA and the Dean of Students.

Section 8. Advisor

The Supreme Court shall be advised by one or both of the SGA advisors. The advisor must be in attendance before any session of the Supreme Court may begin.

Article IV

Committees

Section 1. Student Government Association Committees

SGA Committees are appointed by the Student Body President with the aid of the executive officers.

- A. Homecoming/ Non-Academic Awards will plan and carry out all Homecoming activities in conjunction with the Alumni Relations office. Consisting of Sophomore Class Senators, they will also plan and coordinate the non-academic awards assembly.
- B. Elections/ Public Relations will conduct, supervise, and tally ballots of all campus elections for position and honor. Consisting of Junior Class Senators, this committee will also pursue all matters and actions to provide awareness to the student body of all activities of the SGA.
- C. Dining Services will work with the food service company and all involved parties for the betterment of food quality to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved and shall be comprised of First-Year Class Senators.
- D. Special Events will manage all other functions not provided for in other committees. This committee will consist of Senior Class Senators.
- E. Finance will handle any and all affairs of financial matters pertaining to the Student Government Association. It is composed of the Treasurer, all Class Presiding Senators, and the Vice President. It is chaired by the Treasurer of the Student Government Association.
- F. Committee on Future Events (COFE) will be responsible for making a list of all planned future events for which SGA is responsible for both the current academic year and the next academic year, for reminding SGA about the planned events, and for working with administration at the end

of each semester to make sure all planned future events are on the HPU events calendar. COFE will consist of Junior Class Senators.

- G. All other necessary committees will be created and members appointed on an as-needed basis, and will then be dissolved when their committee objective has been achieved.”

Section 2. Intra-Student Government Association Committees

These committees are appointed by the Student Body President as needed.

- A. Academic Affairs will handle any and all affairs of a curricular and scholastic matter, which includes Student-Administration interaction. Composed of four members of the Student Government Association, appointed by the President, upon approval of Executive Officers.
- B. Constitution and By-Laws will pursue all matters and questions pertaining to the Student Government Association constitution and standing rules or club organization’s constitutions and by-laws. Composed of four members of the Student Government Association, appointed by the President, upon approval of the Executive Officers. It is chaired by the Vice President.
- C. Appointments will interview, review, and recommend approval or disapproval of all Student Government Association presidential appointments. Composed of three members of the Student Government Association, appointed by the President, upon approval of the Executive Officers.
- D. Greek Committee will be made up of the organizational representatives from each of the fraternities/sororities on campus. This committee will plan activities (e.g. Rush) and deal with issues of concern pertaining to their organizations.
- E. Organization Review will review the status of organizations at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. It is chaired by the SGA Secretary.

Article V

Authority

This Constitution, and the legislation made in pursuance thereof, shall be supreme.

Article VI

Amendments and Ratification

- Section 1.** Ratification of or amendments to this Constitution may be proposed either by a two-thirds vote of the Student Government Association or by a petition of no less than twenty-five percent of the Student Body. Such ratification or amendments will then take effect when ratified by a three-fourths vote of the Student Government Association.
- Section 2.** Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be made public no less than one week prior to the ratification election.
- Section 3.** Neither ratification of nor amendments to this Constitution shall affect those holding office for the remainder of the academic year at the time of passage.