



Student Government Association Constitution

Revised September 6, 2013

A. Preamble

We, the students of Lawson State Community College in order to promote student leadership, growth and development; to serve as the voice of the student body at our multi-campus institution; to coordinate beneficial student activities on both campuses which promote student leadership, boosting morale, health and wellness, cultural diversity, and community service; do hereby establish this Student Government Association constitution.

ARTICLE I. AUTHORITY, MASCOT, COLORS, PURPOSES, MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Authority** – The authority of the Student Government Association, herein referred to as the SGA, and Student Body Constitution is derived from delegation by the President of the College and from the student body of the College and shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the statutes of Lawson State Community College; the State Board of Education and the State of Alabama.

Section 2. **Mascot** – Cougar

Section 3. **Colors** – Navy and Gold

Section 4. **Purpose** – The purpose of this organization shall be (a) to serve and represent students at our multi-campus institution, (b) to serve and work toward the betterment of our multi-campus institution, (c) to provide sound democratic student government, (d) to unify the students, faculty and administrative staff, (e) to promote student leadership, growth, and development (f) to promote a sense of loyalty and school spirit at Lawson State Community College, (g) to promote community service, (h) to boost morale, (i) to promote health and wellness, and (j) to promote cultural diversity.

Section 5. **Membership**- All students registered for courses at Lawson State Community College are members of the student body with the right to vote in all elections of officers and referendums. Freshman students will vote for Freshman class officers. Sophomore students will vote for Sophomore class officers. The entire student body will vote for SGA officers. The student body has the right to attend meetings of the association with privileges of the floor. Furthermore, all students shall be entitled to hold office within the restrictions found in this constitution.

Section 6. The SGA shall have sole authority to act in the name of the student body as a whole and all students shall be subject to the rules and regulations in this Constitution, its amendments, and legislation pursuant thereto.

ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Section 1. ***Branches*** – The SGA consists of three branches: The Executive, Legislative, and Judicial.

Section 2. The Executive Branch consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain and the President of Freshman and Sophomore classes. Responsibilities of this branch include the proposal of legislation to the legislative branch (Senate) for its deliberation and to take action on recommended policies and procedures made by the Senate. The Executive Branch must meet at least once per month when school is in session with the SGA advisors in attendance. Vacancies occurring in this Branch during a term will be filled by nominated and qualified elected SGA members through an internal SGA vote. In the event there is no candidate running for a position the SGA will hold internal elections and vote to fill vacant positions as representatives of the student body, with the approval of the SGA Advisors, Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of Students, and with the approval of 2/3 vote by the Senate. The Vice President will assume the presidency in the case of a vacancy in the position of President.

Section 3. The Legislative Branch consists of the SGA Senate. The Senate shall have 16 members, 4 from the Freshman class on the Bessemer campus, 4 from the Freshman class on the Birmingham campus, 4 from the Sophomore Class on the Bessemer campus, 4 from the Sophomore Class on the Birmingham campus. Senators must be regularly enrolled students in good standing. Senators shall be nominated and elected by the SGA, representatives of the student body, through internal elections.

Senate Election

Sophomore senators will be elected in the annual spring elections from the current Freshman class. Freshman Senators will be elected in the annual fall elections. Senate vacancies occurring after the official spring or fall elections shall be filled by SGA presidential appointment with approval of 2/3 of the Senate, SGA Advisors, Dean of Students, and Assistant Dean of Students. Duties of the Senate are to act on items proposed by the Executive Branch and any other items that originate within the Senate. The presiding officer of the Senate is the President of the SGA. The SGA secretary shall be elected by the student body. The Senate will have four standing committees of four members each from the Birmingham campus and the Bessemer campus. No Senator can serve on more than one standing committee. The names and duties of the standing committees are as follows:

- **Program and Activities Committee** – The responsibility of this committee is to plan, organize, finance from the SGA budget, and implement a balanced program of activities that contribute to the overall development of Lawson State Community College students. These activities must promote student leadership, boosting morale, health and wellness, cultural diversity, and community service and other activities that may contribute to the growth and development of students.

- **Finance Committee** – The responsibility of this committee is to develop a budget for the SGA, which the approval process is as follows: The senate creates then submits the budget to the SGA President for review and approval, once approved by the SGA President the final approval is by the Dean of Students and the Assistant Dean of Students.
- **Facilities and Service Committee** – The responsibility of this committee is to explore and recommend facilities and services for the various activities of SGA and assist in the implementation of these activities by reserving certain areas needed for events, requesting equipment needed, assisting with set-up, clean-up, and flow of activities.
- **Publications Committee** – It shall be the responsibility of this committee to publicize the programs and activities of the SGA, including but not limited to creating flyers, which have to get approved by the SGA Advisors, getting publications printed and posted, removing publications when events are complete.

The Senate shall utilize both the Birmingham and Bessemer campuses to conduct all SGA meetings. Meetings will be held every third Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. SGA advisors and the President must be present at all SGA meetings. No business may be transacted by the Senate without a quorum. A quorum shall consist of ten senators. In cases of tie votes in the Senate, the Presiding officer may vote to break the tie. Otherwise, the presiding officer cannot vote.

Conflict of Interest

The organization shall not subject the institution to any contractual arrangements that involves a personal concern of any elected member of the SGA.

Section 4. ***The Judicial Branch-*** The Judicial Branch of the SGA consist of one Chief Justice and four Associate Justices. The responsibility of this branch is to rule on the constitutionality of any matter of activity of, by, or within the SGA, that is properly brought before it. It is the final authority on matters of constitutionality within the SGA. Justices are selected in the following manner: The Presidents of the freshman and sophomore classes shall each present a list of five nominees for the Judicial Branch, to the President of the SGA. From the nominees, the President of the SGA will nominate a chief justice and four associate justices to the Senate. Each Justice must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Senate. Justices shall not be officers in any other organization in the college. Vacancies in the Judicial Branch will be filled in the same manner as the original justices were selected. The Judiciary will act only on matters properly brought before it. All petitions (request for ruling) must be presented in writing. Any student may request a ruling by presenting his/her request signed by a minimum of twenty students. Ay duly elected member of the Executive or Legislative Branches may individually request a ruling by the Judiciary when the request is presented in writing. The Chief Justice will appoint a Secretary for the Judiciary who will keep records of all meetings. The Secretary will also see that a copy of all petitions (request for ruling) and decisions rendered by the Judiciary are returned to the petitioners and a copy deposited with the Secretary of the SGA.

ARTICLE III: ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE SGA

Section 1. Elected Officers of the SGA

- A. President
- B. Vice President
- C. Secretary
- D. Treasurer
- E. Chaplain

Section 2. ***Election of Officers***- The election of SGA officers shall be held during the spring semester or in the fall semester. Elections of Freshman Senators will be held during the fall semester. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The person receiving the largest number of votes will be elected regardless of the number of candidates running for office. In case of a tie it will be the decision of the SGA Senate by 2/3 vote.

Section 3. ***Qualifications of Officers***- Candidates for President must be currently enrolled at Lawson State Community College, have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and have completed two semesters. Remaining SGA Officers and Sophomore Class Officers must be currently enrolled at Lawson State Community College and have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better. The student candidate must not have a disciplinary record. This must be confirmed by the Dean of Students.

Section 4. ***Nominations and Election of Officers***- A student desiring to become a nominee for an office must obtain and complete a student election application from the Office of Student Services. When it has been verified that the student is qualified for nomination the Dean of Students will advise the student that this/her name will be placed on the ballot provided the student is still in good standing on the day of the election. The student candidate must not have a disciplinary record. This must be confirmed by the Dean of Students.

Section 5. ***Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities of Elected Officers.***

- A. President
 - (a) To preside at all meetings, to institute parliamentary procedure for all the Executive Board meetings
 - (b) To cooperate and coordinate all SGA activities with the SGA Advisors
 - (c) To take under advisement policies and actions approved by the Senate and take appropriate action on them
 - (d) To have the power to veto which may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Senate
 - (e) To call special meetings of the Senate, the President must obtain approval for all meetings from the Dean of Students or designees

- (f) To represent and counsel with students on matters concerning student's actions and those issues pertaining to students as represented within the framework of the SGA
- B. Vice President
 - (a) To assume all responsibilities of the office in the absence of the president
 - (b) To conduct a special meeting of the Senate in the absence of the president after obtaining proper authorization
 - (c) To serve as liaison to other campus clubs and organizations as delegated by the president, without authority over them
 - (d) To become president of the SGA should the president at any time become unable to perform his/her duties
 - (e) To fulfill and perform any duties or responsibilities as delegated by the president
- C. Secretary
 - (a) To maintain all official minutes and records of the SGA
 - (b) To publicize records of SGA to students at authorized places on the campus
 - (c) To assist the president and vice president of the SGA with all official correspondence and communications
 - (d) To present to SGA, the SGA advisors, and the Dean of Students minutes and records of all SGA meetings which are held
 - (e) To assist and cooperate with the President of the SGA
- D. Treasurer
 - (a) To maintain as a public record, an accurate account of all organization funds and to maintain all financial correspondence of the organization.
 - (b) To prepare within the Finance Committee a budget of projected revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year.
 - (c) To assist in all other areas related to financial matters as deemed necessary by the Executive Branch to meet the organization's purposes.
- E. Chaplain
 - (a) To assist the Executive Board in meetings and SGA functions as outlined by the Executive Board.

Terms of Office – All elected officials of the Executive Branch shall assume office at the beginning of the summer semester and shall serve until the end of the subsequent spring semester. No elected officer can succeed himself in any subsequent year. Elected officers who do not enroll in classes during the summer semester will assume office at the beginning of the

fall semester. In the case of a tie, it will be the decision of the SGA to vote. The majority will break the tie.

ARTICLE IV: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1. **Reason and procedures for removal** - Any elected or appointed official of the SGA may be removed from office for the following reasons:

- A. Violation of the constitution. Any student may present an allegation of violation of the constitution by an officer of the SGA. The procedure is that:
 - (a) The allegation must be presented in writing to the presiding officer of the Senate and must contain the unduplicated signatures of twenty presently enrolled students.
 - (b) The person subject to removal shall be notified in writing by the presiding officer of the Senate no later than one calendar week prior to the meeting of the Senate to consider the allegation. The person charged must be present at the Senate to respond to the allegations. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is required to sustain an allegation and subsequent removal of the person from office. An officer may, if he/she desires, appeal the action of the Senate to the Judiciary for final disposition.
 - (c) A student may be removed from office if, and when placed on disciplinary probation, suspension or dismissal as a result of violations of student conduct code as spelled out in the Student Handbook.
 - (d) A student may be removed from SGA Office if, and when, placed on academic probation.
 - (e) A student could be removed from SGA Office if, there are excessive absences from scheduled meetings or otherwise failure to properly participate in SGA activities. Three absences from scheduled meetings without valid excuses are considered to be excessive.

ARTICLE V. STUDENT REDRESS

Section 1. Individual Student Participation – Any student who wishes to express his views to any of the three branches of the SGA may do so at meetings of the appropriate body; however, the student should first consult with the presiding officer of that Branch regarding the particulars he/she intends to discuss. The presiding officer shall not recognize the student's request during a meeting unless the aforementioned is followed.

ARTICLE VI. METHOD OF AMENDMENT

- Section 1. All amendments to this constitution must be proposed by the following methods:
 - A. Constitutional Convention
 - B. A petition presented in writing to the President of the Student Government Association carrying the signatures of 2/3 percent of the membership of the SGA
- Section 2. Proposed amendments to this constitution must be posted or published in the College's official means of communication on which a vote is taken by members of the SGA in the convention.
- Section 3. Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be adopted by a 2/3 vote of the students voting in the election, provided the ballots are cast at least 75 percent of the membership of the SGA.
- Section 4. All proposed amendments to this constitution must be approved by the President of Lawson State Community College.

I have read and understand the Lawson State Community College Student Government Association (SGA) Constitution. I understand that I must abide by the rules and regulations of this Constitution in order to remain in office. My signature below gives my permission to remove me from office in the event I do not abide by the rules of this SGA Constitution.

Print

Date

Signature