

Houston Community College - Southwest



Constitution and By Laws

Student Government Association

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Mission Statement

We, the Houston Community College-Southwest Student Government, are a diverse and inclusive assembly of students who are committed to representing the student body of Houston Community College-Southwest. Through tenacity, integrity, and honesty, this assembly shall be an advocate for those issues that promote a healthy learning environment; actively involve Houston Community College-Southwest students with each other and their community; facilitate and strengthen communication between the student body, faculty, and staff of Houston Community College-Southwest; and positively affect both the ecological and collegiate environment of Houston Community College-Southwest.

ARTICLE I – Student Rights and Responsibilities

Section 1: *Enumeration of Rights*

- A. This Constitution hereby declares the following to be basic, inalienable rights of the Houston Community College–Southwest (hereafter called “HCC-SW”) student body:
- B. The student body has the right to delegate to the Houston Community College-Southwest Student Government (hereafter called “HCC-SW SGA”) those functions, powers, and authorities described in its Constitution and By-Laws. This Constitution and its By-Laws shall align with all applicable college policies and procedures.
- C. The student body has the right to be represented on all student committees that governs or affects the student body.
- D. The right of freedom from discrimination by any student organization of HCC-SW on basis of race, ethnicity, skin color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, marital status, age, or disability.

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Section 2: Responsibility

Each student upon coming to Houston Community College accepts college citizenship involving self-government under the *Honor Code*, which, as defined by the Student Government Association, means that:

1. Each student is expected to be honest and truthful at all times.
2. Each student is personally responsible for his/her own conduct, for his/ her obligation to the college community, and for informing himself/herself of and abiding by the college regulations. If a student breaks a regulation, he/she is expected to correct his/her offense by reporting himself/herself to the proper authority, in an academic matter, to the instructor concerned and in a student government matter, to the advisor of the student government association.
3. Each student is responsible for seeing that the Honor Code is carried out at all times. If he/she is aware of a violation by another student, he/she should call this matter to the attention of that student as a violation of his/her responsibility to the college community.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of Student Government Association shall be to ensure, in cooperation with the administration, the general welfare of the student body:

1. To promote by example and precept scholarship, citizenship, and integrity.
2. To act as a liaison between students, and faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees.
3. To serve as the official advocate of the students.
4. To receive and investigate student grievances.
5. To encourage students to become active participants in self-governance.
6. Provide learning and leadership opportunities for its members through seminars and training programs.

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ARTICLE III – Membership

The membership of the student body shall consist of all students who are officially enrolled in credit-bearing courses and have paid, by any means, their student activity fees at HCC-SW, and have a 2.0 GPA. Membership rights include, but are not limited to, the right to vote in student elections and the right to serve on HCC-SW SGA - so long as all requirements stated in ARTICLE VI are met.

ARTICLE IV - Executive Board

Section 1: *Function*

- A. The SGA Executive Board shall put into effect such changes in the constitution and regulations of the Association, in consultation with the advisor, as have been approved by the Student Life Coordinator.
- B. The SGA Executive Board shall receive and investigate grievances, discuss problems arising within the SGA, propose legislation, and make other recommendations and suggestions for appropriate action to the proper board.
- C. It shall be the function of the SGA Executive Board to educate the student body concerning the form, function, and regulations of the Student Government Association.
- D. If deemed necessary, upon request from the president/chair, advisor, highest presiding officer of an organization, it will be the function of the SGA Executive Board to require the holder of any elected office who has not performed his/her duties as outlined in his/her constitution, job description, or the Code of Ethics for Student Leaders to withdraw from the elected office. The SGA Executive Board may call a hearing while considering a matter of this nature. When voting on a matter of this nature, the SGA Executive Board must have quorum, and the vote will require a two-thirds majority.

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Section 2: *Members of the Executive Board and their Duties*

A. President

It shall be the duty of the president to prepare an agenda and preside over all Executive Board meetings, General Assembly and/or special meetings of this Association. Announce meeting dates. Call all meetings of this Association to order. Call all special meetings. Appoint committee members and their chairpersons. Make interim appointments as needed with the approval of the Executive Board. Sign all requisitions with the advisors of this Association. Sign all approved contracts with the advisor. Serve as ex-officio member without voting privileges on all committees. Vote in case of a tie. Enforce and uphold the provisions of the *Constitution*, Bylaws, and the Standing Rules of this Association and ensure that all members adhere to the same. Discipline wayward individuals or groups of this Association, utilizing the means provided in these Bylaws. Communicate the needs and/or desires of this Association, and its members to the administration and/or Board of Trustees of this college. Serve as Chief spokesperson of this Association. Manage the leadership development of the Association. The President shall perform other duties as outlined by his/her contract.

B. Vice President

It shall be the duty of the vice president to assume the duties of the office of the President in the event of the President's absence, disabilities, impeachment, or death. Act as chief students' liaison of this Association and communicate the needs and/or desires of the student body to the President, Executive Board, and the membership of this Association. Act as chief research, surveyor of this Association, and gather all Special information or facts deemed necessary by the President, Executive Board, or the members of this Association. Act as chief analyst of this Association, to determine the feasibility of proposed programs or activities of the association, when the President, the Executive Board, and the members of this Association deem such analysis necessary. Act as chief program coordinator of this Association, and coordinate all the necessary elements of approved proposals and activities in which the association will participate or be

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involved in. The Vice President shall perform other duties as outlined by his/her contract.

C. Secretary

It shall be the duty of the secretary to keep accurate records for the association including a roll call, officers, and active members present at each meeting. Keep accurate minutes of all Executive Board meetings, general assemble meetings, and any special meetings. Keep in his or her possession the originals of said records, and distribute two identical sets of records as follows: one set to the President, and one set to the advisor. Act as chief corresponding agent for the Association. Be responsible for the final content of all publications, announcements, invitations, thank you letters, and advertisements for the association including proofing all information submitted by the members. Assist the President in the preparation of all agendas. Make sure all notices are posted in a timely manner. The secretary shall perform other duties as outlined by his/her contract.

D. Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to maintain accurate records of all monies coming and being disbursed by the association. Prepare a per semester budget, and submit it to the Executive Board, and upon approval of the board, submit the same to the active members for approval. Act as chief economic advisor of the association and advise the Executive Board and members on economic and/or financial matters, as far as this is possible, when requested to do so, prepare and submit financial statement to Student Life Office each semester. The treasurer shall perform other duties as outlined by his/her contract.

E. Parliamentarian

It shall be the duty of the parliamentarian to act as chief advisor to the President on all questions of parliamentary procedure. Have a functional knowledge of parliamentary Procedure. Have functional knowledge of policies and procedures of this college, especially those policies that pertain to students, Student Government *Constitution* and By-Laws, and the standing rules of the association. Make sure that the Constitution and Bylaws are current with HCCS policies.

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Update if necessary and submit any changes to the Student Life Office. Maintain a position of impartiality. The parliamentarian shall perform other duties as outlined by his/her contract.

F. Advisor

It shall be the duty of the advisor to advise the Student Body and the Executive Board on all business before them and to serve as a non-voting member (see other duties listed in his/her contract)

ARTICLE V – Meeting

Section 1: General Assembly Meetings

The Student Government Association shall meet during the fall and Spring Semesters at least once every month with the exception of finals week. A meeting can be canceled or rescheduled, by a two-thirds vote at a prior meeting. Meetings may be canceled or rescheduled no more than twice per month. Meetings shall be conducted based upon Robert's Rules of Order and other accepted parliamentary procedures (such as, dismissing meetings after an hour, remaining silent while others speak, and approving the previous week's minutes). The Secretary shall record minutes of each Assembly Meeting, including a record of attendance. The President shall provide a meeting agenda for Assembly Meetings and shall follow and enforce parliamentary procedure during the meeting. The President shall post the agenda by 9 AM of the day of an Assembly Meeting. All Assembly Meetings shall be open unless designated as closed by a two-third majority vote of the Student Body members, or unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or By-Laws.

Section 2: Executive Board Meetings

SGA officers must meet at least once a month with the Primary Advisor to discuss agenda items, disciplinary action, future events, issues, and concerns (hereafter called the "Executive Board Meeting").

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Section 3: *Special Meetings*

The President, a HCC-SW student, faculty member, staff member, or administrator may call special meetings. The request must be written and given to the president at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 4: *Regular Attendance*

Each Student Government Association officer will be allowed one excused and one unexcused absence from the General Assembly Meeting per semester, after which they are immediately removed from HCC-SW SGA. Non-officers are allowed up to three absences from General Assembly Meetings during a semester, after which they are immediately removed from the HCC-SW SGA. Members who are more than ten minutes late for any meeting are considered tardy. Two instances of tardiness in one semester equals one absence. This attendance policy shall apply to regularly scheduled meetings and Student Government Association sponsored functions.

Section 5: *Special Attendance*

Any member of the HCC-SW community may attend any meeting of the Government Association except in cases when the president deems the meeting closed. Any member of the HCC-SW community who wishes to address the Association during the business portion of the meeting must notify the president at least two days before the meeting so that he or she may be added to the agenda. The Student Government Association may request the special appearance of designated students, faculty, staff, or administrators when appropriate to the agenda

Section 6: *Quorum*

Two-thirds of the voting members shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise voted on.

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ARTICLE VI – Elections

Section 1: *Regulations and Qualifications*

All members of the Student Government Association must be students in good standing both academically and in matters of student conduct. The Student Life Office will review all candidates' academic records prior to the campaign period. Candidates will be notified immediately should they not be eligible to run for office. Please contact the Advisor(s) to the Student Government Association should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter. This document is to be viewed and interpreted in plain and general terms. In the event a provision is unclear or ambiguous, this document should serve the general purpose of the provision or its opposite, which the provision is meant to resolve, and apply that purpose or remedy to the instant circumstance.

Section 2: *Candidates Eligibility*

- A. SGA Executive Officers: Must hold a 2.5 cumulative G.P.A. and maintain the same throughout his/her tenure of office, the candidate must have attended Houston Community College Southwest and was an SGA member the Previous semester prior to election, must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours and able to serve the entire term. Some leadership experience, preferably in SGA or a student officer's position. A person elected into office, whose GPA falls below the stipulated GPA and/or who is placed on academic probation for one semester, will relinquish all powers and privileges of that office. This will also prohibit them from receiving the selected compensation for their term in office.
- B. Candidates must provide the following to the Primary Advisor at least four weeks prior to the election:
 1. A letter of recommendation from a current, full-time HCC-SW faculty or staff member.
 2. A letter of intent stating why the candidate wishes to serve as an officer and what he or she would like to accomplish.

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Section 3: *Election of Officers*

Elections for officers will be held on the first week of April but the candidates will not hold office until the start of the fall semester. A true majority (50% + 1) of the voting population of HCC-SW during the spring shall elect the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian. Should any one candidate fail to attain a true majority (50% + 1) of the voting student body there shall be a run-off election between the two candidates that received the largest number of votes.

ARTICLE VII – Resignation, Removal and Vacancies

Section 1: *Vacancies*

The President shall appoint new officers with the approval from a two-thirds majority of the executive board when an office becomes vacant. Current officers are not eligible to fill these vacancies. An office may be considered vacant when:

1. An officer is no longer a student of the College
2. An officer is removed from office
3. An officer resigns from the office

In the event that the office of the President becomes vacant, the Vice President becomes President. In the event that both offices become vacant, the Secretary assumes the chair and calls for an election to fill those offices.

Section 2: *Removal of an Officer or Member*

A member will be immediately removed from the membership if they fail to meet the following: (see Article VIII (D) for a more extensive list)

1. Membership in the student body
2. GPA falls below the stipulated GPA and/or who is placed on academic probation
3. Attendance requirements for General Assembly Meetings

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Section 2: *Resignation of an Officer*

An officer wishing to resign his/her position must give a written two-week notice to the Primary Advisor.

ARTICLE VIII – Discipline

- A. A member may initiate the act of bringing charges against any other member by presenting his/her complaint to the Executive Board Meeting.
 - 1. Positive solutions outside of the disciplinary process are highly encouraged.
- B. In the case of irresolvable issues, the accuser shall work with an officer or Advisor to draft a letter describing the offense.
 - 1. This act shall not be secret and must be communicated through the membership once initiated.
 - 2. This letter shall be provided to the President as an agenda item for the next General Assembly Meeting.
- C. Once the complaint has been presented to the membership in a General Assembly Meeting, a hearing may be initiated by a two-thirds vote of the members present.
- D. At the agreement of SGA officers, the Primary Advisor, and the Student Life Coordinator, discipline, up to and including immediate removal from SGA, may occur under the following example conditions:
 - 1. Negligence
 - 2. Incompetence
 - 3. Misappropriation of funds
 - 4. Violations of the Constitution or By-Laws
 - 5. Conduct unbecoming of a member of SGA
 - 6. Failure to follow HCC-SW rule/regulations

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ARTICLE IX – Finance

- A. SGA shall submit a fund request to the College Activity Board (CAB) for its operating expenses, and any other funding it may need.
- B. The President, Treasurer, and Advisor must approve any disbursement of funds.
- C. Expenditures over two hundred (\$200.00) must be approved by a majority at a General meeting.

ARTICLE X – Committees

The president will appoint all committees. To make any committee a standing committee requires a majority vote of those attending a general meeting.

Section 1: *Selection Committee*

It shall be the function of the Selection Committee to select through an application/interview process all SGA Executive Board office not filled during campus-wide elections. The Selection Committee shall be comprised of the current Student Government Association president, the newly elected Student Government Association president, the student who currently holds the office being appointed, and the Student Government Association Executive Board Advisor

Section 2: *Ad-hoc Subcommittees*

Ad-hoc subcommittees may be appointed at the discretion of the president to study any campus concern and report their results to the Executive Board. Members from the Executive Board and the HCC-SW student body may be appointed by the president to serve on special subcommittees.

Section 3: *Duties*

It shall be the duty of all student representatives to attend all meetings of their respective committees and to send the reports to the SGA president within one week of the meeting.

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ARTICLE XI - Advisor

The Advisor of the SGA shall be a faculty or staff member appointed to serve as co-advisor with the Student Life Coordinator as advisor. The Advisor shall advise on all procedures and shall provide information and guidance to the members and the Executive Board. The Primary advisor shall be responsible for:

- A. Overseeing the completion and submission of all required college forms in the process of conducting HCC-SW SGA activities and business, including (but not limited to) SGA contract documentation, renewal paperwork, and other official function forms.
- B. Guidance of activities, training and orientation of members, group mission, project guidelines and goals, coordination of events, budget development and monitoring, selection of members, election of officers, and procedural questions within meetings.
- C. At least one advisor shall be present at each official event sponsored by SGA. All advisors shall act on behalf of the college administration.

ARTICLE XII – Amendments

Any member of the HCC-SW community as well as the SGA Executive Board may propose amendments to the SGA Constitution. This article may be amended at any regular meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote of those present provided the amendment is submitted to the President at a prior meeting.

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ARTICLE XIII - Ratification

Upon Ratification by a two-thirds vote of the members present, this Constitution shall become the superior document of the Houston Community College Southwest Student Government Association (HCCS-SW SGA). The Ratification will also take place upon the signatures of all members voting on this document.

ARTICLE XIV - Affiliations

- A. State any affiliations with local, state, regional, or national organizations.
- B. State adherence of any rules by a sport's governing body.