

**Bylaws of the Student Government Association  
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Article I. Preamble**

All members of the Student Government Association (SGA) of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) shall abide by the herein described bylaws. A violation, or failure to perform the duties outlined in this document is subject to removal from office. Removal may also happen by use of Articles of Impeachment, as outlined in **The Constitution of the Student Government Association of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.**

**Article II. Advisors**

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Advisors to: be non-voting members of SGA, aid and advice officers and legislative bodies of SGA, aid in providing beneficial relations between administrators and students, and act as representatives at SGA functions. The Dean of Students, or designee, shall act as the official university account manager for SGA funds.

**Article III. Governing Documents**

- Section 3.01 The following shall be considered the governing documents of UTRGV SGA:
- (a) The Constitution of the Student Government Association of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (referred to in this document as the SGA Constitution).
  - (b) The Bylaws of the Student Government Association (referred to in this document as the bylaws).
  - (c) The Rules and Procedures of UTRGV SGA (referred to in this document as "UTRGV R&P".)

**Article IV. Legislative Bylaws**

- Section 4.01 DEFINITIONS. The following shall be the definitions as used in this article, unless otherwise specified:
- (a) Member: a member of the Legislative Branch that has taken the Oath of Office as outlined in the **SGA Constitution**.
  - (b) Email: official university issued student electronic mail.
  - (c) Mandatory event/meeting: Student Senate meetings, meetings of committees the member is officially appointed to, meetings of the SGA Advisory Council, any planned retreats of SGA, or any event that has been deemed mandatory by the Advisory Council. Events or meetings called less than three (3) days before they take place are not mandatory.
  - (d) Unexcused absence: type of absence members receive when they fail to attend any mandatory event or meeting without prior approval of their corresponding officer as outlined in the SGA governing documents.
  - (e) Excused absence: absence to a mandatory event for which a member receives no penalty.
- Section 4.02 Members shall attend all mandatory events or meetings of the Student Senate or of SGA.
- Section 4.03 The SGA Advisory Council shall be the only committee or council that can deem an event mandatory.
- (a) A vote of a simple majority shall make an event mandatory.
  - (b) The Student Senate as a whole shall reserve the right to appeal a decision of the Advisory Council to make an event mandatory at the meeting immediately preceding the announcement.

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- Section 4.04 The sergeant-at-arms shall keep a permanent record of the Student Senate roll attendance.
- Section 4.05 The sergeant-at-arms shall hold absolute discretion in the Student Senate on awarded excused absences with the exception of Section 4.06 of these bylaws.
- Section 4.06 The sergeant-at-arms shall decide, based on the statutes provided in this section, whether the absence of a member is excused or unexcused. The following shall constitute an excused absence:
- (a) Death, accident, or illness in the family.
  - (b) Personal illness or accident.
  - (c) Religious holy days as per Texas Education Code 51.911 and Atheist holidays.
  - (d) Official SGA business.
  - (e) Official university business, excluding employment.
  - (f) Officially scheduled UTRGV academic coursework.
  - (g) Other circumstances as deemed valid or acceptable by the sergeant-at-arms.
- Section 4.07 If the sergeant at arms is going to miss a mandatory event or meeting, he or she shall ask for an excused absence from the chair of the senate. All statutes explaining the duties and discretion of the sergeant-at-arms in the SGA governing documents apply to the chair of the senate shall this circumstance arise.
- Section 4.08 Failure to provide an excuse to the sergeant-at-arms shall constitute in issuance of an unexcused absence.
- Section 4.09 A member that accumulates a total of three (3) unexcused absences in one semester, or a total of four (4) unexcused absences during the present session shall be removed, and a vacancy shall occur. Appeals shall be allowed if specified in the SGA R&P.
- Section 4.10 **STANDING COMMITTEES.** All student senators and campus representatives, with the exception of the Chair of the Student Senate, shall serve in, and be voting members of at least one (1), but no more than two (2) standing committees.
- (a) The names of the standing committees, along with their responsibilities, shall be stated in the UTRGV SGA Policies and Procedures.
  - (b) All standing committees shall meet at least once per month.
  - (c) Unless otherwise stated in any UTRGV SGA governing document, all standing committee business shall be approved by a simple majority of the members present and voting.
  - (d) All actions approved by a committee shall be taken to the floor of the Student Senate before becoming an official statute of the Student Senate, unless otherwise stated in the SGA Governing Documents.
  - (e) Each standing committee shall have one (1) chairperson, and one (1) secretary.
  - (f) The chair of the senate, with approval of a simple majority of the Student Senators present and voting, must appoint one (1) Student Senator to serve as chair of each standing committee. Co-chairs shall not be allowed under any circumstance.

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- (g) The chair of the committee shall appoint one (1) student senator to serve secretary of the committee with approval of simple majority of the appointed committee members. Co-secretaries shall not be allowed under any circumstance.
- (h) The chair of the senate shall reserve the right to appoint one (1) student senator as an interim-chair of a standing committee should a vacancy occur in the position.
- (i) If the chair of a standing committee is underperforming, the chair of the senate shall reserve the right to appoint a new chair with approval of a simple majority of the student senators present and voting.
- (j) The chair of the senate reserves the right and authority to appoint student senators and campus representatives as voting members to any of the standing committees.
- (k) Quorum for the standing committees shall constitute of one (1) plus one-half (1/2) of the total voting membership of the committee.

Section 4.11

**AD-HOC COMMITTEES OF THE STUDENT SENATE.** The Student Senate shall reserve the right to create an ad-hoc committee with an approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the student senators present and voting.

- (a) An ad-hoc committee shall only be created to look at one specific issue of relevance for SGA, the student senate, or the university as a whole.
- (b) The same standards and requirements for structure and procedure that apply to the Standing Committees in any of the UTRGV SGA governing documents shall apply to all ad-hoc committees.
- (c) Ad-hoc committees shall be dissolved upon completion of their duties, or with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the student senators present and voting at the floor of the Student Senate only if that item of discussion is placed in the agenda with which that specific meeting was called.

Section 4.12

**CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVES.** The campus representatives shall be appointed, non-voting members of the Student Senate that aim to further the representation of the academic campuses and locations in the Student Senate.

- (a) Campus representative vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the SGA president in the same manner as all other legislative branch vacancies, as established in the UTRGV SGA governing documents.
- (b) The Edinburg and Brownsville campuses shall have no more than ten (10) campus representatives respectively.
- (c) All other UTRGV campuses and locations not mentioned in this section shall have no more than two (2) campus representatives.
- (d) An individual that wishes to be considered for a campus representative position shall be enrolled for the majority of their credit hours at the specific location they seek to represent, and shall maintain this qualification while holding office.
- (e) Campus representatives shall aide in the planning and execution of SGA events and activities at the campus they represent.

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- (f) Campus representatives shall be held to the same academic and conduct standards, and meet the same requirements of attendance as all other legislative branch members as established in the UTRGV SGA governing documents.
- (g) Campus representatives shall not hold voting power or authority in any official SGA or Student Senate business with the exception of any committees of the Student Senate as stipulated in the UTRGV SGA governing documents.

Section 4.13 OFFICE HOURS. All student senators and campus representatives pertaining to the Brownsville and Edinburg locations shall complete at least one (1) office hour per week during the Fall and Spring semesters. Office hours shall not be mandatory unless otherwise stated in the SGA Governing Documents.

Section 4.14 TOWN HALLS. All student senators that represent a college shall organize, plan, and execute at least one (1) town hall per semester at each campus (Brownsville and Edinburg). Senators-at-large shall organize, plan, and execute at least one tabling event at each campus (Brownsville and Edinburg) per semester. All senators shall reserve the right to plan and execute as many town halls or tablings as they need.

Section 4.15 ORDER OF BUSINESS. The official order of business of the meetings of the Student Senate shall be outlined in the UTRGV SGA Policies and Procedures.

Section 4.16 LEGISLATION. All UTRGV students shall reserve the right to author legislation. However, all legislation shall be sponsored by at least one (1) student senator in order for it to be introduced to the chair of the senate.

- (a) The chair of the senate shall refer any and all pieces of legislation to one (1) committee of the Student Senate for its review, where the committee shall decide whether or not to pass it on to the floor of the Student Senate by giving the legislation “preliminary approval”.
- (b) All legislation introduced to the floor of the Student Senate must have been given preliminary approval by a standing committee first. No legislation shall reach the floor of the senate without preliminary approval of a standing committees as per the procedures established in the UTRGV SGA governing documents.
- (c) Legislation that fails to receive preliminary approval from a committee, or does not pass in the floor of the Student Senate after being granted preliminary approval by a Standing Committee, shall die.

Section 4.17 The rules for debate, voting, and online voting shall be stated in the SGA Rules & Procedures.

**Article V. Impeachment and Removal**

Section 5.01 Impeachment and removal from any SGA office shall occur as stated in this Article.

Section 5.02 All Judicial proceedings dealing with impeachment and/or removal, including, but not limited to meetings, hearings, and deliberations by the Student Supreme Court, the Internal Affairs Standing Committee, and/or the Student Senate shall be closed to official members of each branch, unless otherwise stated in any article of these bylaws.

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- Section 5.03           Articles of impeachment may be brought forth by any UTRGV student to the Student Supreme Court for violations of any SGA Governing Documents, or the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures. The Student Supreme Court may take one (1) of the following actions:
- (a) Determine that the articles of impeachment are in violation of the SGA Governing Documents and forward them to the Internal Affairs Standing Committee. If the articles of impeachment are brought against a member of the Internal Affairs Standing Committee, he or she shall relinquish his or her membership in the committee. That member shall be reassigned by the chair of the senate to a different Standing Committee if not a member of more than one (1) other committee before the articles of impeachment are forwarded to the Internal Affairs Standing Committee.
  - (b) Determine the Articles of Impeachment are not in violation of the SGA Governing Documents, and ending the process.
- Section 5.04           The Internal Affairs Standing Committee shall interview the member in question at least once before making a decision. The Internal Affairs Standing Committee reserves the right to interview any other person they see fit. No more than one (1) person shall be questioned or interviewed at the same time.
- Section 5.05           The Internal Affairs Standing Committee shall determine by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting if the articles, and the violations they pose, merit consideration for removal by the Student Senate. An opinion by the committee on decision written by the chair or a designated member must accompany the decision. Failure to meet the required vote stated in this section shall end the impeachment process, and the member shall not be removed for the reasons in question during the process.
- (a) If the Internal Affairs Standing Committee determines the violations merit consideration for removal, they should notify the impeached no less than seven (7) days prior to the Student Senate hearing where the Articles of Impeachment will be read and debated.
  - (b) At the meeting where the articles of impeachment are read, the impeached shall have the right to state his or her case against removal.
  - (c) After debate has been exhausted, the impeached can be officially removed from office with a two-thirds (2/3) votes of the student senators present and voting.
  - (d) The removed member may appeal to the Student Senate meeting immediately following the one in which they were originally tried. The appeal needs a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the student senators present and voting to be approved, and for the removal decision to be reversed.

**Article VI.       Executive Bylaws**

- Section 6.01           IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION. Legislation pursuant to a policy or principle of SGA and any official action or position that is to be undertaken by SGA shall, in the form of written legislation, and before it becomes a statutory enactment, be presented by the secretary of administration to the president within seven (7) calendar days after approval of the Student Senate.
- Section 6.02           If the president approves the legislation, he or she shall sign it, and officially certify the legislation as a statutory enactment.

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- Section 6.03 If the President vetoes the legislation, he or she shall return the legislation to the chair of the senate to be placed on the next Student Senate meeting agenda. The president shall provide written objections, which shall be entered in the Student Senate Minutes of said meeting. The Student Senate may then proceed to reconsider the legislation. After such consideration, a two thirds (2/3) vote in favor of overriding the presidential veto must be collected from the student senators present and voting in order for the legislation to become a statutory enactment without his or her signature. No amendments to the legislation shall be allowed on a vetoed legislation.
- Section 6.04 If no action has been taken by the president within fourteen (14) calendar days after his or her notification that the legislation was approved by the Student Senate, the legislation shall become statutory enactment without his or her signature.
- Section 6.05 FIRST YEAR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM. The president shall present to the Student Senate the guidelines for the First Year Internship program. The guidelines shall be a part of the Rules & Procedures.

**Article VII. Judicial Bylaws**

- Section 7.01 PETITIONS. It shall be the duty of the Student Supreme Court to determine the validity of all signatures on petitions. This shall be accomplished within fourteen (14) calendar days after the petition(s) is/are submitted to the Student Supreme Court.
- (a) Signatures found invalid shall not be counted for the final amount of signatures.
  - (b) Petitions found to have an insufficient number of valid signatures will be rejected but may be resubmitted when sufficient signatures are obtained.
- Section 7.02 The following criteria shall be used to determine the validity of signatures on all petitions to be submitted to the Student Supreme Court requiring action on the part of SGA:
- (a) The complete text of all signatures shall be attached to the petition at the time the petition is being presented for signatures.
  - (b) The student's printed name and UTRGV student email shall accompany each signature on the petition.
  - (c) All online petitions, in order to be valid, should collect signatures via the official SGA V-Link.
  - (d) Signatures must be of currently enrolled UTRGV students.
- Section 7.03 Petitions calling for constitutional amendments or referendums must be presented to the Student Supreme Court. If the required signatures are present and valid, the Student Supreme Court shall then refer the petition to the Office of the Dean of Students and ensure that the referendum is implemented in a timely manner.
- Section 7.04 HEARINGS.
- (a) Defendants shall be notified of charges, person(s) who levied charges, time, place, and date at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the hearing; if he or she needs more time to prepare a defense, he or she may petition the Chief Justice.

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- (b) Both sides shall have the right to cross-examine witnesses.
- (c) Both Defendant and Plaintiff may enter any documentary evidence, provided opposing sides are given copies at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the beginning of the hearing. Any evidence presented after this deadline will not be admitted by the hearing body unless adequate proof is furnished that this evidence was not accessible in time to meet the deadline.
- (d) Copies of transcripts or tapes of Student Supreme Court hearings will be provided for the defendant or the plaintiff at his or her expense.
- (e) Plaintiff will present evidence first, followed by Defendant.
- (f) Unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or these Bylaws, the Chief Justice of the Student Supreme Court shall reserve the right and authority to set any limits or deadlines for any process regarding hearings.

**Article VIII. Amendments**

Section 8.01

Amendments to these bylaws shall be passed as established in Article X of the UTRGV SGA Constitution.