



# Student Government Association Constitution & Bylaws



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**CONSTITUTION OF THE  
SUNY COBLESKILL  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)**

**PREAMBLE:** We, the elected government, hereby support, provide for, care for, and protect students in their views, concerns, and aspirations at all times.

**ARTICLE I: NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION**

§ 1 The name of this organization shall be the SUNY Cobleskill Student Government Association (hereafter referred to as SGA).

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

§ 1 The overall purpose of the SGA is to ensure a high quality college experience for the student body, advocate for student needs, and oversee the distribution of and use of the Student Activity Fee. See SGA Strategic Plan.

**ARTICLE III: SENATORSHIP**

§ 1 Senatorship into this organization is open to any student currently enrolled at SUNY Cobleskill with a grade point average of 2.0 or higher and who has paid a Student Activity Fee. See New Senator Bylaw and Active Senator Bylaw. The SGA does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. Senators are expected to be active participants in all aspects of SGA business. This includes regular meetings, committee meetings, SGA sponsored events and projects, and service outings.

§ 2 Senators, including officers, shall be knowledgeable of the Constitution, the bylaws of SGA, the SGA Strategic Plan, and the process of Parliamentary Procedure.

§ 3 Senators are encouraged to recognize, discuss and vote on issues that best represent the interests of the student body; while maintaining viewpoint neutrality at all times.



## **ARTICLE IV: FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

- § 1 The Student Government shall be composed of the following: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the Director of Public Relations, and Senators.
- § 2 Committees shall be formed as necessary; it is the duties of committee senators to be present at all committee meetings and to keep SGA informed on progress within. The Committee chairs shall be appointed by the SGA Executive Board. It is the Committee Chair's responsibility to bring all necessary issues up for a vote at a regularly scheduled SGA meeting.
- § 3 The Advisors of the SGA shall be chosen by the SGA senators and must be a faculty or staff member of SUNY Cobleskill. See Advisory Bylaw.

## **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS**

- § 1 The elected officers and chain of command of this organization shall be the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Director of Public Relations.
- § 2 All Officers of SGA shall:
- V.2.1 Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 per semester.
  - V.2.2 Attend all regular SGA meetings.
  - V.2.3 Designate required amount of office hours per week to address the questions and concerns of the student body.
  - V.2.4 Attend all Executive Board meetings.
  - V.2.5 Promote, follow, and educate others on the SGA Strategic Plan.
  - V.2.6 Promote a positive image of the Student Government Association and SUNY Cobleskill.
- § 3 President of SGA shall:
- V.3.1 Designate (at minimum) eight office hours per week.
  - V.3.2 Have completed at least 24 credit hours before appointment.
  - V.3.3 Preside over all student government meetings.
  - V.3.4 Act as an ex-officio (non-voting) member, except in the event of a tie.
  - V.3.5 Report to the Administration and the College Council on matters of interest or concern of the student body.
  - V.3.6 A voting member to the CAS Board of Directors, unless delegated to another officer.
  - V.3.6 Attend all College Council meetings and be a voting member of the College Council.
  - V.3.8. Facilitate the Executive Board meetings.



**§ 4** Vice President of SGA shall:

- V.4.1** Designate (at a minimum) five office hours per week.
- V.4.2** Have completed at least 12 credit hours before appointment.
- V.4.3** Attend all government meetings, and in the absence of the President, preside over said meetings.
- V.4.4** Supervise the Affiliations committee assignments of all senators.
- V.4.5** Oversee the Exceeding Expectations Program.
- V.4.6** Perform the duties of the President in his/her absence.

**§ 5** Treasurer of the SGA shall:

- V.5.1** Designate (at a minimum) five office hours per week.
- V.5.2** Assist all SUNY Cobleskill clubs, interest groups and affiliates with budget requirements, facilitate the initial review of proposed budgets and present proposed budgets at an assembly meeting.
- V.5.3** Facilitate the development of the annual SGA Budget during the spring semester. Once approved by the SGA senatorship, the proposed budget should be submitted to the College President or his or her designee for ratification.
- V.5.4** Keep an accurate, up to date record of all budget activity.
- V.5.5** Facilitate the Financial Committee and keep a record of all discussion.
- V.5.6** Be enrolled as a full time student.
- V.5.7** May appoint an Assistant Treasurer.

**§ 6** Secretary of the SGA shall:

- V.6.1** Designate (at a minimum) five office hours per week.
- V.6.2** Accurately record the minutes of all assembly meetings.
- V.6.3** Keep an accurate and up to date record of all senator attendance and participation.
- V.6.4** As requested, submit said minutes to the SGA Advisor(s), President of the College, Vice President of Student Affairs, the SGA Accountant, the Library, and all SUNY Cobleskill Student Government senators, following the appropriate bylaws.
- V.6.5** Chair the Elections Committee and keep a record of all discussion.
- V.6.6.** Keep a record of all discussion during Executive Board meetings.

**§ 7** Director of Public Relations of SGA shall:

- V.7.1** Designate (at a minimum) five office hours per week.
- V.7.2** Coordinate the planning of events that the Student Government Association approves, sponsors, and/or finances.
- V.7.3** Oversees the Public Relations Line in the Student Government Budget.



**V.7.4** May act as the liaison with the event planning boards on campus such as Cobleskill Engagement Board (CEB), Brickyard Point (BYP), Coby Late Night (CLN), etc.

**V.7.5** Facilitate the Public Relations Committee and keep a record of all discussion.

## **ARTICLE VI: ADVISORS**

- § 1 The Advisors shall be chosen by the SGA assembly and appointed annually. Any faculty or staff member is eligible to be an advisor.
- § 2 The Advisors shall express the views of the faculty and the administration and inform SGA of State University policies, guidelines, and regulations affecting students. Advisors will not determine bylaws affecting student life, nor will they inhibit students from representing themselves to the President of the College.
- § 3 The Advisor(s) shall serve as a resource person and provide advisory support for the officers and senators. The faculty advisor(s) shall attend executive and general meetings; however, the faculty advisor is not eligible to vote. The faculty advisor(s) shall perform other duties as they are needed by the officers.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

- § 1 Regular meetings shall be held once a week, during the fall and spring semesters, while classes are in session.
- § 2 Special meetings may be called to order by a majority vote. Said meetings shall not be called to order on a weekend, holiday, or without a twenty-four hour notice.
- § 3 Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as 50% + 1 of the voting membership.
- § 4 Minutes of said meetings shall be recorded and sent out by e-mail.
- § 5 Any senator who accumulates five excused or three unexcused absences from Regular Government meetings during a single semester shall be subject to immediate dismissal from the SGA voting senator list (Exception for those with a leave of absence for the semester). See Active Senator Bylaw.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS**



§ 1 Officers are elected once an academic year. Elections are to be held at the end of each academic year in the spring semester, which will be the election for officers for the following academic year. Refer to SGA Election Bylaw.

§ 2 The Oath of Office shall be as stated:

“As a student elected by my peers and a member of this community, I will strive to live by the Cobleskill Creed, exhibit behavior that is civil, positive, and responsible. I (insert name here) understand and will most importantly represent the views of the students of this campus and support its Constitution.”

§ 3 In the event of a vacancy in one or more of the executive board positions, See Officer Vacancy Bylaw.

§ 4 The advisors, along with the President, unless running for a position, shall supervise all elections.

#### **Article IX: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

§ 1 An Officer can be removed from office if they fail to live up to the duties of their office, and/or if they accumulate three unexcused SGA meeting absences per academic year (See Article VIII).

§ 2 Removal of office can be achieved by obtaining a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote at a regular SGA meeting. For a vote to occur, the issue of removal from office must have been brought up at the prior meeting. The officer in question shall have the right to speak prior to the vote, unless they waive their right, or if he/she fails to show up to the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE X: COMMITTEES**

§ 1 Finance Committee shall be managed by the Treasurer and composed of student government members with a minimum staff of 3, with always an odd numbers. Senators must:

**X.1.1** Assist and advise the Treasurer (and Assistant Treasurer).

**X.1.2** Collaborate and make recommendations as a whole about the allocation and spending of Student Activity Fee funds.

**X.1.3** Assist clubs in making budgets and meeting criteria for budget process.

**X.1.4** Oversee all documents of Student Government (club budgets, SGA budgets, and memos).

**X.1.5** No new student organization shall be authorized to represent itself as associated with the college unless it has been chartered by Student Government.

**X.1.6** If a vote for a decision is set at a tie, the chair of the committee will serve as the tie breaker.



- § 2** Public Relations Committee shall be managed by the Director of Public Relations and composed of student government senator with a minimum staff of 3, with always an odd number. senators must:
- X.2.1** Plan events that the student government approves, sponsors, and/or finances.
  - X.2.2** Procuring supplies as deemed necessary for purchase by the Director of Public Relations.
  - X.2.3** Facilitate the staffing, preparing, promoting, and executing of major Student Government events and SGA recruitment opportunities.
  - X.2.4** Promote a positive image of the SGA and SUNY Cobleskill through the following methods: advertising, contacting local media, taking photos and writing articles, and creating contact with students (through person to person contact, email notices, voicemail messages, fliers throughout campus, and advertising).
  - X.2.5** If a vote for a decision is set at a tie, the chair of the committee will serve as the tie breaker.
- § 3** Elections Committee shall be run by the Secretary and be composed of student government members with a minimum staff of 3, with always odd numbers. Senators must:
- X.3.1** Assist and advise the Elections Committee Chair.
  - X.3.2** Research and make recommendations as a whole to the Chair.
  - X.3.3** Assist guests in becoming SGA senators.
  - X.3.4** Oversee Meet the Candidates Night (Debate Night).
  - X.3.5** If a vote for a decision is set at a tie, the chair of the committee will serve as the tie breaker.
- § 4** Affiliations Committee shall be managed by the Constitutions Chair and composed of student government senators with a minimum staff of 3, with always odd numbers. Senators must:
- X.4.1** Assist and advise the Constitutions Chair.
  - X.4.2** Research and make recommendations as a whole to the Constitutions Chair.
  - X.4.3** Assist clubs in creating or editing constitutions, writing minutes, and writing agendas.
  - X.4.4** Oversee all documents of Student Government (club constitutions, SGA constitution, memos, bylaws) and documents binding on the Student Government Association.
  - X.4.5** If a vote for a decision is set at a tie, the chair of the committee will serve as the tie breaker.

## **ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**





§ 1 In the event that an amendment is proposed, said amendment must first be addressed, after two weeks' notice, to SGA. Upon a majority vote, the proposed amendment will be ratified and the Constitution will reflect such change.

§ 2 All changes must be recorded and reflected in the SGA minutes.

## **ARTICLE XII: RULES OF ORDER**

§ 1 Any issue not directly covered in this constitution or one of the SGA Bylaws will be resolved by referring to "Robert's Rules of Order."

§ 2 All meetings, assembly, committee and special, are recommended to follow parliamentary procedure.

## **ARTICLE XIII: RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVING STUDENT MEMBERS**

§ 1 Student Government Association can recognize organizations that may use the name of the State University of New York or the College; for purposes of identification, obtaining organizational privileges to use College facilities, resources, and services, imply college sponsorship, or approval of activities.

§ 2 SGA may establish criteria consistent with college policy to recognize student groups and to provide financial support from the Student Activity fee. This criteria is subject to yearly review by SGA and no student organization will be recognized without approval.

§ 3 Each organization that is recognized by SGA may determine criteria for membership while complying with state and federal law. No organization shall discriminate in the acceptance of members or assignment of voting privileges, rank, or office on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability or handicap, marital status, or previous affiliations. Although involuntary acceptance of members will not be required as evidence, the names, purposes, and procedures of organizations must reflect this equality of opportunity. Local units of national, state, or regional organizations must be free to select individual members among those qualified; outside approval is prohibited.

§ 4 Each group applying for SGA recognition must agree to uphold the regulations of the College and the State University of New York. Application for recognition or renewal of recognition must include the following information: a statement of organization's purpose, membership requirements, sources of income and record of organization's monies, list of current officers, name of faculty or staff advisor or approved substitute,



and organization's constitution or by-laws. Failure to keep current credentials compliant with College or SGA regulations will result in the loss of recognition. See Club Charter Process and Active Club Bylaw.

- § 5 Hazing, defined as the deliberate imposition of unusual stress on a student as a matter of formal or informal ritual, is illegal in New York State in connection with initiations or at any other time. Organizations responsible for incidents of hazing will lose SGA recognition, be excluded from the use of college resources, and may be subject to discipline under the Rules and Regulations for the Maintenance of Public Order on the premises of the State University of New York and criminal prosecution under Penal Law 120.17.

#### **ARTICLE XIV: RATIFICATION**

- § 1 This constitution shall be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the SGA.
- § 2 This Constitution shall become effective upon ratification. Representatives and officers elected under the previous constitution will retain offices but operate under the provisions of this Constitution. Upon ratification, this Constitution shall replace and supersede all previous constitutions.

#### **ARTICLE XV: OPERABILITY**

- § 1 If any provision of this constitution shall be adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such adjudication shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the document.

#### **ARTICLE XVI: FINANCES**

- § 1 All money under the supervision of SGA is to be managed by the SUNY Cobleskill Business Office and governed by generally accepted accounting principles.
- § 2 Financial decisions made by SGA must be in accordance with the Student Activity Fee Guidelines as set by SUNY.
- § 3 All SGA members and officers must maintain viewpoint neutrality when voting on funding allocations.

#### **ARTICLE XVII: DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE**

- § 1 SGA organization will not discriminate in the acceptance of members or assignment of voting privileges, rank, or office on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability or handicap, marital status, or previous affiliations.



# New SGA Senator Bylaw

## SGA Bylaw #1

**In order to become an active Senator of the Student Government Association, a student must meet the following requirements:**

1. Be a matriculated student of SUNY Cobleskill with at least a 2.0 GPA.
2. Submit a Senator Profile Form.
3. Attend three meetings of the Student Government Association.
4. Participate in any two committee meetings or two events under SGA.
5. Assist with SGA sponsored events and initiatives. This may include, but is not limited to, Blood Drive tabling, Charity Volleyball, polling stations, and recruiting initiatives. The Executive Board will determine the requirements for each event or initiative.
6. Attend a pre-senator orientation meeting with an SGA advisor, if offered.
7. Attend a pre-senator orientation meeting with a group of SGA members that may consist of a combination of Executive Board members and Elections Committee members, if offered.
8. Be elected into SGA through Elections Committee.

### **Active Senator Definition**

An active Senator of Student Government has accomplished all of the steps to becoming a Senator as outlined above and will then be a voting Senator and must follow the requirements of the Active Senator Bylaw.



# Active Senator Bylaw

Senators must be elected into SGA according to the New SGA Senator Bylaw through Elections Committee.

## Active Senator Requirements

1. Complete and submit the SGA Senator Profile Form.
2. Attend all SGA meetings for the duration of each meeting. If necessary, excused absences are allowed with prior notification to an SGA advisor or the SGA Secretary. An excused absence includes, but is not limited to health issues, academics, family emergencies, etc. Up to two unexcused absences are allowed per semester.
3. Be an active senator in their assigned committee. Attendance and excused absences follow the same guidelines as SGA meetings as stated above.
4. Assist with SGA sponsored events and initiatives. This may include, but is not limited to, Blood Drive tabling, Club Council, polling stations, and recruiting initiatives. The Executive Board will determine the requirements for each event or initiative.
5. Submit any weekly schedule updates to the SGA Secretary.

## Process for Handling Inactive Senators

If a letter of resignation is not received and the above requirements are not being met, the Elections Committee is responsible to administer the following procedure.

When the active member requirements above are not met by an SGA member, the Elections Committee Chair must notify the senator through e-mail that their status has changed from active senator to inactive senators of SGA. Inactive senators are not allowed to vote in SGA meetings. After notification, if the senator wishes to earn back their active senator status, they must submit a letter of intent explaining why they have failed to meet the requirements and their intentions for the future or a letter of resignation. If a letter of intent is submitted, the inactive senator begins a one month probationary period. During this time, the inactive senator is expected to follow all of the active senator requirements. At the end of the one month probationary period, if the



inactive senator has met the requirements, their active senator status is restored. If they have not followed the active senator requirements, their senator will be revoked by a vote at the next SGA meeting.

## **Resigning from Senator**

Senators are asked to send a letter of resignation with an effective date to the current Elections Committee Chair if they are no longer interested in being an SGA Senator or are no longer going to be a SUNY Cobleskill student.

## **Alternative Committee Arrangements**

In the case that a senator has verified class conflicts for all SGA committee meetings, said senator may serve as an adjunct committee senator, at the discretion of the committee chair and the SGA Executive Board. An adjunct committee senator must meet weekly with the committee chair in the Office of Student Leadership. If there is a change in the committee meeting time or a change in the senator's schedule, the senator must begin attending regular committee meetings in order to meet this requirement.

## **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence would be required if a senator knows of further absences which may extend beyond two meetings. The member should contact the Secretary of the Student Government Association by providing a letter and/or e-mail of intention, reasoning and the timeframe for the leave. Accepted reasoning includes, but is not limited to health issues, academics, family emergencies, etc. Approval of the leave of absence will be confirmed by the Executive Board of SGA. A leave of absence is only applicable for one semester. You must have been a senator for at least one full semester before being eligible for a leave of absence.

Upon approval, this senator will not affect quorum during the leave of absence. After the leave of absence, the senator does not need to be re-elected. If the senator is able to attend a meeting during their leave, the senator will be a non-voting member for that meeting.



# SGA Quorum Bylaw

## SGA Bylaw # 8

The Student Government Association will have an established quorum of 1 over 50% of its Assembly's membership. Without quorum, SGA cannot vote on any motions, financial decisions, or resolutions.



# Election Bylaw

## SGA Bylaw # 14

For Student Government President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relations Officer

### **Candidate Requirements**

Candidates must have a 2.5 GPA.

Any SUNY Cobleskill student that has completed one full complete semester and is currently enrolled in 6 credits can run for office.

Campaigning begins on the designated date the Executive Board has decided. The Executive Board will decide on these dates per year.

Each candidate must submit a letter of intent at least one day prior to the designated Campaigning Day. Letters of intent must be sent to the Student Government Association email account ([studentgovernment@cobleskill.edu](mailto:studentgovernment@cobleskill.edu)) and the presiding Elections Chair.

### **Campaign Guidelines**

Student Government Association encourages the candidates to run a positive campaign.

Flyers cannot be placed on or under doors of classrooms, offices, and residence halls, unless placed by resident of that room.

Slander (negative remarks) should not be made about other candidates on flyers or verbally or on social media.

Flyers are not allowed on window or entrance doors. Bulletin boards are the appropriate places for flyers.

Flyers can be handed out from person to person.



There is a maximum of 300 copies of flyers and 3 large posters that can be made for bulletin boards with the physical equipment of the Student Life Center. A candidate may choose to produce additional materials at his or her own expense. Candidates must submit the original flyer to the office secretary for approval and photocopying.

On Election Day, no flyers or verbal campaigning can be within 100 feet of polling station.

Flyers must have the date of the Election Day on them as a reminder to vote.

No global e-mails can be made.

No posters or flyers relating to elections are allowed in display cases.

Improper campaigning or beginning campaigning before Campaigning Day will result in nullification of eligibility.

Flyers need to be taken down the day after Election Day.

### **The Debate**

A special meeting may be called by the existing Elections Chair prior to Election Day at which time each candidate will have the opportunity to give a qualification speech to the student body. Students can ask the candidates questions at this time.

The special meeting will be called at least seven days before Election Day and be easily accessible to the entire student body.

### **Election Day Procedures**

The names on the ballot will be organized in alphabetical order within each office. There will be no write in candidates accepted.

The polling station will be open on the designated dates and times in various locations around campus.





Candidates cannot staff the voting tables.

The Elections Chair (or an appointed senator), at least 2 appointees, and an advisor(s) shall count the ballots. Ballots should be counted at least twice.

A candidate may appoint a representative to be present during the counting of the ballots. This person is allowed to observe only and may not interact with those SGA senators and advisors who are counting.

The new officers will be announced the night of elections when the outcome is finalized.

In the event that a candidate is determined ineligible by Student Government or withdraws his or her name as a candidate after the Elections and before the candidate takes office, the candidate with the next highest number of votes will be declared the winner.

If a candidate challenges any aspect of the election process, the final decision regarding the election and the election process rests with Student Government. Any decisions relating to a contested election should be made as soon as possible after the election.

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If the Student Government Association votes that a candidate has not followed these bylaws, the candidate will be ineligible to hold office.



# **SGA Officer Vacancy Bylaw**

## **Bylaw #33**

In the event of a vacancy in the Executive Board, any student who are interested must submit a letter of intent by the deadline given. The appointment will be based on a majority vote by the SGA body at a regular business meeting.

In the event of a vacancy in one or more of the executive board positions, the SGA membership will elect any student to the open seat. This special election must be held no later than four weeks after the vacancy of the Officer's seat. Only active SGA senators are eligible to vote in a special election. It is recommended, but not required, that said elections are conducted by secret ballot.



# Club Delegate

## SGA Bylaw # 2

In order to be an active club under the Student Government Association, each club needs to appoint a Club Delegate. The Club Delegate will be a position within one of the Officer positions in the club. This would be outlined in the club's constitution placing the position under which executive board position would be the best fit. The club can choose which officer position can be used.

Each club can designate one or more officers to hold the role of SGA Club Delegate. In place of the designated officer, any officer or member of the club can be there to replace them with the notification to SGA. The Club Delegate will be required to go to an SGA meeting Bi-weekly, whereas dates will be set out during the beginning of each semester and sent out to each club. One Club Delegate from each club is required, at least. A Club Delegate can be a Senator in the Student Government Body.

If the Club Delegate does not attend 2 or more Student Government meetings per semester, the club's budget will be frozen until further notice.



# Electronic Meeting Bylaw

## Bylaw #25

### Meeting Medium

Electronic meetings shall be held in a medium accessible to all Student Government Association Senators, Executive Board Officers and Advisors.

### Compliance

The agenda shall be posted electronically to the medium of choice by the Executive Board Officers and sent via email. Electronic meetings shall be held under special circumstances.

### Quorum

Quorum must be met in order to conduct electronic meetings. Quorum is 1 over 50% of the Student Government Association Senators according to Bylaw #8. Quorum should be verified by a quorum call. A quorum call is when the Secretary or other designee asks for a response from all Senators. Attendance is derived from the number of responses. A quorum call may be called by any Senator at any time. Once quorum is met, it is presumed throughout the meeting until adjournment or a quorum call.