

The Constitution of the Houghton College Student Body

We, the students of Houghton College, in recognition of our charge to pursue excellence both in studies and character, establish in this constitution the Student Government Association in order to contribute to the academic, social, physical, and spiritual growth and development of the Houghton College community.

The Student Government Association hereinafter referred to as the SGA, shall be charged with the tasks to represent the student body to the college administration, faculty, and staff in order to promote student interests and provide activities and services to make the student experience at Houghton the best it can be.

Article I: The Executive Student Council

A. Membership and Privilege

1. *Primary Members* – Primary Membership of the Executive Council shall number eleven, and be composed of a generally elected Student Body Vice President, Executive Officer of Committees, an Executive Officer of Finance, an Executive Officer of Communication, an Executive Officer of Student Life, and an Executive Officer of Spiritual Life; a specially elected Executive Officer of Non-traditional Students; and the four class-elected vice presidents. Elections for all class positions must occur within three weeks of the elections of the generally elected members. Primary members shall perform the duties required of them as defined in this constitution and the bylaws.

2. *Associate Members* – Associate membership shall consist of the generally elected President (who shall be the Chair; the terms President and Chair are used interchangeably within), student representatives to college councils and committees who do not hold a title of membership, and members who have been temporarily stripped of their right to vote. These members have the right to make motions and participate in debate, but may not vote. The Chair and student representatives shall perform the duties required of them as defined in this constitution and the bylaws.

3. *Honorary Members* – Honorary membership shall consist of the two SGA advisors. These advisors shall be Houghton College faculty members. One shall be nominated by the SGA Chair and the other by the presidents of the classes. Both shall be approved by the SGA by majority vote before the third meeting of the Executive Council. They shall assist the SGA in the fulfillment of its duties, and advise the primary members on parliamentary procedure.

4. *The Student Body* – All members of the student body of Houghton College have the right to participate in discussion and debate on any issue. Students are to be made aware that they may bring matters and motions before the Council through their elected members, their class governments, or of

their own volition.

B. Meetings of the Executive Council

1. Regular meetings shall be called on a weekly basis while the college is in regular session. The regular day and time shall be determined during the first meeting after the transfer of power. Meetings will be limited to one and a half hours unless business is extended by a two-thirds vote. As necessary, a two-thirds vote of all present members may reschedule the subsequent meeting for individual instances.

2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or at the written request of one-quarter of all primary members. Notification of the time, date, place, and purpose shall be given at least three days in advance, except in the case of an emergency session, which may be called only by the Chair or any member in the Chair's absence.

3. Parliamentary authority shall be contained in the bylaws and current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*. This constitution, its bylaws, and any other adopted rules of order or policy shall supersede *Robert's Rules of Order* in all cases. Quorum shall be two-thirds of all primary members.

4. The Chair shall see that meetings are called to order, oversee meeting attendance, and chair meetings of the Council. The Chair shall exercise general supervision of the affairs of the Council between meetings, set the order of business of all meetings of the Council with the Executive Officer of Communication, and perform other duties specific to the SGA. If the Chair must be absent, the Executive Officer of Communications shall ask the Council to elect one of its members to the chair for the duration of the meeting.

C. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

The Council members shall have the following duties:

1. To carry out all its duties by proposing and passing resolutions, legislation, amendments to legislation, expenditures and any or all other legislative powers enumerated in this constitution and its bylaws or deemed necessary and proper for the fulfillment of the SGA's purpose;
2. To serve the student body and initiate discussion and take action regarding student concerns;
3. To assist in providing a common ground for communication and the promotion of close cooperation between the students, faculty, administration, and alumni of the college;
4. To represent their fellow students to the administration;
5. To approve the budget of the SGA and annually set regulations in the bylaws on spending from it;
6. To perform all day-to-day activities and maintenance necessary to fulfill the purpose of the SGA; and,
7. To carry out all duties as enumerated by this constitution and in its bylaws.

The Council shall have the following powers:

8. To investigate and make recommendations concerning issues pertaining to student life;
9. To use funds allocated to the SGA budget in accordance with regulations set forth in the bylaws;
10. To require reports from any student elected to a council or committee;
11. To allocate the line items of the campus services budget in accordance with college policy

and the bylaws of this constitution; and,

12. To limit a meeting's attendance at any time to members and advisors. This requires a two thirds vote of all present members and an adequate demonstration of evidence for privacy.

D. Qualifications

1. Any member of the student body enrolled full-time at Houghton College, excluding the Executive Officer of Non-traditional Students, with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 is eligible to serve in or run for a generally elected Council position. Class-representatives must also belong to their respective class as outlined in their respective class constitutions. If the student's grade point average falls below a 2.50 at any point during the term of office or while running for office, but is no less than 2.00, the requirement may be waived in individual instances by the Houghton College Vice President for Student Life.

2. The Executive Officer of Nontraditional Students may be enrolled in a nontraditional education program provided by Houghton College. Such programs include, but are not limited to, PACE, Buffalo Associate Degree, or Adult Education. The Executive Officer of Nontraditional Students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.00. If the student's grade point average falls below a 2.50 at any point during the term of office or while running for office, but is no less than 2.00, the requirement may be waived in individual instances by the Houghton College Vice President for Student Life. [This section of the Constitution will enter effect after the first full year under the new requirements.]

2. Any junior or senior student enrolled full-time at Houghton College with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.30 is eligible to serve in or run for the generally elected position of Chair. If the student's grade point average falls below a 3.00 at any point during the term of office or while running for office, but is no less than 2.75, the requirement may be waived in individual instances by the Houghton College Vice President for Student Life.

E. Legislative Process

1. *General Process for Legislation* – Any member of the SGA may introduce legislation in the Council meetings. If approved by majority vote of the eleven primary members of the Council, it proceeds to the Chair, who shall then sign or veto it. Once signed, the legislation is passed and is to be effective immediately unless a timeframe is defined.

2. *Chair Veto* – If a piece of legislation is passed within the Council then vetoed in whole or in part by the chair, the entire legislation is reintroduced to the Council with the chair's rationale for reconsideration. The Council may then make necessary modifications and vote on it again or override the veto with a two-thirds vote. If the veto is overridden, the Executive Officer of Communications shall attest the legislation and it will be considered passed.

3. *Special Treatment for Resolutions of Opinion* – If the Council passes a resolution only declaring its position on a matter or making a recommendation, it need not be signed by the Chair, but may still be vetoed.

Article II: Elections & Transitions

A. Elections

1. Shall be held six weeks prior to the end of the spring semester for all positions except the class vice presidents and the Executive Officer of Non-traditional Students. The end of the spring semester shall be marked by the last day of final examinations. The Chair shall appoint a temporary Executive Officer of Elections, who will chair the annual Election Board. Other members of the Election Board shall be the freshman, sophomore, and junior class historians. All facets of the election process not enumerated either in this constitution or its bylaws shall be at the discretion of the Election Board. Candidates must submit a petition of 75 signatures. All must be elected by a majority vote of participating students. If there is no majority, a runoff election shall be held between the top two individuals who receive the most votes.

2. The class vice presidents shall be elected in the manner required by their class constitutions. Incumbent Executive Officers of Finance will remain primary members until their successor is elected.

3. The Executive Officer of Nontraditional Students will be elected through majority vote in the first two weeks of the fall semester. The incumbent shall remain in office until the end of spring semester. The incumbent, with the assistance of the Election Board, will institute the steps needed to facilitate an election in the fall. Such an election will be required to adhere to rules specified in the constitution or the bylaws.

B. Transitions

1. The transitional period of the generally elected members of the Council shall be no less than three weeks immediately following elections. For the class vice presidents this period shall last from the time that a given member is elected until the transfer of powers date. The Executive Officer of Nontraditional Students is not subject to a traditional transfer of powers.

2. Three weeks before the end of the spring semester, previously marked as the last day of final examinations, there is to be a day known as the transfer of powers day. The specific date and time will be set by the Election Board. At this time, the current Council membership shall step down from their respective positions and in so doing shall relinquish all of the privileges, responsibilities and obligations afforded to that position to the newly elected Council membership. The members of the former Council shall be obligated to provide assistance to the new Council until the end of the spring semester.

3. The exceptions to this complete transfer of power are determined jointly through majority vote by the Election Board and incumbent Council's primary members. Any exceptions of official transfer of power shall be June 1st. The incumbent senior class vice president, shall continue to serve as a primary member of the Council and their class cabinet until the end of the spring semester.

4. All members of the Executive Council shall sign contracts promising to fulfill the duties of their office. The outgoing Chair shall oversee the new Council's signatures.

Article III: Removals & Vacancies

A. Impeachment and Removal

Possible causes for impeachment include, but are not limited to the following: felonies and misdemeanors (excluding minor traffic violations), intentional violations of this constitution or signed contracts, or intentional violation of Houghton College regulations and policies as forwarded by the Student Conduct Committee. These processes may not be tabled or vetoed and take precedence over all other business.

1. President (Chair of Executive Council):

i. The Council may initiate the impeachment process by a two-thirds vote of the primary members. The prosecutor(s) must demonstrate probable cause and present the evidence immediately after the vote to initiate the process. Immediately after the impeachment proceedings, the Executive Officer of Communications shall appoint an investigative committee in consultation with the SGA advisor. This committee will investigate the charges.

ii. The investigative committee shall present a report on their findings to the Council at its second regular meeting after the process has been initiated.

iii. The accused person will be given time at the third meeting to respond to the accusations at the next Council meeting following the report by the committee.

iv. At the fourth meeting since the process has been initiated, first the prosecutor then the accused shall be given an opportunity for a final word before a ballot vote is held. A two-thirds vote in the affirmative of all present primary members shall result in removal.

2. Executive Officer of Communications, Executive Officer of Committees, Executive Officer of Student Life, Executive Officer of Spiritual Life, and Executive Officer of Finance:

i. The Council may initiate the impeachment process by a two-thirds vote of the primary members. The prosecutor(s) must demonstrate probable cause and present the evidence immediately after the vote to initiate the process.

a. Depending on the role of the primary member, the Chair shall appoint an executive assistant to fulfill the role until either charges are cleared or a new primary member is elected. This appointment must be approved by a majority vote of the primary members, excluding the accused member.

ii. The accused person must respond to the allegations at the next regular Council meeting. At the conclusion of that meeting, a ballot vote shall be held. A two-thirds vote in the affirmative of all present primary members and the Chair shall result in removal, excluding the accused.

3. Executive Officer of Non-traditional Students

i. The Representative of Non-traditional Students may be removed in a manner similar to the procedure for other Officer positions with the following exceptions:

a. The Vice President of Student Life will be asked to involve him or herself in an investigation of a nontraditional student.

b. The decision to impeach or not impeach can be vetoed by the Vice President for Student Life and can only be overturned by unanimous decision of all primary members and the Chair of the Council.

4. Class Representatives

i. The primary members from the classes may be removed from primary membership of the Council following the impeachment process for the Executive Officers. However, removal from the Council passes the impeachment process on to the class constitutions to be further investigated and

resolved.

ii. Should a class representative be impeached by the Council and not the respective class, then the position is forfeit by the representative for the remainder of the term and shall be filled by a member of the respective class cabinet as internally selected.

B. Vacancies

1. In the event that the office of the President is vacated by removal or resignation, the Vice President immediately assume the office of the president. The office of the Vice President shall then be filled in the same way as any other vacated primary member position.

2. In the event that any other primary member position is vacated (with the exception of that of the officers of finance) by removal or resignation, the position shall be filled by the following process:

i. Notification of the vacated position must go out to the entire student body and petitions consisting of 75 signatures must be filled out.

ii. One week after notification is out, the petitions must be turned in to the Chair and the candidates for the office in question shall be interviewed by the Executive Officer of Communications and Executive Officer of Student Life. Recommendations from the Executive Officers will be made to the Council at its next scheduled meeting. After this interview, the candidates shall go before the Council for a ballot vote of all primary members and the Chair. The candidate with the majority of votes shall be declared the winner. If there is no majority, there will be a runoff election held immediately between the two candidates who receive the most votes.

iii. All class representative vacancies shall be filled by a special election in the manner set forth in respective class constitutions and filled by the appropriate class president in the interim.

Article IV: Bylaws and Governance

A. Bylaws

1. The SGA will establish the bylaws annually during the first meeting of the new Council by a two-thirds vote. The President, President-elect, Vice President, Vice President-elect and Executive Officer of Committees shall make any necessary revisions to the document before presenting it to the Council with all changes from the previous year's bylaws explained. In the event that a position should overlap, the Council may appoint a representative to fill the overlapped position. The SGA may amend the bylaws to this constitution by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

2. Any bylaw may be nullified, suspended, or stricken by a two-thirds vote of the Council. In cases of bylaws pertaining directly to the Council, informal approval must be obtained from the SGA advisors.

3. No bylaw may contradict or conflict with any clause of this constitution.

B. Governance and Structure

1. This constitution and its bylaws are subject to the Houghton College constitution and bylaws. In the case of any conflict, the latter set of documents shall prevail.

2. All student class, club, association, and organization constitutions shall fall under this

constitution. In the case of conflict of structure or governance, the latter shall prevail. All other cases shall be deferred to Student Life Council.

Article V: Ratification, Amendment, and Review

A. Ratification

This constitution shall be ratified with a three-fourths vote of primary members of the Council, the President, and then a majority vote of the student body, with at least a fifteen percent response. This constitution shall go into effect immediately upon ratification and voids any prior constitutions or bylaws.

B. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution proposed shall be ratified with a three-fourths vote of primary members of the Council and then a majority vote of the student body, with at least a 15 percent response. Alternatively, amendments may be ratified by a unanimous vote of both the Executive Council and the class cabinets. To ensure that language, policies, etc. are congruent with existing college policies, the SGA shall not bring any constitutional amendment to vote without first consulting a representative from the Office of Student Life (in accordance with the policy for SGA and Student Life collaboration adopted by the Student Life Council on December 6, 2004 and ratified by the college faculty on January 13, 2005). All amendments shall be presented to the student body at least two weeks prior to any ratification vote conducted.

C. Review

Review of this constitution and its bylaws shall be conducted every tenth year, beginning in 2015 by the President, the Vice President, the class presidents, and the Vice President of Student Life to check for congruency with college policy. Amendments may then be proposed as necessary detailing needed changes.

This document was approved 19-2 by the Student Senate on Wednesday April 9th, 2014 and ratified by the student body on Wednesday April 16th 2014