Joint Statement of Rights and Freedoms

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities in the classroom, on the campus and in the larger community. Students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.

The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. Each college and university has a duty to develop policies and procedures, which provide and safeguard this freedom. Such policies and procedures should be developed at each institution within the framework of general standards and with the broadest possible participation of the members of the academic community.

Agreeing with this statement by the Joint Commission on the Rights and Freedoms of Students, Marywood University sets forth the procedures, rights, responsibilities, and guidelines outlined in this handbook as indispensable for achieving the goals desired: freedom to teach, to learn, and to search for truth.

From "Student Rights and Freedoms"
NASPA, Washington, D.C., November 1992

Mission

The Undergraduate Student Government Association of Marywood University serves not only as the voice of the undergraduate students, but also the link between faculty and staff. Adhering to the core values of Marywood, these student leaders will do everything in their power to exercise their leadership skills to represent the student body.

Article I. Name and Purpose

- Section I. Name
  - The organization shall be named the Undergraduate Student Government Association of Marywood University, which shall be referred to as the SGA throughout the remaining document.
- Section II. Purpose of the SGA
  - To serve as the voice of the undergraduate student body;
  - To advocate and pursue changes in Marywood University policy that enrich or enhance the quality of student life;
To uphold the SGA Constitution and follow the procedures set forth within the Constitution and by-laws in all matters pertaining to the SGA;

And as outlined by the student handbook and calendar.

Article II. Structure

- Section I. General Assembly
  - Purpose
    - To provide a forum where undergraduate students may observe the functioning of the SGA and voice their concerns and/or suggestions to all SGA officers;
    - To hold the final vote on all issues originating from committees;
    - To consider new ideas or issues established by fellow undergraduate students and direct them to the appropriate House of Representative member for further investigation;
    - To review progress of all committee meetings as submitted each meeting by their respective committee chairs and secretaries;
    - And to allow non-elected students to participate in the SGA.
  - Regulations
    - Each meeting shall be advertised to the University community at least one week before its scheduled time. Advertisements must clearly state the date, time, and location of the meeting as well as convey that the meeting is open to all undergraduate students.
    - Each meeting must be open to all undergraduate students and be held in a location that can comfortably accommodate the expected meeting turnout.
    - Meetings are to be held no less than once every two weeks unless cancelled due to extenuating weather conditions or some other emergency situation. Any meeting cancellation shall be relayed to all SGA members and posted at the advertised location of the meeting.
    - Members shall include the Executive Cabinet, the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Senators at large. All members, with the exception of the SGA at large, shall obtain voting powers during their term.
    - All members must abide by the attendance policy.
      - Attendance Policy: Attendance of all members of the SGA is required at every General Assembly meeting. As a student leader, it is understood that academics come first. However, holding an elected position is a responsibility, not a right. If a member cannot attend for academic or Marywood sponsored reasons, a twenty-four-hour-notice to the Executive Secretary is required via e-mail to be considered an excused absence. Failure to do so shall be considered unexcused and shall result in a positional evaluation with the Executive Cabinet. Two positional evaluations, unexcused absences per year, shall result in removal from office. If an emergency situation arises in which notice cannot be
given, it shall be the member’s duty to inform the Executive Secretary of the situation as soon as possible to be considered an excused absence. No penalty shall be given for excused absences.

Procedures

- The Secretary shall record meeting minutes at every General Assembly meeting.
- Each meeting shall begin with a call to order, followed by roll call, and then the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. Each of these procedures must be completed through a motioning process.
- Each meeting shall proceed according to an agenda prepared by the President. This agenda must be approved by the advisor of the SGA and presented to all those in attendance during the meeting.
- Each meeting shall include an allotted amount of time for Committee Meetings, during which members and guests may introduce new goals as well as discuss the status of on-going goals until they reach resolution. It shall be during these meetings that Senators and House of Representatives collaborate in working towards their committee’s goals.
- Each meeting shall include a Committee Reports section, allowing for the committees to update the General Assembly on the progress made during their Committee Meetings.
- Each meeting shall include an Open Floor section, during which anyone in attendance may speak.
- Each meeting shall conclude with the adjournment procedure, which must be completed through a motioning process.
- An example agenda with all of these procedures can be found the Appendix I of the Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution.

- Section II. Executive Cabinet

  Purpose

- To oversee the SGA and preside over the General Assembly

  Expectations/Responsibilities:

- To meet every two weeks as a cabinet to discuss progress of the SGA and push forward with new ideas;
- With the exception of the President, each member of the Executive Cabinet shall serve as a Committee Chair;
- To attend SGA training a week prior to the academic year;
- And to attend all General Assembly meetings.

  Positions

- The members of the Executive Cabinet shall include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Public Affairs Officer, and the Head of Senate. Detailed descriptions of these positions can be found in Appendix II of the Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution.

- Section III. Senate
Purpose:
- To be the voice of the undergraduate student body, relaying any problems, questions, and/or concerns students may have to the House of Representatives;
- And to serve as researchers in collaboration with the House of Representatives to accomplish committee goals.

Expectations/Responsibilities:
- To collaborate with the SGA in the positive resolution of student concerns through dialogue with class peers, other members of the SGA, and, at times, University officials;
- To be responsible, easily communicable/accessible, and willing to work with their fellow peers, members of the SGA, and members of the Marywood Community;
- To attend SGA training a week prior to the academic year;
- And to attend all General Assembly meetings.

Positions
- The members of the Senate shall include the Head of Senate, Class Senators, and the SGA at large. Detailed descriptions of these positions can be found in Appendix III of the Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution.

- Section IV. House of Representatives

  Purpose
- To serve as the liaison and connector of relations between the SGA and the area of the Marywood faculty or staff;
- And to serve as researchers in collaboration with the Senate to accomplish committee goals.

  Expectations/Responsibilities
- To facilitate continuous relations between students and departments by establishing and maintaining strong lines of communication with their designated faculty or staff area;
- To meet at least once a month with their designated departments, relaying any questions and/or concerns from any student to their expertise in a timely manner;
- To attend SGA training;
- And to attend all General Assembly meetings providing feedback from the faculty to the students.

  Positions
- The members of the House of Representatives shall include the Resident Representative, the Commuter Representative, the Athletics Representatives, the Campus Ministry Representative, the Student Activities Representative, the University Offices Representative, the Security Representative, the Food Services Representative, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Representative, the College of Health and Human Services Representative, the Insalaco College of Creative and Performing Arts Representative, the Reap College of Education and Human
Development Representative, and the School of Architecture Representative. Detailed descriptions of these positions can be found in Appendix IV of the Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution.

- **Section V. Advisor Appointment of Advisor**
  - The advisor shall be the Director of Student Activities and Leadership Development (SALD).

**Purpose**
- To serve as the direct advisor for the Executive cabinet;
- And to serve as the overall advisor for the SGA.

**Responsibilities/Expectations**
- To serve as the administrative link/source of knowledge for any member of the SGA in any matter and seek knowledge for any matter necessary;
- To assist in providing information and advice on how/where to pursue information relating to issues facing the SGA;
- To preside over SGA training;
- To meet with members of the Executive Cabinet regularly at least twice a month;
- And to meet with each member of the executive cabinet every two weeks in a One-on-One meeting to discuss progress, issues, concerns and ideas related to the students’ position on SGA.

**Powers**
- The advisor does not have voting power, but shall advise the government in any matter.
- The advisor shall preside over any impeachment hearing and provide an objective standpoint to both sides being debated.
- The advisor does have the right in special circumstances (alleged major violation of student code of conduct or other alleged violations of moral character) to meet with a member of the SGA to discuss such issues. If the circumstances are confirmed, the advisor does have the choice to remove the student from their position.

**Article III. Undergraduate Student Government Association Training**

- **Section I. Purpose and Description**
  - A detailed description of the SGA training can be found in Appendix V of the Undergraduate Student Government Association Constitution.

**Article IV. Elections, Appointments, and Terms of Office**

- **Section I. Election Logistics**
  - Campus-wide elections shall take place three times a year
• Freshman Elections and Vacant Position Elections
  • Freshman and Vacant Position Elections are intended to fulfill the freshman class senator positions. In the event that there are other vacant positions in the SGA at the time of the fall elections, they may also be fulfilled at this time. Each candidate is to run individually.
  • Shall take place two weeks into the fall semester.

Spring I- Executive Cabinet Elections
  • Executive Cabinet Elections are intended to fulfill only Executive Cabinet positions. Candidates running for President and Vice President are to run on one ticket. Other members of the Executive Cabinet are to campaign and run on separate tickets.
  • Shall take place four weeks prior to the end of the spring semester.
  • To run for the position of President and or Vice President, the student must have held, at least, the position of General Assembly member.
  • Graduating seniors in the Marywood community are not eligible to vote for Executive Cabinet members spring semester of their senior year.

Spring II- House of Representative and Senate Elections
  • House of Representative and Senate Elections are intended to fulfill all positions within the House and the Senate, excluding the positions of Freshmen Senators. Each candidate is to run individually.
  • Shall take place two weeks prior to the end of the spring semester; two weeks after Executive Cabinet elections.
  • Graduating seniors in the Marywood community are not eligible to vote for House of Representative or Senator positions during spring semester of their senior year.

Election of Head of Senate
  • Head of Senate Elections are intended to fulfill the position of Head of Senate. To be eligible, candidates must be at least a sophomore. The election shall be overseen by the Vice President. Senators can nominate themselves. Each nomination shall be addressed to the Vice President and counted on the ballot. Each candidate shall have two minutes to state his/her case for the position. A secret ballot shall then be conducted, which only the members with voting powers may participate. The decisions shall be made by a majority vote. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast their deciding vote.
  • Shall take place at the first General Assembly meeting, during training, of the Fall Semester

Advertisements
  • Elections- Advertisements for elections shall be posted two weeks before the date of the elections and shall include information on how to run, in addition to when, where, and how to vote.
- Candidate- Advertisements for individual candidates should be approved by the SALD office. Students may inquire with the SALD Office for appropriate places to hang advertisements.

- Section II. Special Elections
  - In the event that a position becomes vacant mid-term, a special election shall be held. The special election is to be announced at the first General Assembly meeting following the position becoming open and held during the following meeting. The election is to be advertised to all undergraduate students for the two weeks following the announcement. Any undergraduate student is eligible to run for the position, but voting is only open to voting members of the SGA. Candidates shall each give a speech and voting shall take place immediately following through secret ballot. The tabulations shall be made by the members of the executive cabinet, excluding any members who may be running for a position. The decision shall be made by a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast their deciding vote.

- Section III. Coordinator
  - The Vice President shall preside over all annual election proceedings including publicity, election procedures, and tallying. The Vice President shall also be the main point of communication for all candidates.

- Section IV. General Qualifications
  - To be eligible to campaign for a seat on the SGA the following qualifications must be met:
    - Must be a student in good academic and judicial standing (If the student does have violations of either, or, or both, the advisor of the SGA shall make a character call and have the final say as to if the student can run for office);
    - Must have a GPA of at least 2.50;
    - Must be a full-time undergraduate student;
    - And must submit to the Executive Cabinet an application for candidacy at least one week before the elections date.

- Section V. Term Limits
  - The term limit for every SGA Officer is one academic year beginning in the Fall Semester after they are elected. Freshmen student terms begin immediately after their election into office. In the case of special elections, terms shall last from the time of election until the conclusion of the academic year.

- Section VI. Procedures
  - Specific election procedures are to be left open for further progress. Examples include ballot boxes, online voting, etc. However, all methods used for elections shall be available for all undergraduate students, allowing only one vote per student, per electoral process.
Section VII. Tabulation and Results

- The Vice President, with assistance from the Executive Cabinet, shall be responsible for the tabulation of votes within twenty-four hours of the polls closing. All candidates shall be informed of the results before they become public and shall be notified via email immediately following the tabulation of the votes.

Article V. Vacancies/Removal from Office

- Section I. President
  - Should the position of the President become vacant mid-term, the Vice President shall succeed.
  - The new President shall remain in office for the remainder of that term.
- Section II. Vice President, Secretary, Public Affairs Officer
  - Should the position of Vice President, Secretary or Public Affairs Officer become vacant mid-term, the President shall appoint a present member.
  - The new appointed member shall remain in office for the remainder of that term.
- Section III. Head of Senate
  - Should the position of Head of Senate become vacant mid-term, a new Head of Senate shall be elected.
  - All current Senators are eligible to run for this vacant position.
  - The election shall be announced at the first General Assembly meeting following the position becoming vacant and held during the following meeting. Advertisements for this vacant position shall be made to all current Senators between the two aforementioned meetings.
  - During the election, each candidate shall give a speech and voting shall take place immediately following through secret ballot. Voting shall only be open to members of the SGA with voting powers.
  - The tabulations shall be made by the members of the Executive Cabinet. The decision shall be made by a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast their deciding vote.
- Section IV. Senators
  - Should a Senator position become vacant mid-term, a special election shall take place.
  - The new Senator shall remain in office for the remainder of that term.
- Section V. Grounds for Removal from Office
  - Grounds for removal from office can be included, but not limited to the below items:
    - Violation of attendance policy
    - Failure to maintain a 2.5 GPA, which is the academic requirement.
    - Abuse/misuse of power
    - Insufficient time to accomplish tasks
    - Actions unbecoming of a member of SGA
      - Unbecoming actions include any participation in illegal activities, violation of the Marywood Handbook, or immoral behavior.
Article VI. Committees

- Section I. Existence
  - Committees shall be created or abolished based on the needs of the current Marywood environment. Thus said, committees shall be created by the discretion of the SGA Executive Cabinet depending on the goals set forth. The creation of committees must be voted on at the first meeting of the year by the General Assembly to ensure there is common interest in each created committee. Examples of committees include: Academic Committee, Student Issues, IT services, Food Services, etc.
  - At SGA training the roles and descriptions of each committee shall be described to all members. Members from the Executive Cabinet, House of Representatives, and Senate shall be assigned to their committees at this time.

- Section II. Purpose
  - To bring together the SGA members with similar interests and provide a forum for those members to accomplish goals. By dividing the General Assembly into committees, more goals can be accomplished within different areas of the University.

- Section III. Committee Chairs
  - Chairs of the committees shall be an Executive Cabinet member that has specific interest in that committee’s goals. Their duties shall include guiding the students in the committee and assisting the committee in coordination of responsibilities and providing insight and advice when needed. Key components to success include: delegation, communication, setting goals and assigning tasks in between meetings.

- Section IV. Membership
  - Members of the House of Representatives shall be assigned to committees based upon their roles during the SGA training. Senators shall have the ability to choose which committee they shall be on based upon their interests; however one student Senator must be on each committee. Senators shall have the ability to choose which committee they want to represent at the beginning of the year, however members of Executive Cabinet have the right to move committee members at anytime deemed necessary.
  - New members are welcome to join committees throughout the year. These new members shall be informed of current progress of goals and being work on those goals.

- Section V. Expectations/Responsibilities of Committee Chairs and Members
  - To have an interest in the specific committee and demonstrate commitment toward the progress of that committee;
  - And to actively participate in committee meetings, trainings, as well as outside assignments. Failure to do so can result in removal from office.

- Section VI. Regulations
  - The list of the committees shall be stated in Appendix VI of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government. Since issues facing the SGA can and do change throughout the years, the names and purposes of the committees shall be
chosen by the executive cabinet during SGA training. Therefore the list and the Appendix shall be updated prior to each academic year. The committees may also change throughout the year if a committee has completed all of its tasks in the eyes of the executive cabinet. If this occurs, the President has the right to dissolve the completed committee and name a new committee. By default, the members of the old committee shall become members of the newly created committee.

- **Section VII. Procedures**
  - Meetings shall occur at an allotted time slot within the regularly scheduled General Assembly meeting. This time slot shall be announced by the President at each meeting prior to breaking up into committees.
  - The secretary of each committee shall be appointed by the Committee Chair, therefore cannot be a member of the Executive Cabinet.
  - Each meeting, the secretary of the committee must review the previous meeting’s minutes and updates shall be provided on the aforementioned topics.
  - Each meeting shall include a workshop consisting of discussion explaining how the information presented can be used to further advance progress of the goal.

**Article VII. Amendments**

- **Section I. Definition**
  - An amendment shall be defined as any change to the physical wording and content of the Constitution of the SGA. An amendment could be an addition to the constitution, the removal of part of the constitution, or both.

- **Section II. Proposal of Amendment Procedure**
  - An amendment can be created by any elected member of the SGA.
  - The proposal must be typed and properly detailed. The author must also provide a written explanation to what would be changing within the constitution if this amendment passes.
  - The amendment must have five signatures in order to be formally proposed to the general assembly for voting:
    - The author, 2 members of the House of Representatives and 2 Senators
  - Once official, the amendment must be sent to the President to review and to be placed on the agenda for the next SGA Meeting. The President shall send out the proposed amendment via e-mail to the SGA prior to the next SGA meeting.

- **Section III. Presentation of Amendment Procedure**
  - This must only take place at an SGA meeting where there are at least 60% of the voting members present.
  - The author of the amendment shall present the amendment to the SGA, reading it thoroughly and providing any background information related to the creation of the amendment.
  - The author shall field questions from the General Assembly about the amendment; this process shall not to exceed ten minutes. After ten minutes have passed, the President shall then begin the ratification process.

- **Section IV. Ratification Process**
  - The President shall preside over the Ratification Process.
This process is set in place to make any changes (if felt necessary by the SGA) to the amendment as well as to pass the amendment.

- **Changes to Amendments**
  - Any elected member of SGA can propose a change, or amendment to the amendment. This must be done verbally and must be acknowledged by the President. Once acknowledged, the author of the change has the opportunity to explain the change. After explanation, the author shall field questions for no more than five minutes.
  - Once the time has elapsed, there shall be an immediate vote on the change to the amendment. The President shall conduct the vote, done by show of hands. A simply majority shall pass the change to the amendment.
    - There shall be a limit of only three possible changes of an amendment.

**Ratification of Amendment**

- After the change to the amendment process is completed, the amendment shall then proceed through the ratification phase. The President shall preside over this process.
  - The amendment shall be typed in its entirety and read to the entire general assembly.
  - One read, roll-call of all voting members shall be taken, and each member shall vote by proclaiming “yes”, “no” or “abstain”. To pass the amendment, at least 60% of the present voting members must vote “yes” to the amendment. If the amendment passes, it shall immediately alter the current SGA constitution. If the amendment fails vote, it must go through the amendment procedure again.

Last Updated: August 2013