



Constitution and By-Laws

“The Voice of The Students”

Table of Contents

Article I - Preamble to the Constitution	3
Article II - Name	3
Article III - Purpose	3
Article IV - Membership	4
Article V - Oath of Office	4
Article VI - The Constitution	5
Article VII - Branches of the Organization	5
Article VII. A - The Executive Branch: The Executive Council	5
Article VII. B - Legislative Branch: The Student Senate	9
Article VII. C - The Advisory Council	11
Article VIII- Impeachment	12
Article IX- Committees	13
Article X- Stipends	17
Article XI- Student Government Association Service Hours	18
Article XII- Elections	19
Article XIII – Notice of Nondiscrimination	22

Article I - Preamble to the Constitution

We, the students of Gaston College, do hereby stand to fulfill the purpose of the Student Government Association, which is to encourage student leadership and participation in the concerns and activities of Gaston College. This organization will provide both social activities and learning opportunities for students to encourage students in such endeavors. This organization will promote individual student growth, good citizenship, a unified spirit, a positive image of the college, and quality education. We, the students of Gaston College, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

Article II - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of Gaston College.

Article III - Purpose

The Student Government Association (SGA), as governing body, of Gaston College seeks to maintain a healthy relationship between our students, faculty, staff, and community. Through a unified spirit, The Student Government Association will provide both educational and social activities, respectfully representing the voice and concerns of students for the improvement of our college environment and atmosphere. We will encourage and support other clubs and organizations to strive and achieve their maximum potential. The Student Government Association will be a forum for professionalism and leadership development by enhancing individual student growth.

Article IV - *Membership*

The SGA will act on behalf of any registered Gaston College student whose enrollment includes a student activity fee. These students shall vote in large for the members of the SGA; who can be any student who meets the requirements of candidacy for the legislative or executive council.

Article V - *Oath of Office*

By their first official meeting, all members of the Student Government Association will be required to take the following oath of office:

I, *(state your name)*, will act as a responsible student leader in my duty as liaison between the governing bodies of Gaston College. As *(insert office)* of The Student Government Association, I will represent all students and seek to maintain a healthy relationship between the students, faculty, staff, and administration. I will promote unity and serve as an active voice for the students of Gaston College.

Article VI - The Constitution

The constitution and by-laws shall be the working rules of the Student Government Association and will be subject to a change by a 2/3 majority vote of the Student Government Association Student Senate Representatives. The Executive Council of the Student Government Association will be entitled to propose revisions, additions, or deletions to this constitution. In addition, the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects and Student Government Association Advisors can change the constitution as they deem necessary. Robert's Rules of Order will be the orders followed by the Student Government Association in accordance with the Constitution, Policies, and Bylaws.

Article VII - Branches of the Organization

The Student Government Association shall consist of two branches: Executive and Legislative. These two branches shall be led by the Advisory Council.

Article VII. A - The Executive Branch: The Executive Council

Section I: The Executive Council shall consist of the following officers: President, Vice President, Parliamentarian, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section II: Candidates must have previously served as a Student Government Association (SGA) senator or be appointed by the SGA President and Advisory Council.

Section III: Candidates must be registered for at least six credit hours per the semesters of their term, hold a minimum 2.75 cumulative GPA, and be in good academic standing at the time of application.

Section IV: Executive Council members must maintain a 2.75 GPA and six credit hours throughout their term. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal by the Advisory Council. After removal students may request a prayer of judgment.

Section V: These officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Gaston College student body during spring elections.

Section VI: In the event of a vacancy, the SGA President may appoint an eligible senator, subject to approval by the Advisory Council and Student Senate. If the President appoints a senator into an Executive Council position this does not prevent them from running for the same executive position in future terms. If the President's position is vacated, the Vice President shall assume the role for the remainder of the term. This term as interim president does not prevent the candidate from running for presidency role in future terms.

Section VII: Executive Council members missing more than two Student Senate meetings and 50% of events, without excused absences, may face impeachment. The Advisory Council may recommend necessary action.

Section VIII: Each Executive Council term lasts one academic year, and members may serve only one term per position. However, they may hold a different Executive position in a future term to allow equal opportunities for Student Senate members.

Section IX: Each Executive Council member shall have one vote, with no voting by proxy. The President may vote only in the event of a tie.

Section X: In emergencies requiring immediate Student Senate action, the Executive Council, with the consent of the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects, may act and must report promptly to the Student Senate.

Section XI: No Executive Council member responsible for the chairing or acting as an ex-officio member of an assigned committee shall chair a standing committee of the Student Senate.

Section XII: Executive Council Members must serve a total of eighty office hours and ten hours of community service per semester. A minimum of two and a half In-office hours per week.

Section XIII: Responsibilities of the Executive Council are as follows

A. The President shall:

- Preside over Student Senate and Executive Council meetings as chief officer, appointing chairs as needed.
- Fill vacancies in the Student Senate and Executive Council with Student Senate approval; if not filled within 4 months, the Advisory Council may appoint.
- Appoint committee chairs and ad-hoc committees as needed.
- Represent SGA as an ex-officio Board of Trustees member.
- Vote only in the event of a tie in Student Senate or Executive Council meetings.
- Act as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Appoint Executive Council members if needed.
- Maintain knowledge of the SGA Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order.

B. The Vice President shall

- Perform responsibilities assigned by the President and Student Senate.
- Represent SGA as chair of the Inter-Club Council (ICC) or appoint an alternate.
- Assume the President's responsibilities in their absence or incapacity to do so.
- Serve on ad-hoc committees as appointed by the President.
- Maintain knowledge of the SGA Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order.

C. The Parliamentarian shall:

- Perform responsibilities assigned by the President and Student Senate.
- Ensure meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order and the SGA Constitution.
- Train new members in parliamentary procedure.
- Assist with motions, resolutions, and maintaining order in meetings.
- Ensure adherence to agendas and time schedules in SGA Business meetings.
- Chair Student Senate meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- Act as ex-officio member of all standing committees and attend at least one standing committee meeting per month.

D. The Secretary shall:

- Record and distribute minutes of Executive Council and Student Senate meetings.
- Assist the President in preparing and distributing business meeting agendas.
- Maintain all SGA records, including committee, Student Senate, and Executive Council proceedings.

- Chair Student Senate meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President and Parliamentarian.
- Serve on ad hoc committees as appointed.
- Maintain knowledge of the SGA Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order.

E. The Treasurer shall:

- Manage SGA funds with oversight from the Gaston College Business Office and SGA Advisory Council.
- Prepare financial requisitions and maintain budget records.
- Provide monthly financial reports to the Student Senate.
- Chair meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President, Parliamentarian, and Secretary.
- Serve on ad hoc committees as appointed by the president.
- Maintain knowledge of the SGA Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order.

Article VII. B - *Legislative Branch: The Student Senate*

Section I: The Student Senate shall consist of nine senators elected by the student body during spring elections or appointed by the Student Government Association in the event of an open seat.

Section II: Candidates must be registered for at least six credit hours per semester of their term, maintain a minimum 2.50 cumulative GPA, and be in good academic standing at the time of application. Failure to maintain academic standing or required credit hours will result in immediate removal by the Advisor unless the Executive Council grants an exemption due to severe circumstance

Section III: If senator positions become vacant, the Executive Council and Advisory Council may appoint eligible students to fill them. Appointed senators shall complete the term of the member they replace.

Section IV: Senators must fulfill tasks assigned by the Executive Council or Student Senate. Failure to attend more than two Student Senate meetings and 40% of events without an excused absence may result in impeachment, as determined by the Executive Council and Advisory Council.

Section V: Senators serve a fall to spring academic year term and hold one vote each, with no voting by proxy.

Section VI: A quorum consists of a simple majority of the Student Senate, including the Executive Council.

Section VII: Any SGA member may present a petition or proposed resolution in writing at a Student Senate meeting. A vote must be delayed by at least one meeting if deemed necessary. Any member may address the Student Senate for a reasonable time on college-related issues.

Section VIII: The Student Senate shall follow Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) unless they conflict with this Constitution and bylaws, in which case the Constitution and bylaws take precedence.

Section IX: The Duties of a senator are as follows:

- Appropriate funds for activities sponsored by the Student Government Association.
- Plan and establish social and cultural activities of the Student Government Association.
- Establish rules, consistent with administrative policy, regulating student behavior at college sponsored activities on campus

- Serve as a member of any standing or ad hoc committees.
- Serve at least forty office hours a semester and ten hours of community service.
Serving at minimum two-and-a-half in-office hours per week.
- Have a good understanding of the Student Government Association
Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order.
- Attend two Committee Meetings a month. Missing more than 4 committee meetings a year may result in appraisal by the Executive and Advisory Councils.

Article VII. C - *The Advisory Council*

Section I: The purpose of the Advisory Council should be to advise based on their wealth of knowledge of the Student Government Association.

Section II: The Advisory Council shall consist of the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects of Gaston College and/or such person's designee(s) appointed by The Dean of Student Development and Support Services and or the Vice President for Student Services.

Section III: The Advisory Council shall act as a resource to the Executive Council and the Student Senate. They shall attend its meetings and shall have authority to adjust the Student Senate's budget and decision making as deemed necessary.

Section IV: The Advisory Council may have the right to convene with any senator or executive officer if infractions against this constitution are committed.

Section V: If any Senator or Executive Council member fails to increase their participation or quality of work after an intervention, the Advisory Council may announce the member's inconsistency to the Student Senate. The Student Senate may then decide as to whether impeachment is appropriate.

Section VI: The Advisory Council may make revisions, additions, or deletions to the constitution, which will then be adopted by the approval of the Student Senate.

Section VII: The Advisory Council shall be recognized by the Chair in the same manner as voting members to discuss, debate, and/or advise on any matters under consideration.

Section VIII: The Advisory Council will not be allowed to vote.

Article VIII- Impeachment

Section I: The following are grounds for impeachment:

- Any violation of Gaston College's Student Code of Conduct.
- Inappropriate virtual and/or in-person actions brought before the Advisory Council.
- Negligence of one's duties and responsibilities as outlined in this Constitution.
- Failure to comply with any part of this Constitution.
- Reasons stated in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section II: The Student Senate will bring forth grounds for impeachment and, once quorum is met, it will be voted on by a 2/3 majority vote.

Section III: An individual may oppose impeachment and present a case to the Student Senate where they may receive a prayer of judgement from the Executive Council and Student Senate.

Article IX- Committees

Section I: There shall be two types of committees

- Standing Committees – Permanent committees essential to SGA operations.
- Ad Hoc Committees – Temporary committees formed as needed by the President or Advisory Council.

Section II: Committee Chairs shall:

- Create a log of Committee attendance to be presented to the Student Senate during scheduled business meetings.
- Lead their respective committees and appoint members from the Student Senate.
- Be elected by a majority vote of committee members unless otherwise designated by the President or Advisory Council.
- Report on committee meetings to the Student Senate at scheduled meetings.
- Schedule and notify members of committee meetings, which must occur at least twice per month unless special circumstances arise. Failure to schedule two standing meetings will result in appraisal of the Executive and Advisory Council.
- Maintain written records of committee work, including meeting minutes and agendas.

- Work with the President and Advisory Council to build committee membership.
- Act as the committee's spokesperson when appropriate.
- Set and lead committee agendas, delegate tasks, and involve all members in decision-making.

Section III: The following are the standing committees of the SGA:

- Inter-Club Council (ICC)
- Constitution Committee
- Public Information Committee (PIC)
- Campus Activities Committee (CAC)

Section IV: Inter-Club Council shall:

- Be chaired by the Vice President of the Student Government Association.
- Represent the clubs of Gaston College.
- Be made up of one or more representatives from every documented Gaston College club to the best of the Committee's ability.
- Develop and maintain structure through a constitution approved by the Student Government Association.
- Form bylaws, policies, and activities, which will be followed within the council upon approval from the Student Government Association.

- The bylaws and policies shall consist of governance of attendance, club suspension or recognition, the appointment of the ICC Chair, or other club related matter.
- The Constitution, bylaws, policies, and activities made by the council may not go against the Constitution or policies of the Student Government Association.

Section V: Constitution Committee shall:

- Be chaired by the Secretary of the Student Government Association. If the Secretary role is vacant, the committee should be chaired by the Parliamentarian. If the Parliamentarian role is vacant, a chair shall be appointed by the President.
- Review the Constitution at least once every two years.
- Make recommendations to the Student Senate for appropriate additions, revisions, and deletions that will be suggested with intentions to improve the Student Government Association for the students of Gaston College.
- Study any topic that is appointed by the President, Student Senate, or Advisory Council.

Section VII: Public Information Committee shall:

- Be chaired by a Senator member elected by a majority of committee members.
- Assist in creating posts, images, videos, flyers, and captions that will be posted on SGA social media accounts.

- Promote a good public image of the SGA and Gaston College.
- Promote events organized by the SGA and the Office of Student Life.
- Promote academic and wellness advice.
- Promote national, cultural, and international holidays, and awareness days/weeks/months.
- Publicize community involvement and accomplishments by SGA members and Gaston College students.
- Receive approval from the Advisory Council before publishing.

Section VIII: Campus Activities Committee shall:

- Be chaired by a Senator member elected by a majority of committee members.
- Plan and organize social events for the campus.
- Provide inclusive events for all students at Gaston College.
- Reach out to companies, businesses and representatives in the community for collaborations on events.
- Have a Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC) Liaison be appointed by the Executive and Advisory Council. This liaison shall report at each Gaston College SGA business meeting.
- If no Senator is interested in chairing the committee, the President has the power to appoint an SGA member to serve as acting committee chair until a Senator is elected into the position.
- If no volunteers come forward from Campus Activities Committee the President will appoint any member of the SGA deemed most qualified.

- Share their minutes to the Public Information Committee within forty-eight hours of the meeting.

Section IX: Ad-Hoc Committees shall be made by the Executive or Advisory Council as needed.

Section X: All committees must meet at least twice per month unless special circumstances arise.

Missing more than four committee meetings per year without a valid excuse is grounds for appraisal by the SGA Advisory Council, Executive Board, and Student Senate.

Article X- Stipends

Section I: In order for The Student Government Association Senators to be eligible for compensation up to \$300 per semester for services rendered, dispersed on a prorated basis, they must meet the following guidelines:

- Maintain a 2.50 grade point average per semester.
- No more than three unexcused absences per semester.
- Carry at least six credit hours per semester.
- Fulfill all office and community services required for Senators.

Section II: In order for The Student Government Association Executive Council members to be eligible for compensation up to \$600 per semester for services rendered, dispersed on a prorated basis, they must meet the following guidelines:

- Maintain a 2.75 grade point average per semester.
- No more than two unexcused absences per semester.

- Carry at least six credit hours per semester.
- Fulfill all office and community services required for Executive Council members.

Section III: Stipends will be increased to any Gaston College student who serves on a Gaston College school-wide committee, on behalf of the Office of Student Life or the SGA, by \$50-\$100 per semester per committee. The Advisory Council will select the amount of money disbursed based on the activity of the committee.

Section IV: Stipends may be prorated according to the time served and portrayal of willingness as deemed by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.

Section V: The Advisory Council has the right to eliminate the amount of an individual's stipend based on their hours and commitment to the Student Government Association.

Article XI- Student Government Association Service Hours

Section I: Community Service Hours

- Executive Council members and Senators are required to complete a minimum of ten hours of community service per semester.

Section II: Office Hours

Subsection A: In-Office Service Hours

- Any SGA related time spent in the Office of Student Life may be counted as office hours as deemed fit by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.
- Any inquiries about office hours may be referred to the Advisory Council.

Subsection B: Out-of-Office Service Hours

- Representing the Gaston College Student Government Association at recognized SGA opportunities such as:
 - i. North Carolina Comprehensive Community College Student Government Association (N4CSGA) student leadership events
 - ii. Student Government Association planned on-campus events
- Independent work or study correlated to mandated Student Government Association responsibilities.
- Any inquiries about out of office hours may be referred to The Advisory Council.

Article XII- Elections

Section I: Any student who meets the requirements that are outlined in the Gaston College Student Government Association Constitution is eligible to run for a Senator position.

Section II: Executive Council Positions can only be ran for by previous Senators of the Student Government Association that meet the outlined requirements of the Student Government Association Constitution and By-Laws. In the case of there not being a returning senator that is interested in an Executive Council position, the most qualified applicant may be able to attain an Executive Council position with the support of the Advisory Council. Assuming there is no candidate running for the Executive Council position, one may be appointed by the Advisory Council.

Section III: Any student who meets the requirements that are outlined in the Gaston College Student Government Association Constitution and By-Laws, and is interested in serving on the Student Government Association must apply by completing the application supplied by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.

Section IV: Campaigning shall go as follows:

- All posters displayed on bulletin boards must be limited to 8 ½ by 11 size.
- A copy of any campaigning materials must be given to the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.
- Campaign materials on mirrors, windows, painted surfaces, and/or pavement are prohibited.
- Any campaign materials shall be in accordance with the Gaston College Student Code of Conduct.

Section V: Polls and Voting shall go as follows:

- The name of the candidate, as well as the position they are running for will be placed on the ballot.
- Online voting will take place upon the determination of a date by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.
- The dates for the polls will be published online.

Section VI: Recounts must be held as follows:

- Recounts will be available if probable cause is determined by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.
- A candidate must file for a recount within 3 days of the released votes. The Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects will ask appropriate persons for a recount.
- The findings will be final.

Section VII: Complaints shall be handled as follows:

- Submitted within a 24-hour window of the day of the incident.
- No one may tamper with anyone's campaign materials. If they do, appropriate actions will be taken by the Coordinator of Student Life and Special Projects.
- Any candidate found tampering with campaign materials will automatically be disqualified and proper action will be taken in accordance with Gaston College's Student Code of Conduct.

Section VIII: Upon submission of application material, all non-returning students interested in joining the Student Government Association must attend one SGA Information Session in order to be eligible to run for election.

- The dates for this session shall be set forth by the Advisory Council.

Article XIII- *Notice of Nondiscrimination*

Section I: Gaston College is an equal opportunity institution providing educational and employment opportunities, programs, services, and activities, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, age, or veteran status.

Inquiries regarding equal opportunity should be directed to: Chief of Staff for Employees or Vice President for Student Services for Students.