

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Student Body Constitution



Article *Please Note: Amended Changes Highlighted*

I. Preamble

We the student body of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, in an effort to establish ourselves as a responsible unit for democratic self-government, further the rights and obligations of all students, and initiate stimulating and rewarding activities for the betterment of the University and civic community, do ordain and establish this Constitution, within the structure established and subscribed to by the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

All students by virtue of their home-campus registration at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg Campus are members of the St. Petersburg Campus Student Body and are granted all the rights and privileges of this Constitution. Just as a good classroom experience is vital to a student's academic excellence, the co-curricular experiences that a student has through leadership opportunities is crucial to a student's desire to contribute to community, while developing skills that they can use in their lives away from the university.

The Student Government Association of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, hereinafter referred to as 'Student Government' or 'SG', shall represent the interests and concerns of students to the larger university community, while working to build an excitingly vibrant life on campus for students. The elected leadership of the SG, along with the general student body, will work together to realize these goals. Because every student is created equal, the differential treatment of a student based on factors including, but not limited to, race, creed, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender status, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, parental status, disability, personal wealth, or any combination thereof, is deemed unacceptable. The denial of due process or the infringement of the substantive rights of any student will not be tolerated.

The elected leadership of the SG will meet weekly with the Director of Student Life to address issues that impact the lives of students at the university. The Director of Student Life, in turn, will work with the SG leadership to ensure that students' voices are heard by the leadership of the university, that students are represented on appropriate university committees, and that student input is sought by University leadership when making important university decisions.

Article II. Structure Overview and Elected Leadership

Section I: There are three branches that make up the official structure and leadership of the USF St. Petersburg Student Government; the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Each branch shall hold meetings independent of one another, and charged with establishing and updating their respective rules of procedure. On campus student organizations are the manifestations of students' interests and concerns. SG branches further detailed under Article's III, IV, V.

Section II: The general student body of USF St. Petersburg elects the members of the Executive and Legislative branches, which include the positions of Student Body President & Vice-President, the Student Body Treasurer, and members of the Student Body Senate. Judicial branch Justices are nominated by the Student Body President and confirmed with Senate Consent. Election processes further defined under the

SG Statutes & the Elections Procedures Act.

Section III: The Executive Cabinet, consisting of the Student Body President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Department & Agency Directors, together with the Student Senate and Student Judicial Court, are charged to collaborate with one another and with the student body to ensure that students' voices are heard and effectively communicated and whose interests are known throughout the University. This process shall be facilitated by several means, including through the Judicial, Executive, & Legislative ('JEL') Commission; detailed under the SG Statutes.

Section IV: The Student Body Senate shall consist of a Senate President, Senate President Pro Tempore, and Senators (either elected or appointed) who represent specific colleges within the university. The Senate President and President Pro Tempore shall be nominated and confirmed from within the sitting members of the Senate at the beginning of each fall and spring semester. Details are further defined under Article IV, SG Statutes, & Senate Rules of Procedure.

Section V: All candidates for the Office of Student Body President and Vice President shall form joint candidacies so that each voter shall cast a single vote for a candidate for President and a candidate for Vice President.

Article III. Executive Branch

The administrative authority of the student body shall be vested in the Student Body Executive branch. The Executive branch shall be comprised of the Student Body President, Vice President, Treasurer, Department and Agency Directors, and all other executive officials hired or volunteering. Members of the Executive branch are the most visible and active members of the SG who work closely with the Director of Student Life to address students' concerns at the University. The Executive branch sets a vision for student-driven co-curricular life. Additional duties further defined under SG Statutes and Executive Rules of Procedure.

Section I: Student Body President-

1. Represents and reflects the views of the entire student body to the broader university community.
2. Creating and articulating the vision of Student Government.
3. Upholds the SG constitution.
4. Oversees SG and ensures that the organization runs smoothly.
5. Shall inform and advise the Student Body Senate at least once each fall and spring semester, and on other occasions at the invitation of the Senate, on the issues and progress of the USF St. Petersburg campus. An annual State of the Campus address shall be given by the President before the Student Body, Senate, and Student Judicial Court.
6. Serves as Student Representative to the Campus Board.
7. Member of the Judicial, Executive, & Legislative Commission.
8. Shall have the power to nominate and, by and with the consent of the Senate, appoint Directors who will head Agencies and Departments. Department & Agency Directors shall be responsible for creating, amending, and enforcing their Department/Agency's rules of procedure. The terms of office for Department and Agency Directors shall be from the time of confirmation by the Senate until the termination of the President's term. All other hired or volunteering executive officials, not in charge of Departments or Agencies, shall serve until the termination of the President's term. The President can remove Department and Agency Directors, with the consent of the Senate, during his/her term of office.

Section II: Student Body Vice President-

1. Fulfills the role of the President's position when President is absent.
2. Executing the vision of Student Government, as set forth by the President.
3. Member of the Judicial, Executive, & Legislative Commission.

Section III: Student Body Treasurer-

1. Chair of the Budget Committee.
2. Shall have the authority on behalf of the budget committee for all Student Government expenditures: the budget committee's structure shall be defined in SG statutes.
3. Shall prepare and present each new fiscal budget for the expenditure of Activity & Service Fee funds to the Senate in the spring, and the annual student organization budgets.
4. Provides budget updates at the request of the Senate; additionally, shall provide the Senate with a current, comprehensive budget summary of Activity and Service Fee expenditures every two academic weeks throughout the Fall and Spring semesters.
5. Prepares the Student Government allocations manual distributed to student organizations and makes changes to financial processes with the approval of the SG Senate.

Article IV. Legislative Branch

The legislative authority of the student body shall be vested in the Student Body Senate, hereinafter referred to as the Senate. The Senate is charged to amend the SG constitution, recognizing student organizations through funding, approving fee increases, and vote on all SG issues. Members of the Senate represent specific populations within USF St. Petersburg community. The Senators shall represent the interests of their respective colleges. No Senator may hold an office or position in any other branch of Student Government. Additional duties further defined under SG Statutes and Senate Rules of Procedure.

Section I: The number of students enrolled in each college shall be determined by the Director of Admissions at the conclusion of each fall semester, and shall be the basis for determining the number of senators from each college for the general election in the spring. The Senate is composed of senators from the following areas: College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, and Undeclared

Section II: All undergraduate members of the Senate shall be enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours at USF St. Petersburg and all graduate members of the Senate shall be enrolled for a minimum of four credit hours during the fall and spring semesters. Summer semester requirement shall be provided by statute.

Section III: The Senate shall have the authority to enact, amend or repeal statutes of Student Government by a majority vote. The Senate shall also have the authority to enact resolutions, memorials, and its own rules of procedure.

Section IV: The Senate may propose, by a two-thirds vote, constitutional amendments. Complete amendment process further defined in Article VIII.

Section V: The Senate must approve or decline, by a majority vote, nominations of the President requiring the Senate's consent. The Senate's failure to act on any such presidential appointment within ten academic days shall be deemed approval of such appointment.

Section VI: The Senate may override, by a two-thirds vote, a veto by the Student Body President.

Section VII: The Senate shall have the power to initiate impeachment hearings of any person in Student Government. Impeachment charges are then tried by the Student Judicial Court; further detailed under the SG statutes.

Section VIII: The Senate shall assemble in weekly open meetings for the deliberation of legislation and the business of the student body. The Senate shall provide for the compilation and publication of all legislation to the student body. The Senate shall establish means through which the student body can actively participate in the formulation of policies that affect them. No member may hold an office in any other branch, agency, or department of Student Government during his/her term of office in the legislative branch.

Section IX: The Senate shall have the power to establish any committee necessary to the operation of the Senate. The Senate President shall nominate committee chairs, and shall be approved by majority vote in the Senate. Committees shall consist of members of the Senate appointed by committee chairs. Minutes

and attendance of each committee meeting shall be recorded and put on file with the Senate President Pro Tempore.

Section X: The Senate shall elect, within members of the Senate, a Senate President at the beginning of each fall and spring semester; in addition, a Senate President shall be elected for summer by all recently elected senators at the second Senate meeting following each annual election in April. As chairperson of the Senate, the Senate President shall have no voting authority, except in the event of a tie among voting members. No one may be nominated for or elected to the position of Senate President who has not or will not have served at least one full semester in the Senate by the time they would take office. The Student Government Statutes, and the Senate Rules of Procedure, shall further detail the duties of the Senate President.

Section XI: The Senate shall elect, within members of the Senate, a Senate President Pro Tempore at the beginning of each fall and spring semester; in addition a Senate President Pro Tempore shall be elected for summer by all recently elected senators at the second Senate meeting following each annual election in April. No one may be nominated for or elected to the position of Senate President Pro Tempore who has not or will not have served at least one full semester in the Senate by the time they would take office. Duties shall be further detailed in the Student Government Statutes and Senate Rules of Procedures.

Section XII: The Senate President and Senate President Pro Tempore may be subject to a vote of confidence by the Senate. He/she may be removed from the position of Senate President/Senate President Pro Tempore upon a 2/3 vote in the Senate.

Section XIII: One-half plus one of the elected or appointed voting members of the Student Senate shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business. Proxy votes are not allowed.

Section XIV: Elected Senators shall serve a one-year term of office, from May 1st through April 30th. Appointed members shall serve until April 30th.

Article V. Judicial Branch

Section I: The judicial power of Student Government shall be vested in the Student Body Judicial Court. The Court shall have jurisdiction over all cases and controversies involving Student Government, including the power to declare any act of the Executive branch, the Senate or Student Organizations unconstitutional. The Court may hear violations of the student code of conduct at the discretion of the Dean of Students and/or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The Court shall have the authority over hearing and deciding on interpretation disputes of this Constitution, and SG By-Laws/Statutes. Additional duties further defined under SG Statutes and Judicial Rules of Procedure.

Section II: The Judicial Court shall try all cases of impeachment brought by the Senate.

Section III: The Judicial Court shall adopt rules for its practices and procedures. These rules may be repealed by statute enacted by two-thirds vote of the Senate.

Section IV: The Judicial Court will be comprised of five Justices; a Chief Justice, a Ranking Justice, and three Associate Justices. The President shall nominate and, by and with the Consent of the Senate, appoint Justices. Judicial Court nominees shall first receive a majority vote from members of the Legislative Affairs Committee in order to proceed to a Senate vote; pursuant to the committee's duties listed under the SG Statutes. The Chief Justice shall preside at all sessions of the Court. The Chief Justice and Ranking Justice shall serve as members of the Judicial, Executive, & Legislative Commission. The title of Ranking Justice shall be given to the senior-most Associate Justice on the Court.

Section V: Cases of impeachment of a Justice shall be tried by a Senate Judicial Committee. The Judicial Committee shall be composed of five Senators. A Justice may not be removed from office except on a majority vote of the Judicial Committee and two-thirds vote in the full Senate.

Section VI: The Student Judicial Court shall have the power to summon a member of the Student Government with majority vote.

Section VII: Justices shall serve for two consecutive years, beginning the day they are sworn into office. Justices may be re-nominated by the Student Body President. No Justice may hold an office or position in any other branch of Student Government.

Section VIII: All members of the Judicial Court shall be enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours at USF St. Petersburg during the fall and spring semesters. Members must have a minimum GPA of 2.00. Summer semester requirement shall be provided by statute.

Section IX: The Chief Justice of the Judicial Court shall be charged with administering the oath of office (Article VI, Section VIII) to newly elected SG members during the SG inauguration ceremony in April, as well as to newly appointed Senate members.

Article VI. Operating Procedures

Section I: All members of the SG elected leadership must: (SG elected leadership refers to elected members of the Executive branch and the Senate)

1. Be in good standing with the University. No member in the SG elected leadership may be under disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. Should a member be placed under disciplinary probation while in office, the Student Judicial Court must rule the member eligible in order to continue to hold their office-**in order for a member to be considered eligible the Judicial Court must find them capable of fulfilling their responsibilities with discipline and integrity.**
2. Those serving in the SG elected leadership, at the time of election and during the term of office, shall have a minimum 2.00 GPA.
3. Be currently enrolled as a student at USF St. Petersburg and have identified USF St. Petersburg as their home campus.
4. Fulfill the obligations of his/her elected position.
5. Attend weekly SG meetings and other special meetings as required.
6. Be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours as undergraduate students or four credit hours as a graduate student.

Section II: Meetings of the SG elected leadership-

Senate and Executive Cabinet meetings shall be called on a weekly basis. This will not apply to regularly scheduled breaks or during the first and last week of each fall and spring semester. A special Senate meeting may be called by quorum of the voting Senate members.

Section III: For purposes of this constitution, rules of procedure are guidelines independently established by each branch of Student Government in detailing numerous operational procedures as it pertains to effectively proceeding and carrying out each branch's responsibilities and business for the student body.

Section IV: For purposes of this Constitution, 'Senate Consent' means an affirmative majority vote in the Senate.

Section V: In the event the Student Body President resigns, is impeached, or is unable to perform the duties of the office, the Vice President shall be sworn in as President.

Section VI: In the event the Student Body Vice President resigns, is impeached, or is unable to perform the duties of the office, the President shall nominate and, by and with the Consent of the Senate, appoint a new Vice President

Section VII: In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice President at the time of vacancy of the office of President, the order of succession shall be the Senate President, Senate President Pro-Tempore, Chief Justice of the Judicial Court.

Section VIII: Swearing in of new SG members-

1. Before all new members of Student Government, both Executive and Senate (who are elected during the spring elections) begin to execute the duties of their office at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, he/she shall take the following oath before the Student Body of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg during the SG inauguration ceremony: -"I (name) do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the Office of Student Government (office to which they are assuming) of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Student Body Constitution of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg."

2. The Chief Justice of the Student Judicial Court shall be charged with administering the oath of office to new SG members. Judicial Court nominees shall take the same oath of office immediately upon confirmation in the Senate. The SG inauguration ceremony shall be held together with the USF St. Petersburg honor awards ceremony in April.

3. Elected Executive members and Senate members shall serve a one-year term of office from May 1st through April 30th. Appointed members shall serve until April 30th.

Article VII. Fund Appropriation Procedures

Section I - The Student Body President, together with the Treasurer, shall initiate and present a budget for the fiscal year to the Senate for approval by a majority vote.

Section II - The President may amend the budget with a two-thirds approval of the Senate.

Section III - The Senate shall approve or decline the yearly budget with majority vote and any budgetary amendments presented by the President.

Section IV - The Student Government shall keep a minimum amount of funds in the Student Activity & Service Fund- this amount shall never drop below 5% of the Activity and Service Fee funds allocated for a given year. The SG statutes can increase the minimum requirements.

Section V - Student Government shall formulate policy and procedures pertaining to all student activities, functions, and benefits funded by Activity & Service Fee Funds, in accordance with Activity & Service Fee guidelines dictated by the Florida State Legislature and other regulatory bodies.

Section VI - Student Government shall be the regulatory body dispersing Activity & Service Fee Funds at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, to include all Activity & Service Fee Funds generated by Student Government.

Article VIII. Constitutional Amendments

The Senate reserves the right to amend this constitution:

Section I - The Senate shall be held responsible for the amending process of this Constitution. Prior to any Student Government meetings which intend to discuss the amendment of this Constitution, the proposed amendment(s) shall be published and publicized to the Student Body at least one week prior to discussion.

Section II - Amendments to this Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds vote in the Senate, and a two-thirds vote of the student body among those students voting.

Section III - A town hall meeting shall be held two weeks prior to the student body vote, conducted by representatives from the Senate, for the purpose of informing students of final proposed changes. Meeting shall be published and publicized to the Student Body at least one week prior.

Section IV- A proposed amendment(s), together with the parts of the Constitution affected and the dates/times of the student body vote, shall be published in the student newspaper of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg at least three weeks or three issues, whichever comes first, prior to the student body vote.

Section V - Proposed Statute amendments shall gain a majority vote in the Senate. Statutes may be enacted to supplement each article of this Constitution.

Article IX. Governing Acts

SG will utilize additional documents which will govern the activities of the Student Government at USF St. Petersburg. These documents will include the following:

1. Elections procedures act: This document details all policies and procedures related to student body elections including candidate requirements, campaigning procedures, and guidelines for the Election Rules Committee.

2. Financial procedures act: This document details all policies and procedures related to the Student Government allocation of A&S fees. In addition, the document will provide instruction to student

organizations on the appropriate use of student fees and the ways in which SG will distribute funds to these organizations.