



METHODIST UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Constitution

PREAMBLE

We, the students at Methodist University, having faith in the ability of the students to govern themselves in accordance with and subject to the policies of the Board of Trustees of Methodist University, do establish this constitution to promote and protect the general welfare of the students and the University.

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Student Government Association of Methodist University, hereafter known as SGA.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of the Student Government Association is to serve as elected leaders who uphold the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of the student body, while governing and serving as a liaison between the student body and administration at Methodist University. We strive to create a campus of engaged students who are empowered to take initiative in enriching their MU journey.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Student Government Association herein established shall consist of all individuals elected by the student body as outlined in Article VIII.

A. Members of the Student Government Association must:

- a. Be enrolled as a full---time undergraduate or graduate student at Methodist University. Full---time is defined as taking at least twelve (12) semester hours or the number of hours needed to satisfy the requirements of graduation.
- b. Be in overall good disciplinary standing with the University.
- c. Maintain an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0.

- B. Student Government Association members must meet these requirements upon election or appointment and for their term in office.

ARTICLE IV EXECUTIVE BRANCH

A. Definition

- a. The Executive powers herein granted shall be vested in the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Justice of the SGA.
- b. The Executive officers shall be elected by the student body in a general election to serve concurrent terms of one (1) year.
- c. No person other than a full---time undergraduate student at Methodist University shall be eligible to be elected to or hold the office of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Chief Justice of the SGA.
- d. The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Justice of the SGA shall receive, for services rendered, a stipend, which shall neither be increased nor decreased during their term of office.

The Dean of Students shall determine and review the amount of the stipend and the manner of distribution.

- e. Before entering office, the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Justice shall take an oath of office which shall be administered by the outgoing SGA President.
- f. During their terms of office, the Executive Officers of the SGA shall not be appointed or elected to any other office in the SGA, except in the event of filling a vacancy as legislated by Article IV, Section C of the SGA Constitution.

- B. The executive council shall consist of five (5) elected executive officers of the SGA, shall function as the executive branch of SGA, and shall execute the decisions of the Student Senate.

a. President:

- i. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the SGA, therefore being responsible for the overall management of the organization and coordination of the organization to execute, enforce, and carry out the constitution.
- ii. The President shall report to the SGA at least once per semester on the state of the SGA.
- iii. The President shall have ex---officio membership on all subsidiary bodies of the SGA.
- iv. The President shall be the liaison between the SGA Advisor and the Executive Council.
- v. The President shall represent the student body on the Methodist University Board of Trustees as an ex---officio member without vote.

b. Vice President:

- i. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in his/her absence.
 - ii. The Vice President shall serve as President of the Student Senate.
 - iii. The Vice President shall have ex-officio membership on all subsidiary bodies of the Student Senate.
 - iv. The Vice President shall serve as Chairperson of the Awards Committee.
 - c. Secretary:
 - i. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all the meetings of the Executive Council and the SGA.
 - ii. The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying SGA members of upcoming meetings/events and maintain attendance records for all meetings.
 - iii. All clerical work connected with the Student Senate is the Secretary's duty.
 - iv. The Secretary shall serve as the Chairperson for the Public Relations Committee.
 - v. The Secretary shall also appoint an assistant who must:
 - 1. Be an active and current senator.
 - 2. Be an undergraduate student who is not a senior.
 - 3. Be willing to learn the Secretary position for potential future use.
 - 4. Assist the Secretary with all duties they may need help with.
 - d. Treasurer:
 - i. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all the financial matters of the SGA and its subsidiary branches.
 - ii. The Treasurer shall report to the Student Senate once a month on the financial status of the SGA.
 - iii. The Treasurer shall oversee the operations budget of the SGA in conjunction with the Executive Council.
 - iv. The Treasurer shall serve as the Chairperson of the SGA Finance Committee.
 - v. The Treasurer shall also appoint an assistant who must:
 - 1. Be an active and current senator.
 - 2. Be an undergraduate student who is not a senior.
 - 3. Be willing to learn the Treasurer position for potential future use.
 - 4. Assist the Treasurer with all duties they may need help with.
 - e. Chief Justice:
 - i. The Chief Justice shall be responsible for all the judicial matters of the SGA and its subsidiary branches.
 - ii. The Chief Justice shall serve as Chairperson of the Student Judicial Committee.

C. Vacancies

- a. Removal of the President

- i. In the case that the President is removed from the office due to resignation or judicial action, the Vice President shall immediately assume the office and duties of President.
 - ii. In the case that the President is unable or unfit to carry out the duties and powers of office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the office and duties of the President.
 - iii. An inability to carry out the duties and powers of the President shall be brought to the floor by any member of the SGA but shall be determined by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Student Senate.
- b. Removal of Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Chief Justice
 - i. In the case that the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Chief Justice is removed from the office due to resignation or judicial action, a member from within SGA shall be nominated by members of the SGA to assume the office and duties.
 - ii. An inability to carry out the duties and powers of the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Chief Justice shall be brought to the floor by any member of the SGA but shall be determined by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Student Senate.

D. Qualifications for Executive Council Positions

- a. A candidate for office as an Executive Council member shall have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average to seek or hold office.
- b. Candidates for President and Vice President shall:
 - i. Have attained at least Junior Class status prior to their assumption of office.
 - ii. Have attended Methodist University for at least two (2) consecutive semesters prior to the term of office.
 - iii. Have served within the Legislative Branch or Judicial Branch of SGA for at least two (2) consecutive semesters immediately before the office term.
- c. Candidates for Secretary and Treasurer shall:
 - i. Have attained at least Sophomore Class status prior to their assumption of office.
 - ii. Have attended Methodist University for at least two (2) consecutive semesters prior to the term of office.
 - iii. Have served within the Legislative Branch or Judicial Branch of SGA for at least one (1) semester prior to the term of office.
- d. Candidates for Chief Justice Shall
 - i. To qualify for the office of Chief Justice, a candidate should be an undergraduate student who has served within the Student Community Court as an Associate Justice or Attorney General for at least one semester preceding the election and should have attained sophomore status prior to the assumption of office.

ARTICLE V LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

- A. The Student Senate shall have all legislative powers and function as the legislative body of the SGA.
- B. Membership
 - a. Twenty (20) senators shall be elected from the full---time student population. The senators shall have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average.
 - b. No person may be elected to or serve in the Student Senate, excluding the first-year class, unless he/she is in good academic standing, which is defined as having completed one full semester at Methodist University and having obtained a 2.5 cumulative grade point average.
 - c. After the first semester's completion, all first-year students must meet the criteria of all other senators, including at least twelve (12) semester hours completed, and they must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher. If they do not meet the qualifications after the Fall semester, they shall be excused from the Student Senate.
 - d. The Student Senate shall be equally representative of all academic classes.
- C. Duties and Responsibilities
 - a. The Student Senate shall discuss and act of its choice regarding any issue that, it determines, influences the students at Methodist University.
 - b. The Student Senate shall meet at least once a month to consider issues of student interest.
 - c. The Student Senate may establish any committees, commissions, task forces, or other sub-- bodies that it feels necessary to carry out the business of the SGA.
 - d. Everyone must maintain at least one office hour during each week, at which time the Senator must complete SGA work. If a Senator does not comply with this requirement, they will receive an email from the Secretary and set up a meeting with the Executive Board for reprimand.
 - e. Senators are required to submit an Office Hour Journal submission after their weekly office hours. Journal submissions must be turned in by 5pm on the day of the office hour. Submissions should be detailed with the SGA work completed and should include attachments to show progress.
 - f. Each Senator can make a proposal at any time during the academic school year. To have a proposal heard at an SGA meeting, the Senator must provide the information to the Secretary at least 2 days prior to the meeting.
 - g. Senators will be required to report at each Senate meeting. This report will be like their office hours submission. This time may also be used to discuss campus ideas, initiatives, and concerns.
- D. Club and Organization Approval
 - a. The Student Senate shall have the responsibility for approval of all applications by student groups to form clubs and organizations on the Methodist University campus.
 - i. The Approval process shall include the consideration by the Student Senate of a constitution of the organization, a proposed sponsor/advisor,

- and a list of at least ten (10) members, including a list of officers, to be presented by the officers of the organization at the regular SGA meeting.
 - ii. Negative decision regarding the approval of a charter by the Student Senate may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Decisions by the Vice President may be appealed to the President of the University.
- b. If the Senate approves the Constitution of a campus club or organization, such club or organization shall become an “approved campus organization.” That is, such organization may use campus facilities and may have an account with the Accounting Office of the University in which to deposit organizational funds, may request allocation from the SGA Finance Committee for special uses, and will gain the normal privileges and responsibilities of a university organization.
 - i. No student organization that is not an “approved campus organization” may use any campus facility, service, or account or be in any way affiliated with the college without the prior written permission of the Vice President of Student Affairs.
 - ii. Student Organizations are required to submit an updated SOC form every Fall semester. These should be submitted to the Campus Engagement Office. Updates will also be required as Executive Board and Advisor changes occur.
- c. All approved campus organizations, unless accepted by the Vice President for Student Affairs, must set up an account with the Office of Student Accounts of the college into which all funds acquired by the organization through any source must be deposited and from which all funds for any use of the organization must be expended. Violation of this requirement shall result in a one---semester removal of "approved campus organization" status on the first offense and permanent removal on a second offense within a three---year period.
- d. Approval of an organization as an "approved campus organization" does not mean that the SGA or the university supports the purposes, goals, or directions of the organization. In fact, such approval means only that the college and the SGA grant permission for the use of campus facilities and services by the organization.

E. Voting

- a. Each member of the Student Senate and the Executive Cabinet shall be permitted one vote.
- b. A quorum shall be necessary for business to be conducted at a meeting. A quorum is defined as half plus one of the current numbers of voting members.

F. Absences

- a. An absence consists of any event or meeting where an individual is not present for the entirety of the meeting; this includes but is not limited to leaving early and coming late to a meeting. This determination remains up to the executive cabinet's discretion.
- b. Any member of the SGA Legislative Branch is allowed only one (1) unexcused absence during an academic semester.

- c. Excused absences are approved at the discretion of the Executive Board on a case-by-case basis. Senators are limited to one (1) excused absence.
- d. Any member of the SGA must attend at least 85 percent of the SGA meetings if he or she wants to run for an Executive Board position.
- e. Any member having one (1) absence, excused or unexcused, during an academic semester shall receive a written censure from the Secretary, and a meeting with the executive board for reprimand. If a Senator reaches two (2) absences they will have a meeting with the Executive board, at which time, the Executive Board will determine further sanctions.
- f. The Executive Board has the right to terminate a Senators time in office if that Senator reaches two (2) absences.
- g. In the case of an appeal due to excessive absences a committee will be formed consisting of:
 - i. The SGA President
 - ii. Three (3) senators chosen at random
- G. The Student House of Representatives shall serve as a second legislative branch of the SGA. All decisions made by the Student House of Representatives must be approved by the Student Senate before the decision is final.
- H. The Secretary of Minutes shall be an appointed senator from the Student Senate.
 - a. In the first Student Senate meeting nominations will be called.
 - b. Nominees will be given one (1) minute to explain their qualifications.
 - c. The senate will then vote to appoint the Secretary.
- I. Membership
 - a. There will be one (1) representative from each official Methodist University club/organization.
 - b. Representatives will be appointed by the official Methodist University club/organization. Appointing process is left to the discretion of the official Methodist University club/organization.
 - c. Representatives may serve for a one (1) semester term or a two (2) semester term per year. Length of terms will be left to the discretion of the official Methodist University club/organization.
- J. Duties and Responsibilities
 - a. Each representative shall be required to present an update from their official Methodist University club/organization. Updates may include events, fundraisers, community service, elections, etc.
 - b. Each representative shall be required to relay all information presented from the Speaker to the club/organization that they are representing.
- K. Attendance
 - a. All representatives will be required to attend all meetings per year.
 - b. Substitutions for an appointed representative may be made. Each representative is limited to two (2) substitutions per semester.
 - c. Failure to attend all six (6) House meetings will result in removal from the budget tier system for the following academic year.

ARTICLE VI JUDICIAL BRANCH

- A. The purpose of the Methodist University Judicial Branch is to maintain integrity and harmony in the Methodist University community and to deal with alleged violations of the judicial code in a fair and prompt manner.
- B. The Judicial Board shall consist of:
 - a. The Student Judicial Committee
 - i. The Chief Justice
 - ii. An Attorney General, who shall be appointed by the Chief Justice after consultation with the executive board. This individual shall:
 - 1. Assist the Chief Justice but has no voting powers.
 - 2. Be an undergraduate student who has experience serving within the Student Community Court and is familiar with the operations of the SGA.
 - 3. Not be an individual with senior class status.
 - 4. The Chief Justice has the right to appoint someone outside of these qualifications if deemed necessary
 - iii. An unlimited number of Associate Justices, who shall be appointed by the Chief Justice, and approved by the Student Senate. The court justices shall:
 - 1. Be required to attend at least one SGA meeting per month.
 - 2. Be required to assist with major SGA events during the year as determined by the Chief Justice with consultation of the executive board.
 - 3. We shall make every reasonable effort to attend all the Student Court Hearings, except for those that contradict academic scheduling or other excused absences as determined by the Chief Justice.
 - iv. Failure to meet the preceding requirements may lead to the removal from appointment as an Associate Justice/Attorney General.
 - b. The Dean of Students
 - c. The Appeal Board
 - i. Three (3) Administrators
 - ii. Two (2) Faculty members
 - iii. Two (2) Student Representatives nominated by the SGA
- C. Procedure
 - a. Any Methodist University employee or student may report a violation.
 - b. Alleged violations of the standards found in the Judicial Code and residential guidelines shall be forwarded to the Senior Associate Dean of Students.
 - c. The student(s) involved will be given the opportunity to discuss the case with the Senior Associate Dean of Students and to read the report that has been submitted.
 - d. The Senior Associate Dean of Students shall determine if the reported violation warrants a hearing; if it does, the Senior Associate Dean of Students shall

determine whether the matter is to be heard by the Judicial Board or the Dean of Students.

- e. The student may have his/her violation heard by the Senior Associate Dean of Students instead of the Judicial Board upon request.
 - f. Hearings before the Judicial Board
 - i. Cases will be heard by a hearing body of at least four (4) justices in addition to the Chief Justice. In the case of a tie, the Chief Justice shall vote.
 - ii. All sessions of the Judicial Board shall be closed.
 - iii. In a finding of guilty, the Judicial Board may impose sanctions ranging from a written warning to removal from the residence halls.
 - iv. Decisions of the Judicial Board may be appealed to the Dean of Students.
 - g. Hearings before the Dean of Students
 - i. Hearings before the Dean of Students shall be closed.
 - ii. The Dean of Students shall conduct investigations and interviews, as he/she deems appropriate.
 - iii. The accused student shall have the opportunity to call witnesses and present evidence to the Dean of Students.
 - iv. The Dean of Students shall determine the innocence or guilt of the student(s)
 - v. Sanctions by the Dean of Students may be appealed to the Review Board
 - h. Hearings before the Review Board
 - i. All sessions shall be closed.
 - ii. Student making an appeal before the Review Board may enlist the aid of any member of the Methodist University community, including other students, faculty, or administrators.
 - iii. Outside counsel will be permitted only at the Review Board. Counsel may be present to advise the student and may not speak for the defense.
 - iv. Rulings of the Review Board are final.
- D. Appeals
- a. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Senior Associate Dean of Students within two business days after the hearing date.
 - b. The Dean of Students or Review Board, as appropriate, will act promptly on the appeal (Normally within two business days).
 - c. In the meantime, the sanctions of the hearing body shall be observed.
 - d. Alternatives available of the Dean of Students and the Review Board:
 - i. To affirm the decision of the original hearing body
 - ii. To negate or alter the decision or the sanction of the original hearing body.
 - iii. To rehear the case, render a new verdict, and impose a new sanction, if appropriate.
 - e. Rehearing

- i. If the decision is a rehearing, it will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity.
 - ii. Twenty---four (24) hour notice of the hearing will be given.
 - iii. Student filing appeals should be prepared at the time of appeal to present their case at a hearing.
 - iv. The Senior Associate Dean of Students will present the case for the university in a rehearing.
- f. Guidelines for an Appeal
 - i. Information is available that was not available at the time of the decision.
 - ii. The decision embodies a sanction inconsistent with the offense.
 - iii. The facts were not sufficient to justify the findings.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

- A. The committee structure of the SGA may include both standing committees and ad hoc committees.
- B. Plans and activities of the committees must be approved by the Student Senate. Upon approval, implementation is the respective committee's responsibility.
- C. All committees shall meet regularly.
- D. All committees will be chosen by the Executive Board as to what the Executive Board deems necessary placement of Senators.
- E. The SGA standing committees shall be the following:
 - a. Elections Committee
 - i. The Elections Committee shall supervise all elections of the SGA as determined in Article VIII of this constitution.
 - ii. This committee will be composed of four (4) members of the SGA and will be chaired by a member of the Senate who shall also be a voting member.
 - iii. This committee shall have responsibility for the organization, operation, and supervision of all elections held for any office within the SGA and any other votes taken by the SGA for any purpose.
 - iv. This committee shall be responsible for the interpretation of all policies of the SGA regarding elections.
 - v. No member of this committee may serve on the campaign of any candidate for office or in any way be associated with any campaign.
 - vi. This committee will be formed as needed.
 - b. Finance Committee
 - i. The main purpose of the SGA Finance Committee shall be to allocate and monitor the Student Activity Fee. The committee shall have authority over

all matters concerning the student activity except raising/lowering it and a final budget for the fee.

- ii. The foremost responsibility of the SGA Finance Committee shall be to support financially, to the greatest extent possible, all official student clubs and organizations meeting their goals and needs based on available monies.
- iii. All monies shall be spent according to the policies set forth by the SGA Finance Committee.
- iv. The SGA Finance Committee shall maintain by---laws with all rules, procedures, and other valuable information that can be requested at any time.
- v. The SGA Finance Committee shall consist of a minimum of 5 members:
 - 1. 1 assistant to the Treasurer who shall help with the office work associated with the SGA Treasury. This person shall be any undergraduate senator, not a senior.
 - 2. A minimum of 3 SGA members, not including the Treasurer and Assistant, shall sit on the committee.
 - 3. The treasurer shall serve as a chair with no vote, except in a tie vote.
 - 4. Dean of Students who shall be considered Advisor without vote.
 - 5. Members shall make every reasonable effort to attend all committee meetings, except for those that contradict academic scheduling or other excused absences as determined by the Treasurer.
 - 6. Failure to meet the requirements laid out above could result in removal from the committee.
- vi. Disclosure---At the beginning of each semester each committee member shall disclose their affiliation with SOC accounts. This record of disclosure shall be updated as needed.
 - 1. Committee members who have any affiliation with a SOC account which is being considered will be asked to remove themselves from the discussion and the vote.
- vii. Confidentiality--- Finance Committee meetings are confidential. Business and discussions entertained during the meetings shall not be disclosed to individuals outside of the Finance Committee.
 - 1. If members a committee member is found to have breached the confidentiality policy the following will take effect:
 - a. 1st offense--- Committee member will receive a warning and the incident will be recorded.
 - b. 2nd offense--- Committee member will be removed from the Finance Committee and the incident will be recorded
- viii. Procedures--- Grant and Budget request shall be due no later than 5:00pm to the Office of Student Involvement/Campus Life on the date specified by the Treasurer

1. Failure to submit an itemized list of expected expenses would cause a grant or budget item to be tabled.
 2. The SOC has up to 3 business days to provide the additional information for the tabled grant/budget for consideration to the Finance Committee. After such a time the grant/budget shall automatically be denied.
- ix. Allocations
1. The Finance Committee shall oversee the operations of the Student Activity Fee in conjunction with the Executive Board
 2. Any grant submission that exceeds \$500 shall give the Treasurer of the SOC Accounts an opportunity to present to the Finance Committee
- x. All questions and requests for budgetary information should be directed to the Treasurer.
- c. Public Relations Committee
- i. The Public Relations Committee shall have the responsibility for keeping the members of the SGA and members of the student body informed of the activities of the SGA.
 - ii. The committee shall consist of at least four (4) members of the SGA and be chaired by the Secretary, who shall also be a voting member.
 - iii. The committee shall have the responsibility for maintaining the website of the SGA.
 - iv. The committee shall meet as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
- d. Student Judicial Committee
- i. The Student Judicial Committee shall be responsible for overseeing any judicial issues within the SGA.
 - ii. The Chief Justice shall serve as Chairperson for this committee.
 - iii. The committee shall consist of the Chief Justice and an unlimited number of Associate Justices determined by the Chief Justice and the Student Senate.

ARTICLE VIII ELECTIONS

- A. The Elections Committee of the SGA shall be the operational supervisor of all such elections and propose the election rules right before eight weeks of an upcoming election.
- B. Filing for Candidacy
 - a. All students shall be notified by the Election Committee of the period set aside for filing for candidacy for any office at least one (1) week prior to such a period.
 - b. The period for filing shall be at least three (3) days in duration.

- c. After filing, the prospective candidate shall circulate a petition among the student body to collect the signatures of those who support his/her candidacy. Candidates for an executive office shall collect a minimum of fifty (50) signatures. Candidates for other offices must collect a minimum of twenty---five (25) signatures. Petitions must be verified by the Assistant Dean for Student Services. Petitions shall be turned in to the Chairperson of the Elections Committee.
- d. When a candidate picks up a petition, he/she shall be given a list of the election guidelines to be followed. Such guidelines are developed by the Elections Committee prior to each election.

C. Procedure

- a. In any election of the SGA, as many candidates that fulfill all the requirements for office may run for each office.
- b. Election for each office shall be by simple plurality vote of those casting ballots for that office.
- c. In the event of a tie, a run---off election shall be held within three (3) business days of the original election. Campaigning is allowed for run---off elections.
- d. A tabulation of the final vote count shall be recorded and made available upon request. Names of the newly elected candidates shall be emailed to all students from the SGA Advisor by 5pm on the final day of elections.
- e. Any candidate for office may contest the election to the Election Committee and ask for a re-- count of the votes. Such request must meet the following requirements:
 - i. The request shall be in writing.
 - ii. The request shall be deposited with the Assistant Dean for Student Services within seven (7) days after the election.
- f. If, after seven days, the election has not been contested, the Student Life Department shall destroy the ballots.

D. Campaigns

- a. The Election Committee shall post two signs at least seventy---two (72) hours prior to the election listing all the names of formally filed candidates. The sign shall also denote the exact date, time, and place of the election.
- b. Each candidate shall be responsible for all phases of his/her campaign and the individuals who work on the campaign on his/her behalf. Discretion and good taste must be used, and these will be set and judged by the Election Committee.
- c. Campaigning activities may begin the day after the period for filing for candidacy. Campaigning shall cease immediately after the close of balloting.
- d. No campaigning or loitering shall be allowed within fifteen feet of the polls. This distance will be monitored by the Elections Committee.
- e. There is no limitation as to what candidates may spend on campaigns.
- f. All signs to be posted must be approved for posting by the Assistant Dean for Student Services and stamped as approved for posting.

- g. Signs shall not be posted in the Horner Administration Building, Davis Memorial Library, Hensdale Chapel, or any classroom.
 - h. No signs may be posted on glass windows or doors. No sign shall be larger than two feet by three feet. All signs shall be hung with masking tape, or some other substance approved by the Assistant Dean for Student Services.
 - i. All signs must be removed within twenty---four hours of the completion of the balloting.
 - j. Posters that do not meet any of guidelines stated above, or other to be determined by the Election Committee, may be removed, or placed in the SGA Office to be picked up by the candidate.
 - k. Alleged violations of any campaign regulations shall be heard by the Election Committee. The committee may penalize an offending candidate in any manner it sees fit, including elimination of the candidate from the election.
 - l. The Election Committee shall sit as election judges with the power to rule on any question regarding elections. Decisions of the committee may be appealed to the Judicial Board and then to the Associate Dean of Students.
- E. Oath of Office
- a. Before the assumption of office by any elected official of the SGA or its subsidiary bodies, all elected members shall take the SGA Oath of Office.
 - b. The SGA Oath of Office is as follows:

"I do solemnly affirm that I shall faithfully execute the duties of of the Student Government Association of Methodist University and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the Student Government Association of Methodist University."

The oath shall be administered by the incumbent Chief Justice.

ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS

- A. The Constitution of the SGA may be amended by a majority vote of those members of the SGA participating in such a vote during the academic school year; if not during the academic calendar, the Executive Board has the power to make necessary amendments.
- B. Any member of the SGA may propose amendments.
- C. An amendment must be voted on as soon as possible at the discretion of the Student Senate.
- D. Amendments to the Constitution of the SGA may be made by a two---thirds vote of the Student Senate.

ARTICLE X IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

- A. Impeachment

- a. Any Senator may initiate impeachment proceedings against any member of the Executive Council of SGA, Student Senate, or any other elected or appointed official of SGA or its subsidiary bodies.
 - i. Such proceedings may be initiated at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Student Senate.
 - ii. Discussions and a vote on such proceedings shall be taken at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Student Senate.
 - b. A two---thirds majority vote of all members of the Student Senate is necessary to approve such proceedings and grant impeachment.
- B. Removal From Office

- a. Upon the successful completion of impeachment proceedings, the person(s) against whom such proceedings are initiated shall be presented with the opportunity to offer any defense that he/she feels appropriate.
 - i. No more than one (1) hour may be used for the presentation of arguments on either side of the issue.
 - ii. The impeached person shall have the last opportunity to present information prior to a vote.
- b. A three---quarters (3/4) majority vote of all members of the Student Senate is necessary to remove any official from office.
- c. The Chief Justice shall preside over discussions and votes regarding removal from office of any official.
- d. In the case of proceedings against the Chief Justice, the President of the SGA shall preside over the discussion and vote.

ARTICLE XI AUTHORITY

The Association operates under the authority of the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Officers of Methodist University and recognizes that the college has the right to coordinate the operations of the Association.

ARTICLE XII ETHICAL CONDUCT

- A. Code of Ethics for Student Government Association
- B. Any person in government should:
 - a. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles.
 - b. Uphold the Constitution of the Student Government Association and of all governing bodies therein and never be a party to their evasion.
 - c. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay; giving to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.

- d. Seek to find more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.
 - e. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not; and never except for himself, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable person as influencing the performance of his/her governmental duties.
 - f. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office.
 - g. Expose corruption wherever discovered.
 - h. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that office is a public trust.
- C. Members and officers of the Student Government Association should:
- a. Conduct themselves in a way that reflects creditably on the Student Government Association.
 - b. Adhere to the broad ethical standards expressed in the Code of Ethics for Student Government Service. They should not seek private gain from public office. Nor should they attempt to circumvent any Methodist University rule or standard of conduct.

That "public office is a public trust" has long been a guiding principle of government. To uphold this trust, the Student Government has bound itself to abide by certain standards of conduct, expressed in the Code of Ethics for Student Government Service. This code exhorts members and officers to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect creditably on the S.G.A. of Methodist University, to work earnestly and thoughtfully for their fellow student, not to seek to profit by virtue of their public office or to allow themselves to be improperly influenced, and never to discriminate unfairly by dispensing of special favors. This code is set forth at the front of this Bill.

Appropriate standards of conduct enhance the legislative process and build confidence. Ethics rules, if drafted and reliably enforced, increase the likelihood that legislators (senators; and other officials) will make decisions and policies based on the merits of issues, rather than based on factors (such as personal gain) that should be irrelevant.

D. Violation of Ethical Standards

Violations of ethical standards may lead to various penalties. The Constitution authorizes any member of the Student Senate to punish its members for disorderly behavior and, with concurrence of two---thirds, to expel a member.

Precedents also show that any Senator (by means of the President Pro---Tempore), President of the Student Senate, and President of the Student Government Association may punish a member by censure, reprimand, or condemnation.

A Student Senate rule specifically authorizes the Ethics Committee to enforce standards of conduct on Members and Officers; to investigate alleged violations of any rule outlined in the Methodist University Handbook, the Constitution of the Student Government Association, or any regulation pertaining to official conduct; and to make recommendations to the Senate for further action.

This same rule recognizes the Committee's authority to issue letters of reprisal and to take other administrative action. With the approval of the Senate, the Committee may also report substantial evidence of violation by a member or Officer to the appropriate Methodist University Administrative Body.

Even where no specific penalties are provided, Members of the Student Senate may be removed from their positions for misconduct at the discretion of the employing Member, Chief Justice, or Ethics Committee.

Charges of unethical conduct can be evaluated only on a case--- by---care basis. As the Committee has noted, "it was for the very purpose of evaluating particular situations against existing standards, and of weeding out baseless charges from legitimate ones, that this committee was created."

E. Ethics Committee Procedures

F. The Ethics Committee will be chosen at random by the Executive Board.

G. Committee rules now set forth the following requirements for complaints filed with the Committee:

- a. A complaint must be in writing, under oath, and date.
- b. A member of SGA may file a complaint directly or may forward the complaint of an individual not a member for the purpose of initiating Preliminary Inquiry.
- c. If three Members refuse in writing to forward the complaint of someone not a member, acknowledging that this may cause the Committee to initiate a Preliminary Inquiry, then the individual may file the Complaint directly with the Committee. An exact copy of the complaint filed must be attached to each refusal letter.
- d. The complaining party must provide a copy of the complaint to the respondent (the person against whom the complaint is filed) or the committee will not be accepted.
- e. The respondent will be notified if the complaint is returned and accepted by the committee as properly filed.
- f. The respondent will be given an opportunity to provide information responding to a complaint.
- g. The committee will not investigate an alleged violation that occurred in previous years of SGA.
- h. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Committee first determines that it is in proper form, the matter is within its jurisdiction, and the complaint merits further inquiry, it may initiate a Preliminary Inquiry upon an affirmative vote or at least four of its six members.

- i. Once a Preliminary Inquiry is voted, the Chairperson will select two of the six Members to comprise an Investigative Subcommittee.
- j. The Investigative Subcommittee reviews the evidence and determines whether there is reason to believe that an offense within the Committee's authority was committed. If so, the Investigative Subcommittee notifies the respondent of its determination and files with the full committee a Statement of Alleged Violation, asserting specific charges in separate accounts.
- k. The Chairperson then designates the Chief Justice and the Student Community Court to serve as an Adjudicatory Subcommittee to conduct a Disciplinary Hearing where evidence and testimony is received. At the end of the Disciplinary Hearing, the subcommittee determines if any count in the Statement of Alleged Violation is proved by clear and convincing evidence. If so, all Members of the Ethics Committee hold a Sanction Hearing to determine what punishment, if any, to recommend to the Association.

H. The Ethics Committee may recommend one or more of the following sanctions to SGA:

- a. Expulsion from SGA
- b. Censure
- c. Reprimand
- d. Suspension for a period determined by the Committee
- e. Any other sanction deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee.

Alternatively, the Ethics Committee may send a Letter of Reprisal to the respondent without recommending further action by SGA.

I. Advisory Opinions

The Ethics Committee urges individuals to ask questions regarding the appropriateness of contemplated activity. The Committee authorizes "to give consideration to the request of any Member or Officer." This enactment guarantees that no one may be put in jeopardy by making such a request. Anyone who acts in good faith in accordance with a written advisory opinion from the Committee may not then be investigated by the Committee based on the conduct addressed in the opinion, and the Student Community Court will consider reliance on such an opinion a defense to prosecution by the Justices. All such inquiries and their responses will be kept confidential by the Committee.