

Student Senate Constitution

Preamble

Ensuring the stability of the Student Senate, providing a suitable job description for all participant members, and focusing on the virtue and philosophy of the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, we establish this constitution. The Student Senate is a great asset to the student body and provides many services to the school through hard work, organization, and leadership. Since its conception, the Senate has played a substantial role in the formation of 'men for others' at 'the High.' For the purpose of furthering the Senate's success and well-being, this constitution is created as a guide and reference for all participants of the Student Senate.

ARTICLE I. (Senate Composition)

Section 1. The Senate shall be governed by five elected officers with the titles President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant-at-Arms. A primary voting procedure within the Senate will select two candidates per office. The student body shall then elect one of the two candidates for each office in a general election at a convention convened for that purpose. All members of the Senate shall be referred to as Senators with the exception of Officers, Justices, and Moderators.

Paragraph 1 – The Primary System

- (a) To be eligible to run for office, a student must be a passing Junior and have at least two semesters of Senate experience in the high school.
- (b) Each year, the Senate and administration will jointly agree upon a date on which to hold the primary election within the Senate. Candidates for the primary election must submit a letter of intent no later than two weeks before the primary election. These letters must clearly indicate for which office a candidate is intending to run. A student may only run for one office in the primary. The current Secretary shall make public a list of all primary candidates at least one week prior to the primary election.
- (c) Homeroom Senators shall discuss the candidates with their homerooms in preparation for the primary election. Homeroom Senators should take their homeroom's opinion under advisement, but are free to cast their votes as they wish.
- (d) Only Senators shall be allowed to vote at the primary election. The Senate shall vote on each office separately in this order: Sergeant-at-Arms, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and President. Each Senator shall vote for two candidates per office. Their first choice in each office is awarded two points and the second is awarded one point. The two primary candidates who receive the most points shall be designated as the two candidates for that office in the general election. In the event of a tie, the current officers will vote to determine the outcome.

Paragraph 2 – General Campaign and Convention Rules

- (a) The specific guidelines for the campaign process and materials shall be determined by the current officers, moderator, and administration. These campaign guidelines shall be distributed to each general election candidate immediately following the primary election. These guidelines shall also limit the amount of money each candidate may spend on his campaign. At a set time before campaigning begins, candidates shall submit a projected expense report for their campaign. All candidates must sign an agreement to follow the guidelines established for the election.
- (b) On a date predetermined by the school administration, a convention shall be held to elect one of the two candidates running for each office. This convention will be open to grades 9-11. During the course of the convention, every candidate will be granted an equal amount of time during which he will first introduce himself and then have exactly one student speak on his behalf. At the conclusion of the speeches, the convention shall move into voting procedure.
- (c) Senior, who are allowed to attend the convention will vote at the convention. Voting procedure shall require students to remain seated with their homerooms. Homeroom moderators will ensure the validity of the voting process by distributing one ballot to each student in their homeroom. Ballots need not be signed, but moderators must collect exactly one ballot from each student in their homeroom.

Once collected, the ballots shall be sealed in an envelope and then taken by a homeroom Senator to the Senate moderator. The candidates for office will determine the weight of the senior vote.

- (d) The Senate moderator shall oversee the process of counting all ballots. In the event of a tie, the current officers shall vote to break the tie. When the results are determined, the winners shall be announced in front of the convention. The five newly elected officers are immediately installed into their respective positions.

Section 2. The body of the Senate shall be comprised of Co-Chairs, Homeroom Senators, and Big Brothers.

Paragraph 1 – Appointment of Co-Chairs

- (a) After the general election, the newly elected officers shall take applications for Co-Chair positions in the Senate's Standing Committees for the following year. Once the application period has ended, the officers and moderator shall appoint exactly two Co-Chairs for each Standing committee.
- (b) A Co-Chair must be a passing Sophomore or Junior at the time of the application process and must be approved by the administration. No student may serve as a Co-Chair on more than one committee, nor may he serve as a member of more than one other committee.
- (c) Co-Chairs for Special Committees will be appointed as necessary, and may be appointed directly by the Senate officers, or through an application process designed by the officers at any point during the school year. Special Committees are also limited to two Co-Chairs per committee.

Paragraph 2 – Election of Homeroom Senators

- (a) The Officers shall select a date at the beginning of each semester upon which homerooms shall hold an election to select two Homeroom Senators. To be eligible for the election, students must be nominated, seconded, and must accept their nomination on the day before the election. Additionally, candidates must be academically and socially eligible as determined by the moderator and administration.
- (b) On the day of the election, candidates will be given equal time to make a brief statement to their homeroom. Following the speeches, students in the homeroom shall write on a ballot their two choices for Senators. The two choices shall each receive one vote. The ballots shall be collected and sealed in an envelope which will then be submitted to the Senate. The officers shall count the ballots, and the two students with the highest number of votes in each homeroom shall be designated as Senators for that semester.

Paragraph 3 – Selection of Big Brothers

- (a) During the first semester of the year, the Academy and Freshmen homerooms do not have elected Senators. Instead, they are represented by Big Brothers. These Big Brothers will be selected by the officers and administration. The application process for Big Brothers shall run concurrently with the application process for Standing Committee Co-Chairs.
- (b) Big Brothers only participate in the Senate for the first semester of the school year. During the second semester, the Freshmen homerooms will follow the standard procedure for the election of Senators.

Section 3. All members of the Senate, including officers, Co-Chairs, Homeroom Senators, and Big Brothers, are subject to a removal process if they fail to adequately perform their duties.

Paragraph 1 – Removal of Officers

- (a) Senators may motion during a meeting of the Senate to move into removal procedure for a specific officer. This motion, if seconded, must be considered and immediately put to a vote. A simple majority is needed to move into this procedure. Only one officer may be considered per removal procedure.
- (b) Once in removal procedure, the Senator who made the motion to remove an officer will be allotted sufficient time to present his case for removal before the Senate. The officer in question will then be given an equal amount of time to respond.
- (c) Following the speeches, the Senate will be opened up to general discussion. The standard rules for general discussion shall be observed. The Senate moderator will determine an appropriate amount of time for discussion.
- (d) At the end of the general discussion, the Senate shall vote to remove the officer in question. If three-quarters of the Senate votes for removal, the officer in question shall be immediately removed from his office.
- (e) If the President is removed from office, the Vice-President shall assume that office. A special election within the Senate will occur to elect a replacement Vice-President from Senators who are members of the Senior Class. If any officer other than President is removed, his replacement will be elected by the Senate in a special election from among the Senators who are members of the Senior Class.

Paragraph 2 – Removal of Co-Chairs and Big Brothers

- (a) A Co-Chair or Big Brother may be removed from his position at any time by a unanimous vote of the officers.
- (b) Co-Chairs may also be removed by the Senate by a three-quarters majority vote of the Senators.
- (c) Big Brothers may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of their assigned homeroom. This vote shall be administered by the homeroom moderator at the request of the students.
- (d) The officers and administration shall decide upon a qualified replacement for a removed Co-Chair or Big Brother.

Paragraph 3 – Removal of Senators

- (a) A homeroom may remove either or both of its Senators with a two-thirds majority vote. This vote shall be administered by the homeroom moderator at the request of the students.
- (b) Following any removal, replacement(s) shall be selected by the standard Senator election process.

Paragraph 4 – Removal of Justices

- (a) A Justice may be removed from his position at any time by a two-thirds majority in the Senate.
- (b) In order to for the vote of removal to take place in the Senate the Officers first have to review the accusation against the Justice, and make sure that it has foundation.
- (c) Following any removal, replacement(s) shall be selected by the outlined process for selecting Justices.

ARTICLE II. (Senate Duties)

Section 1. All members of the Senate shall uphold the dignity and philosophy of the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, and shall be held to a high standard of behavior and excellence. In order for the Senate to function properly, all Senate members shall be entrusted with certain duties.

Paragraph 1 – General Duties of Senators

- (a) Every member of the Senate shall act in accordance with the ideal of being a 'man for others.'
- (b) All Senators must attend every required Senate meeting and function punctually, or notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of his intended absence or lateness. They must act responsibly at these events, upholding a high standard of decorum as appropriate to the specific function.
- (c) Involvement in the Senate calls for a strong sense of school spirit and commitment to the goals of the school and the Senate.

Section 2. Officers, Co-Chairs, Homeroom Senators, and Big Brothers each have distinct duties that must be performed. Every member will be held responsible for his duties and is therefore subject to removal under directives for impeachment.

Paragraph 1 – The Officers

- (a) The President chairs all Senate meetings as chief executive of the Senate. He is responsible for scheduling Senate meetings and providing for their operation by overseeing the details necessary to their function. The President is the official representative of the student body, and he must conduct himself in a manner suitable to the magnitude of this responsibility. He oversees all Senate events and functions, however he may delegate tasks as he sees fit in order to ensure that everything is carried out as planned.
- (b) The Vice President is the President's first assistant and main consultant. He is in charge of overseeing and organizing Senate committees. He does not establish committees but ensures that they perform their duties. He is the officer who maintains a good relationship with the faculty, staff, and administration of the school. Additionally, he maintains good public relations outside of the school.
- (c) The Secretary is responsible for keeping records, including Senate meeting minutes. He will prepare agendas for each Senate meeting which will be distributed prior to the meeting. He will also make the meeting minutes available to the student body through their homeroom Senators as soon as possible in order to keep the student body aware of all Senate activities.
- (d) The Treasurer handles the economic aspects of the Senate. He is directly responsible for maintaining an accurate and up-to-date account of the Senate's financial transactions. The Treasurer must actively

participate in all Senate functions that involve the spending, receiving, or counting of funds. He shall make public financial reports for any Senate activity that involves income or expense for the Senate. The Treasurer must always be fully aware of the Senate's financial situation.

- (e) The Sergeant-at-Arms keeps order at Senate meetings and events. He supervises work crews for the set-up and clean-up of Senate events. He keeps attendance reports at every meeting and is responsible for notifying homerooms of their homeroom Senators' unexcused absences from required meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for service, including providing helpers for Senate events.

Paragraph 2 – The Co-Chairs

- (a) Co-Chairs are responsible for supervising their committees and ensuring that their assigned tasks are completed efficiently. They work with the Vice President who is in charge of committees. They are in charge of calling regular committee meetings and maintaining attendance for these meetings.
- (b) Co-Chairs must attend all required Senate functions and meetings.

Paragraph 3 – The Homeroom Senators

- (a) Homeroom Senators act as the voice of the student body by representing their respective homerooms at all Senate meetings. They must keep their homeroom fully informed of Senate proceedings, which includes reading the minutes from each Senate meeting to their homeroom.
- (b) All homeroom Senators must serve on a committee of the Senate.
- (c) Homeroom Senators shall attend every required meeting of the Senate and of the committees on which they serve, unless they provide notice of their absence following the aforementioned directives. If a homeroom Senator will be absent from a committee meeting, he must inform his Co-Chair.

Paragraph 4 – The Big Brothers

- (a) Big Brothers represent Freshmen and Academy homerooms in the Senate for the first semester of the school year only. In the second semester, Big Brothers no longer participate in the Senate. Freshmen homerooms are represented by their officially elected homeroom Senators, and Academy homerooms are not part of the High School Senate.
- (b) Big Brothers wishing to remain part of the Senate in the second semester must seek office in their respective homerooms. Those who are elected homeroom Senators continue to vote in the Senate, whereas other former Big Brothers do not.
- (c) During the first Semester, Big Brothers function as homeroom Senators for the homerooms they represent.

ARTICLE III. (Senate Procedure)

Section 1. It is the responsibility of the President to call Senate meetings. All members of the Senate are expected to be in attendance at every Senate Meeting. A quorum is required to pass motions at a Senate meeting.

Paragraph 1 – Organization of a Senate Meeting

- (a) The President may call a meeting whenever it is deemed necessary after consultation with the other officers and the moderator.
- (b) The President shall ensure that all the necessary arrangements have been made for a meeting, including reserving a location and providing ample public announcements.
- (c) The Officers and the moderator shall meet at least one day prior to a Senate meeting to create an agenda for that meeting. The Secretary shall make and distribute copies of this agenda prior to the meeting.

Paragraph 2 – Attendance

- (a) All members of the Senate are expected to attend every meeting.
- (b) If any Senator is unable to attend a Senate meeting, that Senator is expected to submit a written explanation to the Sergeant-at-Arms explaining his intended absence. This must be submitted prior to the meeting.
- (c) If a Senator is absent from a Senate meeting without previously notifying the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the Judiciary of his unexcused absence.

Paragraph 3 – Quorum

- (a) No fewer than one-third of all Senate members must be present at a Senate meeting to pass motions.
- (b) If a Senate meeting does not have a sufficient voting quorum, issues may be discussed but no action may be taken by the body.

Section 2. Members of the Senate are expected to behave in a proper manner during all Senate activities, including general meetings and special events. All Senators should arrive to meetings in a timely fashion and remain until the meeting adjourns, unless granted permission by an Officer. During meetings, senators should be respectful to others in attendance and attentive to the business at hand.

Section 3. The Senate shall function during its meetings in accordance with a system of rules for speaking, making motions, debating, and voting. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for ensuring that each meeting runs in an orderly fashion and follows the rules of procedure.

Paragraph 1 – Speaking

- (a) The dais at each meeting shall consist of the five Officers. The President shall act as chairman of the meeting and have the exclusive right to speak freely.
- (b) During the course of a meeting, there shall be one type of debate: general discussion
- (c) Before anyone may speak on the floor of the Senate during either type of debate, he must first raise his hand and be recognized by the chairman. When a person has been recognized, he has the exclusive right to speak at that time. All students are welcome to participate in general discussions in the Senate, but members of the Senate shall be given priority with respect to speaking order during this time.

Paragraph 2 – Motions

- (a) Business shall be brought before the Senate floor in the form of a motion. Any motion made by a Senator may be entertained as long as it is judged to be in order by the chairman. If the chairman rules that a motion is out of order, his decision may be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senators, and the body shall then consider the motion. A motion ruled in order requires a second to be considered. Once a motion is under consideration, it becomes the main business before the body, and no other motions are to be addressed until the pending motion is resolved or tabled. Motions are resolved by a vote of the body. A motion that receives a simple majority has passed; one that does not has failed. Tabling a motion requires a two-thirds majority vote.
- (b) Only Senators may make a motion. The procedure for handling motions is as follows:
 - 1. A Senator makes a motion.
 - 2. A different Senate member seconds the motion.
 - 3. The chairman rules whether the motion is in order. The body may overturn the decision of the chair by a two-thirds majority vote.
 - 4. Senators may present debate on the motion.
 - 5. The chairman puts the motion to a vote.
 - 6. The chairman announces the results of the vote.
- (c) Once a motion is in order, a Senator may request debate on a motion. The chairman shall then open a general speakers' list for all those wishing to speak. The chairman may also set the speaking time and number of questions allowed for each speaker on his own, or adopt a proposal from the body instead.
- (d) Motions to close debate, to limit or extend debate, to suspend rules, to prohibit consideration of a question, to repeal a previous enactment, and to discharge a committee shall be considered procedural debate. These motions are not open to general discussion.
- (e) All motions other than those covered under procedural debate are open to general discussion. Anyone present may be recognized to speak in general discussion.

Paragraph 3 – Voting Procedure

- (a) If there is no debate on a motion, the chairman shall move immediately into voting procedure.
- (b) If the Senate has entered into debate on a motion, debate shall end when no person who is allowed to speak wishes to do so. At this point, the speakers' list shall close, and the chairman shall move into voting procedure. The speakers' list may also be closed by a motion to close debate.
- (c) Every Senator has the right to cast one vote on all matters presented on the Senate floor.
- (d) When the body moves into voting procedure, votes shall be taken by a show of hands unless a member of the Senate requests a roll-call vote. After the vote is taken, the chairman shall announce the results of the vote to the body.

Section 4. The Constitution may be amended by a vote of the body at a Senate meeting. A Senate meeting must have a quorum of two-thirds of all Senate members in order to consider a constitutional amendment. An amendment is treated as a standard motion open to general discussion and shall follow the standard procedure for such motions, except for the following differences. Proposed amendments must be presented to the dais in writing, require a two-thirds majority vote to pass, and may not be voted upon without discussion.

ARTICLE IV (Senate Committees)

Section 1. Committees exist at all times during the school year. After the Student Senate Convention, the newly-elected Officers shall start the selection process for Co-Chairs of Committees.

Paragraph 1 –The Formation of Committees

- (a) At the beginning of each term the newly elected Officers shall determine what Committees they feel are necessary to perform Senate business.
- (b) The Officers will then define the duties of the formed Committees.
- (c) At any time the Officers can abolish a Committee they feel it is no longer necessary. Officers can also form any new Committee during their term that they feel necessary.

Paragraph 2 –Organization of Committees

- (a) Any student in the school may participate in a Committee, but Senators are required to do so as part of their role in the Senate.
- (b) At the beginning of each semester, the President shall call a meeting for students and Senators to volunteer for the Committees. The membership in committees should be balanced; however, membership should always be kept at a level that will allow a committee to affectively execute its charge.
- (c) Co-Chairs of each committee are responsible for acquiring a meeting space, setting a suitable time, taking attendance, and executing all of their Committee's responsibilities.
- (d) Committees, upon the request of the Officers, shall present a list of activities/or a financial report at Senate meetings. Each Co-Chair shall either present the report or delegate a committee member to do so in his absence.

ARTICLE V (The Judiciary)

Section 1. The Judiciary is responsible for the judicial oversight of the Senate. All members of the Judiciary will be referred to as Justices.

Paragraph 1 – Composition of the Judiciary

- (a) The Judiciary shall consist of three Justices.
- (b) Justices do not have a vote in the Senate, and are not members of the Senate body.

Paragraph 2 – Selection of Justices

- (a) Applicants for the position of Justice will submit applications to the Officers for nomination.
- (b) All applicants for the position of Justice must have two semesters of Senate experience, and be a member of the Junior or Senior Class in good standing with the school.
- (c) Once nominated an applicant will go before the Senate for approval. A simple majority is required for approval.

Paragraph 3 – The Duties of the Judiciary

- (a) The Judiciary has the power of judicial review over all actions of the Senate.
- (b) It has the power to take action against Senators that have been reported chronically absent by the Sergeant-at-Arms from Senate meetings, or found to be in other violation of their duties.
- (c) The Judiciary will inform the Homeroom of an offending Senator, and then explain to them the possible actions the Homeroom can then take.
- (d) Justices are required to attend Senate meetings, and keep informed regarding Senate business.