

**Bylaws**  
of the  
**Student Government Association**  
of the  
**University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

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The Bylaws were ratified by the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, on May 15, 2004. The document below is current as of May 15, 2004.

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**Scope** The Bylaws of Student Government Association (SGA) shall be second highest-ranking document created by the SGA, superseded by only the SGA Constitution.

**Article 1 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

**1.1. House of Organizations**

The seats in the House of Organizations shall be distributed as follows: Two seats each for the Academic/Departmental, Cultural Ethnic, Sports/ Recreation, Greek Life, and Religious/Spirituality categories; one seat each for the Media, Intellectual Sports, Special Interest, Political/Social Activism, Honor Society, Service, and Charter Organizations. Each Representative must be a member of an organization in the category he or she represents. These seats may be reapportioned based on the number of active organizations in each category.

**1.2. Officer Duties**

All Representatives and Senators shall attend all meetings of their respective legislative body, hold at least one office hour weekly during the fall and spring semesters, attend all committee meetings, participate in activities sponsored by SGA, maintain close contact with their constituents, and initiate activities which benefit UMBC undergraduates. Each legislative body shall hold at least one meeting weekly during the fall and spring semesters.

**1.3. Duties of Speakers and Assistant Speakers**

The Speaker of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Organizations shall be responsible for the administration of their respective body; serve of the voice of their respective body; preside over meetings of their respective body (except when absent or yielding the chair); make the SGA Guiding Documents available to all members; and perform all other duties assigned by the President and/or their respective body. The Assistant Speaker shall perform these duties whenever the Speaker temporarily cannot, be in charge of assigning committee, and assist the Speaker in all other duties.

**1.4. Ex-officio Members**

The ex-officio members of the Senate and House of Organizations will have speaking privileges but no voting or motion-making privileges and will not count toward quorum. The UMBC President, UMBC Vice President of Student Affairs, UMBC Director of Student Life, SGA President, SGA Vice President, SGA Treasurer, and SGA Advisor(s) shall be ex-officio members of both legislative bodies. In addition, up to six first-year students will serve as First-Year Ambassadors to the Student Government Association. Up to three of these Ambassadors will serves as ex-officio members of the Senate, and up to three will serve as ex-officio members of the House of Organizations. These ambassadors are to be recommended by the First-Year Council, appointed by the respective Speakers, and confirmed by the respective bodies.

**1.5. Committees**

**1.4.1 Senate and House Committees**

The Senate may establish its own committees through the Senate procedural rules, through Senate legislation, or by the Senate Speaker. The House of Organizations shall have a Finance Committee, Constitution Review Committee, and all other committee established in its procedural rules, through House legislation, or by the House Speaker.

#### **1.4.2 Joint Committees**

The Joint Matters Committee shall be the standing joint committee of the Senate and House of Organizations. Two members from each legislative body shall serve on the Joint Matters Committee. The Joint Matters Committee shall perform the function of a conference committee and assist in the process of passing joint legislation. Ad hoc joint committees may be formed by joint legislation.

#### **1.4.3 University Committees**

The Senate shall be responsible for the filling of SGA seats (when not otherwise designated) on all university committees created by the UMBC Plan of Organizations and the University Steering Committee. Additionally the Senate shall send a delegation to the Food Services Committee (2 seats), IT Steering Committee (1 seat), Commuter Relations Board (2 seats), and Resident Student Association meetings (2 individuals). Non-Senators may serve on these committees provided they meet minimum requirements for becoming a Senator and are approved by the Senate (majority vote). Student appointments to all other university task force shall be made by the SGA President, subject to Senate confirmation.

#### **1.6. Confirmation**

Both legislative bodies must confirm appointments to the Election Board, the Supreme Court, Treasurer (when vacated mid-term), and Chief of Staff. The Senate shall confirm all other presidential appointments, including student appointments to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and University System of Maryland (USM) Student Council.

#### **1.7. Legislative Process**

##### **1.6.1. Legislation**

Official actions of the Senate and House of Organizations shall be made in the form of legislation. All legislation formatted to include: a code and title (should be unique for the academic year); any authors and sponsors (an officer can be both); the date of introduction; a special header noting the vote requirement, if not a majority, and required notice, when applicable; the bill's purpose; the action taken (by passage of the legislation); count and date of the vote; signature of the chair of the body in which the legislation was voted on; and space for the President's signature (if subject to veto).

##### **1.6.2. Joint Legislation**

Any legislative action amending the any SGA Guiding Document, or affecting the workings of both legislative bodies or another branch of the SGA must have prior approval of both the Senate and House of Organizations (majority vote in each, unless otherwise specified in any SGA Guiding Document). At least one Senate and one Representative must sponsor all joint legislation. All joint legislation must pass both legislative bodies in its final form.

Whenever joint legislation is amended in either body, the Speaker of that body shall inform the other body's Speaker in writing of the amendment before the other body's next meeting. If joint legislation fails to pass both bodies in the same form, it shall be sent to the Joint Matters Committee (conference committee) to rectify the differences. The conference committee should, whenever possible, report back to both legislative bodies within three weeks.

##### **1.6.3. Legislation Action**

All legislation shall be drafted, submitted, debated, and voted on in accordance with the procedural rules of the legislative body(s) considering it. Senate and House legislation shall be sponsored in accordance with the respective body's procedural rules. Once legislation passes, the Speaker of body in which it passed should forward the legislation to the President within two business days (days university is open) of passage (even when not subject to veto).

**1.6.4. Executive Action**

The President shall then sign (approve) or veto the legislation and then return it to the author, Speaker and Assistant Speaker of the legislative body(s) from which it came within five business days of receiving it. If the President does not return the legislation within five days, it shall automatically be approved. Once legislation is approved, it becomes effective immediately, unless otherwise noted in the legislation.

**1.6.5. Overriding Vetoes**

In cases of presidential vetoes, legislation shall be returned to the Speaker(s) with a list of objections in writing within five business days of receiving the legislation. At the next regular meeting of the legislative body(s), the Speaker(s) shall inform the legislative body of the veto, the list of objections shall be read, and the legislative body(s) may at its discretion override the veto by a two-thirds vote. If the veto is overridden, the legislation becomes effective immediately, unless otherwise noted in the legislation.

**1.6.6. Voting and Quorum Requirements**

Entire membership includes all filled seats with voting privileges (abstentions and absences count negatively). Members present include members with voting privileges in attendance (abstentions count negatively). Votes specified as “simple,” “members voting,” or left unspecified include only those voting for or against the item (exclude abstentions).

Majority shall mean more votes for than votes counting negatively. Other vote requirements (2/3<sup>rd</sup>, 3/4<sup>th</sup>, etc.) shall be construed as at least the requirement times counted votes (unrounded). Plurality means the most votes amongst options.

All legislation requires a minimum of a simple majority vote for passage. No votes effecting legislation shall be binding unless a quorum of a majority of entire body membership is present.

**Article 2 EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**2.1. President**

The SGA President shall work at least 20 hours weekly during the fall and spring semesters; maintain the day-to-day operations of the SGA; report to the legislative branch on a monthly basis on Executive Branch initiatives and other relevant issues; write a yearly report of activities; faithfully execute all approved legislation; attend all meetings of the University Steering Committee and any other committees designating a seat for the SGA President; sit as an ex-officio on the Student Activities Fee Review Board; call and preside over Cabinet meetings; and perform other duties assigned in the SGA Guiding Documents and legislation.

**2.2. Vice President**

The SGA Vice President shall work at least 15 hours weekly during the fall and spring semesters; assist the President with the day-to-day operations of the SGA; report to the legislative branch on a monthly basis; write a yearly report of activities; co-direct with the President the Cabinet; sit on all university committees reserving a seat for the SGA Vice President; chair the Senate and House of Organizations until they elect their respective Speakers; and perform other duties assigned by the President, Guiding Documents, and legislation.

**2.3. Chief of Staff**

The SGA Chief of Staff shall attend all Cabinet meetings; write a yearly report of activities; work at least 10 hours weekly during the fall and spring semesters; purchase and maintain all office equipment and supplies, with the President's approval; collect and submit timesheets to the Office of Student Life for all paid SGA employees; coordinate, maintain, and keep records of organizations using all SGA-controlled space; oversee the archiving the SGA materials; maintain the official copy of all current SGA guiding documents; and perform other duties assigned by the President, Guiding Documents, and legislation.

**2.4. Treasurer**

The SGA Treasurer shall attend all Cabinet meetings; write a yearly report of activities; work at least 10 hours weekly during the fall and spring semesters; handle, coordinate, and reconcile all financial transactions in SGA-managed accounts, including that of student organizations; keep the Executive Branch, legislative bodies and student organizations informed of the status of their respective accounts; provide training for student organizations on budgeting and expending of funds; work in the Student Affairs Business Services Center, and performed duties assigned therein; sit as an ex-officio members of the House Finance Committee and Student Activities Fee Review Board; and perform other duties assigned by the President, Guiding Documents and legislation.

**2.5. Other Cabinet Members**

All other Cabinet members shall attend all Cabinet meetings; write a monthly report of activities; work at least 5 hours weekly during the fall and spring semesters; and perform the duties assigned by the President, Vice President, and legislation.

**Article 3 SUPREME COURT**

**3.1. Justice Duties**

All Supreme Court Justices shall hold one office hour weekly during the fall and spring semesters; attend all hearing, deliberations, and other meetings of the Supreme Court; and be knowledgeable with the SGA Guiding Documents.

**3.2. Chief Justice Duties**

The Supreme Court Chief Justice shall call and preside over all hearings, deliberations, and other meetings of the Supreme Court; be responsible for the administration of the Supreme Court; publicize all Supreme Court hearings and notify all involved parties; and archive all Supreme Court materials, including rulings, opinions, and precedents.

**3.3. Supreme Court Proceedings**

Students shall have the right to fair and speedy judicial process in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may not create a policy, but instead it may only interpret existing policies in rulings. All ruling and opinions shall be made publicly available within five days of hearings.

**Article 4 ELECTIONS**

**4.1. Election Board**

The Election Board shall have the responsibility and duty of administering a neutral election process, which maximizes voter turnout and ensure fairness to all candidates and voters. The Election Board shall determine the time, places, and manner of all elections in accordance with the SGA Guiding Documents.

**4.2. Election of Officers**

The 12 Representative seats in the House of Organizations reserved for specific categories of student organizations shall be selected by membership of their specific category in a manner outlined in the Election Policy. This election does not need to be a campus-wide election.

For all campus-wide elections (not in-house), SGA officers shall be elected by plurality (person with the most votes gets elected). No person may be elected on the first ballot with fewer votes than 5% of ballots cast. One runoff election shall be held in cases of ties. Legislative officer positions not filled in the campus-wide election shall be filled via in-house election process immediately following the election results becoming official. Whenever the President-Elect resigns or dies before taking office, Vice President-Elect shall be the new President-Elect. If another officer or the entire President-Vice President ticket resigns or dies before taking office, the person/ticket with the next most votes shall take the office.

**4.3. Special Elections**

Special elections may be called for the purpose of hearing a referendum by the Election Board or by passage of legislation. The President shall forward legislation initiating a special election to the Election Board within five days of passage. The Election Board shall be responsible for advertising, administering, and verify the results of all referendum in accordance all SGA Guiding Documents. All referendum shall take the form of a yes-or-no question.

**Article 5 SGA ADVISOR**

The Director of Student Life and/or a designee thereof (approved by the SGA President and both legislative bodies) shall be the SGA Advisor.

**Article 6 SGA STEERING COMMITTEE**

The SGA Steering Committee shall be composed of, but not limited to, the President, acting as Chair, Vice President, Treasurer, Speakers and Assistant Speakers of both legislative bodies, Chief Justice, and SGA Advisor(s). This committee shall discuss relevant matters concerning the branches of SGA and to ensure that the SGA communicates efficiently. The committee shall meet two times monthly while the legislative bodies are in session. The President, Speakers, and Chief Justice shall report back to their branches/bodies after each meeting.

**Article 7 ARCHIVING**

All archived material shall be kept in the SGA office for one year, after which time it may be archived in the UMBC Library. A copy of archived materials should be given to the Office of Student Life. All archived materials shall be available for review by any student, staff, or faculty. The President, Speakers, Chief Justice, and Election Board Chair are responsible for ensuring the archival of their respective body's materials. The following materials shall be archived:

- The official copy of any Senate or House of Organizations legislation (even if it doesn't pass).
- Minutes from and all documents distributed at all Senate and House of Organizations meeting
- Minutes and/or reports from meetings of legislative committees.
- Yearly reports written by each member of the Executive Branch.
- Notes, rulings, opinions, and precedents from the Supreme Court.
- Election materials and decisions from the Election Board.

**Article 8 IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS**

Once impeachment is initiated, the charged officer shall be promptly notified of the charges. The charged officer shall have ten days (after receipt) to prepare a defense, and all evidence shall be public available for those ten days. The trial shall begin at the first meeting of the legislative body hearing the charges, and it shall proceed as follows:

- The Chair of the trial shall set the guidelines for witness registration.
- The trial shall be held in Executive Session with ex-officios permitted to be present. The Managers (those levying the charges) and Defense (representation of the charged) shall be allowed to be present up to the point of deliberations. The trial shall be handled in a secretive and just manner with detail minutes kept throughout.
- The Chair shall verify the charged received proper notification at the trial's onset.
- The charged officer shall enter a plea of guilty or non-guilty. If the charged officer fails to appear, they shall automatically be removed from office. For a guilty plea, the body shall move into sentencing. For a non-guilty plea, the official trial begins.
- The order of the trial shall be: opening statements (Managers first); witness testimony (Managers, Defense, then Managers' rebuttals); closing arguments (Managers first).
- The Chair shall maintain order throughout the trial, with points of order not permitted.
- Each witness shall stay outside until called to testify, unless members of the body. The body shall be permitted to ask witnesses questions after each testimony. Cross, redirect, and re-cross examination are all permissible.
- After closing arguments, the charged officer must leave the room, but all other Defense and any Managers who are members of the body may stay with full rights to voice and to vote (ex-officios shall only have voice).
- The body shall first determine the verdict (based on validity of charges) with a majority vote of members present required for a guilty verdict. If charged guilty, the body shall determine a sentence with a two-thirds vote of members present required for removal from office. All votes shall be conducted by a show of hands, unless a motion for secret ballot passes (simple majority vote).
- Decisions of the body hearing the trial are final and not subject to appeal.
- No SGA officer may be impeached more than once for the same charges with the same evidence.

**Article 9 INITIATIVE**

Petitions from UMBC undergraduates shall be initially given to the SGA President. The President shall then forward it within five business days to the Election Board Chair if a referendum item; or to the Speaker of appropriate legislative body(s) if a legislation or resolution for consideration by that body(s).

**Article 10 STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

All undergraduate student organizations wishing to use UMBC's facilities or name, and/or to obtain funds from SGA must receive SGA recognition through the House of Organizations.

**10.1. Charter Organizations**

Charter Organizations is a special form of recognition granted, by a two-thirds vote of both legislative bodies, to organizations which require special considerations, such as in the budgetary process, for the success of the organization due to their unusual and large capacity for extending the SGA mission on the UMBC campus. Such special considerations shall be specified in a charter, drafted by the organization itself, and approved at the time of chartering.

**Article 11 BUDGETARY PROCESS**

Student activity fees shall constitute a general student activity fund to support activities beneficial to UMBC undergraduates. The Senate and House of Organizations shall establish and maintain a Guiding Document entitled the “Budgetary Policy” determining the budgetary process and which body allocates what funds. No one, including the SGA President, shall spend funds which have not been allocated in accordance with the SGA Guiding Documents.

**Article 12 OFFICER TRANSITION AND TRAINING**

All SGA officers shall attend a retreat prior to the start of the legislative session. This retreat shall focus on the teaching of policies and procedures, goals and expectations, university relationships, and all other relevant training items. The training shall be conducted by the President, in conjunction with the Vice President, SGA Advisor(s), and a representative from the Senate and House of Organizations. In extenuating circumstances or other emergencies, this requirement shall be waved. Additional training opportunities shall be offered throughout the year for new officers by the respective branch/body’s presiding officer.

**Article 13 RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENT**

Ratification of these Bylaws, and amendments thereto, shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of both the House of Organizations and Senate. Actions to ratify or amend these Bylaws are not subject to veto.