Student Government Association
University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast
Constitution

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association (SGA) of the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast (USMGC).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this organization shall be to promote a spirit of fellowship, loyalty, and school pride within the student body. It shall provide a cooperative atmosphere in which to work with the faculty, staff, and administration, and to present student issues and concerns to the administration. This SGA Constitution shall be the final authority regarding all SGA matters.

ARTICLE III. POWERS

1. The Student Government Association shall have the authority to:
   a. Act as a representative for students between faculty, staff and administration.
   b. Establish committees when necessary to conduct business.
   c. Be accountable for Student Government Association budget allocations.
   d. Coordinate student organizations in the implementation of student activities and fund raising programs that affect the student body.
   e. Freely conduct student business without fear of interference or adversity by a student, faculty or administration member.
   f. Yield what authority the administration deems fit for Student Government Association provided it does not conflict with constitutional authority.
   g. Investigate student issues and grievances seeking fair resolutions for all parties.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

1. Executive Council shall consist of a President, Vice President, Attorney General, Secretary, Treasurer, Activities Chair.
2. General Council shall consist of the Executive Council, two student representatives from each academic college, and one graduate representative.
3. The General Council of the Student Government Association shall:
   a. Be enrolled full or part time as a student in good standing at the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast at the time of their election.
   b. Not be on academic probation for any reason.
   c. To be a member of the Executive Council, have and maintain a 2.75 cumulative grade point average (non-rounded). Transfer and freshmen students must have a cumulative 2.75 grade point average (non-rounded) from their previous institution.
   d. To be a member of the General Council, have and maintain a 2.25 cumulative grade point average (non-rounded). Transfer and freshmen students must have a cumulative 2.25 grade point average (non-rounded) from their previous institution.
   e. Be elected by the student body of the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast with the exception of members selected as per Article IX.1.c.
   f. Take the role they are elected to as a commitment to represent the student body.
   g. Not discriminate on the basis of any culturally or cognitively biased characteristics.
   h. Uphold the policies and procedures of university as well as uphold the integrity and prestige of the Student Government Association.
i. Expected to attend the majority of SGA general assembly meetings as well as SGA related events and activities. In the event that a member of the General Council cannot attend an assembly meeting, they must appoint a proxy in their stead for voting purposes.

j. Commit to completing a minimum of two (2) hours a week to SGA business. SGA business includes, but is not limited to, office hours, attending SGA events, committee hours, and meetings.

**ARTICLE V. DUTIES**

1. **The President**
   a. The President shall enforce the SGA Constitution and support it in all aspects.
   b. The President shall serve as SGA Chief Executive, Speaker of the SGA, and as the Official Spokesperson of the Student Body. Additionally, the President shall delegate the various functions of the SGA and the workings of its members not addressed in the SGA constitution or its bylaws.
   c. The President shall form ad-hoc committees to address problems, issues, and concerns. The establishment of these committees shall be subject to the simple majority approval of the General Council.
   d. The President shall convene and preside at all meetings of the Executive Council, General Council, and the student body.
   e. The President must call to meeting the Executive Council, General Council, and/or Student Body upon official written request by the executive administration of the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast or by verbal request from a member of the General Council.
   f. The President shall represent the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast student body and the SGA in any role requiring such representation. The President may select an Executive Council member to serve in his or her stead in a representative capacity.
   g. The President shall be able to summon the Executive Council and General Council of the SGA into a Special Session to address issues of the utmost pressing importance. All other issues must wait until the next regular meeting of the SGA. The President shall notify members of the General Assembly at least one day prior to a Special Session of the SGA.
   h. The President shall be responsible for setting and following the agenda while chairing the Executive Council and General Council meetings.
   i. The President shall initiate and perform the duties of a President as outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised*, unless they conflict with other statutes contained in the SGA Constitution or other standing bylaws.

2. **The Vice-President**
   a. The Vice-President shall coordinate all meetings of the Executive Council, General Council and/or Student Body as directed by the President.
   b. The Vice-President shall succeed to the Office of the President in the event that the President cannot complete a full term of office or a vacant position after Spring elections. In the event that the Vice-President cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the position of the President, a vote will be held in accordance with IX.1.c.
   c. The Vice-President shall serve as the official representative of the SGA in the absence or in the capacity of the President.
   d. The Vice-President shall chair meetings of the General Council in the absence of the President.
   e. The Vice-President shall initiate and perform the duties of a Vice-President as outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised*, unless they conflict with other statutes contained in the SGA Constitution or other standing by-laws.
   f. The Vice-President shall serve as the official liason over all standing committees as well as their respective chair holders, providing a simple majority of the General Council agrees to the Vice-Presidents impartiality, in which case the President shall serve in the Vice-Presidents place.

3. **The Attorney General**
   a. The Attorney General is responsible for informing the SGA of University policies and procedures as well as ensuring that the members of the SGA abide by these policies and procedures.
b. The Attorney General is responsible for regularly checking and maintaining the SGA comment/suggestion boxes located around the campus and responding to comments and concerns posed by the Student Body.

c. The Attorney General is responsible for sitting on the Student Organizations Council that charters student organizations, so as to relay the information from the council.

d. The Attorney General is responsible for ensuring SGA elected officials are in accordance with the constitution and bylaws.

e. The Attorney General is responsible to coordinate with the Secretary to account for absences, and ensure that members are upholding the requirements as set forth by this very constitution.

f. The Attorney General is responsible for setting up elections commission unless he/she is running; If such a case may arise, he/she must give this responsibility to an outgoing executive member.

g. The Attorney General is responsible for ensuring that student organizations are kept abreast of all policies and membership procedures.

4. **The Secretary**

a. The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of all General Council and Executive Council meetings and shall keep the records and files of the SGA in order. All records, files, tape recordings, and minutes shall be kept in trust and shall be available for inspection by any University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast student, faculty, or staff member.

b. The Secretary will work with the Division of Student Affairs to maintain a list of all official student organizations’ contact data and descriptive data associated with the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast.

c. The Secretary shall inform the Executive Council, absent any person that may be implicated for impeachment, of an elected official that is in violation of requirements outlined in this constitution or policies and procedures enforced by the university.

d. The Secretary shall notify all General Council members, Executive Council members, and/or the student body about upcoming meetings in a timely fashion.

e. The Secretary will be responsible for securing rooms for meetings that pertain to SGA business.

f. The Secretary shall send out copies of by-laws, amendments, minutes and other legislation to all persons involved, and as directed by the Executive Council.

g. The Secretary shall initiate and perform the duties of secretary as outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised*, unless they conflict with other statutes or standing by-laws.

h. Should the Secretary be absent from a meeting, the Treasurer shall serve as the Acting Secretary for the meeting.

i. The Secretary will maintain official SGA correspondence. All formal correspondence shall be subject to the majority approval of content by the General Assembly.

j. The Secretary is then responsible for informing the student body of Special Session(s).

5. **The Treasurer**

a. The Treasurer shall administer the financial affairs of the SGA in an orderly manner. He/she shall maintain an orderly budget, including a list of funds contributed to it and funds withdrawn from it, noting the use for each expenditure. This budget shall be public record for members of the administration, faculty, and student body of the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast.

b. The Treasurer shall present a budget update illustrating all financial transactions of SGA funds at each General Council meeting.

c. The Treasurer shall initiate and perform the duties of treasurer as outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised*, unless they conflict with other statutes contained in the SGA Constitution or other standing by-laws.

d. The Treasurer shall serve as Acting Secretary upon absence of the Secretary.

e. The Treasurer shall present a yearly budget to the Student Organizations Council.

f. The Treasurer shall be responsible for fundraising.

6. **The Activities Chair**

a. The Activities Chair shall serve as Executive Officer of the Activities Board.

b. The Activities Chair will be responsible for nominating activities committee chairs and members.

c. The Activities Chair shall appoint an Assistant Activities Chair upon final approval from the SGA President. The Assistant Activities Chair will assist with all Activities Chairs responsibilities and will hold voting power in the absence of the Activities Chair.
d. The Activities Chair will be responsible for submitting a formal proposal to the Executive Council for all events including planning and budget allocations for approval.
e. The Activities Chair, committee chairs, and members must work closely with the Division of Student Affairs in planning events.

7. **Representatives**
   a. Representatives shall be responsible for presenting the views, concerns, and opinions of their constituency and acting on those.
   b. Representatives shall participate in the General Council as a voting member, in select committees as assigned.
   c. Representatives shall be required to serve on one committee of their choice. Those committees include, but are not limited to, the Issues & Grievances, Activities Board, or the Communications Committee.

8. **SGA Advisor(s)**
   a. The Executive Council will be responsible for nominating up to two (2) advisors for SGA.
   b. If the nominations are accepted by those nominated, the president of SGA will be responsible for presenting the nominations to the General Council for a vote. The votes must be a secret ballot if the advisors are present during the meeting. The advisors will be approved upon a 2/3 majority vote.
   c. The SGA advisor(s) will advise the Student Government Association.
   d. The SGA advisor(s) shall represent the views of both the Administration, staff, faculty and students of the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast.
   e. SGA advisors shall serve as a liaison between the University and the SGA, informing both organizations of the actions, activities, and intentions of the other.
   f. The SGA advisor(s) shall have sole signatory authority for contracts, legal agreements, and other official documents binding SGA funds with the oversight of the official University of Southern Mississippi counsel and attorneys. The SGA advisor(s), however, must have the prior approval of the Executive Council for any financial actions undertaken.
   g. The SGA advisor(s) have full floor privileges, but no voting rights in the General Council.
   h. An SGA advisor has the right to step down from their position at any time.
   i. In the event that an SGA advisor has not upheld the standards of constitutional expectations, a member of the General Council will have the right to express these concerns to the Attorney General and President. If the concerns are deemed valid then the SGA advisor will be dismissed by a 2/3 majority vote of the General Council.
   j. In the event of a vacant position for an SGA advisor, the Executive Council will nominate an advisor and act in accordance to (b).

**ARTICLE VI. JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

1. A judicial committee shall be formed comprising of the Vice-President, Attorney General and the SGA advisor(s) as necessary to facilitate any issues constitutional in nature. Forming the Judicial Committee will be a power vested in the SGA President with simple majority vote of the Executive Council.
2. The Judicial Committee shall be responsible for **recommending** measures to the General Council.
3. Impeachment of any member of the SGA will only occur upon recommendation of the Judicial Committee and 2/3 vote of the General Council.
   a. The Vice-President will have authority to form the Judicial Committee if impeachment of the President is deemed necessary.
4. A Judicial Committee will actively enforce the tenets of Article IV and Article XIII.

**ARTICLE VII. STANDING COMMITTEES AND AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

1. Standing Committees shall include, but not limited to, the following:
   a. Issues & Grievance Committee
      i. The Issues & Grievances Committee shall be responsible for investigating grievances and issues presented to the SGA for consideration.
      ii. The Issues & Grievances Committee will report findings and recommendations to the SGA General Council for action.
iii. The Issues & Grievances Committee shall be chaired by the SGA Attorney General and consist of nominated members of the student body and simple majority approval of the General Council.

b. Communications Committee
   i. The Communications Committee shall be responsible for developing methods in which to communicate between the Administration, SGA, and the Student Body.
   ii. The Communications Committee shall be responsible for promoting the SGA and SGA events.
   iii. A Communications Committee Chair shall be nominated by the SGA President and a simple majority approval of the General Council.

c. Activities Board
   i. The Activities Board shall encourage student life, activities, and events across campus.
   ii. The Activities Board shall be comprised of the Activities Chair and those students identified as leaders across campus and approved through simple majority vote of the Executive Council.
   iii. The Activities Board will be responsible for collecting activities forms from other organizations on campus requesting co-sponsorship and present these forms to the Executive Council for a vote.

2. An Ad-hoc Committee shall be appointed as needed by approval of the Executive Council. Ad-hoc Committees shall be created to perform a specific tasks and is dissolved when the tasks are completed and the final report is given. The General Council should not create a special committee to do something that is within the designated function of a standing committee.

ARTICLE VIII. PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

1. The Presidents Council consists of each student organizations standing president, with the purpose of establishing and improving a relationship with the Student Government Association, networking/coordinating of events/activities on campus.
   a. Members are without SGA voting power
   b. Members are not required; although, they are encouraged to participate in the Presidents Council
   c. Members are not upheld to the same standards of elected SGA officials

ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS

1. Elections shall be held only once, every academics year, and in the Spring semester during the first week in March.
   a. Election procedures will be decided by the elections commission, chaired by the Attorney General.
      i. In the event that there is evidence of voter fraud or if an unethical conduct action is observed involving a candidate, the election commission will declare the election for the specific position null and void and a re-election will be held for that position.
   b. New terms will begin after Award’s Day during the Spring semester. The exact date will vary each year in accordance with the student services calendar.
   c. Vacant positions shall be filled by nomination from the SGA President with a simple majority vote of the General Council. Positions filled by this process serve in an interim fashion until the next regularly scheduled election.

2. The Election Commission:
   a. Membership:
      i. The Election Commission is chaired by the Attorney General (AG) and is comprised of the SGA advisor(s).
      ii. If the AG of the SGA is running for the election then he/she will nominate a current member of the SGA to serve on the Election Commission.
      iii. The AG serves as the chair of the Election Commission and will nominate another SGA member to serve on the Election Commission.
   b. Responsibilities:
i. The Election Commission shall be responsible for the management of all student body elections on the Gulf Coast campus including:
   1. SGA Executive Council Elections
   2. SGA Representative Elections
   3. Homecoming Court Elections
   4. Other elections or votes of the student body:
      a) Requested by the administration of University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Coast
      b) Requested by the SGA

ii. The Election Commission shall be responsible for conducting elections in accordance with the rules and regulations here outlined. If, at any time, any of these rules can be interpreted to conflict with the SGA Constitution or university policy, the Election Commission reserves the right to adjust the rules to assure a smooth and fair election and to maintain the dignity and spirit of the democratic process.

iii. The Election Commission is required to attend all meetings called by the Election Commissioner.

iv. The Election Commission shall act to mediate and resolve all allegations of violations of these rules.

v. The Election Commission determines the election calendar, that shall include:
   1. The date of petition availability to all candidates
   2. The date candidates petitions are due
   3. Petition certification will be received within 24 hours.
   4. The dates campaigning will be allowed
   5. The dates, locations and times elections are to be held
   6. The dates financial reports are due
   7. The final appeal date by 2pm following the close of polls.

vi. The Election Commission shall be responsible for appointing poll workers and provide for their instruction and supervision.

c. Powers:
   i. In the event that a complaint is lodged based on an alleged violation of these rules and regulations, the Election Commission is responsible for determining if the violation did occur and if it did (decided by a simple majority vote), the severity of the violation and the appropriate punitive action. These punitive actions shall include, but not be limited to removal from the election or referral to the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for violation of the University of Southern Mississippi Code of Conduct.

ii. The Election Commission may request, at any time prior to the election, the full financial records of any candidate’s campaign.

iii. Upon becoming aware of any alleged violations, the Election Commission shall investigate the allegation to determine its validity, and may then take appropriate action.

iv. The Election Commission reserves the right to interpret these rules and make decisions regarding circumstances not covered within this guide to assure a smooth and fair election and to maintain the dignity and spirit of the democratic process.

v. The ruling of the Election Commission is final as it refers to the election process.

vi. All appeals to the Election Commission will be considered as part of the process to assure a smooth and fair election in future ballots.

3. Election Appeals
   a. All allegations must include factual basis to support their claim.
   b. Any Gulf Coast student may challenge an election in which he/she is eligible to vote.
   c. The Election Commission must act on all complaints within a timely manner.
   d. All complaints must be submitted to the Chair of the Election Commission by 2pm following the day of the election. The Chair of the Election Commission shall inform the Elections Commission of the complaint within the hour of the received complaint.
   e. A complaint by one party against another party must be a typewritten allegation of a violation of these Rules and Regulations stating the candidate(s) involved and all details of the alleged violations. Complaints must be filed with the Election Commission Chair by 2pm following the close of polls. Any complaints received after this time period shall be discarded.
f. The candidate lodging a complaint shall be responsible for proving the complaint to the satisfaction of the Election Commission. Candidates may present evidence and/or witnesses in defense to the alleged violations.

g. The accused candidate must be given a copy of the complaint and shall have the opportunity to present evidence in defense of the allegations.

h. The Election Commission has the authority to investigate alleged violations of misconduct or irregularity as necessary to make an informed and unbiased decisions of each allegation. The nature of this investigation is not restricted by, but may include:
   i. A hearing of all parties involved
   ii. Interviews and consolations with relevant individuals and organizations
   iii. Review of all materials and expenditures involved

i. Appeals may contest any election held therein, for any of the following causes:
   i. That the person who has been declared elected to an office was not, at the time of the election, eligible to that office, position, and/or title.
   ii. That the candidate, or any candidate representative, was guilty of misconduct and/or that any bribe or reward has been offered for the purpose of procuring an election, or has committed any other offense against these Rules and Regulations.
   iii. That irregularity or improper conduct in the proceedings of the poll workers, the Election Commission, or outside party occurred that would jeopardize the candidacy of a candidate.
   iv. That illegal votes were cast or malfunction or irregularity of the polling process occurred.
   v. For grounds not covered in this document but that otherwise work to interfere with the goal of a smooth and fair election and to maintain the dignity and spirit of the democratic process.

j. When a candidate contests any election he or she shall file with the Chair of the Election Commission a written statement setting forth specifically:
   i. The name of the contestant
   ii. The name of the defendant
   iii. The office, position, and/or title
   iv. The particular grounds of contest and the section of this code under which the statement is filed
   v. The nature of the evidence demonstrating a violation of the Rules and Regulations
   vi. The date and time the alleged violation occurred

4. Candidacy:
   A) Qualifications:
      i. A prospective candidate running for a campus wide office must be a registered student in good academic standing at The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Election Commission shall verify this information.
      ii. The student must also be in good disciplinary standing (through the Office of Student Affairs) at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast.
      iii. All candidates must meet the application requirements.
      iv. Each candidate must meet the qualifications for the office, position, or title that he/she is seeking by the specified candidacy application deadline.
      v. Each candidate for an SGA office, position, or title must be either a part-time or full-time under graduate or graduate student in good academic standing with the university at the time of the application.

        1) SGA Executive Offices
           a) The executive offices shall consist of the president, vice president, attorney general, treasurer, and activities chair.
           b) All executive candidates must have a minimum non-rounded gpa of a 2.75.

        2) SGA Representatives
           a) SGA Representatives consists of two student representatives from each academic college, and one graduate representative.
           b) Representatives must have a 2.25 cumulative grade point average non-rounded.
           c) If any representative changes his/her major to an academic college other than the one from which he/she was elected, the representative must immediately inform the SGA
attorney general of the change. The representative will be required to resign from SGA
General Council at the end of the semester in which the change occurred, and a
replacement will be appointed by the president and approved by the General Council.

3) SGA Titles
a) All positions of homecoming maids will be filled by females.
b) All homecoming maid candidates must have a 2.5 cumulative non-rounded gpa. In the
instance that a student does not have gpa from Southern Miss, the Election Commission will
base eligibility on the gpa at the most recent institution attended.

B) Parties:
i. All individuals running for elected position must run as independent candidates not
affiliated with any student organization, political party or other entity.

C) Endorsements:
i. An endorsement shall be defined as any statement of support for any candidate by a
club or organization recognized by the SGA and/or the university.
ii. No member of the Election Commission may endorse or be perceived as endorsing a
candidate.

D) SGA Executive Offices Campaign Expenditures:
a. Each candidate may spend a maximum of $250.00 on his/her campaign. This amount shall
include the value of all campaign items contributed from any source, including donated items.
b. All contributed campaign materials and expenditures shall be assessed a comparable worth to be
deducted from the campaign spending limit. Comparable worth is the normal value of an item or
professional service purchased on the open market. Campaign materials and expenditures
consist of all of those items or professional services used by a candidate in an election effort.
c. Professional work is a service that would normally require payment to the individual or business
by others seeking a similar service.
d. Non-professional human resources shall not have a value assessed them: i.e. poster hangers,
workers to layout and compose poster, banners, or flyers, for example. Contributed or reduced
price professional work done by candidate supporters, friends, relatives, or any other on posters,
flyers, or any other campaign materials and expenditures shall fall under the rules of comparable
worth.
e. It is the responsibility of the candidates to find the comparable worth of all items contributed or
purchased.
f. Each candidate must submit a financial report, including receipts and examples of all campaign
expenditures (including all the comparable worth assessments and documentation as outlined
above), to the Elections Commission Chair (in the SGA office) 48 hours prior to the opening
polls. Failure to do so results in immediate disqualification from the ballot.

E) SGA Representatives Campaign Expenditures:
a. Each candidate may spend a maximum of $200.00 on his/her campaign. This amount shall
include the values of all campaign items contributed from any source, including donated items.
b. All contributed campaign materials and expenditures shall be assessed a comparable worth to be
deducted from the campaign spending limit. Comparable worth is the normal value of an item or
professional service purchased on the open market. Campaign materials and expenditures
consist of all of those items or professional services used by a candidate in an election effort.
c. Professional work is a service that would normally require payment to the individual or business
by others seeking a similar service.
d. Non-professional human resources shall not have a value assessed them: i.e. poster hangers,
workers to layout and compose poster, banners, or flyers, for example. Contributed or reduced
price professional work done by candidate supporters, friends, relatives, or any other on posters,
flyers, or any other campaign materials and expenditures shall fall under the rules of comparable
worth.
e. It is the responsibility of the candidates to find the comparable worth of all items contributed or
purchased.
f. Each candidate must submit a financial report, including receipts and examples of all campaign
expenditures (including all the comparable worth assessments and documentation as outlined
above), to the Elections Commission Chair (in the SGA office) the Friday prior to the opening polls by 5pm. Failure to do so results in immediate disqualification from the ballot.

F) Homecoming Court/Maid Campaign Expenditures:
   a. Each candidate may spend a maximum of $200.00 on his/her campaign. This amount shall include the values of all campaign items contributed from any source, including donated items.
   b. All contributed campaign materials and expenditures shall be assessed a comparable worth to be deducted from the campaign spending limit. Comparable worth is the normal value of an item or professional service purchased on the open market. Campaign materials and expenditures consist of all of those items or professional services used by a candidate in an election effort.
   c. Professional work is a service that would normally require payment to the individual or business by others seeking a similar service.
   d. Non-professional human resources shall not have a value assessed them.
   e. Contributed or reduced price professional work done by candidate supporters, friends, relatives, or any other on posters, flyers, or any other campaign materials and expenditures shall fall under the rules of comparable worth. It is the responsibility of the candidates to find the comparable worth of all items contributed or purchased.
   f. Each candidate must submit a financial report, including receipts and examples of all campaign expenditures (including all the comparable worth assessments and documentation as outlined above), to the Elections Commission Chair (in the SGA office) the Friday prior to the opening polls by 5pm. Failure to do so results in immediate disqualification from the ballot.

G) Campaigning:
   a. Campaigning is any action contributing to the election of a candidate.
   b. Once a candidate’s gpa has been verified and they meet all of the qualifications outlined in the application, campaigning may commence.
   c. All certified candidates must be provided equal access to any/all election forums.
   d. Candidates must adhere to all established university guidelines regarding postings, as well as the guidelines of individual buildings and/or areas.
   e. All candidates are responsible for removing all flyers, banners and other posted materials from all University buildings and facilities at the end of the election.
   f. Candidates and candidate representatives may hand out candy, buttons or other “favors” to encourage student participation in a contest provided the “exchange” is not considered a “deal” for a vote towards a particular candidate.
   g. Campaigning materials shall include, but are not limited to, social media outlets, posters, banners, handbills, handouts, cards, buttons, lawn banners, stickers, waters bottles, candy, and other means that convey a candidate’s name and attempt to influence student’s vote.
   h. Handbills shall include any printed, copied, or written campaign materials that may be distributed by hand or posted around campus within the university policy.
   i. All campaigning photos must remain professional. Any photo deemed inappropriate by the Election Commission will not be allowed on campaigning materials and will be required to be taken down and/or replaced.
   j. Campaign raffles are not allowed.
   k. Blue painters tape must be used to post campaigning materials.
   l. Campaign materials must include the date of the election.
   m. No person shall deliberately remove, destroy, or deface any item of campaign material of another candidate.
   n. Once the voting polls are open, no campaigning may be done within 50 feet of the voting precincts.
   o. Candidates must include their first and last name on all campaigning materials.
   p. All candidates are liable for actions of their campaign manager, staff, and/or assistants.

H) Verbal Campaigning
a. Verbal campaigning shall be defined as speaking to or appearing before any student or group of students for the purpose of influencing their decisions regarding any election conducted by the SGA.

b. Verbal campaigning shall take place in a dignified, professional manner. Violations of this clause may result in the election commissioner removing violator’s right to campaign for the rest of the election.

c. Verbal campaigning may not include amplifications such as bullhorns, microphones, etc.

d. Verbal campaigning cannot be done within 50 feet of the voting precinct once the polls are open.

I) No candidate may:

i. Convey false information pertaining to the election, other candidates, or themselves in any way, shape or form

ii. Use monetary or physical coercion or threat of the same against other candidates, potential voters, or any other members of the community.

iii. Attempt or act to destroy, deface, remove, or cover another candidate’s campaign material.

iv. Violate any university rule or regulation.

v. Campaign within the area designated as the polling place.

vi. Tamper with the ballot box, electronic voting, or any election materials.

vii. Campaign outside the times designated by the Elections Commission.

viii. Use their own personal electronic devices for students to vote on in or outside of the classroom.

b. The Election Commission reserves the right to review and investigate campaign practices, and may take appropriate actions if improprieties are discovered.

c. The election commissioner has complete authority and jurisdiction over subjective matters that may arise during a campaign.

d. Violations will be subjected to review by the Election Commissioner.

J) Elections:

SGA elections shall be held only once, every academic year, and in the Spring semester before Founder’s Day. Homecoming court/maid elections will be held during the Fall semester of every academic year and during the month of September. The dates of this election will be determined yearly by the Election Commission.

a. Voting:

i. Voting shall be done by paper ballot, ballot machine or through a secure on-line website.

ii. The method of voting shall be determined each year by the Election Commission.

iii. An election must use the same voting procedure through the entire process.

iv. No student shall vote more than once on any particular poll.

v. Only those holding a valid and proper University of Southern Mississippi GC student identification number are allowed to vote.

vi. Only Gulf Coast based students taking classes at Southern Miss Gulf Coast may vote in Gulf Coast elections. Duplicate votes will not be counted. All votes will be verified by the Election Commission.

vii. Voting by proxy (letting someone else vote for you) is strictly prohibited and any persons who are found to have been in violation of this rule shall be subject to immediate penalties.

viii. All votes will be verified by the Election Commission.

b. Polling Place:

i. The polling place shall be in the location determined by the Election Commission.

ii. Dates of elections and poll locations shall be set by the Election Commission. Polls shall be open for the election from 9:00am-6:30pm on the day of elections. Any votes submitted before or after the designated time will be discarded.
iii. The polling place shall be defined as an area extending at least fifty (50) feet in every
direction around the ballot box and/or electronic voting stations. When the polling place
is located in a public area (corridors, lobbies, etc.), this area shall be clearly marked.

iv. At least one poll worker shall be assigned to each polling place at all times.

v. Poll workers shall not be allowed to wear any materials or verbally campaign for any
candidate while working the polls.

vi. No students shall be allowed inside a polling place except poll workers and/or those
actively casting a vote in the election.

vii. If the election is taking place online, any computer, smartphone or other electronic
device shall be considered a polling place when it is running the online voting
application.

viii. No campaigning in any form shall be allowed in the polling place besides materials
already posted in those areas prior to the setting up of the polling place.

c. Ballots:

   i. Placement of the candidates’ names on the ballot shall be determined by the order in
      which applications are received.

   ii. The ballot form shall list the names of the candidates, a photograph, the office of the
       elected position, and any other extra information that the election commissioner deems
       applicable to the office in which they are running for.

   iii. The Election Commission must protect balloting materials in a manner so as to prevent
tampering. If the Election Commission decides by 2/3 majority vote that the ballots of a
particular poll have been or may have been tampered with, they may declare the entire
election invalid, and schedule a new one.

   iv. All voting shall be considered a secret ballot in all elections.

   v. No indication as to the total number of votes obtained by any candidate may be
      announced or distributed in any manner prior to the announcement by the Chair of the
      Election Commission.

d. Tabulations:

   i. All ballots shall be tabulated by the Election Commission.

   ii. Blank, illegible or otherwise confusing ballots, as deemed by the Election Commission,
       shall not be included in the tabulation.

   iii. If a ballot envelope, or the process by which the ballots were compiled, has been
determined to be tampered with, the entire election will be forfeited. A 2/3 majority of
the Election Commission shall determine whether any tampering has occurred.

   iv. The Election Commission must commence the counting of ballots after the closing of
the polls.

   v. All ballots must be counted during one continuous executive session, with at least
three members of the Election Commission, and within a reasonable period of time.

e. Determining the winner of an election

   i. The winner shall be the candidate who receives majority of the valid votes cast. An
absolute majority shall be defined as 50.1% or more of the votes.

   ii. If a candidate is unopposed, he/she automatically wins the office, position, or title.

   iii. In the event that a majority vote is not cast for any candidate for any office, position, or
title, a runoff election shall be held. Runoff elections shall be held within one week but
no earlier than two calendar days after the primary elections.

   iv. Runoff elections for each office, position, or title shall consists of two (2) candidates
from the primary election who received the most votes cast.

   v. A runoff election can hold more than two (2) candidates in the event of an exact tie of
the number of votes received by candidates eligible for the runoff.

   vi. If a candidate has not used all their budget and advances to the runoff election, he/she
may use the remainder of their funds for the run-off election. Receipts and expense
reports must be turned in by 8:30 a.m. the day of the runoff election.

   vii. In the event that another tie is held between the top two candidates in the runoff election
then another election will be held.
viii. The winner of the runoff election will be determined by the candidate who received the most votes cast.
ix. After tabulation, all ballots and related materials shall be stored by the Election Commission and kept for one year for public inspection upon request.
x. The Chair of the Election Commission shall release the official election results.
xii. Following the period for appeals, the entire study body, staff, and faculty will then be notified of the election results.

K) Violations of the Election Code
   a. Any student, candidate or SGA official may be charged for each instance of violation of the Election Code. Violators of the election code shall undergo judiciary hearing before the Election Commissions and/or the SGA Judicial Board in the event that the violator is a part of the Election Commissions.

L) Referendum
   a. If a petition is signed by at least 20 percent of the student body and is presented to the SGA Election Commissioner requesting consideration for a student body vote on a particular issue, a special election for the same shall be held within 14 to 21 days following the presentation of the petition to the SGA Election Commissioner. The Election Commissioner must take into account university policy when considering the voting issue. If the measure is passed by a majority vote, the measure shall become law pending the approval of the SGA General Council.

M) Should any complaints against these Election Rules and Regulations arise, they must be made in writing and delivered to any member of the Election Commission. Any Election Commission member receiving the complaint shall notify the entire Election Commission within 24 hours of receiving the complaint. The Elections Commission shall meet and then decide what further action shall be taken within 7 days of being notified.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

1. The Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the General Council by a 2/3 majority vote provided the amendment was presented in writing at the previous regular meeting and successfully placed on the following meetings agenda.
   a. After the amendment is approved by the General Council, the amendment shall be sent to the SGA president for final approval. In the event the SGA president issues a veto, the veto may be overturned by a three-fourths vote of the General Council.

2. If the need arises for a rewriting of the SGA Constitution, the process shall be as follows:
   a. The process shall begin with the written consent of the SGA president or a unanimous vote of the General Council.
   b. There shall a Constitutional committee established that shall consist of the following: the SGA president, the SGA vice president, the SGA attorney general, the treasurer, the secretary, as well as four representatives, which shall bring the total of the Constitutional committee to 9 members.
   c. The committee shall meet at the discretion of the committee members, but shall not operate unless 7 out of the 9 members are present.
   d. Upon completion, the new document must be submitted first to the SGA General Council for 2/3 approval and then to a vote by the student body. This document will go into effect with the majority consent of the student body vote.
   e. Upon the plurality vote of the participatin student body of USM-GC and approval by the SGA General Council, the new SGA Constitution shall take immediate effect, and all preceeding documents will be declared null and void.
   f. Conflicts with immediate implementation, may be postponed or managed accordingly with the approval of the SGA president and the SGA attorney general.
ARTICLE XI. BYLAWS

a. Bylaws shall be established to govern Student Government Association activities and conduct.
b. Bylaws require a simple majority vote of the General Council.
c. Bylaws shall follow constitutional boundaries on all matters. Should any bylaws, bills, or resolutions conflict with this Constitution, they will be rendered null and void.

2. Bylaws
   a. The 2013 SGA Constitution. The 2013 Constitution will go into force in the following semester after 2/3 majority vote of the General Council.
   b. Office Hours for Executive Council. Executive Council members are required to maintain 2 regularly scheduled hours per week during the academic semester in the SGA office.
   c. Office Hours for General Council. General Council members are required to maintain 1 regularly scheduled hour per week during the academic semester in the SGA office.
   d. Attendance Requirement. Elected members of the SGA or their proxies, are required to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the SGA. Elected members of the SGA should make a best effort attempt to attend all sponsored activities of the SGA.
   e. The American Student Government Association. The Gulf Coast Student Government Association desires to become part of the broad network of Student Government Associations across the United States. The Gulf Coast Student Government Association believes that a healthy Student Government Association leads to a healthier institution and a better experience for the student body. The Gulf Coast Student Government Association desires to align its long term institutional goals to those recommended by the American Student Government Association as follows:
      1. ALL higher-education institutions, no matter the size, state, or type, must have and fully support student-governance organizations with leaders whom are popularly elected by a majority of the student body. Administrators and trustees must recognize these governance groups as the official "student voice."
      2. ALL Student Governments must be "institutionalized." Colleges and universities must consider SGs to be indispensable, critical parts of the higher-education experience and should include student governance in their mission statements.
      3. ALL Student Governments must operate as autonomously as possible. They must have the right to succeed or fail on their own, without fear of reprisal by administrators, except in the case of fraud, embezzlement, or other illegal activities on the part of the SG officers and members.
      4. ALL Student Governments must be as fiscally autonomous as possible. Their annual budgets ideally should be based on a portion of student fees generated by tuition revenues. SG budgets should only be impacted positively or negatively based on the institution's enrollment growth or decline, and absolutely should not be impacted by administrative decree, whims, or needs.
      5. ALL Student Governments should be able to choose their own advisors and should expect these advisors to be committed and competent. An advisor should understand that his/her role is one of a helper, teacher, and information resource, not a dictator.
      6. ALL Student Governments should be provided with spacious, convenient, and clean on-campus office space from which to base their operations, preferably located in a major student thoroughfare.
      7. ALL Student Governments must have a student representative and vote on campuswide governing and academic committees, including the institution's "board of trustees."

ARTICLE XII. STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS

1. No student shall be deprived of his or her constitutional rights as established in the United States Constitution, with the exception of the right to bear arms which is prohibited on campus, without due process of law.
2. No student shall be deprived of their educational opportunities because of race, sex, age, beliefs, or physical conditions.
3. Every student has the right to expect the best educational institution and materials possible.
4. Every student has the right to expect a courteous and professional environment on campus.
5. Every student has the right of due process for any grievance between student and faculty, staff or administrative member.

6. No legal possession of any student may be confiscated without due process of law, except firearms, which are prohibited on campus.

7. Every student has the right to air grievances or concerns with the Student Government Association, faculty, staff, or administration without fear of punishment or harassment from any student, elected representative, faculty, or administration member.