

CONSTITUTION of the Northern Iowa Student Government

Updated as of August 28th, 2009

PREAMBLE

We, the students of the University of Northern Iowa, exist not only as individuals, but also as a community. The purpose of this Constitution is to unify our student community by establishing this student government.

We establish this Constitution in order to improve the administration of student affairs, to encourage the greatest level of cooperation and communication, to ensure the protection of student rights, and to provide excellence in education.

ARTICLE I: DEFINITION OF NORTHERN IOWA STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The self-governance of student affairs at the University of Northern Iowa, hereafter referred to as the University, shall be vested in the Northern Iowa Student Government.

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Northern Iowa Student Government, hereafter referred to as Student Government.

Section 2. Membership

Any student who is currently registered at the University shall be a member of the Student Government.

Section 3. Purpose

The purpose of Student Government shall be to act as the supreme student governing body of the University in the regulation, implementation, and coordination of affairs of the Student Body, to represent the Student Body in matters concerning the University and non-University communities, and to promote any business in the best interest of the Student Body.

Section 4. Powers

In accordance with the responsibilities as set down by the President of the University and of the Board of Regents - State of Iowa, the Student Government is empowered to take those steps necessary to manage the affairs of the Student Body, including the assurance of student representation in University decision-making processes and to conduct the business of the Student Body.

ARTICLE II: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The executive responsibilities of the Student Government shall be vested in its Executive Officers.

Section 1. Executive Officers

The Executive Officers of the Student Government shall consist of a President, Vice President, Director of Administration, Director of Public Relations, and Director of Diversity and Student Life.

Section 2. Election and Appointment

The Executive Officers shall be chosen through the following procedures:

A. **President and Vice President.** The President and Vice President shall run as a ticket and be elected by a majority of students voting in the annual general election. If no ticket receives a majority of the vote, a run-off election shall be held one week later between the two tickets with the highest vote totals, upon confirmation of the Election Commission.

B. **Directors.** After the general election, a public announcement by the President-elect shall be made seeking applications for the Directorships established by this Constitution. At least two weeks after this announcement, the President-elect shall present one nominee for each position before the Senate elected in the aforementioned general election for confirmation. Failing to secure a majority vote for any position, the President must submit another nominee.

Section 3. Qualifications

The Executive Officers of the Student Government must be currently registered students at the University.

Section 4. Term of Office

Each Executive Officer's term of office shall be in two parts, transitional and official.

A. **Transitional.** Upon election or appointment, each Executive Officer shall serve the transitional term of office. This term shall be used to familiarize the newly-elected officer with the workings of his or her respective office.

B. **Official.** The official term of office shall begin on the fifteenth day of April. The Executive Officer shall serve until the completion of the fourteenth day of April or until duly replaced.

Section 5. Succession and Vacancies

A. **Succession.** Should a vacancy occur in the office of the President, an officer of the executive or legislative branch shall assume the office of the President. The order of succession shall be as follows, with the named officer serving the balance of the un-expired term:

- The Vice President
- The Director of Administration
- The Director of Public Relations
- The Director of Diversity and Student Life
- The Speaker of the Senate
- The Deputy Speaker of the Senate
- The Chair of Government and Legislative Affairs Committee
- The Chair of the Organization and Finance Committee
- The Chair of the Student Affairs Committee
- The Chair of the Public Relations and Programming Committee

Should all of these be vacant simultaneously, the Senate shall meet at its earliest convenience to elect a Senator to serve as President for the balance of the un-expired term.

B. **Vice Presidential Vacancy.** Should a vacancy occur in the Vice Presidential position, a public announcement by the President, through campus media, shall be made seeking applications for the Vice Presidency. At least two weeks after this announcement, the President shall present a nominee for Vice President to the Senate for confirmation. Failing to secure a majority vote, the President must submit another nominee.

Section 6. Powers and Responsibilities

The powers and responsibilities of the Executive Officers shall be as follows:

A. **President.** The President shall be the chief executive of the Student Government and may call special meetings of the Senate and meetings of the Interim Committee. With the approval of the majority of the Senate, the President shall create any lower executive offices or committees and appoint persons thereto. The President shall have the power to dismiss any Executive Officer. The President shall submit a monthly written report to the Senate. The President shall deliver to the Senate and campus community in the fall semester, an address or written report about the state of the Student Body of the University and condition of the Student Government.

B. **Vice President.** The Vice President shall be in charge of all academic affairs of the Student

Government. The Vice President shall be responsible for monitoring and securing nominations for University Presidential Committees, campus committees, and academic committees. All such nominations shall be submitted to the Senate for confirmation. Additionally, the Vice President shall be responsible for coordinating the executive staff at the request of the President. The Vice President shall submit a monthly written report to the Senate.

C. Directors

1. **Director of Administration.** The Director of Administration shall be responsible for the efficiency and upkeep of the offices of the Student Government. The Director of Administration shall be responsible for hiring an executive office manager and coordinate with the same concerning the spending of allocated funds in cooperation with the student accounts officer and the Organization and Finance Committee. Director of Administration shall further be responsible for the administration of new organizations that have received recognition by the Senate. The Director of Administration shall also work with the Senate to prepare the budget of the Student Government. The Director of Administration shall serve as Attorney General of the Student Government. This officer shall submit a monthly written report to the Senate.

2. **Director of Public Relations.** The Director of Public Relations shall be responsible for the functioning of all Student Government programs and shall submit monthly written reports on all programs to the Senate. The Director of Public Relations shall be responsible for all press relations.

3. **Director of Diversity and Student Life.** The Director of Diversity and Student Life shall be responsible for the enhancement of student life through academic and social ventures and shall promote the recognition and appreciation of diversity at the University of Northern Iowa. The Director of Diversity and Student Life shall submit monthly written reports to the Senate.

Section 7. Compensation

The Executive Officers stated herein shall receive compensation for their service. Other officers and employees of the executive branch may receive compensation for their services as determined by the Senate.

Section 8. Number of Positions Held

No person shall hold more than one position as an Executive Officer, nor serve in any other branch of Student Government.

ARTICLE III. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The legislative powers of the Student Government shall be vested in the Senate.

Section 1. Composition of the Senate

The Senate shall be divided as follows:

A. Off-Campus. There shall be one Senator for every five hundred students residing off campus, based off the previous fall enrollment.

B. Residence Halls and University Apartments. There shall be one Senator per Residence Hall and University Apartments.

C. College. There shall be one Senator for each College within the University of Northern Iowa.

D. University At-Large. There shall be 5 spots open to any student of the University of Northern Iowa.

Section 2. Election

All Senators shall be chosen during the annual general election by a plurality vote from the constituents of the area in which they seek office.

Section 3. Qualifications

A. A Senator must be a currently registered student at the University. It is not necessary for a person seeking office to reside in the area which he or she seeks to represent, but must reside in said area within the first five Senate meetings of the commencement of his or her official term in office and remain a resident of the area throughout his or her term of office.

B. A person seeking office, for a College Senatorial seat, must be a declared major in the college of which he or she is seeking to represent. If the student switches their major to one in a new college, the Senator must relinquish their seat immediately.

Section 4. Terms of Office

The term of office of the Senate shall be in two parts, transitional and official.

A. Transitional. Upon election, each Senator shall serve the transitional portion of office. The duties of the transitional Senate are to organize itself for the official portion of office, and to familiarize itself with the procedures of the Senate.

Transitional Senators must attend meetings of the Senate and retain the power to approve nominees to the Executive Branch and to select legislative officers. The Transitional Senate shall meet at the discretion of the seated Speaker of the Senate, hereafter referred to as the Speaker, and shall act under the authority of the Speaker until it shall have duly authorized a Speaker to serve the pending term.

B. Official. The Senate shall begin the official term of office on the fifteenth day of April at

12:01 a.m. The Senate shall officially serve until the completion of the fourteenth day of April of the next year.

Section 5. Vacancies

Any vacancies in the Senate shall be filled by appointment of the Speaker and confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. The Speaker is free to begin appointing Senators the Tuesday after Labor Day. Any Senators appointed prior to a special election shall run in said election to retain their seat.

Section 6. Officers

A. Speaker of the Senate. The chief officer of the Senate shall be the Speaker of the Senate. This officer shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Transitional Senate. The Speaker must be a currently registered student at the University. The Speaker shall preside over the Senate, and appoint and coordinate the committees of the Senate. The Speaker shall establish the time and place of the regular meetings of the Senate with the approval of the Senate.

B. Committee Chairs. A committee chair must be a currently registered student at the University. Committee Chairs shall be elected by a majority vote of the committee members at the first committee meeting of the new Senate following the annual general election, subject to confirmation by the full Senate. Vacancies shall be treated in a like manner. Committee Chairs may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of their respective committee.

Section 7. Meetings of the Senate

All meetings of the Senate and of the Senate's committees shall be open to the public except upon matters of impeachment. Trials of impeachment shall not be open to the public. A majority of the Senate constitutes a quorum. A special meeting of the Senate may be called by the Speaker, the President, the Director of Administration, five Senators, or upon petition by one percent of the Student Body. The last regularly scheduled meeting must occur on or before April 8th.

Section 8. Number of Positions Held

No Senator shall hold more than one seat in the Senate, nor serve in any other branch of the Student Government.

Section 9. Powers

The Senate is granted the following powers:

- A. Enacting such legislation as it may deem necessary to investigate items of student concern and to decide policy for the Student Government.
- B. Determining and supervising the budgeting and disbursement of Student Government funds.
- C. Determining the procedure of recognition of campus organizations.
- D. Receiving reports upon request from any portion of the Executive Branch.
- E. Approving executive appointments and committees by a majority vote.
- F. Dismissing the Speaker by a two-thirds vote.
- G. Studying and forming recommendations on any area of student interest.
- H. Approving the censure or dismissal of any Senator for lack of attendance to Senate meetings or Senate committee meetings, for abuse of powers or responsibilities, or for unethical conduct while in office.
- I. Determining the rules of conduct for the Senate and for the Interim Committee.
- J. Creating temporary committees as deemed necessary by the Senate.

Section 10. Legislation and Veto

All legislation must be passed by majority vote of the Senate at any authorized meeting. Upon passage, such legislation shall be presented to the President who may sign or veto such legislation. If any such legislation is vetoed, the reason for the veto must be submitted in writing to the Senate at the meeting immediately following the original passage, excepting legislation passed during the last regular meeting, in which case the veto must be presented to the Speaker of the Senate within 7 days. The Speaker shall then call a special meeting for the purpose of considering the veto. A veto may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the Senate during the meeting at which the veto is presented. Should the legislation be neither signed nor vetoed it shall be enacted following the next regular meeting after passage.

Section 11. Impeachment and Trial

The Senate shall have the power to impeach and try members of the executive and judicial branches of the Student Government, and its own members, for abuse of powers or responsibilities, or for unethical conduct while in office.

I. Impeachment

A. Five (5) Senators or the Speaker of the Senate may bring forth legislation to convene the Investigative Committee in order to investigate charges against a member of the executive branch, member of the judicial branch, or against a Senator.

B. The accused shall be notified via e-mail, telephone, and registered mail of his or her charges and his or her accusers. The accused shall be notified at least one (1) week before a meeting of the Investigative Committee.

C. The Investigative Committee shall be composed of five members: the four standing committee chairs and the Speaker of the Senate. If one of the sponsors of the initial bill or the accused is a standing committee chair, the vice-chair or another member of said standing committee must sit in his or her place.

D. The Investigative Committee shall create formal charges against the accused. The accused shall have an opportunity to come before the Investigative Committee. If the accused is found guilty of the charges by a majority vote of the Investigative Committee, the accused will be considered impeached.

II. Removal

Upon impeachment, the Investigative Committee will present its charges, in bill form, to the Senate. The accused will have the privilege of an open or closed session of the Senate. A two-thirds majority vote of the Senate is required to remove a member of Student Government.

III. Appeal

The Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction in matters of impeachment and removal. As the Director of Administration serves as the Attorney General of Student Government, he or she shall represent both the Investigative Committee and the Senate before the Supreme Court, per Northern Iowa Student Government By-laws, Article I, Section 1, C, 5. A majority vote of the Supreme Court is

required to overrule the actions of the Investigative Committee or the Senate, per the Constitution of the Northern Iowa Student Government, Article VI, Section 2.

ARTICLE IV. INTERIM COMMITTEE

The Interim Committee shall act in the place of the Senate between the end of the spring semester and the beginning of the fall semester.

Section 1. Composition

The Interim Committee shall be composed of thirty Senators, to be selected by the Speaker of the Senate no later than the final regular meeting of the Senate during the Spring Semester. All the members of the Interim Committee must be elected or appointed Senators; however, the Senators shall not be bound to their constituencies during the Interim Session and need not be registered for Summer Session classes.

Section 2. Meetings

Meetings of the Interim Committee may be called by the President or the Speaker of the Senate. All meetings of the Interim Committee shall be held on or near the campus of the University. There shall be no minimum number of meetings to be called during the Interim Session. A quorum shall consist of sixteen duly elected Senators.

Section 3. Powers

Any action by the Interim Committee shall be binding upon the Northern Iowa Student Government. Either the Speaker of the Senate or one of the Senators of the Committee shall preside at meetings. All legislation must pass by majority vote. The President may veto any legislation.

ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS

The power to hold elections and establish an Election Commission shall be vested in the Student Government.

Section 1. Dates

The Northern Iowa Student Government General Election shall be held each year on the date(s) determined by the Election Rules. Special Elections shall be held on dates determined by the Election Commission.

Section 2. Election Commission

An Election Commission shall be established by the Senate. Election Commission members shall be chosen as outlined in the **Northern Iowa Student Government By-Laws**. The Election Commission shall conduct all Student Government elections. They shall also establish rules for all general and special elections, providing that such rules do not conflict with the Student Government Constitution or By-Laws. Rules are provided in the **Northern Iowa Student Government Election Rules** document. The Election Commission shall have original jurisdiction over all election contests. The Election Commission shall be responsible for the certification of all Student Government Elections. If an election is not certified, the Election Commission shall hold a new election.

ARTICLE VI. JUDICIAL BRANCH

The power to review the activities of the Student Government shall be vested in the Supreme Court and such lower courts as may be established by the Senate.

Section 1. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court shall consist of five students currently registered at the University. The justices shall be appointed by the President and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. Justices shall serve for the duration of their enrollment at the University, or until they resign. The Supreme Court shall meet as necessary to dispose of its business and shall have exclusive domain over its rules of conduct.

Section 2. Jurisdiction

The Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction in all matters relating to the constitutionality of actions by the executive and legislative branches of Student Government and of actions by the Interim Committee, over disputes between the Student Government Constitution and constitutions of other student organizations, over violations by student organizations of University policies, and over other questionable actions of organizations recognized by the Student Government. The Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction over decisions of the Election Commission. The Supreme Court shall have the power to suspend organizations from University recognition. Any ruling of the Supreme Court must be observed and enforced by the Executive Officers and the Senate unless four-fifths of the Senate, with the concurrence of the President, object to such rulings. The President of the University or his or her representative shall have appellate jurisdiction over rulings of the Supreme Court.

ARTICLE VII. STUDENT BODY

The Student Body shall maintain certain powers unto itself.

Section 1. Powers

The powers of referendum, initiation, and recall shall be vested in the Student Body:

- A. **Referendum.** Upon petition of five percent of the Student Body any measure or decision enacted or accepted by the Senate shall be submitted to the Student Body for their approval or rejection in a special election for that purpose.
- B. **Initiative.** Any matter may be brought before the Senate for consideration by a petition of one percent of the Student Body.
- C. **Recall.**
 - i. An election for the recall of a specific Senator or the President must be held after petition of twenty-five percent of a residence hall or University Apartments Senator's constituency, ten percent of a college Senator's constituency, or five percent of the constituency of all other Senators and the President.
 - ii. The name reason of initiator of the petition of the recall shall be placed upon the petition.

Section 2. Meetings

Meetings of the whole Student Body may be called by the President with majority approval of the Senate or by petition of ten percent of the Student Body. The President shall preside at such meetings.

ARTICLE VIII. INITIATION OF SPECIAL STUDENT FEES

The Student Government may initiate special student fees, either voluntary or mandatory, through the following procedure.

Section 1. Definition of Special Student Fees

Special student fees are fees collected from students above and beyond tuition and other types of educational fees collected by the administration of the University. These fees shall be for a special purpose, and as such are designed by students for student benefit.

Section 2. Initiation Procedure

The Senate shall determine the need for any such fee, the use of such fees, the guidelines for expenditures of such fees, and the collection procedure, either

voluntary or mandatory, by a two-thirds vote. Once the parameters for such a fee have been determined by the Senate, a majority petition of the Student Body must be made to certify that a majority of the students desire such a fee. The petition must include the collection procedure, either voluntary or mandatory. Upon completion of the petitioning, the fee proposal shall be taken before the Board of Regents - State of Iowa for their approval. Only upon completion of the above steps shall fees be collected.

ARTICLE IX. OATH OF OFFICE

Section 1. Definition

Oath of Office refers to Article IX, Section 6.

Section 2. Executive Branch

- A. Before the President-elect shall assume office, the incumbent Student Government President shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her. This will take place at the first regular Senate meeting of the new Senate session.
- B. Before the Vice President-elect shall assume office, the incumbent Student Government Vice President shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her. This will take place at the first regular Senate meeting of the new Senate session.
- C. Before the Director of Administration, *Director of Public Relations*, and *Director of Diversity and Student Life* shall assume office, the Speaker shall administer the Oath of Office to them. This shall take place at the first regular Senate meeting after confirmation.

Section 3. Legislative Branch

- A. Before a Senator shall assume office, the Speaker shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her. This shall take place at the first regular Senate meeting of the Senator's term of office.
- B. Before the Speaker shall assume office, the incumbent Speaker shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her at the last regular meeting of the Senate session.
- C. Before the Recording Secretary shall assume office, the Speaker shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her.

Section 4. Judicial Branch

- A. Before the Chief Justice shall assume office, the President shall administer the Oath of Office to him or her. This shall take place at the first regular Senate meeting after confirmation.

B. Before a Justice shall assume office, the Speaker will administer the Oath of Office to him or her.

Section 5. Special Circumstance

If the person stipulated to administer the Oath of Office is unable to perform this duty then the Senate shall select a designee to administer the Oath.

Section 6: Oath of Office

I (name), promise to uphold and execute the Constitution and By-Laws of the Northern Iowa Student Government and the duties of my position to the best of my ability. I pledge my dedication through my time, talents, and other efforts to faithfully preserve and improve the quality of the academic and student life of my constituents and the student community of the University of Northern Iowa.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be initiated by a two-thirds vote of the Senate or by petition of fifteen percent of the Student Body. Amendments shall be ratified by a majority vote of the Student Body voting in either a general or special election. Each amendment shall be presented in bill form and shall have two readings before the Senate, and the proposed amendment must be published at least two weeks before the vote.

ARTICLE XI. RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the present Senate and a majority of the vote in an election called for that purpose.