Bemidji State University

Student Association Constitution

Last Updated April 2019

Preamble

We, the students of Bemidji State University (BSU), joined together in a common cause, need a governing body to give advice on the interests of the student body, and to represent the student association to all levels of government, administration, faculty, and staff. In order to achieve this, pursuant to the rules of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MN State) Board of Trustees, we hereby ordain and establish this governing body and Constitution.

Article I – Name

The name of the organization of the students is hereafter referred to as the Bemidji State University Student Association (BSUSA). The governing body of this association shall hereafter be referred to as the Student Senate.

Article II – Definitions

In interpreting any part of this Constitution and its bylaws, in whole or in part, the singular includes the plural and the plural includes the singular; words in the past or present tense shall include the future; and the University President or the Student Senate President include any designees thereof. The Student Senate shall consist of all Student Senate seats specified in this Constitution less any seats that are declared.

Article III – Constituency

BSUSA Student Senate will represent members of the BSUSA. Membership in the BSUSA shall be open to all students who are enrolled at BSU for credit and/or audit. This shall include all on and off campus students and external studies students.
Article IV – Governing Body

Section 1: The governing body of the BSUSA shall be the Student Senate. The business of the Student Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the policies of BSU, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MinnState) and all local, state and federal laws.

Section 2: The BSUSA Student Senate shall always operate in a non-partisan fashion. All members will refrain from attempting to move the Student Senate in a partisan direction or trying to influence any other students or members in a partisan way.

Section 3: The BSUSA Student Senate shall have the following structure:

- President
- Vice President
- Chief of Staff
- Committee Chairs
- Office Manager
- Senators

Section 4: Members:

A) Bemidji State University has an all-comers policy. Consequently, all registered student organizations must allow any interested student to participate, become a member, or seek leadership positions in the organizations, regardless of their status or beliefs. No person shall be discriminated against with regards to race, sex, gender, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, and sexual orientation.

B) The Student Senate shall consist of a President, Vice President, Office Manager, Chief of Staff, four (4) Committee Chairs, and twenty-three (23) Senators. All other students of Bemidji State University are considered “non-
voting” members.

C) The Student Senate Cabinet shall consist of the President, Vice President, Office Manager, Chief of Staff, Committee Chairs, and any other position at the discretion of the cabinet.

D) The Director of the Hobson Memorial Union shall serve as the advisor to the BSUSA Student Senate, unless the Student Senate elects to have another advisor who is a member of the BSU faculty or staff.

Section 5: Application and Eligibility Requirements

A) Senators: To be eligible for election or appointment, as well as continued service as a Senator or cabinet member, a candidate must:

1) Be a member of the BSUSA;
2) Maintain a good academic standing with the university;
   i) 0-15 credits must be a 1.5
   ii) 16-30 credits must be a 1.7
   iii) 31-59 credits must be a 1.9
   iv) 60+ must be a 2.0
3) Maintain a status of at least six semester credits for undergraduate students or three semester credits for graduate students for their entire term of office;
4) Not be on academic or disciplinary probation at BSU.

B) President requirements: To be eligible to run for President, the candidate must have done at least two of the following three requirements during the academic year that they are choosing to run:

1) Attended at least five (5) Student Senate meetings
2) Attend at least one (1) Students United conference
3) Served on a BSUSA Student Senate Committee for at least five (5) meetings

C) Should any candidate for any Senate position not meet any or all of the above stated requirements, they shall not be appointed or placed on the ballot. Should any member of the Student Senate fail to meet these requirements or be discovered to not have met the requirements at the time of their election or appointment, they shall be automatically removed from their Student Senate position upon notice from the Student Senate Advisor or the current Student Senate President.

Section 6: Policies
A) The Student Senate may propose regulations, create services, initiate activity or policy, enforce compliance, petition particular action by appropriate authority, and adopt resolutions.

B) The Student Senate may use Cabinet or committees to develop proposals or recommend modifications to University regulations pertaining to, but not limited to: housing, conduct, student mass media, the student union, the assessment of student fees, and the expenditure guidelines and budgets for student fee supported operations.

C) The Student Senate shall also have the opportunity to make recommendations prior to final action on, or implementation of, University policy decisions and procedures.

D) Any Student Senate action requiring University response shall be forwarded to the University President within three (3) days. The Student Senate President shall request the University President to respond in writing to the Student Senate within a specified period of time.

Section 7: The duties and powers of the BSUSA Student Senate members shall be:

A) Student Senator:

1) Act as a representative of the BSUSA Student Senate at all times.
2) Keep University students informed of the activities and issues of the Student Senate.
3) Act as a voting member of the Student Senate.
4) Maintain assigned office hours.
5) Participate in an assigned BSUSA Student Senate committee.

B) President

1) Fulfill the responsibilities of a Student Senator with the exception of serving on a committee and is not a voting member.
2) Act as the official representative of the BSUSA and the Student Senate.
3) Chair all Cabinet meetings.
4) Hold fiduciary responsibility over the BSUSA.
5) Appoints positions of committee chairs, Chief of Staff, and Office Manager.
6) Chair all Student Senate meetings or appoint designee from cabinet in accordance to Robert’s Rule of Order: Newly Revised.
7) Provide leadership and direction to the BSUSA Student Senate per discretion of the cabinet.
8) Approve emergency expenditures and inform the Student Senate of these expenditures.

9) Maintain regular contact with the Student Senate advisor or designee.
10) Serve as the representative of BSU on the Students United Board of Directors or designate cabinet member. The Board of Directors term will last until June 30th of each year.
11) Maintain regular contact with the University President and University Cabinet.
12) Must provide a transition report to the next administration as it pertains to duties

C) Vice President

1) Fulfills the responsibilities of a Student Senator with the exception of serving on a committee.
2) Provide mentoring to new senators as they join BSUSA Student Senate.
3) Appoint Senators into Student Senate Committees with the approval of BSUSA Cabinet.
4) Have a deep working knowledge of BSUSA Constitution and the bylaws so as to be a resource to the BSUSA Body.
5) Assume the Duties and office of President in the case of an absence.
6) Must provide a transition report to the next administration as it pertains to your duties

D) Chief of Staff

1) Fulfills the responsibilities of a Student Senator with the exception of serving on a committee.
2) Support the President by helping to enforce Robert’s Rule of Order: Newly Revised during Student Senate meetings
3) Must provide a transition report to the next administration as it pertains to your duties
4) Nominate three (3) students to the Elections Commission at least 8 weeks prior to the start of the election by the procedures outlined in the Campaign/Election Guidelines
5) Assume the Duties and office of the Vice President in the case of an absence

E) Office Manager

1) Fulfills the responsibilities of a Student Senator position with the exception of serving on a committee.
2) Record attendance and minutes at weekly Student Senate meetings.
3) Catalog Student Senate bills and resolutions.
4) Report on the Student Senate budget at Student Senate meetings upon request.
5) Prepare the agenda for each Student Senate meeting.
6) Maintain office operations.
7) Check the Class standing of all senators at the beginning of each semester.
8) Provide administrative assistance to Committee Chairs.

F) Committee Chairs:

1) Fulfills the responsibilities of a Student Senator.
2) Facilitate regular committee meetings and post meeting times.
3) Assign and coordinate sub-committees to fulfill specific purposes.
4) Act as a spokesperson for the committee to the Student Senate and the public.
5) Complete committee reports and post them upon request.
6) Report committee meeting absences to the Office Manager.
7) Serve as a member of cabinet.

G) Cabinet:

1) Advise the Student Senate President on how to best represent the BSUSA especially in the specific areas of Student Senate that each member is responsible for.
2) Responsible for determining stipends, assuring accountability, conducting evaluations, and addressing personnel issues.
3) Keep all members of the Student Senate informed and advise them about issues in their specific areas of the Student Senate.
4) Appoint all projects/concerns that are brought to the Student Senate to appropriate committees.
5) Approve recommendations for University committees.
6) Shall have authority to make time-sensitive decisions. These decisions must be reported to the Student Senate at the next regularly scheduled Student Senate meeting. Any decisions made by cabinet can be overturned by a ⅔ majority vote on a motion made by a member of the Student Senate within two weeks of the decision report. Cabinet members will not have a vote on any motion attempting to overturn their decision.

H) Advisor:

1) Attend the weekly Student Senate meetings.
2) Be aware of University policies and advise the Student Senate of these
policies when needed.
3) Be aware of and offer advice on bills and resolutions that are produced by the Student Senate.
4) Meet on a regular basis with the President and Vice President to discuss Student Senate issues and be available to all Student Senate members for questions.
5) Work with the Senate to keep the budget balanced, sign off on all applicable paperwork, and pay bills in a timely fashion.

I) University Committee Student Representatives:

1) Keep the Student Senate informed of the issues and activities of their committee via a report as needed or requested.
2) Attend their scheduled University Committee meetings and be knowledgeable of current issues.
3) Must submit written documentation (including, but not limited to attendance and notes) to the Chief of Staff.

Article V – Committees

Section 1: All committees shall meet weekly during the academic year, unless otherwise determined by the chair, and the membership of these committees shall be open to all members of the BSUSA.

Section 2: The BSUSA Student Senate shall consist of four (4) chaired committees that take on projects/concerns as they are brought to the Student Senate. The committees may also bring forward projects/concerns that they would like to see the Student Senate address:

A) Campus Affairs
The Campus Affairs Committee oversees the policies, concerns, and issues that affect the entire campus. This committee reviews and creates policies and procedures to protect the campus community in both external relationships, as well as internal operations. Campus Affairs’ policy areas include but are not limited to administrative affairs, alumni relations, and student affairs.

B) Academic Affairs
The Academic Affairs Committee oversees all activities that support the academic mission of the University. The work of the Academic Affairs Committee includes the articulation of the academic mission of the University, enhancing the quality of the academic program, considering new academic programs and significant modifications in existing academic programs, all matters relating to the graduate and professional student experience, which include academic, extra-curricular, and co-curricular affairs, and overseeing strategic planning for the University and
its constituent schools.

C) Inclusivity Affairs
The Inclusivity Affairs Committee shall be responsible for promoting various organizations and events on campus, with the goal of supporting equality and respect among the population of Bemidji State University. Such responsibilities include but are not limited to working with University Committees concerned with inclusivity, student organizations, Students United Diversity Specialist, and collaborating with said organizations. Inclusivity Affairs will also handle the approval of Student Organization Constitution and Student Organization Fundraising Applications.

D) Public Relations
The Public Relations Committee shall be an active voice by spreading the word of the Student Senate and encouraging other students to become involved. The Committee shall work with all media outlets, on and off campus. The Committee shall also plan and direct public relations programs designed to disseminate and create publications pertaining to BSUSA Student Senate activities.

Section 3: The Student Senate shall approve eight (8) members, one (1) Vice Chair, and appoint one (1) Chair to serve for terms of one academic year on the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee (SAFAC).

A) The composition of this committee shall be no more than two (2) Student Senators.

B) The Chair of this committee shall be appointed by the Student Senate President and ratified by a majority vote of the Student Senate.

C) The Vice Chair of this committee and the eight (8) members shall be appointed by the SAFAC Chair and be ratified by a majority vote of the Senate.

D) SAFAC will work under the Constitution and bylaws of the Student Senate but will retain their own policies and guidelines as stated in the SAFAC manual, provided that they are in compliance with the Student Senate Constitution and its bylaws.

E) The SAFAC Chair or his/her designee will report monthly to the Student Senate on the actions and issues of SAFAC.

Article VI – Replacement of Officers
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Section 1: Should the President leave office for any reason the Vice President shall assume the office of the President. Should the Vice President leave office for any reason, the Chief of Staff shall assume the office of the Vice President.

Section 2: One person may hold only one of the following offices at any one time: President, Vice President, Office Manager, Chief of Staff, and Committee Chairs.

Section 3: If there is a vacant seat in the Student Senate, the Vice President shall declare the vacancy to the Student Senate and the Public Relations Chair shall announce the vacancy to campus media. Appointment shall be considered during the regular Student Senate meeting following the declaration of vacancy. Any individual meeting the requirements of eligibility and who appear before the Student Senate at a designated time shall be considered for appointment.

Section 4: Vacancies in the Cabinet will be appointed by the President, approved by Cabinet and confirmed by a majority vote of the Student Senate to be approved.

Article VII – Removal from Office

Section 1: Any elected or appointed member of the Student Senate is subject to removal from office by the BSUSA or its Student Senate.

Section 2: Any removal must follow due process and must adhere to University policy, State and Federal law, and procedures described in the Constitution and bylaws of the Student Senate.

Section 3: Any member or appointee of the Student Senate may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote for any of the following reasons:

A) Breach of this Constitution and/or its bylaws.

B) Non-compliance with University policies.

C) Illegal activity directly relating to or affecting their role within the Student Senate.

D) Misrepresentation of the Student Senate or BSUSA.

E) Failure to fulfill the duties required of their office.

F) Misuse of Student Senate funds.
Section 4: Any member of Student Senate may be removed from office by the following procedure:

A) Any member being considered for removal will be given at least one (1) warning by the Student Senate Advisor. This will result in a probationary period as determined by the Cabinet. If the probationary period is violated, any member of the Cabinet can make a motion for removal during New Business of the next regularly scheduled Student Senate meeting. Before the removal the member shall have the opportunity to address the Student Senate. If a member does not address the Student Senate as previously desired, they forfeit the opportunity to defend themselves.

B) The Student Senate shall determine by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present at the Student Senate meeting on a secret ballot whether the person shall be removed from office. If the member remains in office the member’s removal may be addressed to the Senate only after an additional violation.

C) Any removal decisions may be appealed to a committee sustained of the Associate Vice President for Student Life and Success, the Student Senator Advisor, and the Student Senate President within five (5) academic days of the removal.

D) In the case of the Student Senate President removal, the appeal committee will be made up of the Associate Vice President for Student Life and Success, the Student Senate Advisor, and the Student Senate’s Cabinet. The appeal must be made within five (5) academic days of the removal.

Section 5: Any individual appointed by the Student Senate to any position other than that of Senator, Chair, or Office Manager may be removed by a simple motion in a regular meeting during the New Business portion of the agenda. Removal of an appointee does not remove them from any duly elected position they hold.

Section 6: Senators who are appointed shall be treated as elected senators with respect to the removal process.

Article VIII – Terms of Office

Section 1: The President and Vice President shall begin their terms of office the day after commencement following their election and end their terms on the day of commencement of the subsequent year.

Section 2: All senators elected in the internal elections shall begin their terms of office upon approval of the election results and end their terms on the day of commencement of that academic year.
Section 3: All senators elected in the Spring General election shall begin their terms of office upon approval of election results and on the day of commencement of that academic year. Their terms end on the day of commencement the subsequent year.

Section 4: The terms of office of the Cabinet members shall expire with the term of the President who appointed them.

Section 5: Any member may voluntarily end their term by tendering a letter of resignation to the Student Senate.

Section 6: All students appointed to a University Committee shall end their terms on the day of commencement of that academic year.

Article IX – Meetings

Section 1: The Student Senate shall convene no less than once per week during the academic year when classes are in session for a full day except for finals week.

Section 2: The President may convene summer Student Senate meetings if the need arises.

Section 3: The President shall have the authority to set special meeting times. Formal notification to all Student Senate members shall be given twenty-four (24) hours prior to the special meeting times.

Section 4: A quorum shall consist of a two-thirds majority of the current membership of the Student Senate.

Section 5: The members of Cabinet and other appointed student representatives shall give reports to the Student Senate in accordance with the Constitution and the bylaws.

Section 6: Bills and resolutions shall be given their first readings and points of clarification in New Business and shall be debated and voted upon at the next regular meeting within Old Business and shall require a simple majority vote. Bills and resolutions may also be read, debated and voted on all in the same meeting, but require a two-thirds (2/3) vote for approval (except for Article VII - Removal from Office).

Section 7: Any proposed expenditures over thirty (30) dollars must be presented in the form of a motion and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate.

Section 8: All BSU students may attend any meetings of the Student Senate and may submit questions, requests to speak, or petitions in writing. During a period of executive session, all non-voting members must vacate the room during the discussion and vote.

Section 9: The President, with assistance from the Chief of Staff, shall make all

Article X – Student Clubs and Organizations

Section 1: The Student Senate shall grant recognition to all student organizations that meet the requirements of BSU policy.

Section 2: Recognition is granted after the Inclusivity Affairs Committee approves a submitted constitution, the Associate Director of Hobson Memorial Union, and the University President or designee also approve, in that order.

Section 3: Recognized organizations will have access to BSU facilities in accordance with BSU policy.

Section 5: All recognized organizations must review and update their constitution every three years.

Section 6: Recognition of student clubs and organizations can be revoked by a Student Senate two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

Article XI – Elections

Section 1: One Fall General election and One Spring General election shall be held each academic year. All elections shall be done by secret ballot (electronically).

Article XII – Student Legal Rights

Section 1: The members of the BSUSA shall be entitled to the same legal rights and duties as other citizens of the United States. This includes the freedoms of speech, press, religion, and peaceful assembly.

Section 2: The University shall respect the rights guaranteed to students by the Constitution and laws of the United States, the State of Minnesota, and the governing policies of the Minnesota State Board of Trustees.

Article XIII – Initiative and Referendum

Section 1: Any member of the BSUSA may place an initiative on the ballot of a Student Senate election if two hundred (200) BSUSA members sign a petition stating the proposed resolution. The initiative shall be binding if most of those voting approves and at least ten (10) percent of the BSUSA members vote in the election.
Section 2: The Student Senate may place a referendum upon the ballot of a Student Senate election if a resolution stating the proposal and specifying its placement upon the ballot is approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Student Senate. The initiative shall be binding if a majority of those voting approve and at least ten (10) percent of the BSUSA members vote in the election.

Article XIV – Amendments

Section 1: The Constitution shall be amended by the initiative of an ad-hoc Constitution Committee.

Section 2: The Constitution Committee shall hold at least one (1) public meeting on the proposed amendment(s), and the proposed changes shall be available in writing prior to the election.

Section 3: The amendment(s) shall be ratified if two-thirds (2/3) of those voting in the election approve the proposed amendment(s).

Section 4: If approved, the President shall present the amendment(s) to the University President for his/her approval or recommendation(s).

Section 5: If the University President rejects or recommends changes to the amendment(s) or Constitution, the Student Senate President shall request the University President to place the objection in writing, and the Constitution Committee shall consider the objections and take appropriate action.

Article XV – Authority of Documents

Section 1: The Constitution shall have precedence over the bylaws; the bylaws, precedence over bills; and bills, precedence over resolutions.

Article XVI – Ratification and Implementation

Section 1: The Constitution shall be the official governing document of the BSUSA Student Senate if a majority of those casting ballots in the election and the University President approve. It shall be subject to modification by the University President, but such modifications may be refused by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate making the Constitution void and reverting to the previous document.

Section 2: Rule and structural changes specified by the Constitution shall be completely implemented by the following elected administration.

Section 3: This Constitution supersedes all previous Constitutions, bylaws, and rules of the BSUSA Student Senate.
Section 4: Once approved, the Constitution may not be changed except by the process of amendment described in Article XIV or the passing of a new Constitution.