

# **Berkshire Community College**

## Student Government Association Constitution



Revised 2021

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## **Preamble -**

We, the students of Berkshire Community College, in order to promote an efficient form of self-government, hereby establish and affirm this Constitution as the official constitution of the Student Body of Berkshire Community College. The name of this organization shall be the Berkshire Community College Student Government Association. This constitution will govern the rights of students in areas of educational quality, involvement in college affairs, and the facilitation of communication among students, faculty and the administration of Berkshire Community College.

## **Article 1 – Mission of the Student Government Association**

### **I. Mission Statement for the Student Government Association**

A. The Student Government Association (SGA) was formed as a viable system of government for the students at Berkshire Community College. The mission of the SGA is to represent, relate to, recruit, retain, and protect the rights of BCC students. The members of SGA shall represent the views of the student body to the faculty and administration of the College, while maintaining a channel of communication between these groups. It is our goal to unite the students of Berkshire Community College through representative leadership and to join with the faculty, staff and administration of Berkshire Community College in order to enhance the campus community.

### **II. Vision Statement for the Student Government Association**

A. The purpose of the Student Government Association shall be to join with the faculty, staff and administration of Berkshire Community College in order to enhance the campus community. It shall also provide the community with quality programming as a means of enhancing life at Berkshire Community College.

B. The Student Government Association members are trained to recruit new students and retain them by connecting them with the proper services. The SGA relate to students by sharing their college experience and represent students' interests and concerns at meetings with college staff.

C. The Student Government Association realizes its commitment to the student body, as well as its commitment to its members. The SGA shall take actions to ensure that these commitments are satisfied in order to better address the needs of the student body.

## **Article 2 – Eligibility and Membership**

I. Students interested in representing the student body on the SGA must be taking a minimum of one (1) credit hour per semester. Students must have already attained freshman status and must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 per semester and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0.

II. The total number of Student Government members (SGA) shall not exceed twenty (20). The number of available voting seats is equal to the returning SGA members subtracted from twenty (20). Students returning beyond their elected term or any other interested students may be appointed to the SGA only if vacancies still exist after the completion of the election by the student body prior to the first SGA meeting in May and/or the first two weeks of meetings both in the Fall and Spring semesters. The number of voting members may be waived at the discretion of an advisor(s) to the SGA.

#### A. Appointment

1. The appointment process will be conducted through candidate interviews by a quorum of the SGA. Available SGA members will conduct individual interviews at times that are convenient for both the candidate and the SGA. Once all possible candidates have been interviewed the position will be filled by a point value vote. With the appointment of said student(s), s/he will then assume the duties of an elected member.

2. These appointments shall expire at the end of the spring semester, at which point End of Year Elections will be held. For appointed SGA member to continue their membership in the SGA, the student body must vote them in.

III. At any time a member may make a request for a leave of absence of up to fifteen (15) weeks. The request must be made to the SGA advisors and shall be granted at their discretion.

IV. The SGA does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability and veteran status.

### **Article 3 -- Responsibilities of the SGA**

#### I. The Organization

A. The SGA shall be accessible for representation of all students attending Berkshire Community College.

B. The SGA is the main legislative, representative, and investigative body of the student body.

C. The SGA and all its subcommittees shall act in accordance with Roberts' Rules of Order to the degree it is necessary to conduct an orderly meeting.

D. The SGA shall act upon recommendations sent to it by other college committees for consideration on behalf of the student body.

E. The SGA shall consider proposed college policy changes brought forth by the students, faculty and administration.

F. The SGA shall maintain cooperative relationships with various educational organizations, with the community, with the student body and student organizations.

G. At the beginning of the fall semester the SGA may establish Finance, Events, and Community Service Subcommittees (see [Addendum I](#)).

H. The SGA will hold an election at the beginning of the fall semester for the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Officer, and Historian.

I. The SGA will hold elections at the end of each school year for the offices of Student Trustee and Representative(s) to the College Senate.

J. The SGA will elect Representatives to the College Committees at the beginning of each school year.

## II. Attendance

A. SGA member must be present for all SGA meetings; a maximum of three (3) unexcused absences per year are permitted from SGA meetings. Any representative arriving 15 minutes after the opening or leaving 15 minutes before the close of any SGA meeting will be given an unexcused absence provided there is no formal notice. SGA members are required to inform any officer or advisor of the SGA of any absences. The SGA will judge absences according to due process.

## III. Quorum

A. Quorum will be defined as one-half plus one of the voting seats of the SGA or any of its committees. If a quorum is not obtained in any meeting, the meeting can be held but nothing that requires a vote can be acted upon. In the absence of an advisor a meeting can be held.

## IV. Structure

A. All SGA members must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 per semester and a cumulative GPA of 2.0.

B. Students are elected for a one (1) year term.

C. Each member is responsible for knowing and following Roberts' Rules of Order.

D. The members must fill all the open student seats on the College Standing Committees. Any member of the SGA may run for any of these positions. A majority vote of the SGA is needed for the position to be filled.

E. All votes and resolutions made by the SGA members shall be made public. A roll call vote shall be required if one (1) SGA member requests it.

F. Each SGA member is responsible for following policies set forth by the SGA and conducting oneself in a manner becoming a member pursuant to college policy on or off campus, as set forth by the Student Policy Guide.

## **Article 4 – Subcommittees**

The SGA Subcommittees are groups of SGA members that are designated to coordinate SGA related issues on a detailed level. The SGA has had, but is not limited to the following committees: SGA Subcommittees; Finance, Events, Community Service, Fundraising, Forum. Subcommittees can be added at any time at the discretion of the group.

I. Bylaws: Bylaws can only be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire subcommittee. Operational procedures can be changed by a simple majority vote. These amended bylaws must be approved by the entire SGA.

II. Subcommittee Officers: All subcommittee officers shall be elected by a majority vote of at least a quorum of the subcommittee. The only exception to this is the position of Finance subcommittee President. This office is filled by the SGA Treasurer.

A. President of a subcommittee shall be responsible for:

1. Arranging and conducting orderly meetings of the subcommittee;
2. Carrying out the decisions and requirements of the Subcommittee and the student body;
3. Calling special meetings of the Subcommittee
4. Keeping the President of the SGA informed of weekly meetings by placing minutes of the meetings into his/her mailbox, no later than 5 p.m. Monday prior to the next SGA meeting;
5. Posting the time and place of all meetings, on the official college bulletin board, at least 24 hours prior to the meeting

B. Vice President- The Vice President is responsible for:

1. Attending all Subcommittee meetings
2. Ensuring that Robert's Rules of Order are followed during all subcommittee meetings;
3. Advising the Subcommittee President of all discrepancies concerning Robert's Rules of Conduct during all meetings;
4. Making available copies of Robert's Rules of Order at the beginning of each semester and be responsible for having a copy at each subcommittee meeting.
5. Fulfilling the duties of the Subcommittee President in the event of their absence, resignation, or termination until another election can be held for that position, including the weekly meeting with an Advisor to prepare an agenda for scheduled meetings.

C. The Secretary shall be responsible for:

Keeping minutes and records of all Subcommittee meetings, decisions, transactions, memos, and operational procedures of the Subcommittee, and giving a copy of said minutes to the Subcommittee President as well as the SGA Historian for filing in the Continuity book. Minutes will be dispersed via email as well as posted in the office.

## Article 5 - Elected Officers

For any occasion requiring the attendance of officers of the SGA the order of delegates is as follows: President, Vice President, Student Trustee, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, and Historian. All officers of the SGA will be elected by a majority vote of the SGA. Candidates for offices will be interviewed to discern their qualifications and reasons for running for said office by an advisor of the SGA. No one Student Government Association member can hold more than one of the following positions:

A. President- The President of the SGA is responsible for:

1. Drawing up an agenda prior to the SGA meeting, approving this agenda with at least one Advisor and providing the agenda to all members during the meeting.
2. Presiding over the SGA meetings;
3. Running a fair and orderly meeting;
4. Taking proposals, passed by the SGA, through the proper channels;
5. Acting as liaison between the SGA and the college's faculty and administration by keeping an awareness of developing situations concerning the student body;
6. Submitting a written report at the end of their term to the SGA advisors and to the Historian for the Continuity Book.
7. Meeting weekly with the SGA advisor/s prior to the SGA meeting.
8. Maintaining active communication with the Vice President
9. Mandatory membership in the Student Advisory Council (SAC) which is a statewide organization created to set up a dialogue between student leaders from every public college and university in Massachusetts and the Board of Higher Education. These meetings can be viewed on Skype/Zoom.

B. Vice President- The Vice President is responsible for:

1. Attending SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#)
2. Ensuring that Robert's Rules of Order are followed during all regular and special meetings;
3. Advising the President of all discrepancies concerning Robert's Rules of Conduct during all meetings;
4. Making available copies of Robert's Rules of Order at the beginning of each semester and be responsible for having a copy at each meeting.
5. Fulfilling the duties of the President in the event of their absence, resignation, or termination until another election can be held for that position, including the weekly meeting with an Advisor to prepare an agenda for scheduled meetings.

6. Ensures the responsibilities are fulfilled in other offices. In the event that an officer is not accomplishing their requirements, it is the duty of the Vice President to report to either the President or an advisor of the SGA depending on which is more appropriate.

7. Fulfilling the roles of other officer positions as needed, and/or assigning these positions to capable SGA members as appropriate, after consultation with an SGA advisor.

C. Student Trustee- The Student Trustee is responsible for:

1. Attending all BCC Board of Trustees meetings and all SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#).

2. Writing a monthly SGA Report to read at the Board of Trustees meeting.

3. Representing and informing the SGA about all Board of Trustees meetings and providing a monthly Trustee's report to the SGA for submission to the Continuity Book.

4. Being a liaison between the Student Government Association/student body and the Board of Trustees;

5. Maintaining full or part-time student status.

6. Mandatory membership in Student Advisory Council (SAC) which is a statewide organization created to set up a dialogue between student leaders from every public college and university in Massachusetts and the Board of Higher Education. These meetings can be viewed on Skype/Zoom.

D. Secretary- The secretary is responsible for:

1. Attending SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#)

2. Taking minutes for all SGA meetings. These minutes are to be distributed to all SGA members at the weekly meetings;

3. Maintaining attendance records:

a. Keeping record of the amount of excused and unexcused absences per semester of each Ambassador; and

b. Giving attendance records to the President at the completion of each SGA meeting for weekly review by the SGA Advisor/s.

E. Treasurer- The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. Attending SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#)

2. Chairing the Finance Committee (see [Article 3](#)).

3. Accounting for any money raised by or for the SGA; and

4. Reviewing budget request forms for the clubs and organizations in the Spring semester.



5. The Treasurer is responsible for preparing a budget report for inclusion in the Continuity Book. This report shall include any money raised from events operated and run by the SGA and shall be reported to the SGA during a regular meeting.

F. Public Relations Coordinator- The Public Relations Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Attending SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#)
2. Working with the Advisor(s), the Public Relations office and the Webmaster to create press releases, flyers and Facebook/Twitter announcements as well as SGA Webpage updates.

G. Historian- The Historian is responsible for:

1. Attending SGA meetings as written in [Article 3, Section II](#)
2. Maintaining and updating the SGA Continuity Book;
3. Keeping records of all events held by the SGA and directing the filling out of post-event reports (either by him/herself or by another member who was actively involved with planning that event). These should be approximately one paragraph in length that captures all points of the event as relevant to the SGA.

## **Article 6 – Advisors**

The advisors of the SGA are the Director of Student Engagement and the Administrative Secretary who work in the Office of Student Life.

## **Article 7 – Election Procedures and Rules**

I. Spring Semester General Elections

A. Election Times

1. The elections shall be held the last full week in April. The elections for Student Trustee and Student Representative to the College Senate will be held at the same time.

B. Candidates

1. A candidate is any current BCC student who meets the qualifications as defined by Article 2 of this Constitution, and who has passed the SGA interview process.
2. No candidate shall bribe, coerce, or threaten any candidate(s) for office or any eligible voter(s) during or before an election.

C. Campaigns

1. All candidates shall be given equal opportunity and equal time to express their thoughts and opinions through BCC media following the guidelines established in [Article 12](#).

2. Any campaign materials for a candidate located in the Office of Student life shall be available to any other candidate.
3. Campaign material of a slanderous nature shall be deemed inappropriate and shall be removed.
4. No candidate or his/her material (signs, buttons, etc.) shall be placed within fifteen (15) feet of the designed voting area.
5. No candidate shall mark, destroy, or otherwise deface another candidate's campaign materials.
6. A candidate for office shall not receive contributions or spend his/her own money in excess of \$25, or s/he will be disqualified. Any proof of purchases (e.g. receipts) must be presented to the advisors of the SGA prior to elections.

#### D. Ballots

1. Names of candidates shall appear on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name.
2. All candidates' names shall appear on the election ballots with proper spelling and in legible form.
3. Voters shall place ballots in a sealed official voting box.
4. The number of ballots cast shall equal the number of voters who voted and were recorded on the official registration sheet.
5. At the conclusion of all elections, the Election Attendants shall tally the ballots. Any defaced, improperly marked, or questionable ballots shall either be destroyed or tallied, according to the unanimous decision of the Election Attendants and at least one SGA Advisor. Ballots shall be locked in the Office of Student Life between all voting periods during elections. Ballots, voter registration sheets, and results shall be locked in the Office of Student Life for one month after the election.
6. A candidate shall be elected to office by obtaining a majority of votes cast.

#### E. Election Attendants

1. Election Attendants are current Student Government Association members who are not on the ballot or the Advisors to the SGA. Their job is to work at the election table during the election.
2. An official election attendant shall not discuss any candidate's qualifications or any other matters of the campaign or the candidates, while performing his/her official duties.
3. The official election attendant may not suggest, discuss, persuade, or advise a voter during an election. This constitutes grounds for removal (see [Article 9](#), Section I).

4. No election attendant shall publicly declare his/her support or non-support for any candidate(s) for office before or during an election.

#### F. Voting

1. All elections shall be held in an official, designated voting area.
2. All elections shall be conducted by a secret ballot, and all ballots shall be marked in the presence of an official election attendant.
3. All elections shall be held for a minimum ten (10) hours, over five (5) days.
4. Election dates shall be announced two weeks prior to the elections through BCC media, including official bulletin boards.
5. All positions to be filled by an election or appointment shall be announced two (2) weeks in advance of the elections or appointments through the BCC media.
6. An eligible voter is any current BCC student. This student may vote for up to five SGA candidates.
7. The voter shall vote only once, and the official election attendant must record his/her name.
8. Absentee ballots will be allowed upon majority approval of the SGA.

#### G. Election Results/Grievances

1. A written account of the election results shall be publicly announced through official bulletin boards and BCC media within five (5) school days after the election.
2. All election results (ballots and voter registration sheet) shall be open to any candidate or student's inspection for five (5) school days after the votes are tallied.
3. Any candidate(s) or student(s) may file a written grievance with the Election Attendants and/or SGA Advisors concerning any impropriety of an election within five (5) school days following that election.
4. The SGA shall act on a filed grievance and/or request for a re-count within five (5) school days after the votes are tallied.

#### H. Appointments

1. Students returning beyond their elected term or any other interested student, may be appointed to the SGA if vacancies still exist after the completion of the election prior to the first SGA meeting in May and/or the first two weeks of meetings both in the Fall and Spring semester. Appointed students must meet the Eligibility and Membership requirements listed in [Article 2](#). Interviews for potential appointees will be

conducted individually by the SGA, at times, which are convenient for both candidate and SGA.

## II. Officer Elections

A. Only SGA members who are returning for the fall semester will be able to vote. In the case of a tie, the advisors will interview the candidates and make a decision. The new officers will take office at the last SGA meeting of the semester.

B. Officer Elections of Fall Semester President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian and Public Relations Officer will take place in the fall, two weeks following appointments.

C. SGA Subcommittee elections will also take place two weeks following appointments, as necessary.

D. Elections will be held at the end of May for the offices of Interim President and Secretary for the summer. The candidates for these positions must be returning for the fall semester. Their term will last from the end of the school year to the beginning of the fall semester.

E. All speeches given during the time of the election must be limited to five (5) minutes. The nature of the presentation shall be conducted in a professional manner.

## III. Terms of Office

A. The President, Vice President, Student Trustee, Treasurer, Scribe, Public Relations Officer, Historian, and Student Representative to the College Senate will have terms of office that last one academic year.

## **Article 8 - Removal Procedures and Resignations**

### I. Grounds for Removal

A. Any violation of Article 4, for any Officer of the SGA, and any violation of Article 3, Section II for any member of the SGA, shall be deemed as grounds for removal from the SGA. B. Proven dishonesty, corruption or fraud shall be deemed as grounds for removal from the SGA

### II. Removal Procedures: By any Student

A. Removal procedures may be initiated by any member of the student body against any member of the Student Government Association. A petition must be approved by the Director of Student Engagement and by a vote of 2% of the student body if the matter is not resolved. This procedure shall be brought before the SGA and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire SGA for removal, after a fair hearing and due process. The President of the SGA and/or an Advisor of the SGA must notify the said Ambassador of the anticipated removal procedures at least one (1) week prior to any meeting where action may be taken against the Ambassador. This will give the student a chance to prepare a case at the hearing.

### III. Removal Procedures: By any SGA member

A. Removal procedures may be initiated by any member of the Student Government Association against any other member of the Student Government Association. This procedure shall be brought before the SGA and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire SGA for removal, after a fair hearing and due process. The President of the SGA and/or an Advisor of the SGA must notify the said member of the anticipated removal procedures at least one (1) week prior to any meeting where action may be taken against the member. This will give the student a chance to prepare a case at the hearing.

### IV. Resignation or Removal of the President of the SGA

A. If the President of the SGA fails to meet the requirements of his/her position, or is impeached the Vice-President will act as President until a new President can be elected.

B. If the President of the SGA resigns from his/her position on the SGA, s/he should write a formal letter of resignation and give it to the SGA Advisor.

C. The Vice-President will be Acting President for two weeks, at which time a new President must be elected.

### V. Resignation of any Member of the SGA

A. If any SGA member needs to resign from his/her current position on the SGA, s/he should write a formal letter of resignation and give it to either the SGA advisor and the President of the SGA.

### VI. Reinstatement of any Member of the SGA

A. A former member may be reinstated after they have been removed from the SGA. This may occur only once per academic year. The reinstatement may be by reappointment or re-election. The reinstated SGA member will hold the status of appointed member. The reinstatement may carry further stipulations if enacted upon by 2/3 vote of a quorum at said meeting.

B. Upon the resignation or removal of an officer, the Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of said officer or appoint a temporary officer as appropriate until a new election may be held for that position, see [Article 4](#).

## **Article 9 - Amendments to the Student Constitution**

I. The SGA shall be able to designate a temporary Constitution Committee, as needed, to devote more time to Constitution-related issues. This temporary committee will then take its recommendations to the SGA. A majority vote of the SGA and a majority of the voting student body are required for passage.

II. The SGA will discuss and recommend proposed amendments to the Constitution to the entire SGA. The Constitution Committee shall also review any petitions from the student body regarding amendments to the Constitution. Any petition for changes to the Constitution by the student body must be signed by 2% of the Student body.

III. The SGA takes its proposed changes to the Director of Student Engagement and the Vice President of Student Affairs for review and recommendations.

IV. If passed by the SGA, or approved through petition, the proposed changes must be published and posted on official bulletin boards or its equivalent, at least two weeks prior to the date of the vote on the Constitution.

V. One (1) week prior to the date of the vote, the SGA must conduct one (1) open meeting for the purpose of encouraging discussion by interested students. The meeting must be posted two weeks prior to the date of the vote.

## **Article 10 - Ratification of the Student Constitution**

I. To be ratified, the Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the SGA before any open vote of the student body. A simple majority of the votes cast by the Student body is needed for ratification of the Constitution.

## **Article 11- Bylaws to SGA Standing Committees**

All SGA Standing Committees shall be composed of Student Government members. However, the Community Service Committee, at their discretion, may appoint members of the Student body to be voting members of their committees. Neither the appointed members from the Student body nor any officer of the SGA shall chair the Subcommittees.

## **Article 12- BCC Media**

BCC Media includes but is not limited to: Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; Official Bulletin Boards, and any posters, flyers, or handouts designed to represent any part of Berkshire Community College. BCC Media shall not be abused or misused by any member of the Student Government Association or Student Body. Misuse of the media includes promoting an idea that is not consistent with the values and mission of Berkshire Community College or discrimination of any kind against any person or group especially a person or group of the Student Body. Abuse of the media includes hate speech, violence, and suggestive or explicit content. Any member of the SGA who is reported for media abuse or misuse shall be brought before the SGA and shall undergo the process of removal as directed in [Article 8](#).

## **Student Government Association Agreement**

Please read, sign and return this document to the President of, or an Advisor to, the Student Government Association.

I agree that I have read and understood the by-laws and procedure as defined by this document. I understand that failure to uphold the rules and regulations set forth by this document may result in actions taken up to my removal from the Student Government Association.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_