



BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT

CONSTITUTION

Revised December 2015

Preamble

The Bowdoin Student Government exists to empower students. It stands on campus as the democratically- elected, autonomous representative of the Student Body and receives its authority from those whom it serves. It seeks to be a partner to the faculty and administration in the leadership of the College, while being a relentless advocate for student needs and desires. In its policies and programs, it aims to serve as a thoughtful and fearless voice for conveying student opinion to the campus and beyond. The Bowdoin Student Government also serves as a workshop for the development of future leaders and an enabler of creative pursuits. It works to improve student experiences and ensure full access to campus resources and opportunities. Above all, it strives to refine the College's most important goal – the education of students in a residential community.

Article 1. General Provisions

1) Name

The name of this Body shall be Bowdoin Student Government, and its members shall comprise of the General Assembly ("Assembly") and the Class Councils.

2) Objects

The Assembly shall pursue the objects stated in the preamble. The Assembly will act as a forum for ideas and represent the Student Body in campus decision-making processes. It will present student opinion to the administration and select representatives to sit on the College and Trustee Committees of the College. It will pass resolutions and speak with the authority of the Student Body.

3) Authority

The Assembly is a permanent and ongoing Body with authority vested within its representatives and officers. The authority of this constitution is the basis for the conduct of all operations and business for this Assembly. The Assembly may, by a two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly, adopt or amend Bylaws. The Assembly will have the authority to charter organizations and to fund them through the Student Activities Fee.

4) Nondiscrimination Policy

The Assembly shall not discriminate on the basis of citizenship, economic status, ethnicity, disability, national origin, philosophy, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. The Assembly shall discourage acts of discrimination within the Student Body and shall not restrict anyone's freedom of public speech, assembly, or expression.

Article 2. Membership

- 1) Elections
 - a) Elections shall be conducted as outlined by the Election Rules and Regulations. No person who is a candidate shall be eligible to conduct elections. All candidates must submit a statement of candidacy that shall be made available to the student body before elections.
 - b) The President and Vice Presidents will be elected at-large by the Student Body in the spring.
 - c) Elections and the counting of votes will be done online with the assistance of Information Technology. In the event of technical failure, elections may be rescheduled or held by paper ballot.
 - d) Candidates shall be notified of results within 24 hours of closing the election.
- 2) Term of Service
 - a) An elected representative shall take office at the final Assembly meeting of the semester, and shall serve for the duration of the term of the position unless he or she resigns, leaves the college, is expelled for nonattendance or misconduct, or is recalled.
- 3) Vacancy
 - a) Assembly members shall fill vacancies as needed on each committee of the College where student representatives are required. All vacancies will be addressed at the next Assembly meeting. If one person is interested in the vacant position, he will be appointed with a majority vote of the Executive Committee. If more than one individual is interested in the vacant position, the vacancy will be filled by a special election outlined by the Bylaws. The election must be held within three weeks and will be administered by the Election Commission. A two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly can bypass this rule and allow the President to appoint a desired candidate. After spring vacation, no special election will be required to fill a vacancy; the President may appoint a candidate.

Article 3. Organization

- 1) Composition
 - a) General Assembly of Bowdoin Student Government
 - i) The Assembly shall be composed of eight class representatives to be elected during class elections, a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-House Council, a representative from the McKeen Center, a representative from the Entertainment Board, a representative of athletic interests, At-Large representatives of the Student Body as a whole, the President, and the Vice Presidents.
 - ii) Chief Executive

The chief executive officer shall be the President, who shall preside over the Assembly and the Executive Committee. The President shall delegate any and all responsibilities to those who are not otherwise assigned; shall serve as the Assembly's representative and official spokesperson; and shall serve, along with the Vice President of Student Government Affairs, as *ex officio* members on all standing committees. The President shall interpret the Assembly Constitution and Bylaws. All such decisions and/or other official action of the President can be appealed and overturned by a majority vote of the Assembly.
 - iii) Each class will have two class representatives who must be elected by their class.
 - (1) The Election for Junior Class Representative positions will be divided into two separate elections: one for the fall semester and one for the spring semester. There will still be two class representatives for each semester. Both elections (for fall and spring positions) will take place in the spring of the previous academic

year along with the other class officer elections. Candidates who intend to be enrolled at the college for the full academic year may run in both the fall and spring elections. The two candidates with the highest vote tallies in the fall election will be the class representatives for the fall semester. The two candidates with the highest vote tallies in the spring election will be the class representatives for the spring semester.

- (2) In the event that only one candidate runs for two open full-year class representative seats, that candidate will be guaranteed the seat and the election will be reopened for only one seat.
- (3) If a suitable class representative cannot be found, the Executive Committee will work with two delegates from the incoming Class Council to interview and appoint an eligible member. In the event of resignation or removal, the sitting Class Council would fulfill the role of the “incoming” Class Council.
- iv) There shall be eight At-Large representatives to represent the interests of the Student Body as a whole. Two will be elected during the spring class officer elections. The remaining six will be interviewed by the Executive Committee for their position. The appointed representatives may be appointed to either half or full-year terms.
- v) The Representative from the Executive Committee of the IHC will be appointed by the President of the Council. The Athletics Representative will be elected each year for a full-year term by the Athletics Council. The McKeen Center representative will be appointed by its Director. The Entertainment Board representative will be appointed by the E-Board Chair. The Multicultural Representative will be elected by the Multicultural Coalition.
- vi) Appointment/election of Assembly members shall take place in the spring, excluding the incoming first-year class, the rising senior class and the six appointed representatives, which shall take place in the fall before the first Assembly meeting.
- b) Leadership Council
The Leadership Council will be made up of the President of the Assembly and the President of each of the Class Councils. This council will serve as a coordinating and consulting body and must meet monthly. Leadership Council reports will be delivered to the Assembly by the president. Meetings may be called by any of the five Presidents.
- c) Class Councils
The Class Councils have been established to help promote the social and structural unity of the classes. The officers are empowered by the Assembly. Members of the class may approach these councils to suggest ideas and assist in the planning of activities. The Class Councils shall comprise of the following offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Representative to the General Assembly (2), and Community Outreach Officer (COO).
- 3) Committees
 - a) There shall be seven standing committees. These committees shall be the Executive Committee, the Committee on Student Affairs, the Committee on Academic Affairs, the Student Organizations Oversight Committee, the Student Activities Funding Committee, the Committee on Facilities and Sustainability, and the Committee on Appeals. Any and all matters shall fall into the jurisdiction of the appropriate committee and its subcommittee. Each Representative to the Assembly shall sit on at least one committee. Each committee will be chaired by the President or a Vice President. The President and Vice President of Student Government Affairs shall serve as members *ex officio* on all committees. In consultation with the President, the Vice President of Student Government Affairs may create *ad hoc* committees, of which he serves as chair.
 - b) Executive Committee
 1. The executive authority of the Assembly shall reside with the Executive Committee. The President and Vice Presidents will make up the Executive

- Committee of the Student Government Assembly. This Committee will act as an advisory body for the President and approve all appointments.
2. The President and Vice Presidents will make up the Executive Committee of the Student Government Assembly. This Committee will act as an advisory body for the President and approve all appointments.
- c) **Committee on Student Affairs**
The Committee on Student Affairs will deal with the Assembly's engagement in policy issues in the area of student life. It will receive and propose potential legislation, provide advice for the President and Vice President for Student Affairs and discuss programming and policy initiatives. This Committee will be composed of the Vice President for Student Affairs, who will serve as chair, and several members of the Assembly as assigned by the Executive Committee.
 - d) **Committee on Academic Affairs**
The Committee on Academic Affairs will deal with the Assembly's engagement in policy issues in the area of academic life. It will receive and propose potential legislation, provide advice for the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs and discuss programming and policy initiatives. This Committee will be composed of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will serve as chair, and several members of the Assembly as assigned by the Executive Committee.
 - e) **Student Organizations Oversight Committee (SOOC)**
 - i) The Assembly is the organization on campus with the authority to charter student organizations. It achieves this through the Student Organizations Oversight Committee which works in collaboration with the Office of Student Activities. The final decision-making power regarding all student organizations and clubs rests with the student leadership.
 - ii) A charter is an organization's mandate to operate on campus. Charters are approved by the SOOC and grant an organization access to meeting spaces on campus and use of certain College properties. It also indicates whether or not an organization is eligible for SAFC funding.
 - iii) The Student Organizations Oversight Committee will deal with the Bowdoin Student Government's management of student organizations at the College. It will grant or deny proposed charters, review existing charters, provide advice for the President and Vice President for Student Organizations, and propose legislation related to club life.
 - iv) The Committee will be composed of the Vice President for Student Organizations, who will serve as chair, the Vice President for the Treasury and several members of the Assembly as assigned by the Executive Committee.
 - v) The Committee will operate according to the Student Organizations Oversight Committee Rules and Regulations which are created and maintained by the Assembly.
 - f) **Student Activities Funding Committee (SAFC)**
 - i) The Student Activities Fee is a student-managed fund collected as part of the College bill. It is a distinct fee, explicitly for the purpose of supporting student life and under the exclusive control of students. It is administered by the Bowdoin Student Government through the Student Activities Funding Committee under administrative guidance but with no higher authority than the student leadership that allocates it.
 - ii) **Guidelines**
 - (1) Funds from the Student Activities Fee may not be used as a donation to any off-campus organization or charity and must be for the benefit of the College community.

- (2) Funds from the Student Activities Fee will only be allocated to student-led groups or projects.
 - (3) Funds from the Student Activities Fee may not be used to purchase alcohol or to finance any other illegal substance or activities.
 - (4) Other regulations for the funds will be outlined in the Student Activities Funding Committee Rules and Regulations.
- iii) The Student Activities Funding Committee will be allocated the entirety of the Student Activities Fee, minus the operating budget of the BSG Assembly as determined by the Executive Committee and SAFC, to distribute to student organizations. This money may be returned to the BSG through the approval of Student Activities Funding Committee. Only organizations that have been chartered by the Student Organizations Oversight Committee may receive funding. It will oversee the approval of operating budgets for some organizations in the spring, advise the Vice President for the Treasury and allocate funding on a weekly basis.
- iv) The Committee will be composed of the Vice President for the Treasury, who will serve as chair, the Vice President for Student Organizations, the Treasurer of each class and two at-large members appointed by the Vice President for the Treasury, Vice President for Student Organizations and President.
- v) The Committee will operate according to the Student Activities Funding Committee Rules and Regulations and may change these rules with the approval of the Bowdoin Student Government Assembly.
- vi) At the beginning of each academic year, the Student Activities Funding Committee will present its Rules and Regulations to the Bowdoin Student Government Assembly, propose any changes they might have at that time and receive a vote to approve their activities under these rules for the upcoming year. Additional changes may be made outside of this occasion if the Bowdoin Student Government Assembly permits it.
- vii) The funding allocated to an organization by the Student Activities Funding Committee may not be used as a donation to any off-campus organization or charity and must be for the benefit of the College community.
- g) Committee on Facilities and Sustainability

The Committee on Facilities & Sustainability will deal with the Assembly's engagement in policy issues regarding the physical and virtual infrastructure of the College. It will receive and propose potential legislation, provide advice for the President and Vice President for Facilities and Sustainability and discuss programming and policy initiatives. This Committee will be composed of the Vice President for Facilities, who will serve as chair, and several members of the Assembly as assigned by the Executive Committee.
- h) Committee on Appeals

The Committee on Appeals will deal with all student complaints related to the process of the Student Government Assembly or any of its committees (excluding elections). It will only meet when called by the President or Vice President for Student Government Affairs after receiving a complaint and will be empowered to rectify any process errors that have been made. This committee will be composed of the President, the Vice President for Student Government Affairs, one elected representative from each class, the Vice President of the Inter-House Council and one additional Assembly member of the appellants choosing.
- 4) Executive Committee

The President and Vice Presidents will make up the Executive Committee of the Student Government Assembly. This Committee will act as an advisory body for the President and approve all appointments.
- 5) Staff
 - a) The Executive Committee may hire a paid, independent Secretary to keep minutes at Assembly meetings as well as a Webmaster to maintain the website. The President may create additional unpaid staff positions and make appointments to them with the approval of the Executive

Committee. This includes the Director of Programming who will be appointed by the Executive Committee, will act under its purview, and will attend Assembly meetings but not vote.

Article 4.Procedure

1) Meetings

- a) The Bowdoin Student Government Assembly shall hold a meeting at least every week, unless found unnecessary by the Executive Committee. Meetings shall be conducted in a respectful and welcoming environment and in accordance with the Bylaws. The structure of meetings will be explained by the President at the first meeting.
- b) Students who wish to express an opinion before the Assembly may do so during a designated Public Comment Time at the beginning of each meeting.
- c) Any non-member student that would like to propose a bill before the Student Government should do so by submitting it to the appropriate committee of the Student Government Assembly or by having it endorsed by one of his/her class representatives.
- d) Any student concern may be brought to a meeting of the Assembly or to any of its members, and it will be given consideration by the Assembly.

2) Quorum

In order for a vote to be held, a meeting of the Assembly must have two-thirds of its membership (not including unfilled positions) present.

3) Motions

A motion may be made by any member of the Assembly. No motions will be allowed unless permitted by the Bylaws of the Assembly.

4) Referendum

- a) A two-thirds vote of the Assembly or submission of signatures equal to twenty percent of the Student Body on a student-initiated petition shall bring any issue to a student referendum, except the recall of the members of the Executive Committee.
- b) Student-initiated petitions may only be presented on an official Student Government Assembly form, the distribution of which will be controlled by the Executive Committee. Once the student initiating the petition has requested a form and clarified the intention of the petition, he may not, under any circumstances, be denied the form by the President, or Vice President.
- c) The entire Student Body shall be entitled to vote. One-third of the Student Body shall constitute a quorum. A two-thirds majority vote constitutes passage of a referendum.
- d) The referendum shall be run by the Vice President of Student Government Affairs.
- e) Petitions shall be presented to the President and acted upon within three weeks.
- f) A Referendum may be overturned by three-fourths of the assembly with exception of a referendum on the Constitution.
- g) The Executive Committee shall be the governing body of all referenda.

Article 5. Bylaws

- 1) The Assembly will adopt Bylaws to govern its processes by a two-thirds vote of its membership. These Bylaws are superseded by and may not conflict with the Constitution.
- 2) Included within these Bylaws will be the Rules of Order for Assembly meetings, the Election Code, the Rules and Procedures of the Student Organizations Oversight Committee and the Rules and Procedures of the Student Activities Funding Committee.

Article 7. Accountability

- 1) Transparency

Any document or record produced by the Assembly shall be a matter of public record, with such exceptions as the Bylaws or Executive Board may prescribe. The proceedings of meeting and meeting minutes to be made public unless the President has moved the meeting into executive session.
- 2) Officers

Every officer or delegate who exercises any power or duty under the authority of this constitution, or who represents the Assembly, is subject to the Student Body and the Assembly. The Assembly may move to expel any officer or member in accordance with the Bylaws.
- 3) Recall

Recall shall be defined as the removal of an individual from an elected office by the electing body. A petition calling for a recall of an elected official, bearing the names of at least fifty percent of students on campus for that semester must be presented at a regular meeting of the Assembly. A campus-wide vote on the issue must be held within two weeks of the meeting at which the petition is presented. The Elections Commission, excluding any officer at question for recall, shall supervise the election of the new official.
- 4) Expulsion
 - a) A member may be removed from the Assembly by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. The Assembly will immediately begin the process by which the member was originally chosen to fill the empty seat. If the removal takes place within three weeks before a regularly scheduled election or appointment, the seat will remain unfilled.
 - b) When there is a vacancy in the Executive Committee, the Assembly shall elect one of its members to fill the vacancy.

Article 8. Amendment and Suspension of Rules

1) Committee on Rules

There shall exist a Committee on Rules. The Vice President of Student Government Affairs or his designee shall chair the Committee. Its members will be appointed by the Executive Committee, and all representatives of the Assembly are eligible to serve. Only committee members shall maintain voting privileges, however all Assembly members may make and second motions from the floor. No proposed amendment to this Constitution or the Bylaws shall be considered as new business by the Assembly without having been considered by this Committee.

2) Constitutional Amendments

a) Assembly Action

Constitutional amendments may be proposed by a four-fifths majority of the Assembly and ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Student Body voting in a referendum. The Assembly must take appropriate measures to inform and educate the Student Body about the changes proposed.

b) Student Body Action

- i) Constitutional amendments may be proposed by a petition containing signatures representing twenty percent of the Student Body and ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Student Body voting in a referendum. The results of such a referendum, however, will only be valid if at least one-third of the Student Body has voted.
- ii) Student-initiated constitutional amendments may only be presented on an official Student Government Assembly form, the distribution of which will be controlled by the Executive Committee. Once the student initiating the petition has requested a form and specified the exact constitutional change desired, s/he may not, under any circumstances, be denied the form by the President or a Vice President.

3) Amendment and Suspension of Bylaws

Bylaws and revisions to them may be proposed by the Student Government Affairs Committee or any member of the Assembly. In order to amend the Bylaws, a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Student Government Assembly (not including unfilled positions) is required. All amendments to the Bylaws must be voted on twice, with the votes occurring at least one week apart, before they are ratified.