

# College of the Sequoias

## Student Senate



# Constitution

# College of the Sequoias Student Senate Constitution

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# College of the Sequoias Student Senate Constitution

## ARTICLE I

### Preamble

We, the students of the College of the Sequoias, in order to provide a better learning environment for all students will provide: a legislative body; social activities; co-curricular programs; and shared primary responsibility in all areas of collegial government, hereby establish this constitution as provided for by the State Legislature through the California Education Code and Title V of California's State Code, and as approved by the College of the Sequoias Board of Trustees.

## ARTICLE II

### Title of Organization

#### **SECTION A. Title**

This organization shall be known as the College of the Sequoias Student Senate.

#### **SECTION B. Abbreviation**

COSSS shall be the legal abbreviation of said organization.

#### **SECTION C. Rights to Title**

This organization shall be the only authorized entity to utilize the above designations. The College of the Sequoias Student Senate may be referred to as the Student Senate within this document.

#### **SECTION D. Organization Colors, Symbol, and Mascot**

The colors of this organization shall be blue and orange with the blue dominating. The symbol of this organization shall be the Sequoia Tree and the Mascot shall be known as the "GIANT".

## ARTICLE III

### Membership, Requirements, and Privileges

#### **SECTION A. Membership**

Any student officially enrolled in the College of the Sequoias, and has paid current Activity Benefits Fee, shall be a member of the Student Body, governed by the Student Senate.

#### **SECTION B. Requirements**

Students who wish to actively participate in Student Governance and serve as an officer in Student Senate must be in good standing at College of the Sequoias. This includes:

- Enrollment in all Leadership Certificate Courses. (Students who successfully complete all required courses may be eligible to obtain a Leadership Course Certificate.)
- Free from disciplinary action against them by College of the Sequoias. (Students with disciplinary records may appeal with the Dean of Student Services.)

- Enrollment in a minimum of nine (9) units per semester with a maintained 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
- (To serve as Student Trustee, a student must maintain a 2.5 GPA or better.)

**SECTION C. Privileges**

Members of the Student Senate must have the Activity Benefits fee paid and student ID with benefits sticker. They shall be granted the following privileges and the right to:

- Seek and hold office and appointment from the Student Senate Executive Board Membership Committee.
- Serve on Participatory Governance Committees and Task Forces.
- Represent all campuses in the College of the Sequoias District (Visalia, Hanford, and Tulare campuses).

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Student Senate Officers**

**SECTION A. Title**

The College of the Sequoias Student Senate Executive Board may be referred to as the Executive Board within this document.

**SECTION B. List of Officers**

The Student Senate shall consist of elected and/or appointed officers: Student Senate President, Vice President, Student Trustee, Student Body Ambassador, Commission of Activities, Commissioner of Clubs, Commissioner of Finance, Commissioner of Publicity and Art, and Commissioner of Records.

**SECTION C. Appointments**

Appointments for all Executive Board positions shall be made by the Membership Committee, as outlined in the Student Senate Bylaws. Should this say: Only those individuals approved by the Membership Committee to fill a vacant elected position within the first two (2) weeks of the semester, as provided for in this document, shall be considered appointed officers.

**SECTION D. New Officers**

No other positions on the Executive Board shall be created without an amendment to this document.

**SECTION E. Term of Elected Office**

The term of office for the Student Senate Executive Board shall be one academic year, unless student is terminated or resigns from their position. Terms shall begin on July first (1<sup>st</sup>) and end on June thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) of the academic year for which the election was held.

**SECTION F. Term Limits**

At no time may any individual hold the same elected office for more than one (1) term, nor shall any individual be allowed to hold an elected office for more than two (2) terms. The only

exception: Students appointed to an office mid-term, may be elected to serve in that position for a total of one full term.

**SECTION G. Vacant President Office**

If the office of the Student Senate President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall assume the office of the President, and a Vice President will be appointed by the Membership Committee.

**SECTION H. Vacant Positions**

If any elected position is not filled in a general election, or if it is left vacated by resignation or dismissal of the office holder, then it will be deemed an appointed position and shall be filled by the Membership Committee within two (2) weeks.

**SECTION I. Term of Vacant Office**

In this case, the term of office will begin immediately after the appointment by the Membership Committee and shall end on June thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) of the current term.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **General and Legislative Powers, Responsibilities, and Duties of All Elected and Appointed Executive Board Officers**

The Student Senate Executive Board shall have the legislative authority in all matters related to the Student Senate. Some fees may need to be approved by the COS Board of Trustees. These powers shall include, but not be limited to:

**SECTION A. Student Senate Powers**

1. The power to create and act upon motions, proposals, resolutions, and ordinances.
2. The power to set and collect membership fees.
3. The power to sponsor, plan, and/or implement activities on behalf of the Student Senate.
4. The power to determine the annual budget for the coming year. The budget shall be established no later than the fourth week of the Fall semester
5. The power to authorize expenditures as specified in the Financial Code and to develop new sources of income.
6. The power to make policies and procedures that are not delegated or otherwise prohibited by this document or the current laws, and to change these policies and procedures as determined necessary by the Executive Board.
7. The power to take a position on pending local, state, and federal legislation on behalf of the students enrolled at College of the Sequoias.

**SECTION B. Limitations**

The following limitations of the legislative power shall apply to the Student Senate Executive Board:

1. No proxy voting shall be permitted.

2. The Student Senate is created with the approval of, and is subject to the control and regulation of, the College of Sequoias Board of Trustees and the California Education Code. The Executive Board shall not violate any rules or regulations of these entities/documents or any other laws of the State of California and/or the laws of the United States of America. All laws, regulations, codes, policies, and procedures shall be followed from the highest to the lowest level of authority.

### **SECTION C. Responsibilities and Duties**

All members of the Student Senate Executive Board shall assume the duties of the office he/she was elected or appointed to as defined in the Student Senate Bylaws. In addition, each officer shall:

1. Attend all regularly scheduled Student Senate Executive Board meetings and shall attend all other meetings required by the position.
2. Make an honest attempt to attend all other meeting/activities at which his/her presence/participation is requested.
3. Take on individual commitments for projects, activities, special events, committees, and/or other work necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives set by the Student Senate Executive Board for the current year.

The Executive Board shall be responsible for conducting the day-to-day business of the Student Senate. A list of jobs and responsibilities for all elected and appointed officers shall be kept in the Bylaws of the Executive Board, and may only be changed or revised with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate Executive Board.

### **SECTION D. Voting**

All officers of the Student Senate, in both elected and appointed positions, shall have only one (1) vote per person on the Executive Board. In the event a Student Senate Executive Board member also serves as a Student Senator (due to low class enrollment) they are entitled to one (1) vote per represented position. The Student Senate President, or any other officer presiding over a Student Senate Executive Board meeting, does not get a vote unless their vote is needed to break a tie.

### **SECTION E. Distribution of Powers**

All legislative, financial, judicial, and executive powers of the Student Senate shall be vested in the Executive Board, with the guidance of the Executive Board's Advisor.

### **SECTION F. Representation**

The Student Senate Executive Board shall be the sole representative unit of the students enrolled at College of the Sequoias to all on and off campus entities. The Student Senate shall exist to conduct participatory governance, offer activities, and promote cooperation between students, faculty, staff, and the community.

### **SECTION G. Shared Governance**

Student Senate participates in the College of the Sequoias shared governance process to formulate policy and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students. The Student Senate has the authority to nominate student representatives to participate on District committees, task forces, or other governance groups. This body is responsible for

recommending how the District's Student Representation fees are allocated for authorized activities. The Student Senate is the only entity empowered to take positions on legislative issues within its purview under College of the Sequoias Policies and Regulations.

**SECTION H.      Communication**

The Student Senate further provides a conduit of information for communicating with the student constituency, for securing the input and views of their constituency, and for representing all views of their constituency. The members of the Student Senate have a responsibility to report back to their constituencies.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Elections**

**SECTION A.      General Election**

The General Election shall be held in the Spring semester, no later than the third week of May, for the purpose of electing the officers for the following term of office.

**SECTION B.      Oath of Office**

The Student Senate Advisor shall issue the oath of office to all newly elected Executive Board officers prior to taking office. The Student Senate Vice President shall issue the oath of office to all newly appointed Student Senate Division Senators prior to taking office.

**SECTION C.      Constitution Revisions**

Any revisions to this constitution will take place during the regularly scheduled General Election held in May of the Spring semester.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Removal**

**SECTION A.      Exclusive Method**

The exclusive method for the removal of an elected or appointed officer is by recall for illegal or unethical conduct, as determined by the Dean of Student Services.

**SECTION B.      Recall Petition**

To recall a Student Senate officer, students from the general student population must submit a petition to the Student Activities and Affairs office with signatures of two-thirds (2/3) of the same number of voters who voted in the last election. Those signatures shall be verified by college officials and only signatures of those students currently enrolled shall count towards the required number of signatures.

**SECTION C.      Recall Election**

A recall election shall be set within fourteen (14) school days after the required Recall petition is submitted and certified. A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the students in favor of the recall election is required to remove a Student Senate officer from office.

**SECTION D.      Vote of No Confidence**

Any Student Senate Executive Board member who misrepresents the Student Senate as a whole, either verbally, written, or by behavior, shall be given warning and action may be taken by the Student Senate Executive Board. The process of a Vote of No Confidence action, as outlined in the Student Senate Bylaws, shall include the following steps: one (1) verbal warning; followed by one (1) written warning; and finally, a two-thirds (2/3) majority in favor of imposing a Vote of No Confidence by the Student Senate Executive Board. If the Vote of No Confidence is passed, the officer will be removed from their elected/appointed position. Once the process has been completed and a final decision has been made, there is no appeal process.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Meetings**

#### **SECTION A. Quorum**

A quorum to conduct business of the Student Senate shall consist of a majority of the currently elected or appointed members of the Executive Board.

#### **SECTION B. Meeting Schedule**

The regular meeting of the Student Senate Executive Board will be held a minimum of two (2) times per month.

#### **SECTION C. Brown Act**

All meetings of the Student Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act. All agendas shall be published in accordance with the Brown Act. The Student Activities and Affairs office shall be responsible for posting approved agendas. All minutes of meetings shall be made available prior to the next meeting. Special or emergency meetings may be called as provided for in the Brown Act.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Amendments**

#### **SECTION A. Amendments to the Constitution**

Amendments to this document may only be made during the General Election held in the Spring semester.

#### **SECTION B. Amendment on the Ballot**

The Student Senate Executive Board may place an amendment on the ballot with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Executive Board.

#### **SECTION C. Propositions**

Executive Board members may bring forward measure of propositions to be placed on the ballot during a General Election, following the same procedures as for amendments.

#### **SECTION D. Amendments Brought Forth By Students**

Any student, currently enrolled at College of the Sequoias, may bring forth/present an amendment for consideration by the Student Senate Executive Board, during Public Forum at a regularly scheduled Student Senate Executive Board meeting.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Parliamentary Authority/Rules**

#### **SECTION A. Governing Authority**

In cases not provided for in this document, the governing authority in determining all procedural matters shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised Edition.

#### **SECTION B Motions**

No motion, either oral or written, shall be adopted until the same shall be seconded and distinctly stated to the Executive Board by the presiding officer. The minutes shall identify the maker and second of each motion.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Legal Conflicts**

#### **SECTION A. Deemed Illegal Portions**

Should any portion of this document be found illegal, the remainder of this document shall remain in effect, until otherwise changed by amendment.

#### **SECTION B. Deemed Law, Regulation, or Code Conflict**

Should any local, state, or federal law, regulation, or code be found to be in conflict with this document, then the portion in this document which is in question shall be considered to be null and void; however, the remainder of the document will remain in full force. The law, regulation, or code from the highest-ranking authority shall take precedence over all others and will be obeyed by the Student Senate.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Bylaws**

#### **SECTION A. Enactment of Bylaws**

The Student Senate Executive Board shall enact Bylaws which govern the day-to-day operation of the Student Senate.

#### **SECTION B. Amendment to Bylaws**

Bylaws may be adopted or amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Enabling / Ratifications**

#### **SECTION A. Enabling**

This constitution becomes effective upon adoption by a majority vote of the College of the Sequoias student body in a generally scheduled election.

**SECTION B.      Revisions of Constitution**

Upon ratification of this constitution, all prior constitutions and bylaws of the Student Senate are null and void and of no force or effect.

**SECTION C.      Revised and Adopted**

Revised/Adopted: November 2011

Revised: March 2020