

**Constitution of the
Student Government
Association of Barnard
College**



Contents:

Preamble

Article I: Purpose

Article II: Membership

Article III: The Representative Council, The Executive Board, and Committees

Article IV: Finance

Article V: Elections and Appointments

Article VI: Vacancies

Article VII: Impeachment

Article VIII: Referenda

Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution

Article X: Relationships with Other Organizations

Article XI: The Powers of the Constitution

PREAMBLE: We, the members of the Student Government Association of Barnard College, recognize this Constitution as our governing document intended to make clear the purposes, structures, and powers of this body.

Article I: PURPOSE

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the Student Government Association of Barnard College, hereafter referred to as the “SGA.”

Section 2. SGA shall facilitate the expression of opinions on matters affecting the Barnard community through active communication between students, administration and faculty.

Section 3. SGA is charged with gathering and expressing student opinion, actively representing student views, appropriately addressing student concerns, and ensuring that Barnard students are fully apprised of all information of impact to their undergraduate experience.

Section 4. SGA shall promote and ensure responsible self-government, open dialogue, and action by selecting student representatives through fair and transparent elections and appointments processes.

Article II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. All Barnard College students by virtue of having paid their student activities fee are members of the SGA and are entitled to attend all open meetings, vote on issues and candidates in College-wide elections, and hold offices for which they meet the eligibility requirements as defined in the SGA By-laws (hereafter referred to as the “By-laws”).

Section 2. SGA calls on all Barnard College students to take initiative in continuing the SGA’s tradition of equitable self-government, to stay informed on issues pertaining to

the student body, and to hold both administrators and students accountable to the College's larger mission to foster women leaders and intellectuals.

Article III: THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. The SGA shall be composed of a Representative Council, an Executive Board, and a committee system.

Section 2. The members of the Representative Council with full voting privileges shall be:

Clause 1. Officers of the SGA Executive Board which includes those who hold the positions of SGA President, Vice President for Policy, Vice President for Campus Life, Vice President for Finance, and Vice President for Communications.

Subclause 1. The chair of the meeting may vote only in the case of a tie.

Clause 2. Officers who hold the positions of University Senator, Representatives to the Board of Trustees, Representative for Sustainable Initiatives, Representative for Academic Affairs, Representative for Campus Affairs, Representative for Food and Dining Services, Representative for Health Services, Representative for Information and Technology, Representative for Arts and Culture, Representative for Inclusion and Equity, Representative for Seven Sisters Relations, and the Class Council Presidents and Vice Presidents of all four class years.

Section 3. The purpose of the Representative Council shall be:

Clause 1. To legislate on matters related to student government and activities.

Clause 2. To investigate and present proposals and resolutions on matters related to the members of the SGA to the appropriate College committees or the Board of Trustees.

Clause 3. To propose revisions to the Constitution and By-laws.

Clause 4. To request that any elected or appointed committee member, officer, or representative report on their activities as they relate to the student government.

Clause 5. To invite, for the purpose of information or communication on matters related to the SGA, any administrator, faculty member, or non-Barnard affiliate to attend a Representative Council meeting.

Clause 6. To voice student opinions and concerns and to facilitate communication as liaisons between the members of the SGA and the administration as well as members of the SGA and the faculty.

Clause 7. To consider and approve all referenda to be placed before a vote of the entire SGA.

Section 4. The purpose of the Executive Board of the SGA shall be:

Clause 1. To administer and oversee the work of the SGA in areas of student government and activities.

Clause 2. To ensure that decisions legislated through the Representative Council

are carried out.

Clause 3. To draft a yearly budget, subject to the approval of the Representative Council.

Clause 4. To advise and approve all Student Activity funded organization spending throughout the academic year.

Clause 5. To propose and appoint ad hoc committees for the purpose of completing projects deemed necessary in the interest of the SGA.

Clause 6. To deal with matters pertaining to the SGA which are not specifically delegated to any committee, the Representative Council, any individual officer, or to the members of the SGA.

Section 5. Actions of the officers

Clause 1. All officers of the SGA shall be held accountable to the duties of their respective position as are outlined in the By-laws.

Clause 2. In order to appeal any action of the officers of the SGA, any member of the SGA may present a petition signed by twenty members of the SGA to the Representative Council. The rules of such petition procedures are outlined in the By-laws.

Section 6. The following are committees either chaired by an SGA Representative or are Barnard College Committees to which SGA sends representatives (see Committee Handbook and the By-Laws):

1. Committee on Policy
2. Appointments Committee
3. Constitutional Review Committee
4. Campus Life Committee
5. Leadership Awards Dinner Committee
6. Finance Committee
7. Committee on Public Relations
8. Sustainable Initiatives Consulting Board
9. Student Academic Advisory Committee
10. Committee on Inclusion and Equity
11. Campus Affairs Committee
12. Food Advisory Board
13. Student Health Advisory Committee
14. Committee on Arts and Culture
15. Seven Sisters Committee
16. Transfer, International, and Commuter Student Interests Committee
17. Committee on Instruction
18. Barnard Library Academic Information Services Committee
19. Any other ad-hoc committee created by the SGA Executive Board

Article IV: FINANCE

Section 1. The responsibility of the SGA, subject to the statutory jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees, shall be to allocate money from the Student Activities Fee to the Governing Board at Barnard (GBB) with the stipulation that GBB shall allocate funds to

the McIntosh Activities Council (McAC).

Section 2. Every member of the SGA pays a Student Activities Fee, proposed by the SGA Executive Board, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Representative Council. The administration and allocation of the Student Activities Fee is the sole responsibility of the elected officers of the SGA.

Section 3. The Executive Board of the SGA may request in writing to the President of the College that the current student activities fee be changed for the following academic year. Any such recommendation shall be approved by a two thirds vote of the Representative Council.

Section 4. The Representative Council shall make budget recommendations to the SGA Executive Board. In order to approve the SGA budget as proposed by the Executive Board, it must pass through Representative Council by a majority vote.

Section 5. All approved activities of the SGA shall qualify to be funded by SGA.

Section 6. The Vice President of Finance shall report to the Executive Board on the amount of money in the budget surplus in the Spring Semester of each year. In the event of a surplus the Executive Board shall recommend several possible uses of the surplus to the Representative Council. At this time the Representative Council can propose alternative uses for the surplus. A simple majority vote of the Representative Council shall be necessary to accept the proposed use.

Section 7. The annual appropriation from The SGA Endowment Fund, established by the Board of Trustees, shall be determined by the Executive Board and any other interested members of Representative Council in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer in the Fall of each academic year. The purpose of the Fund is to provide financial support for small projects or new activities that will enhance student life on campus.

Article V: ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Section 1. All officers shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast by the SGA, except for the officers of the class councils who shall be elected by the plurality of the votes of their respective classes.

Section 2. All officers running unopposed shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by the student body.

Section 3. The required class status for officers of the SGA, when elected during regularly scheduled Spring elections, shall be as follows:

Clause 1. The SGA President shall be a rising Senior.

Clause 2. The Vice President for Policy shall be a rising Junior or Senior.

Clause 3. The Vice President for Campus Life shall be a rising Junior or Senior.

Clause 4. The Vice President for Finance shall be a rising Junior or Senior.

Clause 5. The Vice President for Communications shall be a rising Junior or Senior.

Clause 6. The student representative to the Barnard College Board of Trustees shall be a rising Junior.

Clause 7. The Barnard College Senator to the University Senate shall be a rising Sophomore, Junior or Senior. A candidate may only be a rising Senior if they have served two years on the Senate previously.

Clause 8. All other officers, excluding the Class Council officers, shall be rising Sophomores, Juniors or Seniors.

Clause 9. The class standing of each class council officer shall reflect the standing of their constituencies.

Section 4. In the case of a special election, the student vying for the position shall fall into the class standing as defined in Section 3.

Section 5. All candidates shall personally affirm prior to running for office that they are in good academic standing (defined as a 2.5 grade point average or higher). If elected, they must commit to maintaining this average in addition to fulfilling their duties.

Section 6. An Election Commission shall be created for each Election season in order to set forth the elections guidelines.

Clause 1. The two Election seasons shall be defined as the Fall Elections for the First-Year Class and Spring Elections for the entire student body.

Clause 2. The President, the Senior Representative to the Board of Trustees, the Junior Representative to the Board of Trustees, the University Senator, and the Senior Class President shall serve on the Elections Committee.

Subclause 1. If the University Senator is in the last semester of their term and is not a senior, they shall be replaced by the Senior Class Vice President on the Elections Commission.

Section 7. When a new position is created by the SGA a special election shall be held in order to fill the position.

Article VI: VACANCIES

Section 1. A vacancy in the SGA occurs when a position has not been filled by election or appointment, or when an officer or committee member is removed from their position, resigns, does not keep up their academic standing, or is no longer registered at and attending Barnard College.

Section 2. The Appointments Committee

Clause 1. The Vice President for Policy shall chair the Appointments Committee.

Clause 2. The Appointments Committee shall consist of up to five appointed student members sought from the round of applications at the end of the spring semester for the following year. If the committee is not filled during spring appointments, those positions shall be filled during the next fall appointments process. Members of the Appointments Committee may not hold an elected position on Representative Council.

Clause 3. The members of the Appointments Committee shall remain

anonymous to the entire student body and members of the Representative Council except to the Vice President for Policy.

Clause 4. The Appointments Committee shall recommend applicants to fill vacancies other than the President of SGA and the presidents of each class council.

Clause 5. The Appointments Committee shall read all committee and Representative Council applications anonymously and provide a recommendation to the Representative Council. In the case of multiple applications for a Representative Council position, the committee shall recommend two applicants to present at a meeting of the Representative Council.

Clause 6. The Representative Council shall approve the Appointments Committee recommendations by a 2/3rd hand vote.

Section 3.

Clause 1. In the case of a vacancy in the office of the SGA President, the Vice President for Policy shall assume the responsibilities of the President. A new Vice President for Policy shall be appointed.

Clause 2. In the case of a vacancy in any other Executive Board position, the President shall assume the responsibilities of that officer until someone is appointed.

Clause 3. In the case of a vacancy in the office of the President of any class council, the Vice President of the respective council shall assume the responsibility of the President. A new Vice President shall be appointed.

Section 4. Resignation

Clause 1. If an officer announces their resignation they shall hold the position for an additional two weeks or until a new Representative is appointed, whichever is sooner.

Subclause 1. If the officer resigns due to a medical or other emergency, their resignation shall be effective immediately.

Article VII: IMPEACHMENT

Section 1. All officers on the Representative Council shall be brought up on impeachment charges for either:

Clause 1. Failing to fulfill the duties of their position as set forth in the By-laws, or other concerns not pertaining to absences from Representative Council meetings.

Clause 2. Accumulating more than two unexcused absences per semester from meetings of the Representative Council.

Subclause 1. An excused absence is defined as an absence due to a religious obligation, a family emergency, or a medical emergency.

Subclause 2. An unexcused absence is defined as any absence due to other reasons not stated in Subclause 1.

Section 2. The process for review of impeachment charges shall be followed in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article V, Section 2 and Section 3 of the By-

laws.

Section 3. The process for impeachment shall be followed in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article V, Section 4 of the By-laws.

Article VIII: REFERENDA

Section 1. A referendum may be initiated by:

Clause 1. The Representative Council.

Clause 2. Any member of the SGA.

Subclause 1. A member of the SGA may petition the Representative Council to hold a referendum upon the presentation of a petition signed by at least 100 members of the SGA, stating the purpose of said referendum.

Section 2. The process for holding a referendum shall be followed in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article IV of the By-laws.

Clause 1. The Vice President for Policy shall be the point person for all referenda.

Article IX: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1. Constitutional Review

Clause 1. Once every three years, the SGA Constitution shall be reviewed by a special ad hoc committee chaired by the Vice President for Policy.

Subclause 1. This committee shall be called the Constitutional Review Committee (hereafter referred to as the "CRC").

Subclause 2. The CRC shall be composed of two members of Representative Council, two members of the SGA Committee System, and two students who are not members of the Representative Council or SGA Committees.

Clause 2. The report of the CRC shall be considered at a meeting of the Representative Council. If the report proposes amendments then the procedures of Article IX, Section 2 below shall be followed.

Section 2. Amendment process during Constitutional Review

Clause 1. An amendment may be proposed to the CRC by any member of the SGA.

Clause 2. A draft of the proposed amendment(s) shall be posted on the SGA website at least one week prior to the vote of the Representative Council.

Clause 3. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Representative Council shall be required to accept the amendment(s).

Clause 4. Once accepted by the Representative Council, the amendment shall be presented to the SGA as a referendum in the next general All-College election.

Section 3. Amendment process between Constitutional Review

Clause 1. An amendment may be proposed to the Representative Council by any member of the SGA.

Clause 2. The Vice President for Policy shall document the amendment(s) for

the next Constitutional Review. Proposed amendments shall be included in the Vice President for Policy's transition documents.

Clause 3. All documented amendments shall be considered by the CRC during the next Constitutional Review.

Article X: RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Columbia University Student Councils and Governing Boards

Clause 1. The SGA shall honor all written partnership agreements made with other Columbia University organizations such as the Columbia College Student Council, the Engineering Student Council, the General Studies Student Council, and other governing boards.

Clause 2. In the event that a member feels that the terms of the agreement have been broken, the relevant parties shall convene a meeting together.

Section 2. Barnard College Organizations

Clause 1. The SGA shall honor all partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understandings made between itself and other Barnard College organizations such as the McIntosh Activities Council and the Governing Board at Barnard. Similar procedure shall be followed as stated in Section 1, Clause 2.

Section 3. Seven Sisters Coalition

Clause 1. The SGA shall participate in the Seven Sisters Coalition and send the designated Representatives as stipulated in the By-Laws and the Committee Handbook.

Clause 2. SGA shall host the Fall Leadership Conference once every six years, starting in Fall 2015.

Clause 3. SGA shall host the annual Spring Summit for the Coordinating Board members as needed.

Article XI: THE POWERS OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1. This Constitution, having been approved by the SGA, shall supersede all other committee guidelines and constitutions governing student-related matters.

Section 2. In the case of a discrepancy in Section 1, the matter shall be decided by the General Counsel in conjunction with the President of the College.