

John Cabot University Student Government

Constitution

Preamble

We, the Student Government of John Cabot University, seek to provide the official voice through which student opinion may be expressed. We undertake to provide and stimulate student participation in overall policy and decision-making within the University.

We endeavour to encourage and foster a culture and atmosphere that envelops all three branches of the academic community; administration, faculty and the student body, by advocating for students' interests and needs as well as by planning and organising activities and programs. We are committed to supporting the stated mission of the University by using to the fullest extent the unique resources of a multicultural faculty, an international student body and the incredibly rich culture and history of Rome and the surrounding region.

Article 1

This organization shall be known as John Cabot University Student Government. Throughout this document, the organization shall be referred to as SG. This organization shall be comprised of a Senate, an Executive Board, an Academic Affairs Committee, and a Social Events Committee. The Senate shall be comprised of members of the Executive Board, Academic Representatives, and Visiting Student Representatives. The Senate shall meet bi-monthly. The Executive Board shall be comprised of: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, Social Events Officer. The Executive Board shall meet weekly.

Article 2

Officers

The officers of the SG shall be as follows:

The President

The President's duties shall be as follows:

1. To preside over regular meetings of the Senate.
2. To preside over regular meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee.

3. To summon, call to order and adjourn all meetings.
4. To act as the chief representative/liaison between the SG, faculty and the university administration.
5. To call extraordinary meetings of the Senate if and when these shall be requested or required.
6. To represent the student body when any problem is to be brought to the attention of the President or administration of the university.
7. To oversee and coordinate the activities of the SG.
8. To re-assign the duties of any member of the Senate who is prevented from performing them to another member of the Senate.
9. To propose the appointment of additional members to the Senate in the event that tasks (duties) not specifically allocated in this constitution arise.
10. The President shall not have voting rights at meetings of the Senate unless the voting results in a tie, when he/she shall have the casting vote.

The Vice-President

The Vice-President's duties shall be as follows:

1. To assume all the responsibilities of the President in his/her absence.
2. To ensure that all policies are in accordance with John Cabot rules and regulations.
3. To serve, in conjunction with the President, as an internal auditor of the SG's financial records as kept by the Treasurer.
4. To attend each week either the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee or of the Social Events Committee.
5. To assure that individual SG members and the standing committees meet regularly and carry out assigned duties.

The Secretary

The Secretary's duties shall be as follows:

1. To inform members of the Senate well in advance of all meetings.
2. To prepare a written agenda for Senate meetings in coordination with the President and the Vice-President.
3. To display and publicize summaries of all-important decisions reached by the Senate for the information of students in coordination with the Webmaster.
4. To compile and maintain a record of standing committees and their members.
5. To maintain a record of attendance for Senators, and bring excessive absences to the attention of the Senate.
6. To assume procedural responsibilities in Senate meetings in the event of the President and Vice-President both being absent.
7. To attend each week either the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee or of the Social Events Committee.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer's duties shall be as follows:

1. To act as a liaison between the SG members and the Business Office and Administration regarding finances for initiatives and events.
2. To approve and sign requests for funds from SG members and student organizations, and to plan in advance for cash to be released from the Business Office.
3. To keep detailed and careful records of all expenditures in accordance with the allocated amount in the budget.
4. To assure receipts are obtained for all SG purchases and funds allocated to student organizations, and to assure that all of the receipts are legitimate and sufficient for the records of the Business Office.
5. To be able to explain SG's financial policies both to the administration and to the student body.
6. To attend each week either the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee or of the Social Events Committee.

The Webmaster

The Webmaster's duties shall be as follows:

1. To publicize events of SG through the internal and external websites available to John Cabot University Student Government.
2. To oversee the planning of the events' calendar alongside the Presidents of the student organizations at John Cabot University.
3. To be a liaison between students and the Senate in terms of planning and the promotion of Student Government events.
4. To work closely with the newspaper and other student publications.
5. To attend each week either the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee or of the Social Events Committee.

The Social Events Officer

The Social Events Officer's duties shall be as follows:

1. To oversee and chair the Social Events standing committee.
2. To publicize events of the Social Events Committee via all media.
3. To assist the Webmaster in the planning of the events' calendar alongside the Presidents of the student organizations at John Cabot University.
4. To be a liaison between students and the Senate in terms of planning and the promotion of SG events.
5. To work closely with the newspaper and other student publications.

Academic Representative Officer

There shall be six Academic Representative Officers at any given time. Each Academic Representative's duties shall be as follows:

1. To identify academic needs and problems through interaction with the student body.
2. To act as a liaison between departmental heads and students of each academic department.

3. To create academic opportunities for each specific major/department.
4. To increase awareness of academic ideals through promotion of lectures, conferences, debates and other events related to academic matters and any field of interest held by the Officer.

Representation of Visiting Students

1. The Student Government shall include two Visiting Student Representatives. One shall serve on the Academic Committee, and the other shall serve on the Social Events Committee.
2. The duties of the Visiting Student Representatives shall include full participation as members of the Senate, with the special responsibility of relaying the concerns, comments, ideas, and questions of all visiting students to the Senate.
3. These representatives have full voting rights as Senators and are bound by the same obligations inherent to all Senators as explained in the Student Government Constitution in Article 3.
4. These positions are open to all visiting students, though at least one visiting student representative must be intending to study at JCU for the full academic year she/he serves in this capacity.

Article 3

Membership Responsibilities

The responsibilities of all members of the Senate shall be:

1. To promote student interests within the University.
2. To promote the initiatives and events of the SG as well as the clubs and student organizations of John Cabot University.
3. To participate in any events organized by the Senate in which an officer's presence or physical assistance is required.
4. To attend the weekly meetings of either the Academic Committee or the Social Events Committee.
5. To attend bi-monthly Senate meetings unless unavoidably detained.
6. Absence from more than two meetings each semester will necessitate disciplinary action from the SG President and the Advisors.
7. To serve at least two hours per week in the Student Government office.

Article 4

Committees

Integral to the structure of Student Government are committees. These are the forums where student concerns may be most efficiently and properly voiced. All committees shall serve at the will of the Student Senate and the Senate retains full oversight authority over all committees. Each committee, standing or special, shall be expected to report regularly to the Senate of its progress. This shall occur at the bi-monthly meetings of the Student Senate.

The standing committees will continue in existence year to year until the Senate votes otherwise. A committee may be declared standing by Senate vote if the purpose of the committee is determined to be of a long-term nature or special, more permanent purpose.

A special committee may be formed by vote of the Senate for projects requiring special attention but that are not permanent in nature or purpose. This committee ceases to exist upon completion of the project or by vote of the Senate.

Membership on each committee includes, but is not restricted to, members of the Senate, as designated by the President or outlined in this Constitution. Non-Senators may also be chosen from among the student body as appointed or approved by the President or the Chair of the relevant standing Committee. All students with good academic standing at the University shall be eligible for membership on a committee, including both degree-seeking and visiting students. The Senate retains the right to remove any member of a committee at any time for any reason it deems appropriate.

The Chair of each committee shall be directly responsible for reporting business of the committee to the Senate and is appointed Chair by the President. The Chair does not need be a member of the Senate.

Each committee shall have the authorization to determine its own by-laws and organizational structure in collaboration with the Executive Board of SG.

The guidelines for the Standing Committees of the SG are as follows:

1. Academic Affairs: Will consist of the Academic Representatives and one Visiting Student Representative and will meet weekly. Weekly meetings will be chaired by the SG President. This committee will exist year-round and will work to ascertain the academic needs of the students and to communicate them to the university administration. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that sufficient departmental meetings are held each semester for the entire student body regardless of the specific majors and minors of the Academic Officers. Weekly meetings will also serve as a forum for members of the student body to voice academic concerns and questions.

2. Social Events: Will consist of the Social Events Officer, one Visiting Student Representative, and as many students from the general student body as are interested. The purpose of the committee is to work with student organizations and clubs as well as to organize activities and events according to student interests and needs. Students involved in the Committee are not members of the SG Senate and are not required to attend the bi-monthly meetings of the Senate. These members-at-large may be members of the Committee for the organization and duration of a single event or throughout an entire Semester or Academic year as they choose.

3. Electoral Commission: will exist year round but will be staffed and operating with sufficient time to organize and hold the elections

Every effort should be made to develop and utilize synergies amongst the separate Student Government committees and also between these committees and other student organizations at JCU.

Article 5

Role of Student Clubs and Organizations

Each student club or organization is encouraged to send a member of its Executive Board to each SG Senate meeting. One of the primary purposes of SG is to promote and advocate for student interests, including those of student clubs and organizations.

In order to qualify for funding from SG, a student club or organization must be represented by one of its Board members at each SG Senate meeting during the Academic year. Any club or organization's absence from more than two Senate meetings during the year will result in that club or organization being disqualified from funding for the rest of the Academic year.

Article 6

Advisors to Student Government

The Advisors to the Student Government shall be as follows:

1. A Faculty Advisor chosen by the Senate from the full or part time members of the John Cabot University Faculty, dependant upon the approval by the President of the University.
2. A member of the John Cabot University staff.

Both Advisors will serve as ex officio members of the student senate with no voting privileges. Broadly-conceived, the role of both advisors to Student Government is one of guidance.

The Faculty Advisor shall be primarily concerned with matters relating to academics and shall serve as the liaison between the Student Government members of the Faculty. The Faculty Advisor shall have the responsibility of maintaining communication with the Student Government and staying informed of Student Government's projects, events and initiatives. The Faculty Advisor shall be the primary source for Student Government to arrange chaperones as needed for its events.

The Staff Advisor shall be chiefly concerned with matters relating to student activities, including budgetary and financial transactions, and shall be the liaison between the Student Government and the staff of John Cabot University as a whole.

The duties of both advisors shall be as follows:

1. To offer advice, as needed or deemed necessary, regarding agenda items or discussions related to academic affairs, University events and University policy in order to maintain and ensure the integrity of Student Government.
2. To be present, whenever willing and able, at events organized by the Student Government.

Article 7

Electoral Procedures

All candidates for election to the Senate must meet the following requirements:

1. All candidates wishing to run for office must display good academic standing by possessing a grade point average at or above 2.5.
2. Candidates for offices of President, Vice-President and Treasurer should have Junior or Senior standing at the commencement of their term.
3. Candidates for the office of President should previously have served on the Senate. If the situation arises that only one candidate meets this criterion then the position will be open to all who meet the remaining requirements. Similarly if there are no candidates that fulfill the criteria then the same provision applies.

The election process for the Executive Board shall be presided over by the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will comprise both student government advisors, and two Senate members not wishing to run for re-election. This commission functions as a standing committee and as such must adhere to the procedures and responsibilities outlined in Article 4.

Executive Board Elections:

The commission has the responsibility of establishing the electoral guidelines and the timetable of the election and the conduct of the election process. In addition, the commission must inform the student body of the electoral guidelines and timetable within the course of the spring semester allowing for sufficient time for campaigning and the election process.

Elections for the Executive Board will be held during the Spring Semester, at a time sufficiently early to allow the new Board to familiarize itself with the operation and procedures of the Senate.

Candidates must submit a completed application for candidacy to the Electoral Commission to be reviewed in line with guidelines of eligibility and the discretion of the Commission.

All degree-seeking students enrolled in John Cabot University at the time of the elections shall be eligible to vote. Visiting students who have completed at least one full academic semester at John Cabot University are also eligible to vote.

Results of the election will be posted on the day after, following due process and independent verification.

Executive Board members shall serve a term of one academic year beginning at the start of the Summer II academic session.

Elections of the remainder of the Senate:

Elections for the Visiting Representatives and the Academic Representative Officers shall be held in the Fall semester. The positions shall be advertised to the student body during the orientation week as well as during the first week of classes. Applications shall be due during the second week of classes.

The Executive Board, in close consultation with the Faculty and Staff Advisors, shall determine the criteria for the application and shall vote to approve the candidates best qualified for these positions. The new students shall then immediately assume their positions.

Visiting Representatives and Academic Representative Officers shall serve a term of one academic year upon their election to office in the Fall semester.

Article 8

Procedures for Senate Meeting

Meetings of the Senate will be held bi-monthly.

Meetings will be conducted according the guidelines presented by Robert's Rules of Order:

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call of members present.
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting.
4. Committee reports – Academic Affairs and Social Events Committees.
5. Executive Board reports
6. Reports from student organizations
7. Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
8. Unfinished business.
9. New business.
10. Announcements.
11. Adjournment

Meetings will be presided over by the President; if the President is not in attendance then the Vice-President will assume this role. Likewise if both are unavailable the Secretary will assume presiding authority, and beyond this the discretion of the remaining Senators will determine the presiding officer.

In order to conduct business a quorum of 75% of the voting members of the Senate must be in attendance. Voting rights are reserved for elected Senators and Visiting Student Senators. Other non-voting Student Government members may be present however their presence does not contribute to the formulation of a quorum.

Meetings will normally be open to Senators and non-voting members of Student Government. If matters deemed sensitive by the President are to be discussed the President may rule that the meeting will be closed to all non-voting members. However at the conclusion of such a meeting, detailed minutes will be made available by the Secretary.

Article 9

Resignation

In the event that a member of the Senate resigns, a period of two weeks notice is required, unless exceptional circumstances apply. During this period, the outgoing Senator must accept the responsibility of advertising the upcoming vacancy of his/her position so it may be filled by another student. The outgoing Senator also has the responsibility of providing a reason for resignation to the rest of the SG.

If the office of President is vacated and the Vice-President is willing and able to assume the responsibilities then with a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate the senator can assume his/her new office.

If any office other than President is vacated, nominations will be accepted from members of the Senate. Eligible candidates can be drawn from the student body at large. A special

election will be held in the Senate and the nominated officer must be elected by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.

Appointments and Removal from Office

The President may appoint Senators to positions that were uncontested in the previous election. The President may nominate a candidate and if voted upon by the Senate and approved by a two-thirds majority, the Senator will be named to the position.

A Senator may be removed from office for lack of participation and failure to perform the duties of his/her office as outlined in Articles 2 and 3 of this document. There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. “Special circumstances” for an additional absence may apply only by a majority vote of the Senate.

After two absences in a semester, a warning shall be issued to the relevant Senator by the SG President. Following any further absences, the Senator in question will be removed from SG immediately. Additionally, proceedings for removal from office can be initiated at the discretion of the President in matters regarding behavior unbecoming to a Senator.

The President may initiate the removal from office proceedings by issuing a warning to a Senator who is lacking in his/her duties. If the issue remains unresolved, the member can be brought before a review board comprised of the President and an Advisor. It will then be the decision of the review board whether to pursue the matter further. If the review board decides to pursue removal from office, a motion must be brought by a member of the Senate. The Senate shall vote on the matter and a two-thirds majority is required.

Article 10

Amendment of the Constitution

At the conclusion of each academic year the outgoing Senators are required to review the constitution to ensure that it is in line with the current environment and wishes of the student body.

Amendments and revisions to the constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Senate. At the discretion of the Faculty and Staff Advisors, major amendments to the Constitution must then be presented to the Student Body of John Cabot University as a referendum and approved by majority vote.

Updated and Revised by:
Kristen Mapes, President, Student Government
Andrea Tomassini
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Ratified by student vote, 10 March 2009

Previous version of Constitution

Revised by:

Simon Sturgess, Chairman, Constitutional Committee

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Ratified by student vote, 23 April 2002