



Constitution

University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government

Updated: April 22nd, 2024

Table of Contents

Preamble.....	5
Article I. University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government.....	5
Section A. Constituency	5
Section B. Rights and Powers of the Undergraduate Student Body	5
Section C. Organization.....	5
Section D. Supremacy Clause	6
Article II. Legislative Branch.....	6
Section A. Organization.....	6
Section B. Responsibilities.....	6
Section C. Powers of the Student Senate	7
Section D. Senate Officers.....	7
Section E. Seating of Senators.....	7
Article III. Executive Branch	7
Section A. Organization.....	7
Section B. Responsibilities.....	7
Section C. Powers.....	8
Section D. Succession	8
Article IV. Judicial Branch	8
Article V. Student Organizations	9
Section A. Definition.....	10
Section B. Registration.....	10
Section C. Privileges.....	10
Article VI. Elections	10
Section A. Process	10
Article VII. Allocation of Fees and Finances.....	10
Section A. Derivation of Power.....	10
Section B. Allocation Process.....	10
Article VIII. Amendments and Bylaws	11
Section A. Process to Amend the USG Constitution.....	11
Section B. Establishment of the USG Bylaws.....	11

Preamble

The formation of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) seeks to implement an effective and representative government of the undergraduate students of the University of Iowa. The formation of distinct undergraduate governmental structures enables independent work but also allows for and encourages cooperation and collaboration among the entirety of undergraduate student leaders. Indeed, a successful student government is contingent upon open and honest communication and collaboration between USG and the constituents they represent; a failure to do so puts at risk effective representation of the undergraduate students of the University of Iowa (hereafter, referred to as the University). At its core, USG seeks to demonstrate a commitment to the service not only of the undergraduate students of the University of Iowa but also of the greater University community, embracing the principles of a peer governance that values collaboration between faculty, staff, and student leaders in the service of the University and its members.

Article I. University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government

Section A. Constituency

1. All persons registered as undergraduates at the University of Iowa shall constitute the constituency of USG. Registration shall be determined by the Office of the Registrar.
2. In no aspect of its programs shall there be any difference in the treatment of persons on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, associational preferences, or any other classification which would deprive the person of consideration as an individual. The organization will guarantee that equal opportunity and equal access to membership, programming, facilities, and benefits shall be open to all persons. Eighty percent (80%) of this organization's membership must be composed of UI students.

Section B. Rights and Powers of the Undergraduate Student Body

1. Students shall retain all rights and protections provided by the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Iowa.
2. Students shall retain the right to amend the USG Constitution and the USG Bylaws, remove any elected member of USG, and put forth initiatives for the consideration of the student body.
3. All organized bodies of USG shall follow the regulations and rules of the Iowa Open Meetings Open Records Act, as prescribed by Iowa Code, Chapter 22. All USG records shall be accessible to all students.

Section C. Organization

1. USG shall consist of the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, and Judicial Branch.

Section D. Supremacy Clause

1. The USG Constitution shall be the preeminent document of USG.

Article II. Legislative Branch

Section A. Organization

1. The Legislative Branch shall consist of the Student Senate. The Student Senate shall be unicameral body composed of fifty senators who are elected or appointed according to the procedures in the USG Bylaws.
2. The Student Senate shall establish a committee system to aid in the fulfillment of its duties.
3. The Student Senate shall be composed of 50 senators in addition to 12 constituency senators.
4. 43 At-Large senators shall be elected according to the procedure in the Election Code.
5. A minimum of 7 At-Large Senators who are first-year University of Iowa students must be appointed by the Internal Committee during Fall Nominations.
6. Twelve senators shall be appointed by the following constituencies with each constituency selecting one senator to serve on its behalf:
 - a. Asian Pacific Islander Desi American
 - b. Black
 - c. International
 - d. Latine
 - e. LGBTQ+
 - f. Disability
 - g. First Generation
 - h. Native American
 - i. Veteran
 - j. Jewish
 - k. Middle Eastern, North African, and Arab
 - l. NCAA Student-Athlete
7. All constituency Senators shall be required to work on at least one initiative with the Justice & Equity Committee but shall not be required to serve as a member of the Justice & Equity Committee if a Constituency Senator desires to serve on another first-block committee. All other requirements specific to the Constiteuncy Senator position shall be determined in USG's Executive and Legislative Bylaws.

Section B. Responsibilities

1. The Student Senate shall hear and represent student voices.

2. The Student Senate shall express the opinion of undergraduate students.
3. The Student Senate shall advocate for student interests in University, state, and federal policy.
4. The Student Senate shall present legislation to improve student life.
5. The Student Senate shall plan for general and committee meetings.
6. The Student Senate shall help allocate Student Activity Fees.

Section C. Powers of the Student Senate

1. The Student Senate shall have the power to allocate designated Student Activity Fees.
2. The Student Senate shall have the power to draft and introduce legislation.
3. The Student Senate shall have the power to ratify all contracts and agreements negotiated by the President.
4. The Student Senate shall have the power to set its own rules of order.
5. The Student Senate shall have the power to establish both standing and ad-hoc committees.
6. The Student Senate shall have the power to remove elected executives.
7. The Student Senate shall have the power to override an executive veto by a two-thirds affirmative vote of seated senators during the Senate Session immediately following the veto.
8. The Student Senate shall have the power to amend the USG Constitution or the USG Bylaws according to the procedures in the respective document.
9. The Student Senate shall not have the power to suspend the USG Constitution and the USG Bylaws.

Section D. Senate Officers

1. The Senate Officers shall consist of the Speaker of the Senate, Speaker Pro-Tempore, Parliamentarian, and Committee Chairs. The Senate Officers shall be selected according to the procedure in the USG Bylaws.

Section E. Seating of Senators

1. All elected and constituency senators shall be seated immediately after they are sworn into office.
2. All appointed senators shall be seated immediately after the passage of legislation confirming their appointment. This legislation is not subject to an executive veto.

Article III. Executive Branch

Section A. Organization

1. The Executive Branch shall consist of the President, Vice President, and the Cabinet.
2. The Cabinet shall assist the President and Vice President in fulfilling their respective duties.

Section B. Responsibilities

1. The Executive Branch shall be responsible for the execution of all legislation passed by the Student Senate.
2. The Executive Branch shall be responsible for the effective and efficient operation of USG.
3. The President shall be the voice of the undergraduate student body.

Section C. Powers

1. The President shall have the power to veto legislation. The President shall not have the power of line item veto. If legislation is not signed by the President within six days of passage, it shall be considered vetoed.
2. The President shall have the power to call a Special Session of the Student Senate with a minimum of forty-eight hours of written notice.
3. The President shall have the power to issue Executive Orders.
4. The President shall have the power to negotiate all contracts and agreements between USG and other entities.
5. The President shall have the power to introduce Letters of Nomination to the Student Senate for Cabinet and Student Judicial Court appointments.
6. The Vice President shall have the power to cast a vote on Student Senate legislation in the case that the Student Senate finds itself equally divided on a vote.
7. The Vice President shall assume the role of the Speaker of the Senate in the event that both the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker Pro-Tempore are not installed or are absent.
8. Members of the Executive Branch shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Student Senate. Executives do not have the power to introduce legislation.

Section D. Succession

1. In the instance that the President resigns, is removed, or fails to qualify for membership in USG, the Vice President shall assume the role of President. If the Vice President permanently assumes the role of the President, the former Vice President will nominate a new Vice President who shall be confirmed by the Student Senate with a two-thirds affirmative vote of Seated Senators.
2. In the instance that both the President and Vice President are unable to fulfill the duties of the President, the Speaker of the Senate shall assume those duties until a time when a special election can be held to elect a new President and Vice President.

Article IV. Judicial Branch

Section A. Organization

1. All judicial powers of USG shall be vested in the Student Judicial Court (SJC).
2. SJC shall consist of nine justices. The justices shall be appointed staggered by two administrations, serving for one year terms. No members of the Executive Branch or Legislative Branch shall serve on SJC.
3. SJC shall select a Chief Justice who shall act as the chair of SJC.
4. The Chief Justice's term shall be one year in duration, but one person can serve multiple terms.

Section B. Responsibilities

1. SJC shall have original jurisdiction over:
 - a. Interpretation of the USG Constitution, its Bylaws, and any amendments hereto.
 - b. Interpretation of the constitution or bylaws of the governing bodies of USG, all other Associations, Commissions, Student Organizations, or committees.
 - c. Interpretation of the constitutionality of the actions of Associations, Commissions, Student Organizations, Committees, or Officers of USG.
 - d. The appeal process over University-issued parking tickets.
2. SJC shall have appellate jurisdiction over:
 - a. Disputes heard by other student judicial bodies.
 - b. Any case concerning students, providing that the parties agree in writing to submit the case to the court and abide by its decision.
3. SJC shall render advisory opinions upon the request of any member of USG.
4. The Chief Justice shall appoint the Student Election Commissioner from the justices. The Chief Justice may not serve as the Election Commissioner. The SEC shall have jurisdiction over all USG elections and referenda in the following ways:
 - a. The conduct, certification, and announcement of the results of all student referenda.
 - b. The conduct, certification, and announcement of the results of any election authorized by USG in accordance with the body's respective bylaws.
 - c. Infractions of election rules or procedures.
 - d. Review of contested ballots.
 - e. Development of rules and procedures to ensure fair, equitable, and accessible Elections.

Section C. Appointment

1. Five justices shall be appointed at the end of a president's administration. During the time of Presidential Charter Committee Nominations, USG shall open an application for SJC. The President and Vice President will hold interviews and the President will appoint five justices, which must be confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the senate.
2. Four justices shall be appointed at the beginning of a president's administration. During the time of executive appointments, USG shall open an application for SJC. The new President and Vice President will hold interviews and the President will appoint four justices, which the senate must confirm with a two-thirds majority affirmative vote.
3. If the President fails fill the court, the Internal Affairs Committee will appoint members to fill vacancies. If the President fails to fill the court, during the time of fall nominations, the Internal Affairs Committee shall open applications and hold interviews for the vacant SJC seats. Then, the Internal Affairs Chair shall present the item as separate legislation from senator nominations, which must be confirmed by a two thirds majority vote of the senate and presidential signature.
4. If there is a vacancy that comes after the fall nominations process, then the Internal Affairs will repeat the procedure in the third section during spring nominations

Article V. Student Organizations

Section A. Definition

1. Student organizations are voluntary special interest groups organized for educational, social, recreational, and service purposes.

Section B. Registration

1. The Office of the Dean of Students determines the policies and procedures for the registration of student organizations. The policies and procedures for the registration of student organizations are published in the Office of the Dean of Students' Policies & Regulations Affecting Students.

Section C. Privileges

1. Registered student organizations may request funding from USG.

Article VI. Elections

Section A. Process

1. Elections shall be held in the spring semester to elect the President, Vice President, and Senators.
2. The Student Election Commissioner shall oversee the elections process according to the rules and regulations of the Elections Code.
3. All undergraduates at the University are eligible to vote in a USG election.

Article VII. Allocation of Fees and Finances

Section A. Derivation of Power

1. The Board of Regents, State of Iowa allows USG to allocate Student Activity Fees. Distribution of Student Activity Fees and other USG funds shall be vested in the Student Senate. The Student Senate shall consult with the Executive Branch in this process.

Section B. Allocation Process

1. Student Fee Committee
 - a. As deemed by the Iowa Code 264.26B, a committee composed of five students, appointed by USG and GPSG, and five university employees, appointed by the President of the University of Iowa, shall make recommendations concerning student activity fee allocation to the President of the University of Iowa for review no later than April 15.
 - b. The Student Activity Fee Committee shall provide a copy of its recommendations to USG. USG may review the recommendations and provide comment to the President of the University of Iowa and the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.
 - c. USG may continue or discontinue funding existing contracts.
2. Student Senate

- a. The Student Senate shall allocate Student Activity Fees and other USG funds to registered student organizations and any projects deemed beneficial for the University of Iowa and its constituents or for the function of USG.
- b. With recommendations from the Executive Branch, the Student Senate shall pass an annual budget for each branch of USG by the beginning of the University of Iowa's fiscal year.

Article VIII. Amendments and Bylaws

Section A. Process to Amend the USG Constitution

1. An amendment to the USG Constitution may occur in one of two ways:
 - a. Amendments to the USG Constitution by USG must be introduced in writing during a general assembly meeting of the Student Senate. This introduction shall be the first consideration of the amendment. For an amendment to move on to a second consideration it must receive a two-thirds affirmative vote of seated senators. If the amendment reaches this threshold, it can then be brought up for a second consideration no less than three weeks after the first consideration. After the second consideration, the amendment must receive an affirmative three-fourths vote of seated senators.
 - b. Any registered undergraduate student may submit an amendment to the USG Constitution along with a petition with signatures from no less than 10% of the Student Body. After SJC and the Office of the Registrar have confirmed the signatures as valid, the amendment shall be put on the next general election ballot for consideration. The amendment must receive an affirmative two-thirds majority of those students voting.

Section B. Establishment of the USG Bylaws

1. The Student Senate shall have the power to establish bylaws for the effective operation of USG.
2. The bylaws shall detail its own amendment process.