

The Constitution of the Patrick Henry College Student Government

Preamble:

In the name of God, Amen. The students of Patrick Henry College, in covenant together, ordain this Constitution to establish a student government as a liaison between the students and faculty and a coordinator of student activities, a body that promotes order, responsibility, self-rule, freedom, and honor, upholding our education as a functional and enjoyable experience. These rules and principles shall bind and guide our student government.

Article I: The Undergraduate Student Body

Section 1 Name: The name of this Body shall be the Patrick Henry College Undergraduate Student Body, hereafter referred to as the Student Body.

Section 2 Membership: The membership of the Student Body shall consist of all full-time Patrick Henry College students who are taking classes at the Purcellville campus. Full-time status shall be as defined by the Registrar; but membership in the Student Body shall not be denied to any graduating senior for the semester in which he completes his degree. Only members of the Student Body are eligible to vote.

Article II: The Senate

Section 1 Purpose: The Patrick Henry College Student Senate, hereafter referred to as the Senate, shall be the representative of the Student Body.

Section 2 Membership:

- A. The Senate shall be composed of thirty Senators.
- B. All Senators must be members of the Student Body at the time of their election. All Senators must maintain membership in the Student Body as defined in Article I, Section 2.
- C. All Senators and Executive Officers must keep and maintain a 2.0 Grade Point Average to run for and hold office.
- D. Senators who become unable to meet these qualification as defined in Article II, Section 2, parts B and C during a semester shall two weeks from the date of official communication with the Registrar's office (e.g. a grade report or a drop/add form) of that change to resign from the Senate. Failure to do so will be considered a violation of the first section of the Honor Code, and shall disqualify the offender from further ability to hold office in the Student Government.
- E. Qualifications will be verified by the Patrick Henry College Dean of Students or the Registrar at the time of elections and at the beginning of each semester.
- F. Senators shall be elected by the Student Body according to guidelines set by the Election Commission.
- G. All Senators and Executive Officers are required to attend a training session on parliamentary procedure conducted by the Parliamentarian pursuant to Article 3, Section 3.
- H. All Senators shall have a one-year term and can be re-elected.

Section 3 Powers and Responsibilities:

The Senate has the power and responsibility to:

- A. Safeguard the rights, privileges, and duties established in this document.
- B. Promote and facilitate close cooperation and communication between the Student Body and the Staff, Faculty, Administration, and Alumni of Patrick Henry College.
- C. Maintain relations with student governments of other universities and colleges.
- D. Annually approve the Student Senate budget.

- E. Sponsor Town Hall meetings as the Administration sees fit.
- F. Request information from any officer or committee chairman by a simple majority vote.
- G. Elect standing and select committees as outlined in Article IV.
- H. Execute any and all powers granted to it by the Administration of Patrick Henry College.

Section 4 Meetings:

A. The Senate shall meet according to a schedule upon which it agrees, on the call of the President of the Senate, or upon a petition of signatures by one-third of the Senate.

B. A Senator must be present in the Student Senate meeting to cast a vote.

Section 5 Rules of Order: The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall serve as the standard authority for parliamentary procedure in the Senate.

Article III: The Executive Officers

Section 1 The President:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C and shall have attended Patrick Henry College for a minimum of one semester.

B. Shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body.

C. Shall, as the diplomatic representative of the Student Body and the Senate, seek to facilitate good relations between the Senate, the Student Body, Staff, Faculty, and Administration, and Alumni of Patrick Henry College.

D. Shall have the power to delegate his responsibilities to other members of the executive.

E. The President of the Student Body shall administer the oath of office for all other officers (except the Vice-President) and senators (Article IX, Section 1).

F. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate.

G. Shall serve for a one year term and can be re-elected.

Section 2 The Vice President:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C and shall have attended Patrick Henry College for a minimum of one semester.

B. Shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body.

C. Shall fulfill all matters delegated to him by the President of the Student Body.

D. Shall be the presiding officer at all Senate meetings.

E. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate, except to break a tie.

F. In the temporary absence of the Vice President, the Parliamentarian shall be the temporary presiding officer. He shall have a temporary Parliamentarian to assist him (Art III, Sec 3F).

G. Shall serve for a one year term and can be re-elected.

Section 3 The Parliamentarian:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C.

B. Shall be appointed by the President of the Student Body and confirmed by a simple majority vote in the Student Senate.

C. Shall assist the Vice President in maintaining order in the Senate through use of parliamentary procedure.

D. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate.

E. In the temporary absence of the Parliamentarian, the Senate shall elect a temporary replacement by a plurality of Senators.

Section 4 The Secretary:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C.

B. Shall be appointed by the President of the Student Body and confirmed by a simple majority vote in the Student Senate.

C. Shall record the minutes of all Senate meetings.

D. Shall finalize any and all proposals, letters or other documents approved by the Senate for adoption unless otherwise specified by the Senate.

E. Shall maintain a library of all Senate records.

F. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate.

G. In the temporary absence of the secretary, the Senate shall elect a temporary replacement by a plurality vote.

Section 5 The Treasurer:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C.

B. Shall be appointed by the President of the Student Body and confirmed by a simple majority vote in the Student Senate.

C. Shall report to the Senate at the Senate's discretion.

D. Shall not spend over the amount of twenty-five dollars from the Treasury without the approval of a simple majority of the senate, or under the amount of twenty-five dollars from the Treasury without the approval of the president or vice president.

E. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate.

Section 6 The Sergeant-at-Arms:

A. Shall meet the requirements of Article II, Section 2B and C.

B. Shall be appointed by the President of the Student Body and confirmed by a simple majority vote in the Student Senate.

C. Shall have the sole responsibility to gain, and maintain, official count of the quorum for each Senate meeting.

D. Shall preserve order and decorum as directed by the presiding officer of the senate.

E. Shall announce all official messengers or special guests.

F. Shall be sensitive to members that require special seating for reasons of sight, hearing, etc.

G. Shall not have the power to vote in the Senate.

H. Shall admit only those allowed by the rules of the Senate to the floor during a Senate meeting.

Article IV: Executive Vacancy

Section 1: In the event of the Presidency being permanently vacated, the Vice President shall have the option of resigning the Vice Presidency and taking the oath of office as President. If the Vice President declines, the Senate shall choose a new President by a two-thirds vote.

Section 2: In the event of the Vice Presidency being permanently vacated, the President shall nominate a new Vice President, which nominee shall be confirmed by the Senate by a two-thirds vote. If the nominee is rejected, the President shall select another nominee, until a nominee is confirmed.

Section 3: The phrase "permanent vacancy" shall be understood to mean "when the most recent or current person holding a position is someone who will not return to their position as the result of resignation, death, impeachment, or graduation". The phrase "temporary absence" shall be understood to mean "when the most recent or current person holding a position is someone who will return to their position but is absent for a short period of time".

Section 4: In the event of any permanent vacancy in the offices of Parliamentarian, Secretary, Treasurer, or Sergeant at Arms, the President and Senate shall have the power to fill the vacancy pursuant to Article III of the Constitution.

Article V: The Judicial Panel

Section 1 Membership:

- A. The judicial panel shall consist of seven students.
- B. Members of the judicial panel must be junior or seniors.
- C. The Executive Officers, Senators, or members of any other branch of student government may not be members of the judicial panel.

Section 2 Election:

- A. To fill seats on the Judicial Panel, the presiding officer of the Senate shall open the floor for nominations.
- B. Once nominations are in, each senator shall vote for as many candidates as there are open seats on the panel.
- C. Beginning with the leading vote recipient, each candidate must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate, until all open seats are filled.
- D. Members are seated until they graduate, resign, or are impeached.

Section 3 Powers and Responsibilities:

- A. Shall convene only at the direction of the Senate.
- B. Shall review articles of impeachment sent to it by the Senate.
- C. Shall have the power to repudiate or adopt the articles of impeachment by a simply majority vote of the panel.
- D. Shall return the articles of impeachment to the Senate if adopted by the Judicial Panel.

Article VI: Impeachment

Section 1: Senators, elected and appointed Executive Officers, and Judicial Panel members can be impeached.

Section 2 Process:

- A. Any Senator can bring articles of impeachment to the floor of the Senate.
- B. The Senate must pass articles of impeachment by a simple majority vote, and send the articles to the Judicial Panel for review. If they adopt the articles by a simple majority, they return the articles to the Senate. If the Judicial Panel repudiates the articles, this constitutes the final decision on the impeachment.
- C. The returned articles of impeachment must pass the Senate by a 2/3 vote in order to remove the individual being impeached.
- D. Articles of impeachment against members of the Judicial Panel shall be brought directly to the Senate without review by the Judicial Panel and shall require a single 2/3 vote by the Senate to be approved.

Article VII: Elections

Section 1 The Election Commission:

- A. Membership:
 - i. The Election Commission shall consist of five students.
 - ii. The Executive Officers, Senators, or members of any other branch of student government, may not be members of the Election Commission.

iii. Those currently sitting on the Election Commission shall not be eligible to run for any student government office.

B. Election:

i. The Election Commission shall be filled at the first meeting of the Senate after the conclusion of the Spring Presidential Elections.

ii. The Election Commission shall be filled in the same manner as in the Judicial Panel (Article V, Section 2).

iii. Vacancies on the commission shall be filled after the same manner as those on the Judicial Panel (Article V, Section 2).

iv. In the event that there are three or more vacancies on the Election Commission at the beginning of the fall semester before a new senate is elected, the President may, with the consent of any remaining members, appoint new members to fill the seats. Such terms shall end when a new Senate convenes.

C. Powers and Responsibilities:

The Election Commission shall:

i. Design ballots, verify that the information on them is correct, and verify that candidates are eligible to hold office according to Article II, Section 2B.

ii. Present to the Senate a plan for the spring presidential elections no later than six weeks into the spring semester. The proposal shall contain the method, manner and timetable for elections and must include secret ballots.

iii. Set the date for the general Senate elections, which shall fall approximately one and a half months after the start of classes in the Fall semester, and for Executive elections, which shall fall three to four weeks before the end of the Spring semester.

iv. Set a date by which a letter of intent must be filed by candidates and announce the date at least two weeks in advance.

v. Count the votes and announce winners.

vi. Publish notice of vacant Senate seats once notified by the Vice President that the number of vacancies equals or exceeds three, and set the date for a special election to fill the seats unless such an election would take place within six weeks of a constitutionally scheduled election.

vii. Handle irregular situations and emergencies, submitting proposed solutions to the Senate for approval.

viii. All actions of the Election Commission are subject to the approval of the Senate if the Senate so desires.

ix. The Election Commission shall be responsible for the regulation of all campaigns preceding a vote of the student body, including election to any office, and any referendum.

Section 2 Executive Elections:

A. Candidates for President and Vice President shall file a letter of intent with the Election Commission by such a date as the Commission announces.

B. The President and Vice President must run on one ticket.

C. Elections will last one day and be held on the date the Election Commission specifies.

D. The new President and Vice President shall be sworn into office by the President of Patrick Henry College in an official ceremony to take place during the last week of regularly scheduled classes in the Spring Semester, using the Oaths of Office in Article IX, Section 2. In the event the President of Patrick Henry College is unable to swear the new President into office, the Dean of Students shall conduct the ceremony. If the Dean of Students is unable to swear the

new President into office, the Dean of Academic Affairs shall conduct the ceremony. If a tie occurs in a student government election where election to the office is at stake, the issue is referred back to the student body for a revote for those affected. In a presidential election, the vote will be resubmitted to the student body as soon as possible for a runoff election. Winners of the runoff election(s) will be declared the winners by the election commission and assume elected office. If any two or more tickets tie in a run-off election, the tie shall be broken by a coin flip overseen by the Election Commission in the presence of the members of the tied tickets.

Section 3 Special Elections:

A. Senate seat vacancies

i. Upon the notification by the Vice President that three or more Senate seats stand vacant, the Election Commission will publish notice of the vacancies and set an expedient date for the election unless such an election would take place within six weeks of a constitutionally scheduled election (Article VII, Section 1C, vi).

ii. In all the aforementioned circumstances, students will have one week from the date of publication to file a letter of intent with the Election Commission.

iii. The newly elected senators will take office at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting.

B. Executive Office Vacancies

i. If both the Presidency and the Vice Presidency are permanently vacated, the Senate shall choose a new President by simple majority vote. The President shall not be a member of the Judicial Panel or the Election Commission.

ii. The new President shall appoint a new Vice President, who must be confirmed by 2/3 vote of the Senate.

Article VIII: Amendments and Ratification

Section 1 Amendments:

A. Any Senator may propose an amendment on the floor of the Senate.

B. Amendments to this Constitution shall require a two-thirds vote by the Senate, followed by a referendum to the student body, which shall require a simple majority of those voting in order to pass.

C. The Election Commission shall be responsible for overseeing all voting pertaining to student body ratification of Constitutional amendments within three weeks of passage by the Senate.

Section 2 Ratification: This document shall supersede all other rules or documents that have been previously passed by the Senate with the exception of the Honor and Dress Codes, and shall exercise controlling authority over all documents hereafter passed by the Student Senate. In the event that there is a perceived conflict between the Code and the Bylaws, the Bylaws shall take precedence.

Article IX: Oath of Office

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will adhere to the Constitution of the Patrick Henry College Student Government; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.”