

I. Student Senate

Housatonic Community College has a Student Senate whose executive officers are elected by the student body. The Student Senate serves to promote good citizenship and harmonious relationships throughout the college and the community. It serves to provide a forum for student representation and to provide orderly direction of college activities. The Student Senate assists the Office of Student Life in the allocation and distribution of the Student Activity Fund. Any student who meets the necessary academic requirements and also meets the Student Senate requirements outlined in the membership application is eligible for election into the Student Senate.

For more information about the Student Senate, contact (203) 332-5094

Housatonic Community College Student Senate Constitution

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1 The name of this organization shall be the Student Senate of Housatonic Community in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Section 1 The purpose of this organization shall be as follows:

- a. To establish a representative form of government dedicated to the ideals and principles of the form of government under which we live as American citizens.
- b. To generate and evaluate ideas and policies for the benefit of the student body, the college, and the communities served by the college.
- c. To implement/recommend and carry out ideas and policies deemed worthy by the Student Senate or the student body, including the appropriating of the Student Activities Fund.
- d. To represent the student body in shared governance with Housatonic Community College.

ARTICLE III AUTHORITY

Section 1 Authority for the establishment of the student senate is granted by the President of the College.

Section 2 All decisions of the Student Senate shall be final unless vetoed by the President of the College within five days after publication of the meeting minutes which the appropriate motion has been passed.

a. If the President of the College wishes an extension of more than five days, then he or she must request in writing to the president of the Student Senate with a copy to the student parliamentarian.

b. When an objection is made by the President of the College, it shall be his or her responsibility to have statement of reasons for such an objection presented at the next meeting of the Student Senate, with final jurisdiction resting with the President of the College in accordance with the mandate of his or her office.

Section 3 The Student Senate shall be considered the voice of the student body in any and all matters relating to the welfare of the students.

Section 4 The student parliamentarian has the authority and the responsibility to see that Student Senate meetings are carried out in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (rev.), the Student Senate Constitution, and the By Laws. He or she may explain and clarify procedures to Senate members during the course of the meeting by pointing out errors and stipulating correct procedures that will restore the democratic process. If the directions of the student parliamentarian are not adhered to, and the meeting proceeds with the democratic process abused, then the student parliamentarian has the authority to adjourn the meeting.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 The students of Housatonic Community College shall be represented by a Student Senate elected at-large. The Student Senate shall consist of five executive officers: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and student parliamentarian.

Section 2 All full- and part-time students of Housatonic Community College who meet the requirements set forth in this constitution are eligible for election into the Student Senate.

Section 3 No club officer shall fill the role of treasurer on the Student Senate.

Section 4 Senators who are members of HCC-affiliated clubs and/or organizations shall refrain from voting on matters pertaining to said clubs and/or organizations.

Section 5 The Student Senate shall, at all times, have a Faculty Advisor.

Section 6 Members of the Student Senate are required to fulfill at least four (4) hours of community service per month.

a. Participating in the Housatonic Community College Food Pantry is required.

b. Members must complete, sign, and return a volunteer sheet by the beginning of the new month's first to the Director of Student Activities.

c. Disciplinary action may follow for members who do not complete and submit the volunteer form on time.

1. Senators who do not complete the form the first time will not be permitted voting rights for one meeting.

2. Senators who do not complete the form the second time will no longer count for quorum.

ARTICLE V QUALIFICATIONS

Section 1 A student qualifies to run for any open executive office position if they fulfill all of the following criteria:

a. An officer shall have completed a minimum of twelve hours of study and have a good-standing GPA prior to serving in the office to which they have been elected.

b. An officer shall be a student that is currently enrolled and studying at HCC throughout his/her term in office.

c. An officer shall sustain a GPA of good academic standing (2.00) throughout his/her term in office.

d. An officer shall have served in the Student Senate previously or during the time that the Senator shall be sworn in as a member of the executive board. This rule may, when necessary, be waived by the Dean of Students.

Section 2 For non-executive members:

a. Senators shall maintain a good-standing GPA of at least 2.00 during the semester of their election (excluding incoming freshman) and their time of office.

b. A Senator shall be a currently-enrolled student that is carrying a minimum of three credit hours.

ARTICLE VI SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 1 Student members of the Senate will be determined by the student body through the process of general election. Rules for elections may be found in the By-Laws.

Section 2 The Faculty Advisor's duties will be as follows:

a. A member of the faculty will be recommended to the Senate by the Dean of Students.

b. The Student Senate has the option of approving or rejecting the recommendation of the Dean of Students.

Section 3 In the event of the Student Senate membership is not filled by the election procedure, or vacancies occur during the first six weeks of the semester, the open position(s) may be filled by the following procedure:

a. The student fills out a membership application and submits it to the Director of Student Activities.

b. The Director of Student Activities checks the application to verify that the aspiring student is qualified to become a member of the Student Senate. If he or she is not found qualified, then a report of the fact will be made to the Senate at its next regular meeting.

c. At a regular meeting, the Student Senate will make the final decision to accept or reject the aspiring applicant for membership.

ARTICLE VII TERM OF OFFICE

Section 1 All members of the Student Senate shall, unless otherwise disqualified, serve until the end of the academic year for which they are elected.

Section 2 The term of office for the student parliamentarian and the Faculty Advisor will be at the discretion of the Dean of Students.

ARTICLE VIII FILLING OF VACANCIES

Section 1 In the event of an extended absence, impeachment, expulsion, withdrawal from college, or resignation of the president of the Student Senate, the vice president shall assume the office of the president. If he or she declines, then the office will be filled by open election of the Student Senate (See Article V, Sec 1).

Section 2 In the event of the extended absence, impeachment, expulsion, withdrawal from college, or resignation of the office of vice president, secretary, treasurer, or student parliamentarian, any vacant office will be filled by open election of the Student Senate (See Article V, Sec 1).

ARTICLE IX PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OF MEMBER CHARGED WITH BREAKING RULES

Section 1 Notification

a. The possible Senator will be notified via email by the Standards Committee chairperson of the Student Senate. The date, time, and place will be included in said email and be sent to the student's email address, return receipt requested.

b. The Senator then has the right to appear to the scheduled hearing and explain the actions for which he or she is actually being charged.

c. If the possibly culpable Senator does not appear at the scheduled hearing, then the Standards Committee shall proceed with the case and forward its findings and recommendations to the Student Senate for appropriate action.

d. The final decision of the case by the Student Senate must be clearly stated in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2 Penalties

a. A letter of admonition shall be for Student Senate members who have committed a breach of conduct of minor nature (missing a scheduled activity, failing to claim and take action of certain responsibilities, etc.) for the first time.

b. A temporary suspension shall be for members who have committed a breach of conduct of serious nature or multiple minor breaches.

c. A removal from Senate membership is for those who have committed a breach of conduct of serious nature or habitual offenses.

(Consistently speaking without recognition by the Senate chair, continuous use of profanity or abusive language, and the like shall be considered as disruptive tactics which can be equated to habitual offenses.)

Section 3 Rights

The Student Senate member who is convicted with breaking rules or disruptive Senate business shall retain his or her rights and privileges until he or she has been officially, in writing, suspended or removed from the Senate. In the case of suspension, his or her rights and privileges will be reinstated on the date and time that temporary suspension has ended.

Section 4 Appeal

The findings and recommendations of the Standards Committee may be appealed to the Dean of Students.

ARTICLE X REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

Section 1 After two consecutive unexcused absences, a senator is under temporary suspension and not counted for quorum. He or she will be reinstated after attending two consecutive regular meetings.

Section 2 Removal may occur under the following conditions:

a. Any officer or member may be removed from his or her position for:

1. Failure to attend meetings

2. Failure to carry out duties

3. Any other action that is deemed detrimental to the college or to the Student Senate and whose care has first been:

i. Referred by the Senate to the Standards Committee for a hearing

ii. Heard by the Standards Committee and reported back to the Senate

iii. Finally disposed of by the Senate

Section 3 The removal of an officer or member requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the members of the entire voting Student Senate who are in good standing with approval of the Dean of Students.

Section 4 The student body may also cause removal of a student member of the Senate through the process of recall. The following procedures will apply:

a. A petition must be forwarded to the Senate stating the reasons for recall of the cited member. To be valid, the petition must contain signatures of at least fifty currently-enrolled students.

b. The student parliamentarian will verify the names of the petition as being those of matriculating students at Housatonic Community College and read the petition at the next scheduled regular meeting.

c. The student parliamentarian will then forward the petition to the Director of Student Activities for further review.

d. Depending upon the decision of a majority vote made by the Senate, the cited member will be reinstated to full status in the Senate, or his or her name will be removed from quorum. The final decision will be confirmed or denied by the Dean of Students.

ARTICLE XI STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 Standing Committees of the Student Senate are as follows: Executive Committee, Standards Committee, Finance Committee, Activity Committee, Elections Committee, and Outreach Committee. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or Faculty Advisor.

Section 2 Membership of all Standing Committees, with the exception of the Executive Committee, will be determined by the Student Senate.

ARTICLE XII MEETINGS

Section 1 For the purpose of parliamentary procedures and record keeping, a session of the Senate will begin and end with each academic year.

Section 2 The Student Senate will meet on a regular basis. The time and day of (regular) meetings will be determined by the majority of the Student Senate.

Section 3 Special meetings of the Senate may be called at any time by the president of the Student Senate or the Faculty Advisor with a minimum of twenty-four-hour notice. This notice must be published to all members.

Section 4 Attendance at all Senate meetings is mandatory. Only the president or, in his or her absence, the highest-ranking officer, can excuse Senators who have legitimate reasons for being absent. Any student senator accumulating three or more unexcused absences per session will be automatically referred to the Standards Committee in accordance with the By-Laws.

Section 5 A quorum shall be a majority of student senators who are in good standing.

Section 6 If no quorum exists, an expanded Executive Committee may be called, consisting of officers and members present, and they may carry on regular business. However, any action must be approved by the Faculty Advisor.

Section 7 The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised in Brief)* shall govern the Student Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, By-Laws, or special rules of order of the Student Senate.

Section 8 Student Senate meetings are open to all members of Housatonic Community College.

Section 9 Any member of Housatonic Community College, other than student senators, who wishes to speak in a Senate meeting must sign an up-to-date roster sheet kept at the Executive table, stating the matter on which he or she wishes to speak. All speakers must observe the usual time limit established by the Senate.

ARTICLE XIII ANNUAL BUDGET

A review of the annual budget must be submitted to the Dean of Administration, the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, and the President of the College.

ARTICLE XIV AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a majority favorable vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Senate, a majority vote by the student body, and/or approval of the President of the College.

ARTICLE XV RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall go into effect upon ratification by majority vote of the Student Senate, majority favorable vote of the student body, and/or approval of the President of the College.

ARTICLE XVI STATE OF EMERGENCY

Section 1 In the event of a natural disaster or world event, a 'State of Emergency' procedure can be put into force by the current Student President immediately. This must be offered up by suggestion by the Faculty Advisor prior to motion. The Student President would curate an emergency meeting with the Executive Board members along with the current Director of Student Activities and/or Faculty Advisor to create a future meeting time to continue business as usual if possible.

- a. As of 12/05/2020, the signature portion of the Student Senate application will be deactivated, until COVID-19 is lifted and the Campus CEO has approved for on-campus activities to resume.