

# Harvard Law School Student Government Constitution

(Ratified on March 9, 2011)

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## **Article I. Mission**

The Harvard Law School Student Government is the representative body of the students at Harvard Law School. The mission of the Student Government is to improve student life and facilitate communication between the students, faculty, and staff.

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## **Article II. Student Government Membership**

### **Section 1: The Student Government**

1. The Student Government, in its entirety, shall consist of:
  - a. The President and Vice President;
  - b. The Board of Directors; and
  - c. Representatives.

### **Section 2: The President and Vice President**

1. The President and Vice President shall be elected to one year terms.

### **Section 3: The Board of Directors**

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of one of each of the following:
  - a. Director of Academic Affairs;
  - b. Director of Events;
  - c. Director of Faculty Engagement;
  - d. Director of Internal Affairs;
  - e. Director of Student Engagement;
  - f. Director of Student Organizations; and
  - g. Director of Finance.
2. Directors shall be appointed to one year terms.

### **Section 4: Representatives**

1. Representatives shall consist of:
    - a. Three 3L Representatives elected by and from the 3L class;
    - b. Three 2L Representatives elected by and from the 2L class;
    - c. Seven 1L Representatives elected by and from each 1L section;
    - d. Two LLM Representatives elected by and from LLM degree candidates;
    - e. One SJD Representative elected by and from the SJD candidates; and
    - f. One Transfer Representative elected by and from transfer students.
  2. Representatives shall be elected to one year terms.
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## Article III. Elections

### Section 1: The President and Vice President

1. The President and Vice President shall be elected by the student body at large.
  - a. Each candidate for President must run on a joint ticket with a candidate for Vice President.
  - b. Any candidate for a degree from the Law School, including candidates for joint or concurrent degrees who are registered at the Law School, may vote in the election for President and Vice President.
  - c. The elections shall occur at least three and no more than six weeks prior to the last day of classes.
  - d. Elections for President and Vice President shall be run by the outgoing President, Vice President, and the Dean of Students Office.
2. The President and Vice President shall serve a one year term that begins on the day after Commencement and ends on the day of the following Commencement.
  - a. The newly elected President and Vice President may and are encouraged to attend general Student Government and Board meetings with the outgoing administration, but they may not vote, unless they are already members of the Student Government or Board of Directors. During this period, the outgoing administration is encouraged to provide training to the incoming administration.

### Section 2: Representatives

1. The timing of elections shall be as follows:
  - a. The 3L, 2L, LLM, SJD, and Transfer Representatives shall be elected by and from their respective constituencies within the first four weeks of the first day of the fall semester.
    - i. Each transfer student may only vote once for either a Transfer Representative or a Class Representative.
  - b. 1L Representatives shall be elected by and from each 1L section within four weeks of the date student organizations are first permitted to recruit the 1Ls, as established by the Law School Administration, or, if permitted, within four weeks of the first day of the fall semester.
2. Representatives shall serve from the day they are elected until the day of Commencement.
3. Elections for Representatives shall be coordinated by the Director of Internal Affairs.

### **Section 3: General Requirements**

1. Candidates for any elected position on the Student Government must meet all of the following requirements.
    - a. He or she must be a full time student, meeting all of the minimum credit requirements of the Law School.
    - b. If enrolled concurrently in other programs, some of his or her units for that academic year must be taken at the Law School.
    - c. All candidates for any elected position must adhere to the campaign rules in the Student Government By-Laws.
      - i. A candidate may formally complain about a violation of the campaign rules via email to the President, Vice President, and Dean of Students. As soon as practicable, the President, Vice President, and Dean of Students shall meet to determine the appropriate remedy. The complaining parties and the parties against whom the complaint is made may attend the meeting.
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## **Article IV. Appointments**

### **Section 1: The Board of Directors**

1. The newly elected President and Vice President shall appoint new Directors before the day after Commencement.
  - a. The newly elected President and Vice President shall solicit candidates from the entire student body.
    - i. Before his or her term begins, the President-Elect shall have limited access to official student email lists only for the purpose of recruiting the Board of Directors.
  - b. Prior to appointment, information about the applicants shall be distributed to members of the Student Government, who are invited to send comments regarding candidates to the newly elected President and Vice President. The newly elected President and Vice President shall take those comments into consideration when making their final determinations.
  - c. In the event of disagreement between the President and Vice President, the President's choice shall prevail.
2. Directors shall serve a one year term that begins on the day after Commencement and ends on the day of the subsequent Commencement.

### **Section 2: General Requirements**

1. Candidates for any position on the Board of Directors must meet all of the following requirements.
    - a. He or she must be a full time student, meeting all of the minimum credit requirements of the Law School.
    - b. If enrolled concurrently in other programs, some of his or her units for that academic year must be taken at the Law School.
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## **Article V. Vacancies**

### **Section 1: In General**

1. A vacancy occurs whenever a member of the Student Government is unable to serve due to absence, resignation, removal from office, or lack of student status.

### **Section 2: The President and Vice President**

1. If the office of the President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall assume the position and appoint his or her replacement from among the members of the Student Government.
2. If the office of Vice President becomes vacant, the President shall appoint a replacement from among the members of the Student Government.

### **Section 3: The Board of Directors**

1. If the office of a Director becomes vacant, the President and Vice President shall appoint a replacement.
  - a. In the event of disagreement between the President and Vice President, the President's choice shall prevail.

### **Section 4: Representatives**

1. If the position of one of the Representatives becomes available, the next eligible candidate for the vacant position, as determined by the vote tally of the preceding election, shall assume the vacant position.
    - a. If there is no eligible candidate willing to serve, the President and Vice President shall appoint a replacement.
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## **Article VI. Student Government Member Duties**

### **Section 1: The President and Vice President**

1. The President shall have the following duties.
  - a. The President shall be the official spokesperson of the Harvard Law School student body.
  - b. The President shall serve as the primary contact with the Administration and the University.
  - c. The President shall preside over Student Government meetings and functions, voting only when his or her vote would break a tie.
  - d. The President shall, with Student Government approval, create ad hoc committees to address issues inappropriate for the Student Government to address as a whole.
  - e. The President shall call and preside over all meetings of the Student Government and Board of Directors.
2. The Vice President shall have the following duties.
  - a. The Vice President shall appoint students to University and Law School committees, as requested by the University and Law School Administrations.
  - b. The Vice President shall manage all of the student-faculty committees, ensuring that the Student Government is adequately represented on each committee and that information from each committee is shared with the Student Government.
  - c. The Vice President shall preside over meetings in the President's absence.
3. Other duties of the President and Vice President shall be listed in the Student Government By-Laws.

### **Section 2: The Board of Directors**

1. The duties of the Directors shall be listed in the Student Government By-Laws.

### **Section 3: Representatives**

1. The duties of the Representatives shall be listed in the Student Government By-Laws.
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## **Article VII. Attendance**

### **Section 1: General Meetings**

1. If a member is absent from three Student Government meetings within a semester, then the member must meet with the President and Vice President.
  - a. The President and Vice President may, but are not required to, recommend that the Student Government vote on whether to retain that member.
  - b. If the member does not meet with the President and Vice President within a reasonable amount of time, the President and Vice President may, without meeting with that member, recommend that the Student Government vote on whether to retain that member.
2. If a member is absent from four meetings within a semester, then the Student Government must vote on whether to retain that member.
  - a. The member shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
  - b. The member shall not be present during discussion and voting.
  - c. A two-thirds vote shall be required to remove that member from Student Government.
3. A member must be present for the shorter of half of the meeting or 45 minutes to be counted as present.

### **Section 2: Board Meetings**

1. If a Director is absent from four Board meetings within a semester, then the Director must meet with the President and Vice President.
    - a. The President and Vice President may, but are not required to, recommend that the Student Government vote on whether to retain that Director.
    - b. If the Director does not meet with the President and Vice President within a reasonable amount of time, the President and Vice President may, without meeting with that member, recommend that the Student Government vote on whether to retain that Director.
  2. If a Director is absent from four Board meetings, then the Student Government must vote on whether to retain that Director.
    - a. The Director shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
    - b. The Director shall not be present during discussion and voting.
    - c. A two-thirds vote shall be required to remove that Director from Student Government.
  3. A Director must be present for the shorter of half of the meeting or 30 minutes to be counted as present.
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## Article VIII. Impeachment and Removal

### Section 1: The President and Vice President

1. The President and Vice President may be impeached, resulting in a removal from office.
2. To initiate the impeachment of the President or Vice President, a member of the Student Government must submit a written request to a Director to demand an impeachment proceeding by the Board of Directors.
  - a. Upon such a demand, the Board of Directors shall determine whether the Student Government shall hold an impeachment vote.
    - i. The person subject to the impeachment proceeding shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
    - ii. The person subject to the impeachment proceeding may not be present during deliberation and may not vote.
    - iii. If two-thirds of the Board of Directors, including those not present, votes in favor, the issue shall be referred to the Student Government
  - b. Upon such a referral, the Student Government shall hold an impeachment vote at the next Student Government meeting.
    - i. The person subject to the impeachment vote shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
    - ii. The person subject to the impeachment proceeding may not be present during deliberation and may not vote.
    - iii. Two-thirds of the entire Student Government, including those not present, is required to impeach that person.
3. If less than two-thirds of the Board of Directors votes to refer the issue to the Student Government, then the complainant can demand a vote by the Student Government with a petition signed by a majority of all members of the Student Government.
  - a. Upon such a demand, the Student Government shall hold an impeachment vote at the next Student Government meeting.
    - i. The person subject to the impeachment vote shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
    - ii. The person subject to the impeachment proceeding may not be present during deliberation and may not vote.
    - iii. Two-thirds of the entire Student Government, including those not present, is required to impeach that person.

## **Section 2: The Board of Directors and Representatives**

1. Directors and Representatives may be removed from office.
  2. Before a member of the Student Government can initiate the removal of a person in Student Government, the member requesting a removal shall go to the President, who must make a good faith effort to communicate with that person.
    - a. Once such an effort has been made by the President, the President may demand a removal vote by the Student Government.
    - b. Upon such a demand, the Student Government shall hold a removal vote at the next Student Government meeting.
      - i. The member subject to the removal vote shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
      - ii. The member subject to the removal vote will not be present during discussion and voting.
      - iii. Two-thirds of the entire Student Government, including those not present, is required to remove that member.
    - c. A member who is subject to a removal vote shall be notified at least 5 days in advance of the vote by the Student Government.
  3. If the President does not demand a removal vote, then the complainant can demand a vote by the Student Government with a petition signed by a majority of all members of the Student Government.
    - a. Upon such a demand, the Student Government shall hold a removal vote at the next Student Government meeting.
      - i. The member subject to the removal vote shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her own behalf.
      - ii. The member subject to the removal vote will not be present during discussion and voting.
      - iii. Two-thirds of the entire Student Government, including those not present, is required to remove that member.
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## **Article IX. Meetings**

### **Section 1: In General**

1. The Student Government shall meet at least once every two weeks during the academic year, except during Winter Term, vacations, and exam periods.
  2. The President shall determine the order of business for meetings.
  3. Two-thirds of the members of the Student Government shall constitute a quorum at general meetings.
  4. One-half of the Directors shall constitute quorum at Board meetings.
  5. Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, one half of those present plus one shall constitute a majority.
  6. All Student Government meetings shall be open to all members of the Law School community, unless decided against in advance by the President.
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## Article X. Constitutional Amendments and By-Laws

### Section 1: In General

1. All members of the Student Government shall be bound by relevant provisions of the Student Government Constitution and By-Laws.

### Section 2: Procedure

1. Before a proposed Constitutional Amendment or By-Law is presented at a Student Government meeting, the following steps must be taken:
    - a. The Student Government member must write up his or her proposal.
    - b. The Student Government member must collect five signatures, including his or her signature, from members of Student Government as indications of support.
      - i. Signatures can be electronic (e.g. via email).
    - c. The Student Government member must send the proposed Constitutional Amendment to the President at least twenty-four hours before the next Student Government meeting.
    - d. The President shall promptly send the proposed Constitutional Amendment to the Student Government in advance of the meeting.
  2. If the proposer meets the requirements above, then the proposed Constitutional Amendment or By-Law shall be discussed at the next meeting, assuming quorum is met.
    - a. The proposer may present his or her proposal.
    - b. Discussion of the proposal, moderated by the President, shall be allowed.
    - c. Anyone in Student Government may motion to table the proposal.
      - i. The proposal shall be tabled until the next meeting if a majority of the members in attendance are in favor of tabling the proposal.
      - ii. If less than a majority of the members in attendance are in favor of tabling the proposal, then discussion shall continue.
    - d. Anyone in Student Government may motion for a vote.
      - i. A vote shall be held if a majority of the members in attendance are in favor of a vote.
      - ii. If less than a majority of the members in attendance are in favor of a vote, then discussion shall continue.
  3. Requirements for the passage of a Constitutional Amendment or a By-Law:
    - a. The Constitutional Amendment proposal will pass with the support of two-thirds of the members of Student Government, including those not present.
    - b. The By-law proposal will pass with the support of two-thirds of the members in attendance, assuming quorum is met.
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## **Article XI. Enabling Act**

This Constitution shall take effect upon approval by two-thirds of the members present at the meeting, assuming quorum is met.

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