

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RHODES STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Last amended: April 2009

PREAMBLE

We the students of Rhodes College, affirm the right of Students to establish self governance; to advance Student representation within the College Community; to provide for the Student welfare; and to ensure an environment that nurtures physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual development; do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the Rhodes Student Government.

ARTICLE I—RHODES STUDENT GOVERNMENT PURPOSE

- SECTION 1.** The Students of Rhodes College do hereby establish the Rhodes Student Government (RSG) as the representative voice of the Students of Rhodes College. As the representative voice, the Rhodes Student Government shall strive for the highest quality of Student life, both inside and outside of the classroom at Rhodes, and the active exchange of ideas, perspectives, experiences, opinions, values, beliefs, needs, and goals between the Students and the Faculty, Staff, Administrators, Trustees, Alumni and Alumnae, and Friends of Rhodes College.
- SECTION 2.** As the representative voice of the undergraduate and graduate Students, the Rhodes Student Government shall recognize and protect the rights of students; regardless of age, color, disability, ethnic and national origin, gender, marital and parental status, military/veteran status, race, religion and creed, or sexual orientation; shall insist upon academic freedom, responsibility, and excellence; and shall foster an environment which stimulates students to take active roles in the college community.
- SECTION 3.** The Rhodes Student Government is a deliberative and consultative body vested with, but not limited to, the power to make studies, reports, and recommendations advocating student rights, needs, and interests to the college community, administration, Board of Trustees, and the public in accordance with the Rhodes College By- laws.
- SECTION 4.** The powers and authority vested in the Rhodes Student Government are derived directly from the Students of Rhodes College. All members of the Rhodes Student Government, elected and appointed, shall be full- time, enrolled students of Rhodes College. All second-semester seniors are exempt from this requirement.
- SECTION 5.** The RSG Constitution shall be deemed the supreme working body of procedures and policies over the RSG and all associated bodies.
- SECTION 6.** The RSG shall conduct business in accordance with the by- laws of the College.

ARTICLE II—EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- SECTION 1.** The executive branch of the Rhodes Student Government shall consist of the President of the Student Body, the Vice President, the Treasurer, the Vice-Treasurer and the following semi-autonomous body: the Allocations Board. The President and Treasurer shall be considered *ex officio* members of the Student Senate and have no vote in the Senate.
- SECTION 2.** The President of the Student Body shall be vested with the executive authority of the Students and shall serve as the chief spokesperson of the Student Body. He or she shall have the responsibility to propose actions and resolutions to the Senate, have the authority to ensure the enactment of the resolutions of the Senate, and be vested with the power to veto all actions of the Senate. The Senate may override any veto by the President by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Any resolutions passed by the Senate shall become official acts unless vetoed by the President within three (3) days of passage by the Senate. The President shall be responsible for the executive branch and use such as the means of executive actions. The President shall be elected from among the full-time students by the Student Body.
- SECTION 3.** The Vice President of the Student Body shall be the presiding officer of the Student Senate. He or she shall be responsible for upholding the Constitution and Standing Rules and shall be the final authority on the interpretation of these documents. Any such decision may be overruled by a simple majority vote of the Senate. The Vice President shall have authority over the committees of the Senate and shall have the power to create and disband *ad hoc* committees and appoint a chair to oversee the established *ad hoc* committees, both of which are subject to the approval of the Senate by a simple majority. *Ad hoc* committees shall continue their activities until they are disbanded by the Vice President. The Vice President shall vote only to break a tie vote of the Senate. The Vice President shall be elected from among the full-time students by the Student Body. The Vice President shall convene and chair a Senate Steering Committee at his or her discretion to serve as a consultative steering body for the Senate.
- SECTION 4.** The Treasurer of the Rhodes Student Government shall be vested with the responsibility to supervise and control all financial matters of the RSG, including, but not limited to, the preparation and presentation to the President and Senate of a budget for RSG as an organization for the coming fiscal year in conjunction with the incoming President and Vice President after Officer Elections and before the Spring Allocations hearings. The Treasurer shall present the general activities budget for the coming semester to the President and the Senate for approval by no later than two (2) weeks before the final regular Senate meeting of the semester immediately preceding the implementation of said budget. He or she, in conjunction with the President, shall also have the responsibility of examining the sufficiency of the Student Activity Fee at least every other year. The Treasurer shall also present a bi-monthly financial report to the Senate reflecting the activity of the Student Activity Fund. The Treasurer, as chair of the Allocations Board, shall oversee the allocation of student activity funds. The Chair of Internal Affairs shall solicit applications for the office from the Student Body, and the

President shall select a nominee from among the applicants, who then is subject to the approval by simple majority vote of the Senate.

SECTION 5. The Vice Treasurer of the Rhodes Student Government shall be vested with the responsibility of assisting the Treasurer in fulfilling his or her duties at the Treasurer's discretion. The Vice Treasurer shall also serve as a Secretary to the Allocations Board and attend all matters for which the Treasurer deems necessary. The Chair of Internal Affairs shall solicit applications for the office from the Student Body. In conjunction with the Treasurer, the Internal Affairs committee shall nominate a person to serve as the Vice Treasurer, subject to the approval of the Senate by a simple majority.

ARTICLE III— SEMI-AUTONOMOUS BODIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SECTION 1. The Allocations Board shall be responsible for the allocation of student activity funds to student organizations in accordance with the Allocations By-laws. It shall be chaired by the Treasurer and consist of ten (10) members elected from among the full-time students by the Student Body.. Each of the ten elected members shall have a single vote on the Board. All actions of the Board are subject to the approval of the Student Senate. The Allocations Board shall not override the will of the Senate.

ARTICLE IV—RHODES STUDENT GOVERNMENT SENATE

SECTION 1. The legislative branch of the Rhodes Student Government shall be called the Student Senate and shall be composed of the Vice President, the Class Senators, the Secretary, the Elections Commissioners, and the Parliamentarian/Whip. The President, Treasurer, and Vice Treasurer shall also attend Senate meetings as *ex officio* members. The Senate shall meet bi-weekly when school is in session, except when the Chair cancels the meeting, and shall meet on special occasions when called together by the Vice President. The Vice President shall be responsible for establishing and distributing an official meeting schedule for each semester before the first meeting of each semester. Any formal session of the Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Rules of Rhodes Student Government and the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* in all cases in which such is not expressly enumerated in the Standing Rules. All informal meetings shall be facilitated by the Vice President or a designated member of RSG.

SECTION 2. The Senior, Junior, Sophomore, and First-Year classes shall each be represented by five (5) Senators. The Class Senators shall be elected by their respective classes and shall be full-time students, excluding second-semester Seniors, classified by the Registrar as a member of the class they represent. The Senators, vested with the legislative authority of the Students, shall have the power to propose and enact resolutions and call the Student Government to action. Each Senator shall have a single vote in the Senate. First-Year Senators shall be elected by the fifth week of the all semester and shall serve until turnover in the spring semester. Sophomore and Junior Senators shall be elected in the general elections in the spring semester and shall serve for

one year until turnover in the spring semester. The Senior Senators shall be elected in the general election in the spring and serve until commencement of the following year.

SECTION 3. The Secretary/Historian shall be responsible for the minutes of the Senate meetings, keeping an accurate record of attendance, handling all RSG correspondence, and ensuring the maintenance and consistent update of the RSG Archives. The Internal Affairs Committee shall solicit applications from the Student Body for one week immediately following the swearing in of the new Senate. The Secretary shall be nominated by the Internal Affairs Committee from all applicants and be subject to the approval by simple majority of the Senate.

SECTION 4. The Parliamentarian/Whip shall actively enforce and promote *Robert's Rules of Order*. He or she shall interpret the constitution and standing rules of the Senate. The Vice President shall be the final authority on the interpretation of these documents however. Any such decision may be overruled by a simple majority vote of the Senate. The Internal Affairs Committee shall solicit applications from the Student Body for one week immediately following the swearing in of the new Senate. The Parliamentarian shall be nominated by the Internal Affairs Committee from all applicants and be subject to the approval by simple majority of the Senate. The Parliamentarian shall, at the request of the Vice President insure that each Senator, ex-officio or ad hoc member, committee member, or student appointed representative is duly performing his or her duties as reported by reports and as recommended by committee chairs, the President, or the Vice President.

SECTION 5. The Senate shall have four standing Chairs: Internal Affairs, , Student Organization Relations, Student Services, and Campus Outreach.

Paragraph 1: The Chair of Internal Affairs shall be charged to handle internal Senate issues including, but are not limited to, facilitating the flow of information between members of Rhodes Student Government; ensuring the constitutional soundness of all document, resolutions, and actions of Rhodes Student Government; training and supervising the Election Commissioners, the Secretary/ Historian, and the Parliamentarian/Whip; managing the appointment process of Rhodes Student Government; and reviewing and nominating individuals/applicants for vacant positions or awards under the management or jurisdiction of Rhodes Student Government. All nominations made by the committee are subject to the approval of the Senate by simple majority vote. The Chair of Internal Affairs shall convene and chair the Internal Affairs Committee. The Chair shall be chosen by the Vice President from among the members of the Senate.

Paragraph 2: The Chair of Student Organizational Relations shall be charged to address and consider matters involving, but not limited to, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean of Multicultural Affairs, the Director of Student Activities, and the Director of Greek Affairs to identify and address the

needs of student organizations and facilitate the meeting of these needs through the actions of Rhodes Student Government. The Chair of Student Services shall convene and chair the Student Organizational Relations Committee. The Chair shall be chosen by the Vice President from among the members of the Senate.

Paragraph 3: The Chair of Student Services shall be charged to address and consider matters involving, but not limited to, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of the Dean of Administrative Services, the Office of the Dean of Information Services, the Office of the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, the Office of the Dean of Institutional Advancement, and the Office of the Dean of Alumni Relations, and issues directly related to student life. The Chair of Student Services shall convene and chair the Student Services Committee. The Chair shall be chosen by the Vice President from among the members of the Senate.

Paragraph 4: The Chair of Campus Outreach shall be charged to publicize information to the students of Rhodes College concerning the activities of Rhodes Student Government on their behalf. It shall also solicit information from students, faculty, and staff through its publicity mechanisms. The Chair of Campus Outreach shall convene and chair the Campus Outreach Committee. The Chair shall be chosen by the Vice President from among the members of the Senate.

ARTICLE V— ELECTIONS COMMISSION

The Elections Commission shall consist of two (2) Commissioners and one Senator from each class. The Internal Affairs Committee shall solicit applications for the office of elections Commissioner from the students for one week and select two (2) nominees from among the applicants, who then are subject to the simple majority approval of the Senate. The Vice President shall appoint one Senator from each class to serve on the Commission. The Elections Commission shall hear all complaints and grievances filed with the Elections Commissioners and shall be responsible for duties outlined in the RSG Election By- laws.

ARTICLE VI—BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Three (3) students shall serve as student members of the Board of Trustees. One of these student trustees shall be the President of the Student Body. Two (2) of the student trustees shall be elected by the Student Body. The student trustees shall be encouraged to attend the regular meetings of the Senate. At meetings of the Senate immediately preceding and following a meeting of the Board of Trustees, student trustees shall be expected to solicit input from the Senate and report on the agenda and actions of the Board.

ARTICLE VII—MEMBERSHIP

- SECTION 1.** All members of the Rhodes Student Government (with the exception of the First-Year Senators and Elections Commissioners) shall take office during the last meeting of the spring semester., The Senate may, by a majority vote, allow a person to hold more than one position within the RSG and/or to serve on more than one Administrative, Faculty, or Joint Committee.
- SECTION 2.** No member of the RSG, including the President and appointed members of the legislative branch, excluding the Elections Commissioners, shall miss more than two (2) unexcused regular meetings of the Senate per semester, according to the Standing Rules. One absence shall be considered excused and will not be recorded if the Chair of the Senate receives the excuse 48 hours before the meeting and if the Chair determines that the excuse for the absence is sufficient. The Chair may also grant emergency excuses without such notice. A member may appeal the Chair's decision within two (2) weeks and the Chair's decision shall be overturned by a three- fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate. The Senate's decision is final. Once a member has exceeded two (2) absences, he or she is automatically removed from office. He or she has the right to seek office again either through the process of a special election, Internal Affairs nomination, or presidential nomination, as appropriate. The Senate shall develop and implement a policy regarding arriving late to meetings and leaving meetings before they are adjourned. Each committee shall develop an absentee policy for that committee, subject to the approval of the Vice President.
- SECTION 3.** The students may call for the removal of the President, the Vice President, or any appointed member of the executive or legislative Branch with a petition containing twenty- five percent (25%) of the Student Body's signatures, at which time a three- fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate shall remove the officer from office. The students may also call for the removal of Class Senators with a petition containing twenty-five percent (25%) of the signatures of the senator's respective class and a three- fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate shall remove the Senator from office.
- SECTION 4.** A vacancy in the office of the President shall be filled by the Vice President of the Student Body.
- SECTION 5.** A vacancy in the office of the Vice President of the Student Body or of any Class Representative position shall be filled according to the following method:
- Paragraph 1:** If a vacancy occurs as the result of an election in which there are not enough candidates to fill the available positions, it shall be filled by Internal Affairs nomination, subject to a simple majority vote of the Senate, within two (2) weeks of the election.
- Paragraph 2:** If a vacancy as the result of resignation or removal occurs within fifteen (15) calendar days before a scheduled election, , the position shall be put on the ballot of the next election. If the vacancy occurs outside the fifteen (15) calendar day timeframe it shall be filled by an Internal Affairs nomination, subject to a simple majority vote of the Senate.

Paragraph 3: All vacancies following the successful completion of a special election shall be filled by Internal Affairs nomination, subject to a simple majority vote of the Senate.

Paragraph 4: In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the Chair of Internal Affairs shall serve as the interim Vice President thereby acquiring the duties of both offices until a new Vice President has taken office.

Paragraph 5: In the event the Senate fails to approve an appointment, Internal Affairs shall appoint an additional nomination. In the event of a sole applicant, a call for new applications shall be made by Internal Affairs.

SECTION 6. The Senate shall be able to remove any member of RSG, excluding the President and Vice President, by four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Senate. If this action is vetoed by the President, the decision on removal will then be taken before the relevant section of the student body for a vote. A 2/3 majority will be required to sustain the removal.

SECTION 7. The Senate shall remove any student member of a faculty or administrative committee by a simple majority vote if he or she is not fulfilling his or her obligations as member of the committee, either to the committee itself or to the Student Senate. The vacancy shall be filled by a nominee from the Internal Affairs Committee, subject to the approval of the Senate.

SECTION 8. The President shall have the authority to remove any member of the RSG from an office that is filled by Presidential appointment. This removal can be reversed by a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Senate if the person having been removed from office petitions the Senate for reinstatement to his or her former position.

ARTICLE VIII—AMENDMENTS

This Working Constitution of the Rhodes Student Government shall be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate, a majority vote of the Student Body, and the approval of the President of the College. Amendments, when appropriate, shall become effective immediately upon approval.

ARTICLE IX—IMPLEMENTATION

This Constitution of the Rhodes Student Government shall have full force and effect following passage by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of seated members and majority vote of the Student Body.