

**CONSTITUTION OF THE  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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**Article I**

**Section I: Name**

- A. The organization shall be named, “The Student Government Association of Princeton Theological Seminary,” herein referred to as “The SGA.”

**Section II: Vision**

- A. The SGA is committed to responsible leadership in the formation of a community of seminarians dedicated to their ministry, their scholarship, and service to one another.

**Section III: Purpose**

- A. The primary functions of the SGA shall include acting as: Legislative assembly for the Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) Student Body, Representatives of the PTS Student Body to the PTS Faculty and/or Administration, Coordinator of student activities and concerns, Facilitator for student involvement in non-seminary organizations, Allocation authority for the operating budgets of the Approved PTS SGA Student Organizations, Recommender of seminarians to the President of PTS for appointment to specified Faculty/Administration Committees and Student-Faculty/Administration committees, Appointer of seminarians to serve as Social Chairpersons on Ad-Hoc Committees, Responder to the cares and concerns of the entire PTS community by working directly with the Chapel Office and the Office of Student Affairs
- B. The “Student Body” shall consist of all currently enrolled students of PTS.

**Section IV: Mission**

- A. The SGA seeks to support Princeton Theological Seminary’s mission to prepare women and men to serve Jesus Christ in ministries marked by faith, integrity, scholarship, competence, compassion, and joy, equipping them for leadership worldwide in congregations and the larger church, in classrooms and the academy, and in the public arena.

**Article II: The General Assembly**

**Section I: Powers**

- A. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in the General Assembly of The SGA, which shall consist of all duly elected representatives and Executive Board members in attendance at any official gathering of such.
- B. The Secretary of the General Assembly shall keep the minutes of the General Assembly’s proceedings, and shall make available those minutes to the General Assembly within two (2) days of any General Assembly meeting. The Secretary shall also make those minutes available to any student from PTS or faculty or administrator at his/her request.
- C. The voting power of the General Assembly shall be vested in its duly elected representatives. The result of all matters voted upon, shall be recorded in the minutes of each meeting. The yeas and nays of each member need not be recorded in the minutes of each meeting, unless the General Assembly deems it necessary by a majority vote. The General Assembly may also, by a simple majority vote, conduct votes by secret ballot. The result of a vote by secret ballot must still be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

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- D. All elected representatives may sit on SGA committees, introduce legislation at General Meetings to be voted on, and retain any and all other powers vested in them by this Constitution.

**Section II: Membership and Responsibilities**

- A. Membership in any officially recognized SGA student organization and the SGA General Assembly shall be open to all students currently enrolled at PTS regardless of race, gender, sex, class, or creed.
- B. All members of the General Assembly, including the Executive Board, shall be permitted two (2) unexcused absences per semester from meetings of the General Assembly.
1. If a member of the General Assembly has a conflict that prevents them from attending a meeting of the General Assembly, they may obtain an excused absence at the discretion of the Secretary. If the Secretary denies the request for an excused absence, the member may appeal to the entire Executive Board, which shall then by majority vote over rule the decision of the Secretary. If the Executive Board also denies the request, the member may appeal to the General Assembly, which may over rule the Executive Board's decision by a majority vote. The General Assembly's ruling on an absence shall be final.
    - i. Extenuating circumstances shall be defined as death in family, illness, unexpected or unavoidable Field Education or work responsibilities, or other unexpected events.
  2. Upon the third (3) absence of a SGA elected representative, excluding Executive Board members, the SGA General Assembly may by a simple majority vote initiate the removal of the member. Once the General Assembly has voted to remove a member, the Constitution Committee will deliberate before the next SGA meeting to discuss the matter. The Committee will return with a recommendation to the General Body at the next meeting, where the member may present a defense. At this time, the General Assembly may by a two-thirds (2/3) majority remove said member for excessive absences.
  3. Upon the third (3) absence incurred by an Executive Board member, the General Assembly may by a two-thirds (2/3) vote refer the Executive Board member to the Constitution Committee for removal due to excessive absences. The Vice President may not chair this committee meeting if he/she is the member under review. At the next SGA meeting after the Committee brings its recommendation, the Executive Board member may give a defense. A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote is then required to remove the Executive Board member for absences.
- C. All elected members must serve on at least one standing committee.
- D. All members of the General Assembly shall be elected by the Student Body.
1. Elections for the five (5) Executive Board Members shall take place in early April each year, and Executive Board members shall serve a one year term from June 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which they were elected, until May 31<sup>st</sup>. The elections must occur before the end of the spring long-term.



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**Section III: Meetings**

- A. The General Assembly shall meet every other week during the PTS academic year. The General Assembly may decide by a simple majority vote, whether or not to hold a meeting in January during fall short term. If there is not a January meeting, regular meetings every other week will commence the first week of the spring long term and conclude by the end of spring long term. The SGA will not schedule regular meetings in the spring short term.
- B. The meeting time for all regularly scheduled SGA meetings shall be set by the General Assembly at the first meeting of the year. The first meeting of the fall must take place within the first two weeks (14 days) after the start of fall semester classes. With the exception of the first meeting of a semester, all members must be notified one week (7 days) prior to each meeting.
- C. The General Assembly will adhere to Robert's Rules of Order for its proceedings, unless the membership votes by a simple majority to conduct its proceedings another way. For an official meeting to commence, a quorum must be present. Quorum shall be more than fifty percent (1/2) of the elected representatives. In addition over fifty percent (1/2) of the elected Executive Board of the General Assembly must also be present.
- D. The President shall call a special meeting of the SGA within one week (7 days) of any of the following conditions, to consider specific agenda item(s):
  - a. At the request of two (2) members of the Executive board, after they have recorded their reason with the Secretary and the President.
  - b. At the request of five (5) members of the SGA, after they have recorded their reason with the Secretary and the President.
  - c. Upon receipt by the Executive Board of a petition signed by no less than fifty (50) members of the Student Body.
  - d. At the discretion of the President, after recording his/her reason(s) with the Executive Board.
  - e. Due notice (at least 24 hours), is required for such a special meeting, except under extreme circumstances where due notice would be prevented. The Executive Board must post the agenda, time, and place conspicuously prior to the meeting (at least 24 hours).
- E. The General Assembly will go into Executive Session whenever discussing the discipline or removal of office of any member. They may also vote to move into executive session as per Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section IV: Legislation Policies**

- A. Every piece of legislation regarding the SGA Constitution or Statutes, shall, before it can be presented to the General Assembly for a vote, first be reviewed by the Constitution Committee of the SGA.
- B. If the Constitution Committee approves the legislation, it shall give a positive recommendation to the General Assembly. If the Constitution Committee finds issues with the proposed legislation, they shall present a negative recommendation to the General Assembly at the next SGA meeting, along with a written report of their findings. The SGA may pass legislation which has been given a negative recommendation, as long as such legislation is constitutional. Legislation regarding

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- the constitution or statutes must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the General Assembly in order to pass.
- C. The General Assembly of the SGA may by simple majority vote go into committee as a whole to discuss pressing piece(s) of legislation if there is not enough time to send the Bill to committee. After a recommendation is voted upon in committee as a whole, the General Assembly shall return to their meeting to vote on the legislation.
- D. Any bill, resolution, or other piece of legislation may have its constitutionality called into question by any elected representative of the General Assembly. When this occurs, all business in the meeting must stop until the SGA President decides whether or not the legislation in question is constitutional or unconstitutional. The SGA President must provide evidence from the Constitution to support his/her decision, and may not simply disagree with the Constitution. The SGA President may move to go into Constitution Committee as a whole to discuss the matter and receive a recommendation if the legislation is time sensitive. If the legislation is not time sensitive and the SGA President wishes to refrain from making an immediate ruling, he/she may table the legislation in order for the Constitution Committee to conduct a more thorough review, and report its findings at the next SGA meeting, at which time the SGA President shall announce his/her ruling.
1. A bill, resolution, or other piece of legislation which has been called into question, and found to be unconstitutional (in conflict with the SGA constitution) after review by the SGA President, becomes immediately null and void. The SGA President may not rule parts of the SGA constitution or by-laws 'unconstitutional'. Rulings which are unconstitutional may subject the President to possible removal by the General Assembly or Student Body.
  2. A bill ruled unconstitutional by the SGA President may be overturned by the General Assembly.
    - i. Legislation initially requiring a simple majority vote to pass, may be overturned by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the SGA Assembly.
    - ii. Legislation initially requiring a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to pass, may be overturned by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the SGA Assembly.

**Section V: Committees**

- A. There shall be five (5) standing committees in the General Assembly
1. Housing and Residence Life: Chaired by the President
  2. Constitution Committee: Chaired by the Vice-President
  3. Academic Affairs: Student-Faculty Liaison
  4. Finance: Chaired by the Treasurer
  5. Public relations: Chaired by the Secretary
- B. Each elected SGA representative must sit on at least one (1) committee as part of their legislative duty. Student organization representatives may choose to sit on committees, but are not required to and may not serve as the vice-chair of any committee.
1. Elected representatives may choose which committee to sit on, and must inform the SGA President and Secretary by the second regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year, following their taking office.

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2. The first two (2) representatives to express interest in a committee shall have priority for primary membership on that committee. This is to make sure that each committee gets at least two (2) members, before more representatives join that committee.
  3. If a representative does not notify the President and Secretary by the second regularly scheduled meeting of their committee choice, or if their first committee choice already has two (2) members and other committees still need more members, then the President shall appoint said representative to a committee during the second regularly scheduled meeting.
- C. Ad hoc committees may be formed by the President with the advice and consent of the General Assembly. The chairman/chairwoman shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the General Assembly.
- D. Each committee shall meet at least once before the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) regularly scheduled meeting of General Assembly for the academic year to elect a vice-chair who shall moderate the committee in the absence of the chair, and to set the committee meeting time for the semester. Each committee shall announce its vice-chair and meeting time at the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) SGA meeting.
- E. Each committee shall meet at least twice a semester to discuss affairs that pertain to the committee. Committees shall also meet after any business is referred to it by the General Assembly or Executive Board, and before the next regularly scheduled General Assembly meeting. Each committee shall present a report of its activities at each regularly scheduled General Assembly meeting.
- F. Each committee shall have at least two (2) elected SGA members in addition to its chair. PTS students who are not elected SGA or Student organization representatives may sit on any committee, but may not vote.
- G. Elected members may accumulate two (2) unexcused absences from committee meetings. The committee chair may excuse members at his/her discretion, when conflicts arise. The third (3<sup>rd</sup>) committee absence, and additional absences, will each count as an absence from a General Assembly Meeting, and may lead to removal of said member.

**Article III: The Executive Board of the General Assembly**

**Section I: General**

- A. The Executive Board shall consist of five (5) positions elected by the Student Body: President, Vice President, Student-Faculty Liaison, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- B. The Executive Board shall meet at least once a month, at a time and place determined by them in a majority vote. A quorum, which shall consist of over fifty percent (1/2) of the board members, must be present to hold an official Executive Board meeting.
- C. All currently enrolled students of PTS, in good academic standing, shall be eligible to run for Executive Board. No person shall be deemed ineligible due to race, gender, sex, class or creed.
- D. The Executive Board members, in addition to chairing their respective committees, shall also help plan and facilitate the proper functioning of SGA meetings and events, including assisting SGA organizations with questions regarding procedural matters.

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- E. The Executive Board of the General Assembly shall also be responsible for carrying out all legislation passed by the General Assembly.
- F. An Executive Board member may be removed due to nonfeasance, malfeasance, or misfeasance. Please refer to Section IX of Article III of the SGA Constitution for details regarding the removal of Executive Board members.

**Section II: Election**

- A. Each Executive Board member shall hold his/her office for a term beginning on June 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on May 31<sup>st</sup>, together with the other executive members, chosen for the same term. Election dates shall be recommended by the Elections committee (which the Public Relations committee is responsible for forming), and then voted upon by the General Assembly before the end of March. At this time any additional election procedures, not found in the constitution or statutes may be developed and passed by the General Assembly. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to pass election dates, rules, and procedures.

**Section III: The Duties of the President**

- A. The President shall preside over meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board, compose the meeting agenda, act as official representative of the organization to the PTS administration as well as to outside parties, be responsible to oversee all activities of the SGA, chair the Housing and Residential Life Committee, be an ex-officio member of all committees, and co-sign financial documents with the Treasurer.
- B. The President shall have the power to form and create a presidential committee to handle special functions or projects.
- C. The President shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the General Assembly, to appoint members to committees and to fill vacancies in the General Assembly.
- D. The President shall from time to time give to the General Assembly Information of the State of the Organization, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he/she shall judge necessary and expedient.
- E. The President shall take care that the laws are faithfully executed and to perform other duties as outlined by this Constitution.
- F. The President may, on extraordinary occasions, convene an emergency meeting of the General Assembly. Due notice (at least 24 hours) must be given for an emergency meeting, except under extreme circumstances. A quorum is still required to commence a meeting, however at an emergency meeting a quorum shall be defined as more than fifty percent (1/2) of the members who are eligible to attend. Therefore, those members who cannot attend the emergency meeting due to extraordinary circumstances may be excused by the Secretary of the General Assembly. However, any votes shall only be binding if a quorum of the members is present.

**Section IV: The Duties of the Vice President**

- A. The Vice President shall preside over General Assembly and Executive Board meetings in the absence of the President. He/she shall prepare the meeting agendas at the discretion of the President in the absence of the President at said meeting.

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- B. The Vice President shall serve as Parliamentarian during meetings, chair the Constitution Committee, oversee the progress of the committees, and fulfill all other duties outlined in this Constitution.
- C. The Vice President shall update and revise the SGA Constitution and Statutes when changes are passed by the General Assembly with his/her committee, and forward such changes to the Secretary to be posted on the SGA website.
- D. In Case of the Removal of the President from office, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President.

**Section V: The Duties of the Secretary**

- A. The Secretary shall maintain complete records of all SGA correspondence, maintain the official Journal of minutes, execute all clerical duties, maintain a current membership roster and contact information, organize the publication and announcement of all General Assembly meetings, and distribute the agenda for meetings once received from the President. He/she shall also be responsible to organize the publication of flyers, posters, and other means of advertisements to promote the SGA and its events.
- B. The Secretary shall notify all members of the General Assembly of all scheduled meetings at least one week (7 days) prior to such, and provide the minutes of meetings to the General Assembly before the next regularly scheduled meeting of the General Assembly.
- C. The Secretary shall keep attendance records for all meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board, and make such records available at the request of any member of the Student Body, chair the Public Relations committee, organize the Elections committee and recommend a chair of the Elections committee, to be approved by the General Assembly, and fulfill other duties as outlined in this Constitution.

**Section VI: The Duties of the Treasurer**

- A. The Treasurer shall manage the account of the SGA and co-sign financial documents with the President. The Treasurer shall supervise the financial affairs of the SGA, chair the Financial Committee, and maintain a current financial report.
- B. The Treasurer shall brief the General Assembly of the SGA's financial status at each meeting of the General Assembly. He/she shall present a financial record of all monies budgeted, disbursed, and remaining in the SGA student organization accounts at the first meeting of each month.
- C. The Treasurer shall authorize the PTS Business Office to make disbursements from the SGA account after receipt of necessary documentation as outlined in the Statutes, and perform other duties as outlined in this Constitution

**Section VII: The Duties of the Student-Faculty Liaison**

- A. The Student-Faculty Liaison shall be the primary contact between the SGA and the Faculty of PTS, attend monthly Faculty meetings and report on those proceedings to the SGA.
- B. The Student-Faculty Liaison shall, when requested by the faculty, organize opportunities for students to meet with applicants for faculty positions.



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- C. The Student-Faculty Liaison shall promote awareness of Faculty sponsored events and lectures to the student body, chair the Academic Affairs Committee, report on the proceedings of all student-faculty committees to the General Assembly, and perform other duties as outlined in this Constitution.

**Section VIII: Training**

- A. All Executive Board members shall be responsible for training their successors.

**Section IX: Removal of Office**

- A. The members of the Executive Board shall be removed from Office by Resignation, Impeachment for, and Conviction of, abuse of powers, neglect of office, or other Crimes and Misdemeanors. An Executive Board member may be removed due to nonfeasance, malfeasance, or misfeasance.
- B. In Case of the Removal of the President from office, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the office of President, the same shall devolve on the Vice President.
- i. If the President is removed and the Vice President becomes the new President, then the vice chair of the constitution committee will act as parliamentarian at SG meetings until a new Vice President is elected in accordance with the election procedures under Article III, Section II.
- C. Whenever the removal of office of an executive member is being considered, the General Assembly shall go into closed session.
- D. An Executive Session will only consist of the elected representatives of the General Assembly deliberating. The minutes shall record only the outcomes of the motions considered. No discussion that takes place during an Executive session shall be recorded or discussed outside of Executive Session.
- E. A two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority vote is required to initiate the removal process of an Executive Board member. The member must be presented with reasons for removal, and then shall have a chance to make a defense. A three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote of the General Assembly is required to remove an Executive Board member from office.

**Article IV: Judicial Procedures**

- A. Any disputes within an SGA student organization which cannot be resolved shall be forward to the SGA Executive Board by the student organization President. If the President is involved in the matter, the student organization General Assembly shall nominate another member to send the information to the SGA Executive Board. Upon receipt of the complaint, the SGA Executive Board will send the matter to the SGA Constitution committee, which will then conduct an investigation into the matter to mediate and arbitrate where and when necessary.

**Article V: Constitutional Amendments and Statutes**

- A. This Constitution may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the student body of PTS. Any and all amendments passed by the SGA and ratified by the student body, shall become law and part of this constitution.

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- B. A proposal to amend the constitution may be initiated upon petition to the Executive Board by fifty (50) members of the student body or upon petition by five (5) elected representatives of the General Assembly.
- C. The proposed amendment shall be promptly presented, along with the recommendation of the Executive Board, to the General Assembly for approval.
- D. The proposed amendment shall be read aloud by the Secretary to the General Assembly during at least two (2) separate meetings of the General Assembly before a vote may be taken.
- E. The secretary will distribute copies of the proposed amendment to each elected representative in the General Assembly. Copies shall be distributed to the representatives of each SGA student organization upon his/her request.
- F. The Secretary will also publicly post the proposed amendment for review by the Student Body and invite comments to be made via e-mail or at the next SGA General Assembly meeting.
- G. A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the General Assembly is required to approve a Constitutional amendment. Following the approval by the General Assembly, the amendment shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Body. This vote shall be set up and conducted by the Elections committee and overseen by the SGA Constitution committee. A special election may be announced by the SGA President or by a simple majority vote of the legislature, to vote on the proposed amendment. Or the constitutional amendment may also be voted on during the fall or spring representative elections.
- H. The General Assembly may by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, create and pass Statutes of the SGA, which shall be considered the By-Laws of this Constitution. Such Statutes, as may be attached to this Constitution, may be amended or deleted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the General Assembly.

**Article VI: Constitutional Authority**

- A. This Constitution shall be the supreme internal law of the SGA and every member of the Student Body shall be bound thereby. This Constitution shall supersede all Student Organization Constitutions. All members of the SGA shall uphold this Constitution. The Constitution shall be annually reviewed so as to comply with the policies of PTS, and to meet the needs of the current students of PTS.