

Oberlin College Student Senate Bylaws

Senate Mission Statement as of October 3rd, 2021

“As representatives of Oberlin’s student body, we aim to uphold and cultivate a community on campus that embraces, uplifts, and protects equity, diversity, and inclusion. We aim to expand accessibility in academia, student life, and the conservatory. As student leaders, we will use our positions to be change agents to ensure that the issues illuminated by students, faculty, and staff are addressed on an institutional, social, and academic level. As collaborators, we will work as a team with senior administration and student organizations to assess best possible outcomes to challenges that may arise on campus. Most importantly, we will be a constant reminder that Oberlin itself is not a monolith in any sense of the term, but that as human beings we should always be able to advocate for our passions with respect and courage. Therefore, everything we do will be done in love for the students, faculty, staff, and this campus.”

Article 1: Officers

Section 1: Officers

- I. The officers shall be a President, Vice President of Student Life, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Finance, Director of Operations and Communications, Housing and Dining Senate Committee Chairperson, Racial Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, Disability Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, International Students Representative, Conservatory Representative, Athletics Representative, First-Year Class Representative, Second-Year Class Representative, Third-Year Class Representative, and Final-Year Class Representative.
- II. The term of each office is one academic year as defined by the Oberlin administration.

Section 2: Eligibility

- I. Officers must be fully enrolled in Oberlin College and be in good academic standing and conduct with the College as verified by the Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion and Office of the Dean of Students.
- II. Candidates for class-year representatives must meet eligibility requirements and be a member of the class in which they are running, as verified by the Registrar.

Section 3: Election

- I. The elections of Executive Committee members, chairs of standing committees, and class representatives shall be conducted each spring semester.
- II. Candidates for class-year representatives must meet eligibility requirements and be a member of the class in which they are running, as verified by the Registrar.
- III. Regular election procedure
 - A. Elections will be conducted by the Student Senate. The voting medium will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
 1. Applications for positions will be available by the Monday of the fifth week of the spring semester and will remain open until the Monday of the eighth week of the spring semester. During the period of students accepting nominations, but before the ballots go out, there will be a publicly-accessible list of every student who is running for a position so that students can make a more informed decision about which positions to run for.
 2. Applicant eligibility will be verified by the Director of Operations and Communications and the Student Senate advisor during the eighth week of the spring semester.

Applicants will be notified if they do or do not meet eligibility requirements by the end of eighth week, per the conduct check.

3. Candidates may campaign from the Monday of the ninth week through Friday of the tenth week of the spring semester.
4. Voting will occur during the eleventh week of the spring semester. All students may vote for all positions with the exception of class representatives; only members of the corresponding class may vote for their representative.
5. Winning candidates will be determined by the Single Transferable Vote (STV) Voting System. Winning candidates will be notified by Friday of that same week and must accept or decline the position by the Monday of the twelfth week of the semester. If the winning candidate chooses to not accept the position, the position shall be opened for a special election.

IV. Campaigning

- A. Candidates are permitted to campaign during the ninth and tenth week of the spring semester.
- B. Regulations surrounding campaigning apply to each person running regardless of the number of positions for which they are running. All campaigning must follow campus policies, including the posting policy.

V. Special Elections

- A. Special elections will be called by the Director of Operations and Communications with approval of the Executive Committee.
- B. The Executive Committee will determine the timeline and procedure for any election. Typically, any vacancies still remaining at the conclusion of a regular election will allow one day for applications to be submitted, two days for voting, and one day for candidates to accept the position. Winning candidate(s) will be determined by the Single Transferable Vote (STV) Voting System. If the winning candidate chooses to not accept the position, the position shall be offered to the runner-up. If there are no more runner-ups, the position shall be opened for a special election.

VI. First-year Class Representative Elections

- A. Shall be completed by the end of the fourth full week of the fall semester.
- B. Any member of the first year class meeting the eligibility requirements may be considered.
- C. Only members of the first year class may vote in the election.

Section 4: Term

- I. The officers shall serve for one year and their term of office shall begin at the commencement of the fall semester.
- II. Officers must meet eligibility requirements to obtain and maintain officer roles.

Section 5: Removal from Office

- I. All officers of the Student Senate are subject to removal from office.
- II. Officers may face removal for one or more of the following reasons:
 - A. Failure to perform the function of their office.
 - B. Failure to meet officer eligibility requirements.
 - C. Failure to execute regularly assigned responsibilities and meet the obligations of the Student Senate.
- III. The Student Senate advisor and President shall facilitate the removal from office process. In the case of the President facing removal from office, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will facilitate with the advisor.

Section 6: Vacancy

- I. If a vacancy occurs, the procedure for special elections will be implemented.

Section 7: Compensation

- I. All elected Student Senate officers are eligible for compensation.
- II. The rate of compensation and allotment of hours shall be determined by the Student Senate advisor and Executive Committee, and shall be reevaluated annually.
- III. The compensation structure shall be included in all election communications to ensure transparency with the student body and to set clear expectations regarding wages and time commitments.
- IV. Officers may not exceed their maximum allotment of hours.
 - A. In rare circumstances, officers needing to exceed the maximum allotment of hours must submit a written request to the Senate advisor in advance of the work.
 - B. Hours exceeding the maximum allotment requested after they have already been completed will not be retroactively approved and the officer will not be compensated for that time.

Article 2: Duties of Officers

Section 1: General Expectations of All Officers

- I. All officers are expected to uphold the duties of their office with the utmost integrity, provide ethical leadership, and demonstrate respect for all student needs.
- II. Officers are expected to:
 - A. Hold themselves to the expectation and standards as outlined in the Oberlin College Student Bylaws and Constitution and commit to holding their peers accountable to these standards.
 - B. Take initiative and seek out opportunities to enhance the student experience.
 - C. Set aside personal opinions and biases to advocate for the needs of the student body.
 - D. Maintain communication with appropriate campus entities and engage in meaningful partnerships.

Section 2: President

It shall be the duty of the President to:

- I. Serve as Senate spokesperson in communication with the staff, faculty, administration, alumni, and trustees of Oberlin College, as well as the greater community.
- II. Preside over all meetings of the general Senate and Executive Committee.
- III. Enforce the practices and procedures outlined in the Student Senate constitution and bylaws.
- IV. Foster an atmosphere within the Senate where all interests of the student body are being heard.
- V. Oversee the work of the standing and ad hoc committees while not serving on any committee in an official capacity.
- VI. Cast tie-breaking vote.
- VII. Complete, delegate, and/or address tasks brought up by the Student Senate Advisor

Section 3: Vice President of Academic Affairs

It shall be the duty of the Vice President for Academic Affairs to:

- I. Fulfill the duties of the President in their absence.
- II. Serve as the Chair of the Student Senate Academic Affairs Committee.
- III. Serve as a liaison between the Division of Academic Affairs and the student body.
- IV. Meet regularly with the Deans of the College of Arts & Sciences and the Conservatory.
- V. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 4: Vice President of Student Life

It shall be the duty of the Vice President for Student Life to:

- I. Serve as the Chair of the Student Senate Student Life Committee
- II. Promote success for students outside of academics, and identify opportunities to enrich the quality of life on campus.
- III. Meet regularly with the Dean of Students and/or staff in the Student Activities office, and/or whatever office is designated for student success (Currently the Center for Student Success).
- IV. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 5: Vice President of Student Finance

It shall be the duty of the Vice President of Student Finance to:

- I. Serve as the co-chair of the Student Finance Committee.
- II. Attend all meetings of the Student Finance Committee.
- III. Regularly report on the business and financial matters of the Student Senate, affiliated committees, and registered student organizations.
- IV. Work with other Student Senators to talk about getting treasurer-trained and the accessibility of the student activity fund.
- V. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 4: Director of Operations & Communications

- I. Serve as chair of the Senate Communications Committee.
- II. Coordinate regular and special elections.
- III. In close collaboration with the President and advisor, plan any officer training or retreats.
- IV. Act as a liaison between the student body and the Student Senate by coordinating public relations efforts and maintaining general communication.
- V. Maintain communication with standing, class, and ad hoc committees
- VI. Act as the Parliamentarian of the meeting in coordination with the President
- VII. Maintain records of attendance for each meeting.
- VIII. Have a thorough knowledge of and lead a regular review of Student Senate constitution and bylaws.
- IX. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 5: Standing Committee Chairpersons

It shall be the duty of the standing committee chairpersons to:

- I. The standing committees of Student Senate shall be Academic Affairs, Student Life, Student Finance, Housing and Dining, Senate Communications, Disability Equity Committee, Racial Equity Committee, and Class Years.
- II. Responsible for oversight of the respective standing committee.
- III. Represent the interests of respective committee in Student Senate and to other constituents across campus
- IV. Maintain accurate records of committee meetings
- V. Maintain the authority to create committee structure and appoint members at their discretion as outlined in their committee's procedures.
- VI. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 6: Class-Year Committee Chairpersons

It shall be the duty of class representatives to:

- I. Responsible for oversight of respective class committee

- II. Represent the interests of respective class committee in Student Senate and to other constituents across campus
- III. Maintain accurate records of class committee meetings
- IV. Facilitate a membership selection process for committee members as outlined in each committee's individual procedures.
- V. Other duties as assigned by the Student Senate President and/or advisor.

Section 8: Special Interest Representatives

It is recommended that Student Senate liaisons:

- I. Represent their special interest populations
- II. Recommended to attend regularly as their needs pertaining their interest groups arise
- III. Special Interest Representatives have voting power on Student Senate.
- IV. Special Interest Representatives will be appointed by the Student Senate on a semester basis by a 2/3rds majority vote.

Article 3: Executive Committee

Section 1: Membership

- I. The Student Senate Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President of Student Life, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Finance, Director of Operations and Communications, Racial Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, Disability Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, and advisor.

Section 2: Powers and Duties

- II. The Executive Committee shall:
 - A. Meet regularly at the accordance of the President.
 - B. Members of the executive committee shall be given a 48 hour notice by the Student Senate President and/or the Director of Communications prior to meeting times.
 - C. Discuss pertinent student issues.
 - D. Set the agenda for all regular meetings of the Senate.
 - E. Approve the Student Senate President's creation of ad hoc committees.
- III. The Executive Committee may not make decisions applicable to the entire campus community; all decisions affecting the entire campus shall be brought to the entire membership of the Student Senate for consideration.

Article 4: Advisor

Section 1: Selection

- I. The advisor shall be the Dean of Students or Designee.
- II. Student Senate should route concerns regarding the advisor to the President of Oberlin College and Conservatory.

Section 2: Powers and Duties

The Student Senate advisor shall:

- I. Serve as a non-voting executive officer.
- II. Be present at all general and executive committee meetings of the Student Senate.
- III. Support the work of the Student Senate and assist in the education of officer duties and responsibilities.
- IV. Maintain accurate records of Student Senate financial and business matters.

- V. Work with the Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion and Office of the Dean of Students to verify eligibility for officers during candidacy as well as to maintain position.
- VI. Assign advisors to Student Senate standing and ad hoc committees with input from the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Advisors

- I. Standing and ad hoc committee advisors of the Student Senate shall be held to the same expectations as the Student Senate advisor for their assigned committee.

Article 5: Meetings

Section 1: General Meetings

- I. Regular meetings shall typically be held weekly during the academic year. The President and the Director of Operations and Communications shall prepare an agenda for all meetings of the Student Senate, which shall be available to the entire student body twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting will be called to order.
- II. Any student may attend any meeting of the Student Senate and shall have the ability to propose legislation. Only Student Senate officers may make motions from the floor and vote on motions considered.

Section 2: Special Meetings

- I. Special meetings may be called by the President with the simple majority approval of the Executive Committee. Forty-eight (48) hours notice should be given to all officers and advisors of special meeting time and location.

Section 3: Executive Committee Meetings

- I. Executive committee meetings shall be called by the Student Senate President.
- II. Executive Committee members should be given a forty-eight (48) hour notice before any meeting.

Section 4: Quorum

- I. The quorum required for the Student Senate to conduct business shall be a 2/3rds majority of voting members.

Section 5: Parliamentary Authority

- I. Robert's Rules of Order shall guide this senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws. The Senate shall loosely follow Robert's Rules of Order unless a two-thirds majority vote of present voting members determines that Robert's Rules of Order should not be strictly observed.

Section 6: Attendance

Attendance at plenary, General Faculty, Working Group, Faculty Committee, and (if applicable) Executive Committee meetings is required, and attendance will be taken by the Director of Operations and Communications for relevant meetings. Working group chairs will take attendance at working group meetings and send it to the Director of Operations and Communications. In the event of repeated absences, the Director of Operations and Communications should have a conversation with the Senator.

Article 6: Voting

Section 1: Voting Procedure

- I. Regular business at meetings of the Student Senate is subject to a simple majority vote, as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order.
 - A. Officers with voting privileges are: Vice President of Student Life, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Finance, Director of Operations and Communications, Housing and Dining Senate Committee Chairperson, Racial Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, Disability Equity Senate Committee Chairperson, International Students Representative, Conservatory Representative, Athletics Representative, First-Year Class Representative, Second-Year Class Representative, Third-Year Class Representative, and Final-Year Class Representative.
 - B. The President shall only vote in the case of a tie (if applicable).
- II. Alternative voting thresholds shall be used for only when specified within the Student Senate bylaws.

Article 7: Finance

Section 1: Student Activity Fee

- I. Each student shall be assessed a student activity fee relative to the determination of the Administration.
- II. The student activity fee shall be allocated by recommendation of the Student Finance Committee and approved by the Student Senate.
- III. The majority of the student activity fee shall be allocated to support student organizations. Portions of the student activity fee can be utilized to fund other initiatives with the approval of the Student Finance Committee.

Section 2: Determining the Student Activity Fee Amount

- I. The Student Finance Committee shall regularly evaluate the student body needs as related to the student activity fee. Student Senate and the Student Finance Committee can make a formal motion to evaluate the student activity fee to determine if an increase should be recommended. The evaluation process shall include a good faith effort to gather the opinions of the student body and the appropriate members of the College administration.
- II. If an increase in the student activity fee is recommended by the Student Senate, it shall require the ratification of the Oberlin College Board of Trustees.
- III. The Oberlin College Board of Trustees may alter the student activity fee to align with inflation or other institutional priorities.

Section 3: Student Finance Committee

Student Finance Committee policies can be viewed on the SFC website.

Section 4: Funding Eligibility

- I. Actively chartered student organizations in good standing with the College are eligible to apply for student activity fee money as permitted in the Student Finance Committee bylaws.
- II. Student Senate committees are not eligible for student activity fee money except as permitted by Student Finance Committee bylaws.
- III. Funding is made available to individual students within the ad hoc funding guidelines located in the Student Finance Committee bylaws (Article 8)

Article 8: Senate Committees

Section 1: Senate Committee Member Selection

Senate Committee chairs should advertise their committees to the student body at the beginning of each semester, and any student is eligible to participate in them. Each Student Senator must be an active member of at least one

Section 2: Standing Senate Committees

Place all of the bylaws for each of your standing Senate Committees here

1. Student Life
2. Academic Affairs
3. Disability Equity
4. Racial Equity
5. Housing and Dining
6. Communications
7. International Students
8. Class Year

Section 3: Ad Hoc Committees

- I. New ad hoc committees shall be approved by the Executive Committee officers at the suggestion of the President.
 - A. The structure of the committee shall be determined by a majority vote of the Student Senate. Structure may vary based on the purpose of the committee.
- II. Each ad hoc committee should be given a specific written timeline and charge set by the Executive Committee.
 - A. Ad hoc committees will be dissolved at the end of each academic year.
 - B. If necessary, a majority vote of the Student Senate may extend the timeline of the committee, not to exceed one additional academic year.
- III. Each committee shall decide on a regular meeting time.
- IV. Minutes shall be recorded and submitted regularly to the Director of Operations.
- V. No more than three ad hoc committees shall be operational each academic year.

Article 9: Amendments and Ratification

Recommendations for amendments to Student Senate bylaws shall require a two-thirds majority vote of present, voting Student Senate members. Amendment proposals shall have a minimum of two readings prior to vote. The Executive Committee may vote to reduce this standard to one reading by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Amendments to the student Senate bylaws need to have a 50% approval from the Student Body per a Referendum.