



BRISTOL
STUDENT
SENATE

Bristol Community College
Student Senate Constitution

Amended: Spring 2020

Preamble

We, the students of Bristol Community College, do hereby establish a student government, whose duty is to:

- Represent student interests
- Establish and oversee all student organizations
- Act as a liaison between the student body, the college administration, and the Board of Trustees.

The Student Senate is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of students and articulating student voices for advancing action and change. We shall use our collective voice to take an active role in affecting the College's policies and priorities.

Article I – Student Senate

- A. The governing organization of the students of Bristol Community College (Bristol) shall be known as the Student Senate (Senate). The Student Senate shall be responsible for:
1. To encourage the creation of an atmosphere suitable for intellectual and social growth for students as they participate in the affairs of the college.
 2. To allocate the revenues generated by Student Activity Fees in a manner consistent with procedures established by the Board of Higher Education and the President of Bristol Community College.
 3. To give advice and counsel the leadership of Bristol on matters related to the development or improvement of services, policies and procedures at the College.
 4. To represent the student body by engaging in cooperative ventures, and negotiations with representatives of the faculty and administration.



5. To assess and /or provide for the educational, recreational, social, cultural and other needs of the students when such actions would tend to facilitate the attainment of their educational goals.
- B. All currently enrolled Bristol students are members of the Student Senate
 - C. The Advisor of Student Senate shall be a member of the professional staff in Student and Family Engagement at Bristol Community College.
 - D. The governing body of Student Senate shall consist of three bodies: Executive Board, Senators, and Campus Representatives

Article II – Student Senate Responsibilities & Duties

- A. The Student Senate shall establish procedures, as well as, design structural mechanisms for the implementation of the following responsibilities:
 1. To encourage the creation of an atmosphere suitable for intellectual and social growth for students as they participate in the affairs of the college.
 2. To allocate, deny or terminate the granting of student activity funds in a manner that positively affects the general well-being of the student population.
 3. To exercise close scrutiny over the actions of any individual or group whose activities are allocated by the Student Senate.
 - a. The Student Senate shall be informed in detail of the purpose of any expenditure.
 - b. The Student Senate shall have the right to summon any individual or group making use of funds derived from the student activity fee to appear and answer questions on matters relevant to such expenditures.



- c. The Student Senate shall have the authority to require that the individuals and groups who receive activity fees should submit an annual report to the Student Senate.
4. To design and create ad hoc committees which are appropriate in carrying out the intents of the Student Senate.
5. To hold regular meetings at the college.
6. To establish effective communications with the Bristol Community College community.

Article III – Student Senate Membership and Elected Officials

- A. The membership of Student Senate shall consist of those students enrolled in degree or non-degree programs at the College as determined by the Registrar and confirmed by the Dean of Enrollment Services.
- B. Any student attending classes and carrying six (6) or more semester hours of credit may be eligible for Student Senate Membership provided that they are in good academic standing as stated in current Bristol Community College Catalogue. Course credit count will be as of the end of the second week of classes and must be maintained to be eligible to be a candidate for the Student Senate.
- C. A Student Senator, once elected may serve no more than a total of four semesters.
- D. Student Senate Officers consist of Executive Board Members, Senators and Representatives which are elected members of the Student Senate.
 1. The Executive Board is comprised of the Senate President, Vice President, Chair of Finance, Chair of Academic Affairs, Chair of Student Engagement, and the Chair of Public Affairs.



a. Each Executive Board Member has but are not limited to the following responsibilities:

- Attend all Executive Board and Senate meetings
- Meet bi-weekly with Senate Advisor
- Complete office hours

2. The duties of each Executive Board position are listed in order of succession below.

Succession is defined as temporarily fulfilling the role of the President when they are absent for any reason. The person filling this role will hold this role until the President returns or until someone is appointed to that position.

a. President

- Elected by the membership of Student Senate at Bristol Community College
- Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
- Upholds the Senate Constitution
- Responsible for the overall Senate Organization
- Creates agenda for all Senate meetings
- Calls to order and presides over Senate meetings
- Meets regularly with executive board members and Senate Advisor
- Meets with the President of Bristol Community College at least once per semester
- Creates and coordinates trainings and retreats with the Advisor
- Ability to call Executive Session with a majority vote of senate



- Is a voting member of Senate
- Serves on campus-wide committees as needed
- Serves as a Bristol Community College representative on the Student Advisory Council for the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.
- In order to serve as president of Senate, the member cannot be the president of another club recognized by the Senate
- In order to serve as president of Senate, the member must be a member of the senate for at least one semester

b. Vice President

- Elected by the membership of Student Senate at Bristol Community College
- Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
- Upholds the Senate Constitution
- Serves on campus-wide committees as needed
- Oversees special elections with Senate Advisor
- Maintains all Senate records and amendments to the constitution
- Calls role at all open Senate meetings
- Takes minutes at all Senate related meetings and events and distributes minutes to the executive board for voting
- Works with President to coordinate all Senate related conferences, orientation programs, socials and retreats



- Oversees administrative operations of Senate, including, but not limited to attendance for all senate meetings and events, office hours, disciplinary issues and attendance at campus-wide events
- Coordinates the Senate meeting schedule each semester and coordinates any ad hoc committee meetings
- In order to serve as vice president of Senate, the member must be a member of the senate for at least one semester
- Attends all Senate meetings as a voting member

c. Chair of Finance

- A Senate member is appointed to the position through an application and interview process by the current members of Executive Board after the Executive Board elections
- Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
- Upholds the Senate Constitution
- Meets with the President of Senate and any other administrators as needed
- Works with Student and Family Engagement professional staff to distribute and track allocated funding to recognized campus clubs
- Tracks and reports on all allocated funding and Senate budgets and spending
- Keeps contact information for all recognized clubs



- **Communicates regular budget updates to all members of recognized clubs' leadership and advisors**
- **Attends all Senate meetings as a voting member**

d. Chair of Public Affairs

- **A Senate member is appointed to the position through an application and interview process by the current members of Executive Board after the Executive Board elections**
- **Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body**
- **Upholds the Senate Constitution**
- **Executes and oversees all correspondence and marketing for Student Senate**
- **Regularly updates the Senate area of the Bristol Community College Website**
- **Communicates and posts approved Senate minutes for members of the Bristol Community**
- **Responsible for creating a semester-long marketing plan and short-term marketing plans for special events**
- **Responsible for the branding of Senate**
- **Meets with members of the Bristol Community College Marketing and Communications team as needed**
- **Attends all Senate meetings as a voting member**

e. Chair of Student Engagement



- Elected by the membership of Student Senate at Bristol Community College
- Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
- Upholds the Senate Constitution
- Serves as a direct student liaison between Senate membership and Student Services and Enrollment Management
- Meets with Director of Student and Family Engagement bi-weekly
- Attends all Senate meetings as a voting member

f. Chair of Academic Affairs

- Elected by the membership of Student Senate at Bristol Community College
- Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
- Upholds the Senate Constitution
- Serves as a direct student liaison between Senate membership, Academic Affairs and related offices and resources
- Meets with VP of Academic Affairs each semester
- Attends all Senate meetings as a voting member

3. There is a total of 4 elected Senators representing students at Bristol Community College. Each Senator has but are not limited to the following responsibilities:

- a. Attend Senate meetings as a voting member
- b. Meet bi-weekly with Senate Advisor



- c. Complete office hours
 - d. Elected by the membership of Student Senate at Bristol Community College
 - e. Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
 - f. Upholds the Senate Constitution
 - g. Serves on campus-wide committees as needed
4. There is a total of 5 Campus Coordinators representing students at each Bristol Community College location: Fall River, Attleboro, Taunton, New Bedford and Online. Each Campus Coordinator has but are not limited to the following responsibilities:
- a. Attend Senate meetings as a voting member
 - b. Meet bi-weekly with Senate Advisor
 - c. Complete office hours
 - d. Elected by the membership of Student Senate at each Bristol Community College location
 - e. Meets regularly with Bristol campus leadership and members of the campus Dean's Office
 - f. Represents and reflects the views of the Bristol Community College student body
 - g. Upholds the Senate Constitution
 - h. Serves on campus-wide committees as needed

Article IV – Meetings of the Student Senate

- A. The Student Senate shall meet once every week at a time when no courses are scheduled to allow students to attend, during the academic year, except during recesses, which are voted by the Senate.



- B. The Student Senate at its first regular meeting of each semester shall determine the time and location of such meeting. This information shall be published to the college community.**
- C. In order to vote on matters during the Student Senate meetings, quorum must be met. A quorum for a regular or special meeting shall consist of a majority of the members currently seated on the Student Senate**
- D. Simple Majority vs. 2. /3 Majority**
- 1. A 2/3 majority is needed for all votes on financial matters, appointments of vacant positions, to start the process of making constitutional amendments, and to finalize constitutional amendments.**
 - 2. All other matters can pass with a simple majority.**
- E. Special meetings of the Student Senate may be called by the President or the Vice-president or an advisor of the Student Senate or by a petition to the President signed by four members of the Student Senate. Notice of all special meetings shall be posted two days in advance of such meetings.**
- F. Executive Session**
- 1. Under the Laws of the Commonwealth, an Executive session may be held as allowed under Chapter 30A, Section of Mass Gen. Laws). Any Student Senate member may request that all or parts of a meeting be closed to the general student body and/or guests for the purpose of discussion of a sensitive topic. "Executive Session", only elected Student Senate members, the Student Senate advisor, the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management and the President of the College may be present. All executive sessions are considered confidential meetings. Minutes should be recorded during these sessions but are to be kept confidential and are to be stricken from the minutes, which are posted publicly.**



G. Attendance and Conduct

- 1. All elected officials are expected to attend regular weekly student Senate meetings**
 - a. A Senator who misses three (3) meetings in a given semester is subject to dismissal by 2/3 vote of the Student Senate**
 - I. The Senate President has the responsibility to issue warnings to those Senators that are in danger of violating this rule.**
 - II. In the event of a planned absence or emergency, notice must be given to the Senate President to be considered excused, all others will count as unexcused**
 - III. The President may excuse an absence related to an academic requirement.**
- 2. After 10 minutes of lateness to a regularly scheduled meeting a Senator will be considered tardy.**
 - b. Two (2) tardy events will be considered an unexcused absence. Thus, a Senator who collects six (6) tardy events or a combination of tardy events and absences will be subject to dismissal**
- 3. The conduct of a Senator must be in compliance with general policies and procedures as they apply to Bristol Community College and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Senators must comply with the Board of Higher Education policy concerning conduct and Campus Rules and Regulations of Bristol Community College and General Laws of the State of Massachusetts.**
- 4. Student Senators should act as a liaison between individual students or groups and the Student Senate when appropriate**



5. Student Senators holding any official position on a campus club or organization may not vote on any matter pertaining to that club or organization and must leave the room during the time of vote. However, they may present on behalf of their club or organization.

Article V– Student Senate Advisor & Ex Officio Members

- A. Up to two (2) advisors shall be selected by 2/3 vote of Student Senate elected officials. The individuals shall become the Student Senate Advisor, upon acceptance, if there is no objection by the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment. The Student Senate may dismiss at any time the advisor by a 2/3 vote of members presently seated, quorum must be met. The advisor shall be responsible for the integrity of all elections along with other members of the election committee. In other matters, the advisors' role shall be limited to providing advice to the Student Senate on how to accomplish its goals. Once recognized, the advisor shall have the right to confer with Student Senators on the matter of proper procedure.
- B. The Director of Student and Family Engagement shall serve as an Ex Officio advisor to the Student Senate, primarily to interpret college procedures and policies and to obtain legal advice as needed.
- C. The elected Student Trustee shall serve as an Ex Officio member of the Student Senate, primarily to act as a liaison to the Board of Trustees.

Article VI– Election Procedures

- A. Executive Board members will be voted into office before at the end of each spring semester with an election being held prior to May 1st.
- B. Campus wide elections will take place in the fall semester for all 2 Senator and 5 Coordinator positions. Any seats which were not filled in the spring elections will also take place in the fall.



C. Any Nominees must file proper nomination paperwork with Election Committee with no fewer than 15 signatures of current Bristol Community College students.

- 1. Papers must be submitted one week prior to the date of the election established by the Election Committee.**
- 2. All nominees must meet the qualifications to participate in Student Senate before they can be put on the ballot.**

D. Elections will be held online, except for appointed positions

- 1. In the event online voting cannot take place, elections will be held with paper ballots in designated locations throughout campus.**

E. Results will be tabulated by the Elections Committee and supervised by the advisor of Student Senate or designee. Results will be made public within forty-eight hours of the election date.

F. A candidate will be declared elected when they receive notification that they have received a majority of the votes cast for each particular position.

- 1. In the event of a tie, candidates will be entered into a run-off election. They may choose to rewrite their platform statements and another election will be held to decide the office. The candidate with the majority of the vote will be declared the winner.**

G. Voting Eligibility

- 1. A current semester enrollment list from the records office will be used to verify a voter's eligibility.**
- 2. All voters will be permitted to cast one vote only online and then will be removed from the active voting list for that election.**
- 3. Students at all campuses are required to be given the opportunity to participate in the Student Senate elections and are encouraged to participate in elections following the rules contained herein.**



H. Special Elections and Interim Positions

1. Special elections shall be called as necessary at the discretion of the Student Senate.
2. Positions may be filled on an interim basis.
 - a. The Student Senate may appoint interim members to fill vacant seats.
 - b. *Such* persons shall have all rights of a Senate but must stand for election at the next subsequent election.
 - c. In the event of the need for interim senators Student Senate shall create an ad hoc committee consisting of no less than 2 current members of student senate Senators to review candidates for interim positions.
 - i. A statement of intent must be submitted to the Executive Board and a majority of Senate must vote in favor of appointing the candidate.
 - ii. The President or a proxy can fill a vacant role only after an unsuccessful call to fill the space.

Article VII– Resignation of Duties

A. Resignation

1. An officer steps down from their elected position because they are unable to fulfill the duties of the office.
2. Said Senator must inform the Senate of their intentions in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed resignation date.

B. Removal

1. An officer may be removed from office and/or put on probation if they fail to fulfill the responsibilities of their elected position, or those found to be in violation of the Bristol Community Standards of Conduct or fall below the academic standard to serve.



2. A Student Senator may be removed for cause by a 2/3 vote of Senators presently seated, quorum must be met. Cause may be defined as actions inconsistent with the role of Student Senate, including but not limited to the following areas:
 - a. Any form of physical or verbal abuse upon another senator, student, faculty member, or ancillary staff of Bristol, whether in person or by social media.
 - b. A lack of consistent participation
 - c. Misrepresentation of matters relating to the Student Senate
 - d. Failure to follow proper protocol
 - e. Failure to adhere to the attendance policy of the Student Senate's regular meeting.
3. Any appeal of a Student Senate's decision to be removed must be made in writing and delivered to the Advisor of Student Senate no later than 15 business days from the vote to remove. Any changes to an appeal must be made with a 2/3rds vote.
 - a. Upon considering an appeal the Student Senate may:
 - i. Reaffirm the original decision
 - ii. Modify the original decision
 - b. The Student Senate's decision shall be final.

C. Leave of Absence

1. In the event of a leave of absence from Bristol Community College, an interim appointment shall be made to fill for no more than 1 semester. Senator will not be officially removed from office, but will instead be granted leave, to return as a full voting Senator the following semester. If the Senator is not able to return to their duties by the following semester, they will be excused from the Senate without prejudice.

Article VIII- Committees



A. Elections Committee

1. All elections will be run by the Elections Committee.
2. The Vice President will Chair the Elections Committee or a student who has committed to not run for a USG position for the following academic year and is appointed by the outgoing Vice President, will chair this committee.

B. The Senate shall have the right to establish and control such ad hoc committees as it deems necessary provided only that the jurisdiction of the committee be clearly stated. Such committees shall report regularly to the Senate. The Senate has the right to appoint a chairperson for such a committee

Article IX- Parliamentary Procedure

A. The parliamentary authority in all matters pertaining to the operation shall be derived from Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Article X- Amendments

A. The Student Senate at Bristol Community College reserves the right to amend the Constitution

1. An amendment process is initiated by a majority vote of the full Senate
2. All amendments must be approved by the President of Bristol Community College
3. All amendments must be made available for one full week to the Bristol Community College community
4. 2/3 vote of the Senate certifies any such amendments
5. Editorial changes may be made at the discretion of the Executive Board

Article XI- Bylaws

- A.** Bylaws are the day-to-day amendable items that give context to the laws of the constitution.
- B.** Bylaws may be added or removed by a simple majority of the Student Senate.



C. Bylaws do not have to be published before being changed.

