

LSU

Student Government

STUDENT SENATE PROCEDURE GUIDE

FALL 2020

An auxiliary document to the LSU Student Government Constitution and Bylaws and the Student Senate Rules of Order, this guide serves as summary of the structure and protocols of the LSU Student Senate.

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Introduction

This guide was created with the intention of simplifying the many rules, regulations, and processes of the Student Senate, specifically for Senators to use as a reference in carrying out their daily tasks. In addition, this guide should make the complexities of the Legislative Branch accessible to any party that is interested. This document is organized as follows:

SENATE STRUCTURE

What is the Senate and how do I get involved?

SENATOR DUTIES & POWERS

So you know exactly what is expected of each member of the Senate.

COMMITTEES

Descriptions and duties of each of the Senate's six Standing Committees.

LEGISLATION

Everything you could ever want to know about the Senate's five legislative instruments.

SENATE PROTOCOLS

All of the intricacies and words you'll see and hear during a typical Senate meeting.

SENATE FINANCES

Where the Senate gets its money and how it is able to allocate that money to and for students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Because you know you want to get in touch with us!

I hope you find this document useful. If any questions arise pertaining to the contents of this guide, or if you would like more information about the Student Senate, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Justin Martin
Speaker of the Student Senate
2020 – 2021

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Structure of the Senate

ORGANIZATION

The Student Senate is comprised of eighty-five Senators that proportionally represent each of the university's twelve Senior Colleges, the Graduate School, the Hebert Law Center and the School of Veterinary Medicine. Senators are elected by members from their specific Academic Area during the fall and spring semesters to serve both one- and two-semester terms.

The Senate is led by a Speaker and a Speaker pro tempore, both of whom are elected by the members of the Senate during the annual Spring Organizational Session. They are assisted by a Legislative Staff, appointed by the Speaker and approved by the Senate, which consists of a Secretary, Undersecretary, Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms and a Director of Communication.

BECOMING A SENATOR

There are two ways to become a Senator: being elected to office or applying for and being appointed by the College Council and confirmed by the Senate membership to fill a vacant seat.

Elections

Elections are the primary way of joining the student Senate. In the middle of the fall and spring semesters, elections are held for various members of Student Government. Half of the Senate membership is elected in the fall election and half is elected in the spring election. Information about SG elections is published well in advance of the election period; for more information, consult the SG Election Code or contact the Commissioner of Elections.

Appointments

Vacancies occasionally occur in Senate seats, when either a Senator resigns from office or no student runs to fill the available seat(s) during an election. When a seat is vacated, the Senate publishes a notice and makes an application available to any interested students. After a period of at least five class days, the Senate gives the applications to the respective College Council, which is empowered to appoint a student to fill the vacant seat. Once a student is appointed by the College Council, a Concurrent Resolution is written and the appointee is interviewed by the Committee on Rules. Following a favorable vote by the committee, the appointee is finally heard on the Senate floor for approval.

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Duties and Powers of the Senate

The Student Senate is enumerated a variety of responsibilities in the SG Constitution and Bylaws and the Senate Rules of Order. The most important and common ones are discussed below:

VOICE STUDENT OPINION

First and foremost, Senators are elected to represent the Student Body – specifically the students from their respective Academic Area. It is the primary responsibility of a Senator to serve as the voice of those students he/she represents. In addition, Senators should always serve as representatives of the university to those members outside of the LSU community, promoting the university in a positive way.

REACH OUT TO STUDENTS

As elected representatives, Senators must make concerted efforts to reach out to their constituents. This is imperative for them to know about the issues that affect students and the challenges that different populations face within the LSU Community. This interaction better acquaints Senators with the people they serve, and it allows them to connect those students to resources that can improve their LSU experience.

Student Outreach (SO) Points

To ensure Senators are actively participating in student outreach, each member must obtain a minimum of two (2) Student Outreach (SO) Points and complete two (2) organization visits over the course of the semester. One SO Point equals thirty (30) minutes of outreach at an approved SG event. An organization visit consists of the Senator(s) attending the meeting of the organization to uncover specific issues that organization deals with and to inform the organization of the resources available through LSU Student Government. The Chair of the Student Life, Diversity and Community Outreach Committee is responsible for approving all SO Points and Organization Visits and for maintaining point records. |

ATTEND MEETINGS

| Senators are required to attend each Regular Session meeting of the Senate, which take place every Wednesday beginning at 6:30PM in the Capital Chamber on the third floor of the Student Union. In addition, every Senator is required to sit on one of five Senate Committees and attend those meetings, usually held each week. |

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Attendance Policy

For regular Senate meetings, Senators are allowed a maximum of three (3) absences. A Senator is assessed a half-absence if he/she arrives after Public Input has ended or leaves before the final roll call vote. If you exceed this maximum number of absences, you will be removed from office. ☹

If you will be absent from a meeting, you must let the Speaker know as early as possible. If your reason falls under the university's policy for excused absences (PS-22), you can be excused and this will not count toward your total number of absences. Having to study is not an acceptable excuse!

For committee meetings, you are also allowed a maximum of three (3) absences. If you will miss a committee meeting, you are allowed to have another Senator serve as a proxy (a max of two times). You must let the Speaker and the Committee Chair know of your absence/proxy as far in advance as possible.

WORK WITH YOUR COLLEGE COUNCIL

In addition to their regular duties within the Legislative Branch, Senators are also members of their respective College Councils. As such, they are expected to attend meetings of the Council and participate in any Council-sponsored events, including Donuts with the Dean, Finals Week Fuel, and any others the Council may put on. |

UPHOLD THE CODE OF ETHICS

As stated in the SG Bylaws, Senators are expected to hold themselves to a high moral standard and adhere to the prescribed Code of Ethics while making every reasonable attempt to fulfill their responsibilities to the best of their ability and discharge their duties in good faith. Furthermore, as elected members of SG, Senators shall NOT:

- Knowingly misrepresent the truth while acting in their official capacity
- Bestow favors or make undue use of influence of their power of office
- Misuse, mismanage, or misappropriate any property or funds of SG

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Senate Committees

The Student Senate contains six Standing Committees which meet weekly while the Senate is in a regular session to discuss issues and initiatives its members want to work on and consider any legislation which may have been referred to it by the Speaker. As noted below, each committee is chaired by a Senator who is appointed by the Speaker. The committees are as follows:

SENATE COMMITTEES, FALL 2020		
COMMITTEE	MEETING TIME*	CHAIR
Academic Affairs	TBA	Sen. Marina Cole
Budget & Appropriations	TBA	Sen. Olivia Taylor
Campus Affairs & Sustainability	TBA	Sen. Harris Quadir
Rules	Tues. 8:00 PM	SPT Revathi Menon
Student Auxiliaries & Services	TBA	Sen. Drake Brignac
Student Life, Diversity, & Community Outreach	TBA	Sen. Angel Puder

**All meetings take place in the Legislative Branch Office (Rm 256 Student Union)*

COMMITTEE DUTIES

First and foremost, committees meet to discuss and vote on legislation that is referred to it from the first reading on the floor. The committee's process should mimic the one that happens on the floor, which is described in detail later in this guide. Briefly, the authors of the legislation will present it to the committee; committee members will have the opportunity to ask any questions; the committee members will then be able to debate on the legislation and offer any amendments they may have; and the authors will have a chance to offer final thoughts. Following this, one of three motions may be made by the committee: to report it favorably to the floor, to report it unfavorably, or to report it with no recommendation. If it is reported favorably, the piece of legislation will be heard on the floor; if it is voted on unfavorably, the legislation will effectively "die" in committee (unless two-thirds of the Senators at a regular session meeting vote to hear it on the floor).

Committees are also responsible for developing and researching initiatives to work on. Members of the committee must come up with a strategic plan by the third week of each semester that outlines the projects it wants to focus on, the committee member(s) who will work on the project, and the process that will be followed to successfully complete the project.

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Senate Legislation

Legislation is the primary medium through which the Student Senate performs its prescribed duties. Senators are expected to research, write, and debate meaningful legislation with the intention of positively impacting on the student body.

TYPES OF LEGISLATION

- **Bill (SGB):** a binding piece of legislation used to approve/amend the Budget, amend any of the Governing Documents, or impeach a member of Student Government.
- **Finance Bill (SGFB):** a binding piece of legislation that is used to allocate money from any of the Student Senate's accounts to students, organizations, initiatives, etc.
- **Resolution (SGR):** a non-binding piece of legislation most often used to express the opinion of the Senate or recommend action on behalf of the Student Body.
- **Concurrent Resolution (SGCR):** a binding piece of legislation usually used to approve Presidential and Legislative appointments or establish a temporary committee.
- **Legislative Order (LO):** a binding edict allowing the Speaker to appoint members of the Legislative Staff, committee chairs and members, and other specific Legislative duties.

WRITING LEGISLATION

Every piece of legislation should begin with adequate research into the issue that the legislation will support; Senators are encouraged to seek help from more veteran Senators, committee members, and other campus resources before beginning to write any legislation. Once the drafting process has begun, there are certain guidelines that an author should follow, beginning with the heading.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT SENATE

F15RS

SGR No. 1

By: SENATOR M. TIGER

This header is used for all legislation heard by the Senate, with the following specifications:

→ **Code:** F for Fall; 15 for 2015; RS for Regular Session

→ **Number:** The Secretary will assign it a number

→ **Author:** The Senator(s) who authored the legislation

If more than one author writes a piece of legislation, the primary author should be listed first and any additional authors should be listed after in alphabetical order by last name.

Following the header will be the preamble of the legislation. In the preamble, you should summarize the main idea behind your Bill/Resolution to give everyone an idea of what they are about to read:

A RESOLUTION

**TO URGE AND REQUEST LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (LSU) TO EXPLORE OPTIONS
TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SEATING IN THE LSU STUDENT UNION DURING LUNCH
HOURS THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER**

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The next part of the piece of legislation is the body; in essence, it is one long sentence consisting of several clauses, each beginning with “WHEREAS,” that conveys the core message of the legislation. For example, take a look at the following piece of legislation below:

PARAGRAPH 1: WHEREAS, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 11:00 AM AND 1:30 PM, MANY STUDENTS CHOOSE TO DINE AT THE RESTAURANTS IN THE TIGER LAIR IN THE LSU STUDENT UNION; AND

PARAGRAPH 2: WHEREAS, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS DINING IN THE TIGER LAIR OFTEN EXCEEDS THE SPACE’S SEATING CAPACITY; AND

PARAGRAPH 3: WHEREAS, STUDENTS MAY NOT HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF EXTRA TIME BETWEEN THEIR CLASSES TO WAIT FOR A TABLE IN THE TIGER LAIR IN ORDER TO EAT; AND

PARAGRAPH 4: WHEREAS, ADDITIONAL SEATING WOULD ALSO AID IN ALLEVIATING TRAFFIC FROM PATRONS ATTEMPTING TO FIND A SEAT IN THE TIGER LAIR; AND

PARAGRAPH 5: WHEREAS, THE ROYAL COTILLION BALLROOM HAS BEEN USED IN THE PAST AS AN EXTENSION OF THE SEATING AREA DURING LUNCH HOURS; AND

PARAGRAPH 6: WHEREAS, LOCATIONS FOR EXTRA SEATING MAY INCLUDE THE ROYAL COTILLION BALLROOM OR THE SECOND-FLOOR LOBBY IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE LSU STUDENT UNION.

After the body comes a set of “resolution” clauses, the first of which restates the intention of the legislation found in the preamble and is the action clauses that the Senate is voting on. The second clause usually contains a list of people who the piece of legislation should be delivered to. When deciding who to send legislation to, keep in mind who will be directly involved in seeing the resolution to its end result, and also be mindful of how much paper it will require (you shouldn’t need to send legislation to more than five people). See below:

PARAGRAPH 7: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE THAT LSU AUXILIARY SERVICES EXPLORES ADDITIONAL SEATING OPTIONS FOR THE LSU STUDENT UNION TIGER LAIR DURING LUNCH HOURS, AND

PARAGRAPH 8: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION BE TRANSMITTED TO MARGOT CARROLL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LSU AUXILIARY SERVICES.

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Last, but certainly not least, comes the enactment clause. This section indicates how many “aye” votes are needed for a piece of legislation to pass. For most things, a simple majority of Senators present and voting at a meeting is sufficient. However, some special cases require more. Those are given below:

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS VOTE

- Allocating SG money through an SFGB
- Amending the SG Bylaws, Senate Rules of Order, or Election Code
- Approving Judicial Branch appointments
- Approving amendments to the Rules of Court or College Council Constitution (following a recommendation from the University Court and College Council Presidents’ Commission, respectively)
- Approving the SG Budget
- Impeaching any Student Government officer
- Overriding a Presidential veto
- Removing the Speaker or Speaker pro tempore
- Suspending the Rules of Order

REQUIRES A THREE-FOURTHS VOTE

- Amending the Rules of Court or the College Council Constitution by the Senate’s own initiation

In addition, the enactment clauses says that if the President doesn’t sign the legislation in the prescribed time (within four class days), it will automatically be enrolled unless it is vetoed; if it is vetoed, then the Senate can override that veto with at least a two-thirds vote. The following is an example of this resolution’s enactment clause:

PARAGRAPH 9: THIS RESOLUTION SHALL TAKE EFFECT UPON PASSAGE BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY (ONE-HALF PLUS ONE) VOTE OF THE LSU STUDENT SENATE AND SIGNATURE BY THE PRESIDENT, UPON LAPSE OF TIME FOR PRESIDENTIAL ACTION, OR IF VETOED BY THE PRESIDENT AND SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED BY THE SENATE, ON THE DATE OF SUCH APPROVAL.

Writing legislation may seem like a difficult, tedious process, but it doesn’t have to be! Don’t be afraid to seek out help from veteran Senators when you begin. Get all your questions answered early and you’ll be a legislation pro in no time!

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Senate Protocols

ORDER OF BUSINESS

This section will follow a sample agenda to help guide you through a typical meeting of the Senate.

[Before the meeting begins, you should arrive early to grab your seat and pick up your clicker at the Secretary's desk in the front of the Capital Chamber.]

CALL TO ORDER

The Speaker bangs the gavel to begin the meeting.

MOMENT OF SILENCE & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Speaker calls a Senator to lead the Pledge of Allegiance, so be paying attention (and try not to have food in your mouth, because if you do you're definitely being called on)!

PUBLIC INPUT

[During this time, anyone who is present in the Chamber may address the Senate body on whatever issues they wish. Each speaker/group is limited to three (3) minutes. Please put all electronic devices away and give your undivided attention to the guest(s), especially if they are university administrators or members of the community.]

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS

[This is the time for the Student Body President, VP, Senior Staff, or Department Directors to come inform the Senate of any updates or progress in the Executive Branch. Each Department is required to do so at least three times each semester.]

JUDICIAL OFFICER REPORTS

Similar to above, this is a chance for the Chief Justice or Deputy CJ to provide the Senate with any updates from the Judicial Branch.

NEW BUSINESS

[At this point, any new legislation is introduced to the Senate for the first time. The author(s) go to the podium and reads the preamble of their legislation. After the authors answer any questions from the floor, the Speaker will refer the legislation to the appropriate committee.]

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The chair of each standing committee will go up and give a report of their committee's meeting from the previous week, highlighting any initiatives or projects that are being worked on and stating the result of any legislation that was considered in committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

This is usually the longest part of each Senate meeting and the time where most of the "business" takes place. Legislation that has been heard in committee is now presented before the Senate floor for the second time, using the following procedure:

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1. Author's Opening Comments: The authors have five (5) minutes to make opening remarks about their legislation.
2. Questions: The floor is opened for questions for ten (10) minutes. During this time, any Senator can ask a question or series of questions to the author(s) regarding their legislation. To ask a question, raise your placard and wait to be recognized by the Speaker.
3. Debate: During this time, Senators may go up and provide their own arguments for or against the piece of legislation being considered and/or offer any amendments to the legislation. Each Senator is allotted a maximum of ten (10) minutes for his/her debate. To go up for debate, raise your placard and wait to be recognized for debate by the Speaker.
4. Author(s)' Closing Comments: The authors have fifteen (15) minutes to provide final arguments and closing comments on their legislation. The typical way to end closing comments is to encourage Senators to vote in favor of the legislation with the phrase "I urge favorable passage."
5. Voting: Standard voting on any legislation is done using the senator's clicker. If you wish to abstain (not vote on a piece of legislation), for any reason, press the abstention button on the clicker.

LEGISLATIVE OFFICER REPORTS

At this time, the Speaker, SPT, or Legislative Staff may make any pertinent announcements or provide Senators with any updates.

ADVISOR REPORTS

This time is reserved for the SG Advisor to come up and address the Senate membership.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

During this sections, Senators may come up to say/promote/beg for/announce whatever they would like (decorously) for a max of three (3) minutes. It can be quite the show sometimes. |

ADJOURNMENT

A motion is made to adjourn and a final roll call vote is taken for attendance purposes. You must click in with your clicker before leaving to not be assessed an absence! |

LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE

To help facilitate our business process, we follow the Senate Rules of Order and, secondarily, Robert's Rules of Order. As such, it probably comes as no surprise that Senators tend to use a more formal style of speaking, complete with a number of special phrases during Senate meetings. Here are some of the things you may hear (and should use yourself), when they can be used, and what each means.

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- **Point of Information** – if you have a general question to ask during a meeting, you can rise to a Point of Information to ask it. This is generally used to ask questions to keep debate moving forward. For example, suppose during debate on a Finance Bill, you'd like to know how much money is left in the Legislative Contingency Account:
 - *"As a Point of Information...how much money is currently left in Contingency?"*
- **Point of Order** – if something has been done incorrectly, you can rise to a Point of Order to correct him/her. For example, suppose the Speaker skips over Questions and goes directly from Author's Opening Comments into Debate:
 - *"Mr./Mdm. Speaker, Point of Order...you skipped over Questions."*
- **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:** if you're unsure as to whether something is being done according to parliamentary procedure, you can rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry to ask. For example, suppose during debate on an amendment to a resolution, you don't remember whether the author of the amendment or the author of the resolution gives closing comments first:
 - *"Point of Parliamentary Inquiry...what is the correct order for closing comments here?"*
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** if you'd like to say something pertaining to yourself, you may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege and do so. This is most often done to announce that you're present if you arrive after roll call. For example, suppose you're freezing in the Capital Chamber:
 - *"Point of Personal Privilege...it's absolutely frigid in here and I can feel myself developing hypothermia as this debate on the global warming initiative moves at a glacial speed. Can we turn the heater on please?!"*
- **Motions:** in order to actually do something (hear legislation, make an amendment, etc.) it has to be done in the form of a motion, which the body must vote on unless there are no objections. So, suppose you'd like to vote a different way on adjournment:
 - *"Mr./Mdm. Speaker...I move to adjourn this meeting by roll call vote."*
- **Suspension of the Rules:** if you'd like to do something out of order (for instance, hearing your SGFB first because you have a guest), you will have to suspend the rules to do so:
 - *"Mr./Mdm. Speaker...I move to suspend the rules and immediately consider SGFB No. 6 because the guests have to leave early."*

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Senate Finances

One of the many ways the Senate works to assist the Student Body is by providing funding for student organizations, initiatives, conventions, competitions, and more. The process for obtaining funding, including the different accounts accessible by the Senate, is summarized below.

SENATE FUNDING PROCESS

The first step for any student or group wishing to obtain Senate funding is by filling out the Senate Funding Application, which can be found on the SG Website or picked up in the Senate Office. The student, organization, etc. must apply for funding from PSIF or ORF, before a request can be made to the Senate...

SENATE ACCOUNTS

The Senate has the power to allocate money from three different Student Government accounts: the Legislative General Contingency, the SG Surplus Account, and the SG Initiatives Account. Descriptions of and restrictions on these accounts are listed below:

LEGISLATIVE GENERAL CONTINGENCY:

- Allocations made via Senate SGFB and approved by the President
- Cannot spend more than sixty percent (60%) of total during the fall semester.
- Remaining funds deposited in SG Surplus Account

SG INITIATIVES ACCOUNT

- Allocations made via Senate SGFB
- Used to fund student programs and initiatives
- Can NOT be used to fund any student travel
Account is refilled each Spring (January following 14th class day)

SG SURPLUS ACCOUNT

- Allocations made via SGFB and approved by the President
- Used for one-time expenditures of the Student Senate (expenditures are defined as items listed on budget within Finance Bill, NOT preamble)

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Leadership Contact Information

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