



# What is SGA? Development, Leadership, and Advocacy

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Student governments (SGA) are the organizations on college campuses that \_\_\_\_\_ students, serve as their voice, and exists to enhance the educational experience for everyone that attends their college or university. Specifically, the Constitution of the Bristol Student Senate states that it is the duty of SGA...”:

- “Represents student \_\_\_\_\_”;
- “Establish and oversee all student \_\_\_\_\_”;
- “Act as \_\_\_\_\_ between the student body, the college administration, and the Board of Trustees.”

Further, the constitution provides that “The Student Senate shall be responsible for”:

- “To encourage the creation of an atmosphere suitable for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ growth for students as they participate in the affairs of the college.”
- “To allocate the revenues generated by \_\_\_\_\_ Activity Fees in a manner consistent with procedures established by the Board of Higher Education and the President of Bristol Community College.”
- “To give advice and counsel to the leadership of \_\_\_\_\_ on matters related to the development or improvement of services, policies and procedures at the College.”
- “To represent the student body by engaging in cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ and negotiations with representatives of the faculty and administration.”

- “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 \_\_\_\_\_ goals.”

**I. Student Government Legislation**

What kind of proposals should SGA members make?

- A. Items for \_\_\_\_\_ on campus
- B. Support of causes and \_\_\_\_\_ of students and clubs/organizations
- C. Positions on \_\_\_\_\_ at local, state, and national levels of interest to students
- D. Honoring significant \_\_\_\_\_ of those in the campus community
- E. Other? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**II. Advocacy and Activism**

**A. Demands**

1. Leave no room for negotiation, moderation, collaboration, adjustment, etc. They are \_\_\_\_\_ propositions.
2. Instead, offer “suggestions of \_\_\_\_\_” or “opportunities for \_\_\_\_\_”.
3. Don’t \_\_\_\_\_.

**B. Civil Discourse**

American Social Psychologist and Professor at Swarthmore College (PA) Kenneth J. Gergen describes it as the “language of dispassionate objectivity”. Key components include:

1. Requires \_\_\_\_\_ of the other participants
2. Does not diminish the other’s \_\_\_\_\_ worth nor questions their good \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Avoids \_\_\_\_\_, direct \_\_\_\_\_, or excessive \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Requires \_\_\_\_\_ and an appreciation of the other participant’s \_\_\_\_\_.
5. **BONUS** (one of Dave’s): Keep \_\_\_\_\_ in check and \_\_\_\_\_!

**C. Critical Thinking in Leadership**

1. Requires a \_\_\_\_\_ for the company, group, organization that \_\_\_\_\_ and directs the work of those involved. \_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the problem-solving process in a \_\_\_\_\_, rather than \_\_\_\_\_ way.
3. Considers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of all decisions and which issues \_\_\_\_\_ action.
4. Recognizes that \_\_\_\_\_ events and issues can affect local concerns and acknowledges the importance of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Knows when to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and when to \_\_\_\_\_.

**D. Your Turn**

1. **Solar Panel Seating** (Tabled to FA21): Tables and chairs for students accessing WIFI on campus.
2. **New Bedford Shuttle** (Tabled to FA21): Implement shuttle service between Fall River and New Bedford campuses
3. **Other Issues**

**E. What to do:**

1. Know what your position is, \_\_\_\_\_, and support it with facts, \_\_\_\_\_ evidence, and data. Be concise and focused.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ with members of the opposition is of little benefit: they have their constituencies to represent, just as you do. Learn their positions so you can \_\_\_\_\_ them, but don't hope to sway them to your side.
3. Work your side but be \_\_\_\_\_ of those on the other. Your adversary on one issue may be your \_\_\_\_\_ on another.
4. If someone on the opposition side chooses to make a \_\_\_\_\_ of themselves, get out of their way and let them!
5. Just because your side did not \_\_\_\_\_ does not mean you were not heard. Take defeat \_\_\_\_\_ to preserve relationships for future issues.

**F. What not to do:**

1. Never \_\_\_\_\_. Integrity is all you have. Know your \_\_\_\_\_ and support and promote it even in the face of \_\_\_\_\_ from a representative.
2. Don't \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or lose your \_\_\_\_\_ with representatives! They have the power to get you what you \_\_\_\_\_!
3. Calling \_\_\_\_\_ is never useful or \_\_\_\_\_.