



What is SGA: Student Government 101

University of Maine Augusta General Assembly Training

Dave Kelly | America's Student Leadership Trainersm

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.

SGA is not something to be _____ by, but to be _____ in.

SGA is the first line of _____ against proposals and items that students would not want, and also the first line of _____ for things that they do.

Governing Documents

The Constitution defines the _____ and principles of the organization. It provides a _____ and framework for the organization such as _____ of government, line of succession, and creation of the _____.

The Bylaws are the document that sets forth _____, policies, regulations, _____ and responsibilities, and duties of officers, the executive board, and the Student Assembly.

The Basics – A Mnemonic – **NO MOME CPA**

N _____

O _____

M _____

O _____

M _____

E _____

C _____

P _____

A _____

_____ Rules and/or Policies and Procedures defines procedures, traditions, and decorum. Could include items such as:

1. _____ code
2. _____ hours
3. _____ and other compensation
4. Travel _____
5. Other?

Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised is typically defined as the resource for anything _____ in the governing documents.

General Assembly Constitution

Article II: Purpose, Mission, and Responsibility

Section I: The purpose of the GA is to serve as the _____ of all UMA students and administer student activity fees in accordance with university policies.

Section II: The mission of the GA is to enhance the _____ at UMA by providing support to the student body with respect to academic, social, financial, and cultural matters.

Section III: The responsibility of the GA is to represent the interests of all UMA students and act as the primary source of _____ and _____; therefore, the GA may, upon request, represent a local

student entity. The GA _____ and _____ leadership and learning opportunities outside the classroom; fosters _____ development, and encourages positive _____ and _____ relations.

Article III: Authority

Section I: All Student Associations (SAs)/Student Government Associations (SGAs) shall _____ of the GA as declared by this Constitution, the policies of UMA, and the University of Maine System (UMS) Board of Trustees (BOT). The GA acknowledges that the BOT is the legal governing body of the UMS and that _____ within its constitution or governing documents shall be construed as granting to the GA the authority to act _____ of the BOT. (University of Maine System Policy Manual, Governance and Legal Affairs Section 201, Governance Document). The BOT _____ to suspend, amend, or otherwise alter this Constitution if the Board finds, at any time, that the provisions of this Constitution are contrary to the policies of the BOT.

Section II: The GA shall retain the authority to _____ and _____ its own policies and procedures. These documents must be written through a _____ and approved by a majority vote by the GA. The policies must adhere to the policies defined within this Constitution, the bylaws of the GA, and the policies and guidelines defined by UMA and the UMS BOT. Policies and procedures approved by the GA shall become the Operations Manual.

Section III: The GA shall submit ideas, issues, and petitions on behalf of the student body to the _____ of the University. The GA reserves the right to petition and poll the student body. They may also form student-led referendums and initiatives.

General Assembly Bylaws

Article I: Responsibilities of the General Assembly (GA)

- a. Provides a platform for addressing _____ from the student body regarding academic, social, financial, and cultural matters.
- b. Facilitates the _____ and polling of the student body, including student-led referendums and initiatives.
- c. Fosters the personal _____ and _____ development of UMA students.
- d. Provides _____ on university committees on behalf of the student body.
- e. Facilitates _____ of Student Association (SA)/Student Government Association (SGA) at any UMA location when an SA/SGA fails to be formed.
- f. _____ members of the student body to assemble and serve as the local SA/SGA when there is none in existence.

Committees

Per Robert’s Rules of Order, committees are bodies that are often, but not necessarily very small and are subordinate to a higher authority. Most parliamentary rules apply, but greater flexibility and informality are commonly allowed. Committees are where boards and assemblies get the _____ of the organization done. They can give more attention and detail to tasks than is possible in a larger body.

There are two types of committees:

- 1. _____: These committees continue from year to year and perform continuing functions.
- 2. _____ or _____: This is a committee that is appointed, as the need arises, to carry out a specific task. At the completion of the

task, the special or ad-hoc committee ceases to exist. Robert’s Rules indicates that these types of committees cannot be appointed to perform a task that falls within the assigned function(s) of an existing special committee.

Importance of Committees

1. Opportunity for various aspects of the college community to come _____ (students, faculty, staff, and administration)
2. The voice of students matters – _____, implemented through committees, gives a platform to that voice.
3. Committees give students a chance to _____ their leadership skills.
4. A chance for students to _____ with faculty and see the inner workings of the college.
5. Students will grow as people, leaders, and be more _____ to the college.
6. Can serve as a _____ for future SGA executive officers, Senators, class reps, etc.
7. Gets students involved!!!

Successful Committees

1. Are organized.
2. Have an agenda.
3. Seek and include participation from all members.
4. Engage through coaching and asking questions.
5. Make everyone feel comfortable in the committee space – all are on a level playing field.

Article V: Committees

Section I: Ad hoc and standing committees shall be formed when deemed _____ by the GA or when _____ by the

Dean of Students, President of the University, or their designee. The Chair of the committee shall be responsible for communicating the activities and progress of the committee at each meeting of the GA.

Section II: The _____ Committee is a standing committee of the GA. This committee is responsible for writing policies and procedures, reviewing and proposing amendments to the GA, SA, and SGA Constitutions and Bylaws, and developing the verbiage and timeline for student initiatives and referendums. All actions and recommendations from the Parliamentary Committee must be _____ by a majority vote of the GA. After solicitation from the members of the GA, the Chair will appoint a member to chair this committee. The Parliamentary Committee Chair must be a _____ but should not be the current GA Chair. Meetings of the Parliamentary Committee are open to all members of the UMA student body.

Recruitment Committee

1. _____ individuals – not all Executive Board members – who focus on recruitment.
2. The committee prepares a semester-long and year-long recruitment _____ based on these ideas and other best practices.
3. Serve as an _____ for interested students.
4. Can also work to _____ students to run for elective and/or higher office.

Think Outside of the Box

1. Wear SGA shirts, jackets, buttons, etc. on _____ days.
2. Have an alternate or additional meeting on a _____.
3. Meet your SGA members on _____.
4. Table to get _____ with service activities.

5. Use _____ as an entry-level way to get involved with SGA.
6. Ask your current members for _____ and _____.
7. Post current members testimonials and _____.
8. Have a “_____” section on your website or social media pages where students can request information – usually it is “Contact Us”
9. Don’t forget about _____ recruitment!
10. Provide fun and meaningful membership _____, such as certificates, induction ceremony, name badges, and ?????
11. What else could you do?

Communication and Conflict Resolution

Face to Face

1. Listening is not _____ for your turn to _____.
2. What people _____ is important to them and needs to be important to you.
3. Improve your listening _____ by focusing on what you are _____ and being interested in what they are _____.

Sources of Conflict

Modes of Managing Conflict

1. _____ = _____
 This style is characterized by low assertiveness of one’s own interests and low cooperation with the other party. This is the “hiding the head in the sand” response. Although avoidance can provide some short-term stress reduction from the rigors of conflict, it does not really change the situation. Thus, its effectiveness is often limited. Avoidance does, however, have its place if the issue is trivial, people need to cool down, or the opponent is very powerful and hostile.

2. _____ = _____
 Cooperating with the other party’s wishes while not asserting one’s own interests. If people see accommodation as a sign of weakness, it does not bode well for future interactions. However, it can be an effective reaction when you are wrong, the issue is more important to the other party, or you want to build goodwill.

3. _____ = _____
 This style tends to maximize assertiveness for your own position and minimize cooperative responses. In doing so, you tend to frame the conflict in strict win-lose terms. Full priority is given to your own goals, facts, or procedures. The competing style holds promise when you have a lot of power, you are sure of your facts, the situation is truly win-lose, or you will not have to interact with the other party in the future.

4. _____ = _____
 This style combines intermediate levels of assertiveness and cooperation. Thus, it is itself a compromise between pure competition and pure accommodation. Compromise places a premium on determining rules of exchange between the two parties. Also, compromise does not always result in the most creative response to conflict. Compromise is not so useful for resolving conflicts that stem from power to asymmetry, because the weaker party may have little to offer the stronger party. However, it is a sensible reaction to conflict stemming from scarce resources.

5. _____ = _____
 Both assertiveness and cooperation are maximized with the hope that integrative agreement will occur that fully satisfies the interests of both parties. Emphasis is put on a win-win resolution in which there is no assumption that someone must lose something. Rather it is assumed that the solution to the conflict can leave both parties in a better condition. Ideally, collaboration occurs as a kind of problem-solving exercise. It probably works best when the conflict is not intense and when each party has information that is useful to the other.

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Dave's Five Concepts

1. If you have a conflict with someone and you do not take it _____ that _____, then it can't be _____.
2. Deal with conflict _____-on-_____: _____ in public, _____ in private.
3. Use the three _____ system: _____, _____, _____.
4. Learn to _____ the _____ from the _____.
5. Confront the _____ with a _____.