

Constitution of the Student Government Association of The Altamont School

Preamble: We, the Altamont student body, in order to form a more perfect school, believing that the ideas, opinions, and participation of students should be protected and encouraged, offer the following constitution.

Mission Statement: The primary mission of the Student Government Association of the Altamont School is to build and sustain a positive student body by creating a cohesive environment in which each student feels welcomed, school spirit is promoted, and productive discourse is encouraged.

Article I: Defining the Association

- A. The name of this organization is the Altamont School Student Government Association (SGA). The Association shall be comprised of the members of the following groups: The Executive Board and the Administrative Committee.
- B. **The Executive Board:** This board will include the SGA President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. These Executive Officers must work to communicate with the school administration, represent the student body, and make overarching decisions regarding student life, event planning, and other SGA affairs. They should also be responsible for calling and running meetings of the Administrative Committee. After their election and before the next school year, the Board should meet to discuss potential amendments to the constitution, as well as set goals for the coming term in office. Additionally, the Executive Board should meet at the start of the school year with the faculty sponsors to create an event schedule for the entire year.
- C. **The Administrative Committee:** This committee shall include the Executive Board and the class officers of the 9th-12th grades. This group exists to better represent the diverse interests of the student body. This committee will be called to vote on select issues, perform tasks on behalf of the association, and inform the student body of SGA proceedings. Additionally, all members of SGA have a responsibility to serve in the Marketplace.
- D. The Altamont School should select faculty sponsors to oversee the workings of the SGA.

Article II: Authority

- A. The SGA governs student affairs with the counsel and consent of the administration. The Association has the powers delineated in Article I, as well as authority that falls within reason as determined by precedent and the faculty sponsors.

Article III: Members and duties of the Executive Board:

- A. **The President:** This individual will preside over assembly programs and SGA meetings, oversee SGA functions, and facilitate cooperation within the SGA. The President should serve as an expedient conduit between the administration and the school, represent the student body, and ensure that the SGA runs smoothly. The President serves as the highest ranking member of the SGA.
- B. **The Vice President:** This individual assists the President and presides over meetings when the President is not present. Their duties include recycling, clubs, and coordinating May Day. The Vice President serves as the second highest ranking member of the SGA.
- C. **The Treasurer:** This individual manages SGA finances, orders food and sets prices for the Marketplace. The newly elected Treasurer manages Book Buyback at the end of the year and coordinates Homecoming Friday Activities (including games, pep rally, booths, etc.). The Treasurer serves as the third highest ranking member of the SGA.
- D. **The Secretary:** This individual manages the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program, handles scheduling of shifts for The Marketplace, creates the Election schedule, and takes attendance and notes at all meetings. The Secretary serves as the lowest ranking member of the Executive Board.
- E. Specific duties of officers are merely precedent. Specific events may be changed and new ones added, and the responsibility to organize said events may be changed within members of the Executive Branch with consent of the faculty sponsors.
- F. Executive Board Officers are allowed 4 excused absences from meetings or events, and 3 unexcused absences before impeachment procedures begin.

Article IV: Class Officers

- A. Class officers represent the students in their respective grades and their duties include, but are not limited to, working Marketplace shifts, recycling every other month, and Homecoming and Mayday set-up and clean-up. Additionally, each grade has a specific responsibility for an event during the school year and should save money to sponsor their event(s).
- B. The typical events organized by class officers are the following:
 - i. The 9th grade class officers will create a Haunted House for the Middle School dance at Halloween;
 - ii. The 10th grade class officers will coordinate the Homecoming dance;

- iii. The 11th grade class officers will organize the Formal dance towards the end of the year;
 - iv. The 12th grade class officers will organize Roundtable and Roast Pig.
- C. Each upper school class officer will attend Administrative Committee meetings, and has the responsibility to represent their respective classes, inform them of SGA proceedings, and carry out the decisions of the committee.
 - D. Class Officers are allowed 4 excused absences from meetings or events, and 3 unexcused absences before they are removed from office. The removal is at the discretion of the SGA Faculty Sponsors with the counsel of the Executive Board.

Article V: Class Officer Elections

- A. Students interested in running for any class office should email their respective class sponsor a paragraph explaining why they would like to serve their class and the school in that specific office by a date determined by the SGA Secretary each spring. Candidacy paragraphs should be made available for perusal by the rest of the grade prior to the election date. Those running for president should prepare a 2-minute speech to give during the election procedure.
- B. Election Procedure:
 - i. Class elections will be held on a date chosen by the SGA Secretary, after final Executive Board election results have been released. Class Sponsors will run the elections;
 - ii. All students in the grade may cast one ballot for each position. The candidate who receives a simple majority will be declared the winner. Ballots should be counted immediately, and if no candidate receives a majority, a runoff between the two with the most votes will be held during that same meeting.

Article VI: Meetings

- A. Meetings may be called to discuss and make decisions regarding events, policies, and student affairs. Meetings of the Executive Board must include all four members in order to vote or make decisions. For meetings of the Administrative Committee, three-fourths of the group must be in attendance.
- B. **Scheduling:** SGA meetings may be called by any member of the Executive Board or the faculty sponsors. Meetings of the Executive Board should be held frequently and should occur before meetings of the Administrative Committee. The chair of the meeting, either the President or officer of next rank, must submit an agenda to the faculty sponsors prior to the meeting. Meetings of the Administrative Committee may be called at the discretion of the Executive Board, and members must be given three days' notice before the meeting date.
- C. **Special Meetings:** Special Meetings of either committee may be called at the discretion of the Executive Board or the administration without prior notice.
 - i. Rules for officers concerning absences do not apply for meetings called without a three days' notice.
- D. **Procedure:** The President of SGA will act as chair of meetings. A vote in the Executive Board must be brought to the Administrative Committee for vote at the earliest convenience in the event of an unresolvable tie, or if one-half of the Executive Board votes to do so. If a vote remains undecided after unresolvable ties in each committee, the motion shall be decided based on the flip of a coin, with heads allowing the motion to pass, and tails failing the motion.
- E. **Third Party Observation of Meetings:** By a vote decided by simple majority, the Executive Board may open a meeting to third party observation at any time before or during the meeting. Administrative Committee meetings are always open to Third Party observation unless they include a removal from office vote. SGA faculty sponsors may attend any meeting of the Administrative Committee or Executive Board. Other faculty members may attend at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Article VII: Executive Board Elections

- A. **Planning Elections:** The current Secretary should set a timeline for SGA Executive Board elections. They must be aware of the Honor Court election schedule and any other school events which might interfere.
- B. Students interested in running for any of the four Executive Board offices must submit an intention to run with at minimum, 30 Signatories from the student body at a date determined by the Secretary.
- C. **Campaigning:** ~~Students running for office may not spend more than \$30 on materials, not including posters. Students are limited to 10 posters. SEE ARTICLE XIII, AMENDMENT III.~~
- D. **Speeches:** Students running for Executive Board positions may prepare a speech timed to about 5 minutes, and must submit them to the SGA Faculty Sponsors for editing and approval.
- E. **Voting:**
 - i. In the election for Executive Board positions, every student in grades 5 through 12 may cast one vote for the candidate of his or her choice.
 - ii. Recognizing greater familiarity with the candidates and being more involved in SGA affairs, the vote of rising students in grades 9 through 12 will be doubled.

- iii. Voting will be conducted using a ranked voting system with an instant runoff. For clarification: “Used in national elections in Australia, this system is said to simulate a series of runoff elections. If no candidate is the first choice of more than half of the voters, then all votes cast for the candidate with the lowest number of first choices are redistributed to the remaining candidates based on who is ranked next on each ballot. If this does not result in any candidate receiving a majority, further rounds of redistribution occur. Or, in other words, voters would rank their first, second and subsequent choices on the ballot. The candidate with the fewest votes would be dropped and his or her supporters’ second choices would be counted and so on until one candidate emerged with more than 50 per cent.” Many online algorithms make this process easy, a good example is this— <https://petertheone.github.io/IRV/>.

Article VIII: Departure from Office

- A. **Grounds for Impeachment:** Any member of the SGA may be impeached for one or more of the following: failure to carry out their duties, actions detrimental to the welfare of the school, any other offense deemed as grounds for impeachment.
- B. A member of the SGA must be removed via the process described in this article, and no member may be removed without adhering to the process.
- C. **Procedure:** If a member of the SGA is accused of committing one or more of these offenses by any of the following: 2 members of the Executive Board, a member of the faculty or a petition with the signatures of 15% of the upper school (9th-12th grades) student body. A two-thirds majority vote of the Administrative Committee must be reached to remove the officer. The Altamont School administration may nullify any removal from office after voting has occurred within a week of the Administrative Committee’s decision.
- D. **Voting:** Voting at each stage of the removal process must be conducted via secret ballot and must be chaired by the highest ranking member of the Executive Board not being impeached. The individual being impeached will retain their ability to vote at every stage of the process in which they would otherwise have the right to vote.
- E. **Vacancy Procedure**
 - i. If the President of the SGA or any class is removed, the Vice President of the SGA or of that class shall take their position, and the new President will nominate a new Vice President in a timely fashion. For other positions, the President of that body will nominate a replacement in a timely fashion.
 - ii. The nomination must receive approval from a majority of the Administrative Committee.

Article IX: Amendments

- A. **Procedure:** Any part of this constitution may be amended. However, only one article may be changed at a time. The amendment of multiple articles must be done via separate motions. Amendments may be proposed by any of the following: 2 members of the Executive Board, a member of the faculty or a petition with the signatures of 15% of the upper school (9th-12th grades) student body. After proposal, a meeting of the Administrative Committee shall be held to discuss and vote on the amendment. In this meeting, the primary sponsor of the amendment must present a completed draft of the proposal and should present it to the group. At this initial meeting, a voting date must be selected in order for the proposal to continue. This date may not exceed 30 days following the first meeting.
- B. **Voting:** All members of the Administrative Committee must be present on the selected voting day. If a member is absent, they may be contacted before the vote to determine their position. A simple majority is necessary to secure the passing of the amendment.

Article X: Enabling:

- A. **Ratification:** For a new constitution to be ratified, three-fourths of the Administrative Committee must approve of the Constitution.
- B. This document was ratified on April 10th, 2018 with sponsorship of David Zell, Will Denniston, Amrita Lakhanpal, and James Dixon.

Article XI: Amendment I

- A. Class Officers reserve the right to request and collect dues from their class in a form of fundraising for class events.

Article XII: Amendment II

- A. In the election of Executive Board positions, every student in grades 5 through 11 may cast one vote for the candidate of his or her choice. Students in 12th grade may not vote in the Executive Board Election. This amendment shall nullify Section E.i of Article VII.

Article XIII: Amendment III

- A. The following will replace Part C of Article VII:

- a. One SGA Sponsor and two seniors who are outgoing members of the SGA will form the Election Committee. If no such seniors exist, then the sponsor will select seniors to fill the positions.
- b. Committee duties include:
 - i. oversee campaigning materials and the election process, will manage candidate's intention to run, and review the speeches submitted by the candidates.
 - ii. The committee will distribute ballots and count votes during the election.
- B. Campaigning regulations:
 - 1. Candidates are allowed a maximum of 10 posters to be placed around the school in support of their candidacy
 - a. Items such as stickers, flyers, candy, food, etc. are not to be used when campaigning for election.
 - b. Candidates are required to heed the edits made to their speeches by the Election Committee
- C. If a candidate is found in violation of these requirements, the Election Committee will penalize the candidate based on the gravity of the infraction, with punishments ranging from a subtraction of votes to immediate disqualification from the race.