



## ***SEBS Governing Council Constitution***

### **Preamble**

*We, the students of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), in striving to support and encourage appropriate academic and social goals in a spirit of understanding, regardless of race, sex, creed, political belief, personal preferences, or economic circumstance, do hereby ordain and establish this document as the Constitution of this organization. This Constitution shall outline the means by which this organization represents the interests of SEBS students, as they relate to student life, student services, academic issues, and the improvement of the SEBS student's quality of life. The constitution will be made available to all SEBS students from the Rutgers Student Life Office.*

### **I. Article I: The SEBS Governing Council**

#### **A. Section 1: Establishment of the SEBS Governing Council**

1. The name of this organization shall be the SEBS Governing Council, of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and will be herein referred to as the SGC.
2. The authority of the SGC is, first and foremost, derived from this constitution and its ratification by the undergraduate students of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences of Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway as their student governing body. Secondly, acknowledgement from the administration and faculty of Rutgers University School of Environmental and Biological Sciences as the primary student governing organization of the students of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences of Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway.

#### **B. Section 2: Objectives of the Council**

1. The duties of the SGC are as follows:
  - a) To serve as the student voice in all matters relating to student life, student services, university, academic, local, state and federal issues as they relate to the SEBS student body
  - b) To recommend to the faculty of SEBS, the administration of the G. H. Cook Campus, the administration of SEBS, and Rutgers University, and the University Senate, action in matters of concern to the SEBS student body
  - c) To deliberate, discuss, recommend, and review procedure and policy matters proposed directly or indirectly by the SEBS student body
  - d) To enhance the local community by supporting and participating in events
  - e) To inform its constituency of local and university wide issues and policies
  - f) To abide by all rules and regulations outlined by this Constitution and its Standing Rules.

#### **C. Section 3: Sovereignty of the SGC Constitution**

1. The means by which the SGC shall engage in and work toward the above

purposes shall be governed as follows, in order of descending precedence:

- a) The spirit, actions, and structure of the SGC shall first and foremost comply with those described in this Constitution; and
  - b) The actions and structure of the SGC described herein shall be further specified and otherwise supplemented by the standing rules of the SEBS Governing Council (herein referred to as the standing rules); and
  - c) The specific proceedings and operations of the SGC shall adhere generally to a reference of parliamentary procedure (e.g. Roberts Rules of Order) selected by the President, but will remain flexible and subject to modification at the discretion of the President or current chairperson.
2. This Constitution shall take effect when it is approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the sitting members of the SEBS Governing Council, which shall then become the SGC.
  3. This constitution shall be protected by the standards established herein for all entities and actions of the SGC. Neither the SGC nor any entity of the University may dissolve the organization as it stands in this document without surpassing the highest challenges this document establishes which may be determined as a combination or mix of one or more provisions. All attempts at subversion will not be tolerated and will be considered a direct assault on the ability of the student body to organize.

**D. Section 4: Non-Discrimination and Compliance of SGC**

1. The SEBS Governing Council shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, marital status, socioeconomic status, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable federal, state, or university policies. The council is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all members of the SEBS community.
2. The SEBS Governing Council shall abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as all Rutgers University policies and regulations. The council shall ensure that all activities, decisions, and operations comply with the laws and regulations of the State of New Jersey.

**II. Article 2: Composition of the SGC General Body**

**A. Section 1: Legislative Positions**

1. The Council shall consists of directly elected SEBS students only:
  - a) Executive Board consisting of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Chief of Staff.
  - b) Representatives
    - (1) Three Class Representatives from each respective class year.
    - (2) Two (2) Transfer Student Representatives
    - (3) Two (2) International Student Representatives
    - (4) Major Representatives: The number of SEBS students registered in each academic major shall be determined by information provided by the Office of Academic Programs.
      - (a) Each major is allowed a maximum of two (2) Major Representatives.
      - (b) Majors with an enrollment of at least 250 students may have up to Three (3) Major Representatives.
      - (c) Enrollment numbers must be determined by a report from the Office of Academic Programs.
    - (5) University Senators
      - (a) The number of University senators shall be the number of seats allocated to the SGC by the University Senate, plus an additional of one University Senator.

(6) Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) Representative

(a) The number of RUSA Representatives shall be equal to the number of seats allocated to the SGC by the RUSA Constitution or RUSA standing rules

c) The SGC should hold the following advisor positions selected by their respective offices.

(1) One SEBS Faculty or Dean Advisor,

(2) One Cook Alumni Association Representative.

**B. Section 2: Eligibility**

1. Each Fall and Spring Semester the SGC shall hold direct elections which allow nonmembers to declare candidacy for a position and to be elected by a majority vote of the SEBS student body.
2. Current members seeking to remain on the SGC for another term in their current or a different position must compete as candidates in the elections process.
3. Each candidate may only be elected to one (1) position for which they are eligible. If a candidate receives a majority of votes for several positions, they must accept only one (1) position and decline the others.
4. All Executive Board Positions must be filled by candidates with at least one (1) academic year of experience serving on the SGC.
5. In the case of a vacancy on the executive board, the president will have the authority to appoint any member of the SGC to the vacant position with the approval of a simple majority of the SGC
6. The Spring elections shall elect for all legislative positions (except for First-Year class representatives). The Fall elections shall elect the First-Year Class Representatives and any remaining vacant legislative positions. All representatives shall be elected based on a plurality of the SEBS student body.

**C. Section 3: Petitioning in members**

1. At any regular meeting of the SGC, any non-member SEBS students may petition for his or her candidacy for a vacant legislative position by presenting a letter of intent to the SGC.
2. The SGC must then move into a majority vote on the question of whether to allow the candidate to fill the position for which he or she declared candidacy. If multiple candidates are being considered for the same position, each candidate shall receive equal time to explain his or her qualifications and answer questions before the vote is taken.
3. A candidate that receives a majority vote by a quorum of SGC members shall fill the position for which he or she declared candidacy. In the event of a tie, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from the election and an additional vote shall be taken from among the remaining candidates.

**D. Section 4: Terms of Office**

1. All members should hold office for a one year term, starting on May 1st of the year elected.
2. Any officers filling a vacancy after the term began or who were petitioned in may only serve for the remainder of the current term.

III. **Article III: Responsibilities of the Membership**

**A. Section 1: Procedure**

1. The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, by Henry M. Robert, shall be the parliamentary authority for all business conducted by the Council.
2. All Council meetings shall be open to all individuals.
3. All members, voting and nonvoting, shall have all the rights and responsibilities given to them by this constitution and by the aforementioned Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

**B. Section 2: Meetings**

1. Meetings will be held, at minimum, on a biweekly basis.
2. The Executive Board shall prepare and announce the tentative dates, times, and places of meetings for each semester one week prior to the beginning of the semester.
3. Voting can only occur when a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as fifty percent of the voting Council members plus one.

**C. Section 3: Committees**

1. The SGC will consist of Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees
2. All committees will be chaired by a Chairperson
  - a) Chairperson
    - (1) The Chairperson of each separate committee shall be a sitting member of the SGC and shall be appointed by the President.
  - b) All committees must submit a semesterly report to the Executive Board for the purposes of evaluating the overall progress and activity of the SGC.
3. Standing Committees
  - a) Established in the SGC standing rules.
  - b) Have an elected Chairperson
  - c) Allocations Committee
    - (1) Draft standing rules that are ratified by the general body, but can be amended by a majority of 2/3 of total votes within the committee.
      - (a) Bylaws cannot conflict with this Constitution or the SGC Standing Rules.
      - (b) Bylaws do not need to be public information, but must be filed with the Secretary.
      - (c) Bylaws should consist of:
        - (i) Mission of the Standing Committee
        - (ii) Structure of the Standing Committee
        - (iii) Procedure of the Standing Committee
      - (d) Bylaws must be created within two (2) weeks of the establishment of a Standing Committee and ratified by the SGC Published Guidelines
        - (i) Guidelines must be ratified by the SGC General Body, but can be amended by a 2/3 majority vote within the committee
        - (ii) Guidelines must be drafted and submitted for approval to the SGC General Body two weeks after establishment
  - d) Subsidiary committees, that will be composed of those from the relevant standing committee, shall be formed by the President or the committee Chairpersons him/herself as considered appropriate to accomplish specific duties or tasks. Such committees may also be formed if approved by a majority of two-thirds (2/3) of total votes of the members present.
  - e) Individuals who are not members of the SGC may work as members of any standing committee, with the approval of the Chairperson of said committee
  - f) Ad Hoc Committees shall be formed by the President or by majority vote of the SGC general body for a specific purpose not covered by Standing Committees.
    - (1) Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President or the

President may charge any such committee to select its own chairperson.

**D. Section IV: Disciplinary Action and Impeachment**

1. Any member of the SGC can be removed from office through the process of impeachment, on any of the grounds listed in Article II. A minimum of 2/3 of total votes of sitting members shall be required in order to impeach a member.
2. Impeached members must vacate their seat on the SGC. Impeached University Senators and RUSA Representatives must also vacate their University Senate seats and RUSA seats, respectively.
3. Grounds for impeachment shall consist of the following:
  - a) Exceeding the allowable unexcused absences
  - b) Incompetence
  - c) Misconduct of duty, including misfeasance and nonfeasance
  - d) Mismanagement or misuse of funds
  - e) Intentional violation of this Constitution or the Standing Rules
4. Any three (3) members of the SGC may present charges against a member of the SGC and must file them with a member of the executive board.
5. Any SEBS student may present charges against a member of the SGC by presenting a petition of at least fifty (50) SEBS students, and must file said charges with the Internal Affairs Committee.

**IV. Article IV: Referendum:**

**A. Section 1: Referendum**

1. A referendum is a majority vote by the general student body of SEBS and it shall serve the purpose of resolving decisions of the highest degree. A referendum may challenge a course of action or decision proposed by any division of student government and pose nonbinding public questions to the SEBS student body.

**B. Section 2: Procedure**

1. A referendum question shall be verbally proposed and submitted to a ballot through one of the following ways:
  - a) A vote of at least two thirds (2/3) majority of the voting council **or**
  - b) a petition for said question by at least ten percent of the total number of SEBS students
2. All regulations and inquiries pertaining to a referendum administered by the SEBS Governing Council shall be approved by a majority vote of council members. Once a question is approved, it is no longer eligible for revision.
3. A referendum must be clearly and explicitly explained as to be understood by students who have no prior knowledge of the question. Furthermore, the result of a referendum shall only be valid if at least ten percent current SEBS student participate in the question.

**V. Article V: Constitutional Amendments**

**A. Section 1: Amendment Procedure**

1. Any member of the SGC may submit an amendment to this constitution. Amendments must be submitted in writing to a member of the executive board, which may prepare the amendment for the executive committee.
2. Once approved by the executive committee the amendments will be introduced to the general body for debate.
3. Amendments will be debated at the next general body meeting.
4. Amendments must be approved by the SGC by a majority vote.
5. The petition must be certified by the Council and may then be submitted to the students in the manner provided in Article IV.

**B. Section 2: Amendment by Referendum**

1. Shall follow the referendum procedure outlined in Article IV
2. Once approved by the SGC the amendments will be submitted to the SEBS

student body for a referendum vote that requires twenty percent (20%) or more of the total number of the SEBS undergraduate students, as determined by the Office of the New Brunswick Registrar

3. The petition must be submitted to a member of the executive board and may then be submitted to the students in the manner provided in Article IV.

**VI. Article VI: Standing Rules**

**A. Section 1: Establishment of Standing Rules**

1. There will be the establishment of a group of Standing Rules that will govern procedures involving the Council, committees, and members in their responsibilities.
2. The Standing Rules shall be a single body of rules that may be specific to, but not limited to, one position, committee, or activity.

**B. Section 2: Constitutionality of Standing Rules**

1. All Standing Rules established by the Council must agree with rules defined by this Constitution. When reviewing proposed Standing Rules, the Internal Affairs Committee must ensure that these rules are allowable under this Constitution.
2. If the Internal Affairs Committee deems an existing Standing Rule to be unconstitutional after the approval of the Council, then the Internal Affairs Committee may propose an alteration or deletion of the rule in order to make it constitutional.

**C. Section 3: Proposal and Alteration of Standing Rules**

1. A Standing Rule may be submitted to the Executive Board by any member of the Council. The Internal Affairs Committee will write and propose the rule to the Council within one council meeting of the rule request. There will be a vote by the Council on the proposed rule no later than one meeting after the Internal Affairs Committee's proposal.
2. A proposed Standing Rule requires a 2/3 Council vote of those present to be officiated.