

STUDENT SENATE BY-LAWS

I. ARTICLE I: STUDENT SENATE AUTHORITY AND PROCEDURE	4
A. Authority of Student Senate	4
B. Quorum Required	4
C. Voting Thresholds	4
D. Mechanisms for Harassment	4
E. Recordkeeping	5
II. ARTICLE II: STUDENT SENATE COMMITTEES	5
A. Committee Reporting Requirements	5
B. Standing Committees	5
1. THE BUDGET COMMITTEE	5
a) Budget Committee Overview:	5
b) Budget Committee Chair:	5
c) Budget Procedures:	5
d) Application for Funds:	6
e) Allocation:	6
f) Distribution of Funds:	6
g) Appeals Process:	6
h) Other Funding Requests:	7
i) Access to Information:	7
2. THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE	7
a) Community Action Committee Overview:	7
b) Community Action Committee Chair:	7
c) Voting on Future Administration:	7
3. THE CONSTITUTION & STUDENT ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION COMMITTEE	8
a) Constitution & Student Organization Recognition Committee Overview:	8
b) Constitution & Student Organization Recognition Committee Chair:	8
4. THE GRADUATION COMMITTEE	8
a) Graduation Committee Overview:	8
b) Graduation Committee Co-Chairs:	8
c) Graduation Committee Members:	8
d) Graduation (Non-Student) Speaker:	9
e) J.D. and LL.M/J.S.D. Graduation Student Speakers:	9
f) Graduation Student Speaker Selection Process:	9

g) Graduation Ceremony Format:	9
5. THE HOUSING AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE	9
a) Housing and Facilities Committee Overview:	9
b) Housing and Facilities Committee Chair:	9
6. THE ORIENTATION AND ADMITTED STUDENTS COMMITTEE	10
a) Orientation and Admitted Students Committee Overview:	10
b) Orientation and Admitted Students Committee Chair:	10
7. THE STUDENT LIFE AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE	10
a) Student Life and Social Activities Committee Overview:	10
b) Student Life and Social Activities Committee Chair:	10
8. THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE	10
a) Sustainability Committee Overview:	10
b) Sustainability Committee Chair:	10
9. THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE	10
a) Committee Overview:	10
b) Committee Chair:	10
10. THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE	11
a) Committee Overview:	11
b) Committee Chair:	11
c) Committee Responsibilities:	11
III. ARTICLE III: TERMS OF OFFICE	12
A. Attendance Requirements:	12
B. Excused Absences:	12
C. Unexcused Absences:	12
IV. ARTICLE VI: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES	12
A. Budget Proposal and Approval Process:	12
B. Allocation of Approved Funds:	12
C. Private Instrument:	13
D. Reporting Violations:	13
V. ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA	13
A. Election Commission Authority:	13
B. Voting and Voting Threshold:	13
C. Tabulation of Ballots:	13
D. Announcement of Results and Recount Requests:	13
E. Certification of Results:	14
VI. ARTICLE VI: REQUIREMENTS OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS	14
A. Purpose:	14

B. Guidelines:	14
1. Beneficial Purpose:	14
2. Constitution:	14
3. Membership:	14
4. Leadership:	15
5. Non-Discrimination Policy:	15
6. Budget Guidelines:	15
7. Political Fundraising:	15
8. Commercial Activity:	15
9. Mandatory Meetings:	15
10. Compliance:	15
11. Non-Senate Recognition:	15
C. Recognition Process:	16
1. Recognition of New Organizations or Organizations Submitting Revised Constitution or By-Laws:	16
a) Submission of Documents:	16
b) Approval:	16
c) Appeal:	17
2. Automatic Renewal of Recognition for Currently Recognized Organizations:	17
D. Grievance and Revocation of Recognition:	17
1. Accountability:	17
2. Grounds for Penalty:	18
3. Other Authorities:	18
4. Grievance Procedure:	18
a) Standing:	18
b) Investigation:	18
c) Dismissal:	18
d) Conformity:	18
e) Hearing:	18
f) Penalty:	19
g) Bad Faith:	19
h) Term of Penalty:	19
E. Entering Defunct Status:	19
1. Deadline for Recognition Requests:	19
2. Suspension of Account:	19
a) Groups That Fail to Meet Recognition Deadline:	19
b) Groups That Are Affirmatively Denied Recognition:	20
3. Repossession of Funds:	20

a) Student Activity Fee Funds:	20
b) Other Funds:	20
4. Successor Groups:	20
5. Other Privileges:	20
VII. ARTICLE VII: PUBLISHING ADVOCACY STATEMENTS AND CIRCULATING PETITIONS	21
A. Purpose:	21
B. Guidelines:	21
1. General:	21
2. Issues Requiring Expediency:	21

I. ARTICLE I: STUDENT SENATE AUTHORITY AND PROCEDURE

A. Authority of Student Senate

The Student Senate's (hereafter, "**the Student Senate**") authority is governed by these Student Senate By-Laws (hereinafter, "**these By-Laws**") and the Student Senate Constitution (hereafter, "**the Student Senate Constitution**"). The Student Senate may consider, among other things, budget, Law School student organization (hereinafter, "**student organization**") recognition, and student advocacy issues.

B. Quorum Required

All meetings of the Student Senate shall require a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the Student Senate. If quorum is not met, the meeting may continue but no voting shall take place and any items of significance must be shared with the Student Senate at large.

C. Voting Thresholds

Votes of the Student Senate shall pass if supported by a majority of Senators present at a meeting at which a quorum exists, except when the Student Senate Constitution or these By-Laws require a higher percentage. For the avoidance of doubt or confusion, each Senator present at a meeting at which quorum exists can either vote: "Yes," "No," or "Abstain." For a measure to pass, the "Yes" votes must constitute a majority of members present at a meeting at which a quorum exists.

D. Mechanisms for Harassment

Any forms of harassment against Senators relating to Student Senate business should be reported to the Student Senate President and/or Executive Board members, who will share the complaint with the President. The President must make good faith efforts to address concerns.

E. Recordkeeping

Senate shall make good faith efforts to publish at the beginning of the semester, and maintain throughout, a folder where students can access ongoing meeting agendas, meeting minutes, meeting schedules, attendance records, official Student Senate documents, and any official materials (club approval, resolutions, budget materials) voted on by Student Senate.

II. ARTICLE II: STUDENT SENATE COMMITTEES

A. Committee Reporting Requirements

From time to time, the Chair or a Co-Chair of each internal Student Senate Committee and the University Senator shall report to the Student Senate on relevant matters before their respective Student Senate Committee or representative body at a Regular Meeting of the Student Senate.

B. Standing Committees

The Student Senate shall have the following ten (10) standing committees: (1) The Budget Committee; (2) The Community Action Committee; (3) The Constitution and Student Organization Recognition Committee; (4) The Graduation Committee; (5) The Housing and Facilities Committee; (6) The Orientation and Admitted Students Committee; (7) The Social Committee; (8) The Sustainability Committee; (9) The Wellness Committee; and (10) The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

1. THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

a) *Budget Committee Overview:*

The Budget Committee shall allocate and distribute the funds generated by the Student Activity Fee to student organizations.

b) *Budget Committee Chair:*

The Student Senate Treasurer shall serve as the Chair of the Budget Committee.

c) *Budget Procedures:*

Before the budgeting process begins, the Treasurer shall finalize and present to the Executive Board the detailed procedures that will be used by the Budget Committee to allocate funds to student organizations and the structure of the standardized forms that will be used as funding applications and funding appeals.

STUDENT SENATE

- d) *Application for Funds:*
At the beginning of each semester, the Budget Committee shall solicit funding requests from all recognized student organizations. Each student organization shall be informed of the application and appeals process. This information shall include the standards that the Budget Committee will follow in allocating funds. The Budget Committee shall distribute a standard funding request form to be used as the application for funding by every student organization requesting funds. The recognized student organizations shall be given at least one week after notification to submit funding applications.
- e) *Allocation:*
In drafting an allocation budget proposal, the Budget Committee shall consider, among other things, the size of the organization, its past performance, its fiscal responsibility, whether or not it receives funds from other sources, whether or not its programs will be held at the Law School, and the impact of the student organization's events and programs on the Law School community. The Committee shall not discriminate against student organizations on the basis of their political, social or religious goals or beliefs. The Budget Committee shall not allocate funds to any student organization that is not open to every member of the Law School community, nor shall it allocate funds to any event that is not open to every member of the Law School community. Student organizations and individuals receiving funds from the Student Senate shall be under an obligation to publicize all events of the student organization in a manner reasonably calculated to give notice to all members of the Law School community.
- f) *Distribution of Funds:*
Following the Budget Committee's approval of the allocation budget proposal, the Treasurer shall distribute the allocated funds to each student organization. All student organizations receiving funding from the Student Senate shall be required to keep receipts of their expenses and an accurate ledger.
- g) *Appeals Process:*
After the Budget Committee approves the allocation budget proposal, the Treasurer shall notify student organizations of their funding allocation (including informing a student organization that they will not be receiving any funding). If a student organization is dissatisfied with its allocation (including an allocation of zero dollars (\$0)), the student organization may appeal to the Budget Committee by submitting a revised funding request. If the revised funding request also does not result in a change in the funding allocation from the Budget Committee, the student organization may appeal to the Student Senate. The appeal must be made within one week of the notification of the funding amount and considered

STUDENT SENATE

by the Student Senate at the next Regular meeting. The appeal shall be made on the standard appeals form that shall be made available by the Treasurer. After the Student Senate considers and votes upon all appeals submitted pursuant to this section, the funding allocation (including an allocation of zero dollars (\$0)) shall be final.

h) *Other Funding Requests:*

During the semester, the Budget Committee shall be convened to hear new requests for funding from new and currently-recognized student organizations on an ad-hoc basis. The Student Senate Treasurer shall promptly disclose all such disbursements to the full Student Senate. Student organizations that receive funding under this subsection shall be subject to the same standards and auditing procedures as those student organizations receiving funding during the Fall and Spring budget cycles.

i) *Access to Information:*

The budget process shall be open to student scrutiny. The Budget Committee shall publicize and explain the budgetary process. Budget Committee meetings shall be closed, but the Committee must keep substantive records.

2. THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

a) *Community Action Committee Overview:*

The Community Action Committee shall function as the Student Senate provider of community-related activities, including organizing at least one blood drive each academic year and the annual Dean's Cup event. The Community Action Committee shall consist of at least three members. The Chair of the committee shall represent the Student Senate in any public interest coalitions and discussions.

b) *Community Action Committee Chair:*

The Student Senate Secretary shall serve as the Chair of the Community Action Committee and shall represent the Student Senate in any public interest coalitions and discussions.

c) *Voting on Future Administration:*

The Community Action committee, in consultation with the Student Senate Executive Board and relevant administrators, will oversee the administration of the Student Senate Spring Break Service Fund. Established in March 2024, the Student Senate Spring Break Service Fund will assist future years with reducing out of pocket expenses for spring break service opportunities by providing grants to students. Grant distribution will be limited to \$17,500 per year, unless additional funding is secured. The Committee has the authority to create application forms,

STUDENT SENATE

rules, or guidelines to implement and safeguard the fund's sustainability over time. These guidelines and rules should be presented to Student Senate before Spring break each year. Fund updates should be presented after Spring Break each year.

3. THE CONSTITUTION & STUDENT ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

a) *Constitution & Student Organization Recognition Committee Overview:*

The Constitution and Student Organization Recognition Committee shall be responsible for proposing amendments to the Student Senate Constitution and these By-Laws and, as necessary, working with the Election Commission, as described in Article V, to establish the process and schedule for the Student Senate and Student Body to vote on a given constitutional referendum. The Constitution and Student Organization Recognition Committee shall also be responsible for implementing the student organization guidelines and for officially recognizing student organizations as set forth in Article VI of these By-Laws.

b) *Constitution & Student Organization Recognition Committee Chair:*

The Student Senate Parliamentarian shall serve as the Chair of the Constitution Committee.

4. THE GRADUATION COMMITTEE

a) *Graduation Committee Overview:*

The Graduation Committee shall be responsible for working with the Law School Administration (hereinafter, "the Administration") to coordinate all activities of the graduating class (including both the 3L and LL.M/J.S.D. classes) relating to commencement, including, but not limited to, the selection of the graduation speaker.

b) *Graduation Committee Co-Chairs:*

Two (2) 3L or LL.M students, at least one of which must be a Senator, shall serve as the Co-Chairs of the Graduation Committee. The Co-Chairs shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board and, if possible, the outgoing Co-Chairs.

c) *Graduation Committee Members:*

The Student Senate President shall issue a widely publicized email for members of the Graduation Committee. Students interested in serving shall submit a candidacy statement. The number and identity of Graduation Committee members shall be determined by the Student Senate President and the Co-chairs of the Graduation Committee no later than October 15th. All members are subject to removal for cause as provided in Article III(6) of the Student Senate Constitution.

STUDENT SENATE

- d) *Graduation (Non-Student) Speaker:*
The procedure for selecting the non-student graduation speaker shall be as open and participatory as possible. The Graduation Committee shall ask all students to submit suggestions for possible speakers. The call for speaker suggestions will be widely publicized. Suggestions will be taken during a time period sufficiently long to allow students to participate. Students may include, with their suggestions, reasons for suggesting a particular speaker and any other information that might aid the Graduation Committee in selecting a speaker.
- e) *J.D. and LL.M./J.S.D. Graduation Student Speakers:*
Two (2) graduating students shall be elected to speak at the graduation ceremony: one (1) of the student speakers shall be a graduating J.D. student chosen by graduating J.D. students, and one (1) of the student speakers shall be a graduating LL.M. or J.S.D. student chosen by graduating LL.M. and J.S.D. students. For the avoidance of doubt or confusion, J.D. students will not vote to select the LL.M. speaker, and LL.M. and J.S.D. students will not vote to select the J.D. speaker.
- f) *Graduation Student Speaker Selection Process:*
The graduation student speaker selection process shall be determined by the Graduation Committee and shall include, at a minimum, open self-nominations, a primary election, and a final election.
- g) *Graduation Ceremony Format:*
At least four (4) weeks in advance of graduation day, the Graduation Committee shall determine the details of the speaking format, which shall include that each graduation student speaker shall be permitted to speak for up to five (5) minutes on any topic befitting a law school graduation ceremony.

5. THE HOUSING AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

- a) *Housing and Facilities Committee Overview:*
The Housing and Facilities Committee shall be responsible for serving as a liaison and source of information on housing and building facilities issues between the student body, the Administration, and the University housing offices.
- b) *Housing and Facilities Committee Chair:*
One (1) Senator shall serve as the Chair of the Housing and Facilities Committee. The Chair shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

STUDENT SENATE

6. THE ORIENTATION AND ADMITTED STUDENTS COMMITTEE
 - a) *Orientation and Admitted Students Committee Overview:*

The Orientation and Admitted Students Committee shall be responsible for coordinating orientation events and programs for entering first-year and LL.M students as well as planning Student Senate related activities during the Admitted Students Programs in the Spring Semester.
 - b) *Orientation and Admitted Students Committee Chair:*

One (1) 2L Senator and one (1) 3L Senator shall serve as the Co-Chairs of the Orientation and Admitted Students Committee. The Co-Chairs shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board and, if possible, the outgoing Committee Co-Chairs.

7. THE STUDENT LIFE AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
 - a) *Student Life and Social Activities Committee Overview:*

The Student Life and Social Activities Committee shall organize and publicize all of the Student Senate’s social events, which may include a Welcome Back Bash at the start of the Fall Semester, a Halloween party, a Valentine’s Day party, and Barrister’s Ball during the Spring Semester.
 - b) *Student Life and Social Activities Committee Chair:*

The Student Senate Vice President shall serve as the Chair of the Student Life and Social Activities Committee.

8. THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
 - a) *Sustainability Committee Overview:*

The Sustainability Committee shall be responsible for organizing events and supporting advocacy initiatives related to environmental sustainability on the CLS campus.
 - b) *Sustainability Committee Chair:*

One (1) Senator shall serve as the Chair of the Sustainability Committee. The Chair shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

9. THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE
 - a) *Committee Overview:*

The Wellness Committee shall be responsible for organizing events and programming to promote student health and well-being at CLS.
 - b) *Committee Chair:*

One (1) Senator shall serve as the Chair of the Wellness Committee. The Chair shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

10. THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

a) *Committee Overview:*

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shall be responsible for serving as an advocate for the furtherance of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University. They shall serve as a liaison and source of information on issues between the student body, the faculty, the administration, and other members of the University community.

b) *Committee Chair:*

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shall have one (1) J.D. Senator and one (1) L.L.M. Senator serving as Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs shall be appointed by the Student Senate President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

When the Executive Board is reviewing candidates for appointment, their consideration shall take into account, but not be limited to, the following:

the candidate's history of commitment to advocacy on behalf of diverse and/or marginalized communities;

the candidate's ideas for furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the University community.

c) *Committee Responsibilities:*

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee tasks shall include, but shall not be limited to:

serving as the primary connection between Student Senate, the administration, the student body, and other student organizations on subjects that relate to the furtherance of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Columbia Law School;

advising the Student Senate's response to incidents both within and outside the Columbia Law School community, insofar as they pertain to issues or topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion;

initiating and facilitating periodic town hall meetings with student leaders designed to understand, respond to, and advocate for student concerns—at least one per semester;

liaising with student representatives on faculty committees regarding initiatives related to inclusive pedagogy and anti-racism at Columbia Law School.

III. ARTICLE III: TERMS OF OFFICE

A. Attendance Requirements:

Attendance is required at all Regular, Special or Emergency Student Senate meetings, internal Student Senate Committee meetings, and other events or meetings designated as compulsory as provided in Article VI(4) of the Student Senate Constitution. Three unexcused absences or ten total absences by any Senator in a single academic year may result in the Executive Board's review of the Senator's continued membership in the Student Senate as provided in Article III(6) of the Student Senate Constitution.

B. Excused Absences:

A Senator's absence shall be excused only when notice of the absence is given to the Student Senate Secretary before the event or meeting to be missed or, if advance notice is not possible, as soon as practicable thereafter. Valid excuses include, but are not limited to: a scheduled class or review session, illnesses and personal emergencies, or job interviews. Questions of excusability shall be decided by the Executive Board.

C. Unexcused Absences:

Three (3) unexcused absences or ten (10) total absences by any Senator in a single academic year may result in the Executive Board's review of the Senator's continued membership in the Student Senate as provided in Article III(6) of the Student Senate Constitution. Questions of excusability shall be decided by the Executive Board.

IV. ARTICLE VI: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

A. Budget Proposal and Approval Process:

The Treasurer, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, shall propose an initial annual or Fall Semester budget proposal to be reviewed and approved by the full Student Senate at the very first Student Senate meeting of the Fall Semester, or at the very first meeting of the Fall and Spring Semesters should the Treasurer, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, opt to propose budgets on a semesterly basis. The budget shall be approved by the Student Senate pursuant to Article VI(8) of the Student Senate Constitution and Article I of these By-Laws.

B. Allocation of Approved Funds:

The budget proposal should clearly state the amount of funds allocated to each committee or Student Senate initiative. The funds allocated to a Student Senate Committee shall be under the purview of the Committee Chair or Co-Chairs. Any funds not specifically allocated to a Student Senate Committee (e.g., Special Projects fund, Retreat, etc.) shall fall under the purview of the Executive Board.

- C. **Private Instrument:**
No person shall cause Student Senate funds to inure to their own benefit, except as reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the Student Senate and in furtherance of its purposes.
- D. **Reporting Violations:**
Any Senator who becomes aware of a potential violation of this section must bring the violation to the attention of the full Student Senate at the next meeting.

V. ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

- A. **Election Commission Authority:**
The Election Commission shall administer constitutional referenda and all elections of Student Senators and the Law School's representative or representatives to the University Senate (the "University Senator"). The Election Commission may prescribe rules consistent with these By-Laws and the Student Senate Constitution that are necessary to ensure an orderly election process. A majority of Commissioners shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, certify results, and adjudicate disputes under Article IV(4) of the Student Senate Constitution. The Student Senate may reverse a decision of the Election Commission by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present at a meeting at which quorum exists.
- B. **Voting and Voting Threshold:**
Eligible voters may vote only once in a Student Senate Election or constitutional referendum. A plurality of votes shall be sufficient to elect Senators. Election of the Law School's representative to the University Senate (hereinafter, "**University Senator**") shall be governed by the relevant University Statutes and University Senate Elections Code.
- C. **Tabulation of Ballots:**
Tabulation shall be performed either by the Office of Student Services or by members of the Election Commission in a secure manner, and may not commence until all voting has ended.
- D. **Announcement of Results and Recount Requests:**
The Election Commission shall announce the detailed results of Student Senate Presidential election and constitutional referendum to the entire student body within two (2) working days after all voting has ended. Furthermore, detailed results for elections directed by Student Senate Standing Committees shall be made available upon request. Within twenty-four hours after results are announced, any candidate may request a recount, which shall be completed within twenty-four hours thereafter.

E. **Certification of Results:**

Within twenty-four hours after the recount request deadline, the Election Commission shall certify in writing that the referendum or election was held in accordance with the Student Senate Constitution and these By-Laws and that the results are correct and accurate. The certified tabulation shall be retained by the Student Senate Parliamentarian and entered into the Student Senate's permanent records.

VI. ARTICLE VI: REQUIREMENTS OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

A. **Purpose:**

The Columbia Law School Student Senate (“**the Student Senate**”) seeks to encourage the existence of a diverse offering of activities and associations that augment a student's law school experience. Student organizations provide important opportunities to students during their law school careers to participate in interesting events and projects and exercise positions of leadership that may both enrich and enlighten their Columbia legal education.

B. **Guidelines:**

A recognized student organization shall be responsible at all times for following the guidelines set forth in this subsection (collectively, the “**Guidelines**”), the violation of which may subject the student organization to penalties determined at the reasonable discretion of the Student Senate, including, but not limited to, the revocation of recognition or Student Senate funding.

1. **Beneficial Purpose:**

The purpose of the student organization shall be sufficiently related to the law school community and sufficiently unrelated to the purpose of any other recognized organization so as to offer a distinct benefit to a substantial number of law school students. Activities of the organization shall benefit the Law School community.

2. **Constitution:**

All recognized student organizations shall adopt an official constitution. The student organization's constitution and any amendments or by-laws thereto shall be ratified by its membership. At a minimum, the constitution shall explicitly state the following: (a) the organization's name; (b) the organization's purpose; (c) the requirements for membership and leadership; (d) the procedure for selecting and removing leadership; (e) the duties of leadership; (f) the procedure for arriving at decisions; and (g) the Non-Discrimination Policy set forth below in Article VI(B)(5).

3. **Membership:**

Membership shall be open and limited to all Columbia Law School students, but may be conditioned upon certain reasonable criteria not in violation of the

Non-Discrimination Policy set forth below in Article VI(B)(5).

4. **Leadership:**
Leadership shall consist of those members elected or otherwise selected according to the student organization's constitution to organize and direct the student organization. Leadership must include at least two (2) non graduating J.D. students. The leadership shall be responsible to the Student Senate for adherence to the Guidelines and shall otherwise remain answerable for the activities of the student organization.
5. **Non-Discrimination Policy:**
Membership and leadership shall be open to all Columbia Law School students without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, political affiliation, or the general exercise of a student's right of free speech or association. Any student organization or group which selects a team to participate in an organized competitive activity is deemed to have a membership and leadership which is open to the entire student body so long as all students are allowed to apply or tryout for membership on the team.
6. **Budget Guidelines:**
The student organization shall utilize any funds allocated to it by the Student Senate in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Student Senate's Budget Committee.
7. **Political Fundraising:**
The student organization shall not give any funding from the Student Senate to political parties, PACS, or political campaigns, nor shall such funds be used in connection with fundraising activities to support political parties, PACS, or political campaigns.
8. **Commercial Activity:**
An activity shall not be carried out for the pecuniary benefit of its members.
9. **Mandatory Meetings:**
The leadership of the student organization shall be responsible for sending at least one representative to all mandatory meetings pertaining to student organizations called by either the Student Senate or Office of Student Services.
10. **Compliance:**
The organization shall not violate any relevant University or Law School regulations, or any applicable federal, state, or local law.
11. **Non-Senate Recognition:**
Any recognized student organization becomes subject to the supervision and

authority of the Student Senate and may not seek or retain recognition by any other division or office of the University.

C. Recognition Process:

Any group of Columbia Law School students desiring recognition by the Student Senate as a student organization must petition according to the procedures set forth under this subsection. Any decisions made by the Student Organization Recognition Committee (“the Committee”) or the Student Senate to confer or deny recognition shall be based solely on the Guidelines set forth in this section above and the procedures set forth below.

1. Recognition of New Organizations or Organizations Submitting Revised Constitution or By-Laws:

Any organization not currently recognized by the Student Senate must apply for recognition under this subsection.

Any approved organizations that have altered their constitution or by-laws since their last submission to the Student Senate must submit changes to The Constitution and Student Organization Recognition Committee for approval. Any substantial changes made to club constitutions must be approved by Senate vote through the recognition procedures under this subsection. Substantial changes are determined at the discretion of the parliamentarian with advisement of the constitutional committee but include non-grammatical changes to the purpose or meaning of a club, changing of voting mechanisms, and changes of club membership requirements.

a) *Submission of Documents:*

Recognition of a student organization under this subsection is contingent upon timely submission of the following to the Senate Parliamentarian:

- (1) A constitution meeting the requirements under Article VI(B)(2) above.
- (2) The names and email addresses of at least twelve (12) current members, including at least two (2) leaders responsible for the organization’s finances and record keeping as well as at least two (2) non-graduating J.D. students. The Committee may waive any part of this requirement upon a group’s showing that its beneficial purpose does not require a standing membership.
- (3) A completed application for recognition, as provided by the Student Senate.

b) *Approval:*

Except as provided under Article VI(C)(1)(c) for appeal, recognition shall be contingent upon the favorable recommendation of the Committee

followed by majority approval of the Student Senate.

c) *Appeal:*

An organization failing to receive a favorable recommendation from the Committee shall be notified of this decision and permitted at least one opportunity to submit a revised application. If the revised application also fails to receive a favorable recommendation from the Committee, the organization may appeal to the Student Senate, which may confer recognition pursuant to Article VI(8) of the Senate Constitution and Article I of these By-Laws.

2. Automatic Renewal of Recognition for Currently Recognized Organizations:

Any student organization currently recognized by the Student Senate that has not altered its constitution or by-laws since its last submission to the Student Senate shall have its recognition automatically renewed upon annual submission of the following to the Student Senate Parliamentarian:

- (1) The names and email addresses of at least two (2) leaders responsible for the organization's finances and record keeping as well as at least two (2) non-graduating J.D. students.
- (2) An affirmation that the organization's documents are unchanged since their last submission to the Student Senate and that the organization will continue to abide by them.
 - (a) If the organization's documents have been changed, the annual submission must include the updated documents. Failure to submit these documents may result in non-recognition by the Student Senate.
 - (b) The Student Parliamentarian may conduct a periodic audit of student organizations' documents, and finding them missing or inconsistent with these By-Laws or the Student Senate Constitution, may require resubmission of documents for approval. Failure to resubmit documents by the subsequent recognition deadline will result in a club being considered inactive.

D. Grievance and Revocation of Recognition:

1. Accountability:

A recognized student organization shall be held accountable by the Student Senate for its adherence to both its own constitution and by-laws and the Guidelines under Article VI(B) (collectively, the "**Governing Documents**"). This subsection provides for a grievance procedure to enforce such accountability.

STUDENT SENATE

2. **Grounds for Penalty:**
A recognized student organization may have its recognition denied or revoked, or be subject to penalty specified by the Committee, either for failure to meet the requirements for recognition under Article VI(C)(1) or (C)(2), or, in the alternative, through the process described herein.
3. **Other Authorities:**
Notwithstanding any penalties assessed by the Student Senate, members of an organization, as well as students submitting perjured grievances, may remain subject to sanctions from other bodies, such as the University, the Law School, or the Attorney's Bar.
4. **Grievance Procedure:**
 - a) ***Standing:***
Any student currently enrolled at Columbia Law School may submit to the Student Senate a grievance against a recognized organization alleging a violation of the Governing Documents.
 - b) ***Investigation:***
Upon notice of grievance, the Committee shall investigate and determine the merit of such grievance.
 - c) ***Dismissal:***
If the Committee determines the grievance to be without merit, it may dismiss the complaint without approval by the Student Senate. However, the complaining student may appeal any such decision to the Student Senate, which may either dismiss the complaint or require the Committee to reconsider the grievance pursuant to the procedures outlined below. The decision upon appeal to the Student Senate shall be final and binding.
 - d) ***Conformity:***
If the Committee determines the grounds for such grievance are of merit, the Committee shall first meet with the accused student organization in an effort to resolve any such noncompliance. The student organization may remedy its noncompliance either by agreeing to conform its practices to the Governing Documents and make necessary reparations, if any, or, where such noncompliance does not otherwise violate the Guidelines, by revising the constitution or by-laws of the student organization. Any such alteration of the organization's constitution or by-laws, however, shall subject the organization to the recognition procedure described under Article VI(C)(1).
 - e) ***Hearing:***
If the student organization denies the validity of the grievance, which, if accurate, would otherwise be of merit, the Committee shall hear from

STUDENT SENATE

both the student organization and the complaining student and shall reach a determination based upon the testimony of the parties and a preponderance of the evidence, if any. Following such determination of the merits of the grievance, the Committee shall make its own recommendation for resolution, which may include dismissal of the grievance, revocation of the student organization's recognition, or other reasonably appropriate penalty.

f) *Penalty:*

If the Committee determines the complaint to be of merit, it may recommend a reasonably appropriate penalty to the Student Senate, which may invoke such penalty or fashion a more appropriate penalty by a majority of Senators present at a meeting at which a quorum exists, which decision shall be final and binding. The accused student organization shall have the right to plead its case before the Student Senate before such a vote is taken.

g) *Bad Faith:*

If at any time the Committee or the Student Senate believes an organization to be acting in bad faith during this procedure, such bad-faith action may submit the organization to additional penalty.

h) *Term of Penalty:*

A determination by the Student Senate to revoke recognition of a student organization shall remain in effect for the academic year in which such determination is made. The student organization for which recognition is revoked shall be permitted to reapply for recognition in the following academic year(s). However, in deciding on such a student organization's application for recognition, the Committee and the Student Senate may consider any prior adverse decisions against the organization.

E. **Entering Defunct Status:**

1. **Deadline for Recognition Requests:**

In coordination with the Senate's Budget Committee, the Chair of the Recognition Committee shall set a recognition deadline. Student groups may apply for belated recognition at any time during the semester.

2. **Suspension of Account:**

Student Services shall suspend the account of any previously recognized student organization that fails to be recognized at the recognition deadline in a given Fall Semester. These groups shall be considered defunct:

a) *Groups That Fail to Meet Recognition Deadline:*

If a student organization fails to be recognized due to a failure to meet the Fall deadline, its account shall remain in suspension for three semesters, at

STUDENT SENATE

which point it is considered fully defunct. If the student organization is recognized again at any time during these three semesters, it shall immediately regain access to its account.

b) *Groups That Are Affirmatively Denied Recognition:*

If a student organization fails to be recognized due to an affirmative denial by the Committee, its account shall remain in suspension for five (5) semesters, at which point it is considered fully defunct. If the student group is recognized again at any time during these five semesters, it shall immediately regain access to its account.

3. **Repossession of Funds:**

Once a previously recognized student organization is fully and finally disbanded according to Article VI(E)(2), Student Services shall repossess any funds contained in the student organization's account.

a) *Student Activity Fee Funds:*

Repossessioned funds shall first be used to satisfy the disbanded student organization's debt, if any. Any such funds remaining thereafter shall be returned to the Student Senate.

b) *Other Funds:*

All other funds remaining in the disbanded student organization's account shall be disposed of by Student Services, in consultation with the Student Senate. Where appropriate, such funds may be used to satisfy the disbanded organization's debt, if any, in lieu of or in conjunction with any funds identified by Article VI(E)(3)(a) above.

4. **Successor Groups:**

If the Committee has reason to believe that a previously recognized student organization has reconstituted under a new name in order to avoid an incurred debt, it may affirmatively deny recognition. The burden shall be on the organization seeking recognition to show that its mission and target population are sufficiently different from the previously recognized student organization.

5. **Other Privileges:**

As soon as a student organization becomes fully and finally disbanded according to Article VI(E)(2), the Office of Student Services shall ensure that the student organization no longer has access to its Student Organization News and Information ("SONI") email account.

VII. ARTICLE VII: PUBLISHING ADVOCACY STATEMENTS AND CIRCULATING PETITIONS

A. Purpose:

The Columbia Law School Student Senate (“the Student Senate”) advocates for student interests, pursuant to Section 2(B) of Article I of the Constitution. This may include, but is not limited to, publishing advocacy statements, petitions, or other communications (“statements”) that are likely to reflect the values and interests of the student body. The purpose of such statements is to amplify the collective voice of the students of Columbia Law School.

B. Guidelines:

1. General:

The Student Senate may take formal advocacy positions and circulate statements to the student body when one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) quorum is established in a meeting, and the statement is approved by a majority of Senators present.

2. Issues Requiring Expediency:

If all, or all but one, E-board members determine that the statement requires expedited consideration, then they may open a digital discussion for at least twelve (12) hours, not including 10pm to 7am, followed by a digital vote of all the Senators for at least eighteen (18) hours. The Student Senate may digitally vote to take formal advocacy positions if the majority of the Executive Board and at least three (3) other senators have confirmed the statement is ready for a vote, one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of Senators participate, and if the statement is approved by at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of participating Senators.

Amended April 2, 2024