

Bill Number: F-06-08-01 Referred to Executive Committee

Final Vote: _____ Committee Recommendation: Positive

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Dean of Student Life: Dee Siscoe Student Senate Chair: Lulu Seikaly

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CONVENTION
FOR THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATING AND AMENDING THE
STUDENT BODY CONSTITUTION**

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5 WHEREAS the Student Body Constitution is the preeminent document that
6 assures students of a voice within the administrative structure, and
7 that governs the operations of the Student Senate, and
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9 AWARE that the process for amending the Student Body Constitution is
10 both time-consuming and is not conducive to facilitate massive
11 changes or updates, and
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13 NOTING that several provisions of the Student Body Constitution read as
14 they did identically thirty-six years ago, and
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16 COGNIZANT that over the course of the past thirty-five years, the Student
17 Senate’s position in relation to the university has gone through
18 several changes: notably the collapse of joint governance and the
19 addition of a student representative to the Board of Trustees, and
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21 FURTHER AWARE that these changes have rendered portions of our Constitution
22 antiquated and obsolete, and
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24 OBSERVING that the following areas of the Constitution are either inconsistent
25 with our historical practices, inconsistent with other Student Senate
26 documents, inaccurately or inadequately describe our functions:
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- 28 (1) Article II, Section 2, Subsection 4 of the Student Body
29 Constitution articulates that the Senate will review the
30 annual budget of the University, while only once in
31 recent history has the Senate viewed only a skeletal
32 version of the official budget of the University in a
33 procedure that could hardly be referred to as
34 “reviewing,”
35 (2) Student Body Officers have no attendance policy, as do
36 all other members of the Student Senate, but are subject
37 to submitting official absence excuses,
38 (3) the Student Senate Officers, voting members, may not
39 vote for the Speaker of the Senate (despite historically

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- being approved before the Speaker is elected),
according to Article II, Section 3, Subsection 2,
- (4) the Parliamentarian is not tasked with enforcing the Student Senate Policies & Procedures, which is an official document, according to Article II, Section 3, Subsection 3,
- (5) Also according to Article II, Section 3, Subsection 3, the Parliamentarian is supposed to chair the Research and Development Committee, a committee not referred to in any other document and has not been historically summoned,
- (6) According to Article II, Section 3, Subsection 4, the Chief of Staff is tasked with chairing the President's cabinet, although the President's duties are mainly external, and the Chief of Staff's required cooperation with the Vice President would be more sensible,
- (7) The voting status of committee chairs is unclear in Article II, Section 4, Subsection 5; as sections 9-12 specify that the Comptroller, Web Designer, general committee members, and Ad Director have no vote, while no such qualifier is put on the Committee Chairs,
- (8) The Cox School of Business' graduate students are guaranteed seats in the Student Senate, while Dedman College, Meadows School of the Arts, and the School of Engineering are not given the same guarantee,
- (9) First year students that matriculate in the spring semester and enter with more than 24 hours may hold Senate seats other than First Year Senator, while those entering in the Fall may not, based on the definition of First Year students,
- (10) The text in Article II, Section 3, Subsection 6, Subsubsection b is vague as to whether candidates are required to complete 24 credit hours cumulatively or for each semester,
- (11) The requirement in Article II, Section 3, Subsection 6, Subsubsection b imposes requirements which should be put under Article IV, Section 2,
- (12) Historically, the Student Body President has not been the agent of appointment for the general members to Student Senate standing committees, as articulated in Article III, Section 1, Subsection 6, Subsubsection a,
- (13) Historically, the Student Body President's appointments for student members to University Governance bodies have not been subject to the approval of the Student Senate, as discussed in Article III, Section 1, Subsection 6, Subsubsection c,

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- (14) Article III, Section 1, Subsection 6, Subsubsection d could be interpreted to indicate that the President should appoint a distinct Chair Pro-Tempore from the Parliamentarian, a clearer definition would be helpful,
- (15) Historically the Student Senate's budget has not been open to the Senate's amendments or access, as indicated in Article III, Section 2, Subsection 5,
- (16) There are no standards or guidance for the formulation of petitions of referendum, referenced in Article III, Section 3, Subsection 9,
- (17) First year senators' terms expire May 1, after the inauguration of the incoming Senate, according to Article IV, Section 1, Subsection 3,
- (18) There is a lack of clarity regarding whether individuals that run for one seat may be appointed to a seat from a different school (because students may run for only one seat according to Article IV, Section 2, Subsection 2),
- (19) Student Body Officer terms expire May 1, after the inauguration of the incoming Senate, according to Article IV, Section 3, Subsection 2,
- (20) No term limits are articulated for Student Senate Officers,
- (21) The term plurality is misused in Article IV, Section 3, Subsection 3,
- (22) Individuals that are in co-op programs, but are not currently taking any classes at SMU are permitted to hold office, according to Article IV, Section 3, Subsection 1, despite not being at the university to understand present student issues,
- (23) Individuals elected into one school, that transfer into another school, can retain their seat, despite not having a clear constituency, and permitting over-representation,
- (24) Students are able to be members of the Student Senate, despite having only a 2.0 Grade Point Average, while in order to be in other organizations which require substantial time commitments, higher GPAs are required (e.g. to be pledged by a Greek association, a 2.25 GPA is required),
- (25) According to the Constitution, students must be trained prior to their inauguration, although this historically has not happened for individuals that were appointed,
- (26) Legislation that would affect Special Interest Seats must be voted on within three weeks of passage in front

132 of the Student Senate, while referenda that deal with the
133 same subject must be addressed at the next general
134 election,
135 (27) Article IV, Section 5, Subsection 2, Subsubsection a
136 states “Signatures and student identification numbers
137 may be submitted through a student’s official
138 University account,” while how this process is to occur
139 is unclear at best,
140 (28) Petitions of recall, identified in Article IV, Section
141 5, Subsection 2, Subsubsection b are discussed, but
142 undefined; no requirements for recall are articulated,
143 (29) Article IV, Section 5, Subsection 2, Subsubsection b
144 should be listed under the powers of the Secretary in
145 Article III, Section 3,
146 (30) No provisions are made in Article IV, Section 5,
147 Subsection 3 for a situation where in which an interim
148 Student Body Officer refuses to hold the permanent
149 office, but no other individuals wish to run for the
150 office,
151 (31) Article V, Section 1 articulates justifications for
152 impeachment, although these justifications are vague,
153 (32) Article V, Section 2 discusses charges of
154 impeachment, while there is no discussion as to what
155 such charges should look like,
156 (33) Article V, Section 3 is antiquated, as it refers to the
157 Vice President presiding in a situation where the
158 Speaker would be the presiding officer, and
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160 **ASSERTING** that thirty-three inconsistencies in our most important document is
161 unacceptable, but
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163 **COGNIZANT** that our traditional, piecemeal method of amending the
164 Constitution effects change in only one part of the document at a
165 time, and
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167 **AWARE** that these sporadic and incomplete amendments have perpetuated
168 the problem of an inaccurate, inconsistent, and out-dated
169 constitution,
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171 **BE IT THEREFORE**
172 **RESOLVED** the SMU Student Senate summons a convention that will be tasked
173 with the express purpose of amending the Student Body
174 Constitution, and
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176 **BE IT FURTHER**

177 RESOLVED that departments and student organizations will be invited to send
178 delegates to this convention, and

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180 BE IT FURTHER

181 RESOLVED that the participating organizations will be defined by the
182 forthcoming By-Laws of this Constitutional Convention, which
183 will be presented to the Student Senate.

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185 Respectfully submitted,

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187 Benjamin D. Hatch

188 Dedman II Senator

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