

# CONSTITUTION

*of the*

## MEDICAL STUDENT POLITY

### **Preamble**

We, the medical students of the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, in order to further the welfare of the student body at this institution through student self-government, do hereby establish and ordain this Constitution for student government. The governing body shall assume the name of the Medical Student Polity, hereinafter referred to as Polity.

### **Article I.**

### **Functions of Polity**

Section I. Polity will function as the sole body of student government in the aforementioned School of Medicine, in order to govern the affairs of the student body.

Section II. More specifically, Polity exists to fulfill the following functions:

- [1] Promote more efficient communications between students and the faculty and administration of this School of Medicine
- [2] Participate in the deliberative and policy making decisions of this School of Medicine
- [3] Hold responsibility for the allocation of medical student activity fees as prescribed under State University of New York Board of Trustees, and under the Mandatory Budget Guidelines, Polity By-Laws
- [4] Establish criteria for, and provide recognition to student organizations within this School of Medicine
- [5] Coordinate other groups or committees, which represent the medical student body as a whole

### **Article II.**

### **Composition of Polity**

Section I. Polity shall be composed of all currently registered students within this School of Medicine. Hereinafter, the sum of currently registered students shall be referred to as the student body.

- Section II. Polity shall consist of a General Delegation and an Executive Board, both duly elected by and from the student body.
- Section III. The Executive Board shall oversee and direct the business of Polity, and shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- Section IV. The General Delegation shall consist of five Representatives from each of the four medical school classes of the student body.
- Section V. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in the 23 voting members of Polity. The 23 voting members shall consist of the 20 Representatives of the General Delegation, as well as the Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Executive Board.

**Article III. Legislative Powers of Voting Members of Polity**

- Section I. Make recommendations to a Dean concerning any considered changes in rules, policy and curriculum concerning medical students in the School of Medicine and the University at Buffalo at large.
- Section II. Appropriate student activity funds in accordance with guidelines prescribed by State University of New York Board of Trustees, and under the Mandatory Budget Guidelines, Polity By-Laws.
- Section III. Recognize student organizations in the School of Medicine and set forth policies governing their behavior.
- Section IV. Require, at its discretion, a report from any organization receiving appropriations from the student activity budget.
- Section V. Make rules regulating student government elections.
- Section VI. Impeach and remove from office any voting member of Polity with a two-thirds vote of the voting members.
- Section VII. Make recommendations necessary and proper to promote the general welfare of the student body.

## **Article IV.**

## **Duties of the Executive Officers and Representatives**

### Section I. President

[1] Serve as the chairperson of the Executive Board, preside at Polity meetings, and oversee all activities of Polity. The President can assume or delegate responsibilities, act as the final validator of all Polity actions, act as the liaison between the Medical School administration and the student body, and represent Polity on the Executive Committee of the School of Medicine. The President may not simultaneously hold a class representative position.

[2] Carry out the affairs of Polity in accordance with this Constitution and its By-Laws.

[3] Appoint all committees and additional officers deemed necessary and proper to conduct the business of Polity and coordinate student representation on all student-faculty-administration committees.

[4] See that all recommendations of Polity are promptly forwarded to the appropriate person, committee or office. See that all approved legislation is implemented.

[5] Compile items for and post the agenda for general meetings at least 24 hours in advance.

[6] The President is a non-voting member of Polity, but will cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie.

### Section II. Vice-President

[1] Assist the President in the performance of his or her duties.

[2] Preside at Polity meetings in the absence or incapacity of the President.

[3] Assume, upon resignation, permanent absence or other incapacity of the President, the duties of said office, for the duration of the unexpired term. In such event, a new Vice-President shall be duly elected.

[4] Coordinate the Summer Housing Weekend for incoming first year students, Winter Semi-Formal and Spring Formal.

[5] Act as chairperson of the major fundraising event (i.e. Annual Golf tournament) in the year of elected office and subsequent year.

[6] The Vice-President may not simultaneously hold a Class Representative position.

### Section III. Treasurer

[1] Act as the official custodian of the funds and accounts of Polity, and to dispense such funds as directed by the Executive Board, in accordance with State University of New York Board of Trustees.

[2] Submit a budget report to the members present at general meetings.

[3] Act as chairperson of the annual Polity budget meeting.

[4] Serve as a financial liaison to Sub-Board I, Inc. and to the University Office of Student Affairs.

[5] The Treasurer may not simultaneously hold a Class Representative position.

### Section IV. Secretary

[1] Record the minutes of Polity meetings, and ensure that an accurate permanent record of such minutes is maintained.

[2] Dispatch copies of said minutes to all members of Polity, Sub-Board I, Inc. Chief Accountant, Dean of the School of Medicine, and any other person as directed by the President, once approved.

[3] Maintain other pertinent permanent records such as this Constitution and By-Laws.

[4] Maintain an updated list of student organization officers, ensure that student organization records are adequately maintained, and oversee that student organizations fulfill the responsibilities placed on them in the By-Laws.

[5] Notify members of Polity of upcoming Polity meetings and reserve a conference room for the meeting.

[6] Conduct all elections of students to any position requiring a general elections by one or more classes as per election guidelines, as well as referendums or other special elections as necessary.

[7] The Secretary may not simultaneously hold a Class Representative position.

Section V. Class Representatives

[1] Have the responsibility to attend all meetings and to vote upon the matters considered. Representatives that are absolutely unable to attend a meeting should seek excusal from the President before the meeting.

[2] Representatives may serve in any additional duties as desired by their respective classes, within that class itself.

Section VI. Sub-Board I, Inc. Representative

[1] The permanent Sub-Board I, Inc. Representative shall be appointed by the President from amongst the medical student body. In the event that the representative cannot attend a meeting, a proxy representative may be appointed by the President from amongst the University student body at large.

[2] Shall be responsible for attending all Sub-Board I, Inc. meetings.

[3] The representative shall be responsible for reporting at the subsequent Polity meeting any Sub-board I, Inc. business that is material to the medical student body.

Section VII. All executive officers and representatives are responsible for checking their University at Buffalo e-mail accounts on a daily basis to remain apprised of all Polity business.

**Article V.**

**Terms Of Office**

Section I. Officer Elections. Elections will be held during the first week of February. Elected individuals shall serve as officers-elect until April 1<sup>st</sup>, when they shall assume the duties of their office. The intervening period shall serve as an orientation period.

Section II. Representatives from the first and second year classes. Each representative shall serve a term of one year. The terms of office shall expire upon the election of new representatives.

Section III. Representatives from the third and fourth year classes. Representatives elected in their third year shall serve a term of two years. The terms of their office shall expire upon their graduation.

## **Article VI.**

## **Unexpired Terms**

Section I. In the event of a vacancy of the office of President, the Vice-President will succeed the President for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section II. In the event of a vacancy in an office other than the President or Class Representative, the office will be open to new nomination as per the Election Guidelines.

## **Article VII.**

## **Election Guidelines**

Section I. The Secretary of Polity will conduct all elections.

[1] Elections for second and third year representatives shall be held in March, with newly elected representatives assuming duties April 1<sup>st</sup>. Only respective members of those classes are eligible to vote on their Class Representatives.

[2] Elections for the Executive Board shall be held during the first week of February. The entire student body is eligible to vote on the Executive Board members.

[3] Elections for first year representatives shall be held in the second week of September. Only the first year class is eligible to vote on their Class Representatives.

[4] The Secretary will conduct all other elections not prescribed here, as they see fit, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section II. Procedures for Scheduled Elections

[1] Notification. The Secretary shall notify the student body that letters of intent will be due at a specified time in order to be eligible to run for office. A period of at least 10 days prior to the election shall be allowed for notification to occur.

[2] Eligibility. In accordance with Article VII, Part C of the UB Student Conduct Rules, University Standards and Administrative

Regulations, only currently registered students shall be eligible for active membership status in Polity.

[a] Officers. Students wishing to run for, and hold office in Polity must be in good academic standing, as defined by the Office of Medical Education, in accordance with the aforementioned Regulations. Students wishing to run for a Class Representative position must be a current member of that class. Students wishing to run for an Executive Board position may be from any of the four classes. Students who are participating in joint degree programs that will cause them to be registered in another school within the University during the proposed term of office may run for that office, but must resign at the point in time when they cease to be registered in the School of Medicine. The vacated position shall be filled in accordance with Article VI, Section II of this Constitution.

[3] Letters of Intent must be submitted to the Secretary in both written and electronic form. The written copy will be posted in the student lounge and the electronic copy will be posted on the Polity webpage.

[4] Debates. An open debate is required prior to the election of the Executive Board. Debates for other elections are optional.

[5] Voting. All elections shall take place online at the address prescribed by the Office of Medical Computing, to be disclosed by the Secretary to eligible participants. All elections require a simple majority of votes collected. Winners will be announced by the Secretary when results are available. The secretary is also responsible for notifying the Office of Student Life of the results of any election.

### Section III. Procedures for Special Circumstances

[1] Unexpired term vacancies. Vacancies of any Polity office other than President shall force a re-election for the office. Proceed as for a scheduled election.

[2] Unopposed election. If a student is running for an Executive Board position uncontested, they shall assume that position without an election.

[3] Absence of candidates for office. All positions must be filled. In the absence of candidates, there must be a second call for candidates before the election takes place, even if this results in a postponement of the election. If, after the second call, there still exists an absence of candidates, the President shall appoint an eligible student to take office.

## **Article VIII.**

## **Meetings**

### Section I. Types of Meetings.

[1] General Session. General sessions shall be scheduled once per month during the academic year. The schedule for general sessions shall be determined and announced by the President at the outset of the elected term.

[a] The Secretary will reserve the meeting place and notify the voting members of Polity and the student body of its time and place. Meetings should be announced at least one week in advance.

[2] Special Session. Special sessions may be called by the President or by petition of a simple majority of the voting members. No business shall be transacted except that mentioned in the call. An attempt shall be made to notify all Polity members of such meetings. Any actions or voting transpiring at special sessions where a quorum is lacking must be given verbal or written approval of a simple majority of voting members within one week in order to represent an official Polity decision.

[3] Executive Session. The President has the right to call an Executive Session, at which only voting members may attend.

Section II. Quorum. The official quorum for all sessions is one-half of all voting members. In the absence of quorum, meetings may proceed but voting or the setting of policy may not take place.

Section III. Agenda. Any student or voting member of Polity may set an item on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. This may be done at the previous meeting or at any time up to 24 hours prior to the meeting start time. Requests to set an item on the agenda shall be made to the President. Any item officially placed on the agenda must be considered at the meeting. The President will post the agenda at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

[1] The order of business at meetings shall be as follows: call to order, roll call and determination of quorum, reading and approval of the previous minutes, President's report, Vice-President's report, Treasurer's report, Secretary's report, old business, new business, adjournment.

Section IV. Minutes. The official Polity minutes will include a complete record of roll, all motions, resolutions or votes, official actions taken, as well as a general summary of reports. Letters, budget summaries, etc. shall be appended to the minutes. It will be the Secretary's responsibility to

ensure that the minutes are complete and unbiased. In the absence of the Secretary, the President must appoint a voting member to fulfill these duties. The minutes will be presented for approval at the following meeting and any necessary revisions shall be made. Past minutes will be made available to any student upon request.

## **Article IX.**

## **Motions, Voting and Reconsiderations**

Section I. Motions. All motions shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. A motion, or a second, may be raised by any voting member. Once sufficient time for debate has been allowed, the President shall call the question to a vote.

Section II. Voting. Voting will be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified in this Constitution. Voting may be carried out in one of two manners as determined by the President. Responses are yeah, nay, or abstain, unless otherwise directed by the President.

[1] Vote by a show of hands. The President will call for a vote by a show of hands.

[2] Vote by ballot. The President will call for a vote by ballot. Secretary will distribute cards to voting members, who will cast their votes. The Secretary will then collect the cards and tally the vote. Before announcing the results, a second voting member appointed by the President shall certify the results.

[3] In the case of a tie, the President may cast the deciding vote.

[4] The results of a vote are effective immediately, upon certification.

Section III. Electronic Voting. In the situation at which it is felt, by unanimous decision of the Executive Board, that an immediate vote must be held before the next scheduled general session, an electronic vote may be conducted.

[1] The Secretary shall conduct the electronic vote.

[2] At 48 hours from the dispatch of the electronic vote, a simple majority of the voting members must have responded, or the vote is null and void. If a simple majority of voting members have responded, then the vote may pass by a simple majority of those who submitted a response.

[3] All electronic votes must be acknowledged at the next Polity general session.

Section IV. Reconsideration. Any action of Polity or the executive officers is subject to reconsideration.

[1] A petition of at least 25 students, calling for reconsideration of an action, must be submitted to the Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the next general session.

[2] Upon receipt of the petition, the Secretary shall schedule a reconsideration of the questioned action for the ensuing general session. At that session, the President will conduct the reconsideration. Petitioners will be given the opportunity to present their case. Following this discussion, the President shall call for a vote.

[3] An issue may only be petitioned for reconsideration once. If the reconsideration is unsuccessful, then petitioners may initiate a referendum. Otherwise the vote is considered final.

## **Article X.**

## **Referendums and Recalls**

Section I. A referendum shall be held in the case of either of the following actions:

[1] By simple majority vote of the voting members.

[2] By a petition of at least 10% of the student body.

Section II. Requests for referendum shall be submitted to the Secretary. The Secretary will be responsible for running the referendum.

Section III. The referendum must be held within three weeks of the receipt of said vote or petition. A minimum of 10% of the student body must cast a vote or the referendum is considered null and void. If more than 10% of the student body responds, then a simple majority of those responding shall grant the action.

Section IV. Recall. Any elected voting member of Polity can be recalled from office for any of the following reasons:

[1] Infringement of this Constitution or any of its By-Laws.

[2] Unexcused absences from 25% or more of any official meetings of Polity during the period of one academic semester by a member of the Executive Board or a Class Representative from the first or second year.

If one of these members is absolutely unable to attend a meeting, they should seek an excusal from the President.

[3] Unexcused absences from 50% or more of any official meetings of Polity during the period of one academic semester by a Class Representative from the third or fourth years. If one of these members is absolutely unable to attend a meeting, they should seek an excusal from the President.

[4] Failing to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the office as specified in this Constitution.

Section V. If any of the above listed conditions exist, the recall procedures are as follows:

[1] The question of recall may be brought forth and carried by a two-thirds vote of the voting members.

[2] A recall vote of a Class Representative by that class within the student body may be brought forth by a petition containing 25% of the signatures of the members of that class. Recall of a Class Representative can be carried out by a two-thirds vote of that class.

[3] A recall vote of an Executive Board member by the student body may be brought forth by a petition containing 25% of the signatures of the student body. Recall of an Executive Board member can be carried out by a two-thirds vote of the student body.

## **Article XI.**

## **Amendments**

Section I. All amendments for consideration must be presented in writing, and tabled, at least one general session before voting may take place.

Section II. Amendments to this Constitution shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the voting members.

## **Article XII.**

## **Ratification of this Constitution**

Polity will assume all governing power and responsibilities held by any previous medical student governing body and will exist from this time forward according the articles prescribed in this Constitution.

**The original Constitution was ratified by Polity in 1978. It was revised in 1980, 1982, and 1999. In 2003, it was decided that the Constitution was in need of clarification and modernization. It was rewritten and ratified by Polity in the spring of 2004. The following By-Laws were also created and ratified at that time.**