



## **Bristol Community College Student Senate Constitution**

*Updated April 2026*

### **Preamble**

We, the students of Bristol Community College, do hereby establish the Student Senate, whose duty is to:

1. Represent student interests.
2. Establish and oversee all student organizations.
3. Act as a liaison between:
  - a. The student body.
  - b. The college administration through the Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management.
  - c. The Board of Trustees through the Student Trustee.

The Student Senate is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of students and articulating student voices for advancing action and change. We shall use our collective voice to take an active role in affecting the College's policies and priorities.

### **Article I – Student Senate**

1. The governing organization of the students of Bristol Community College (Bristol) shall be known as the Student Senate (Senate).
2. The Student Senate shall be responsible for:
  - a. Encouraging the creation of an atmosphere suitable for intellectual and social growth for students as they participate in the affairs of the college.
  - b. Allocating the revenues generated by Student Activity Funds in a manner consistent with procedures established by the Board of Higher Education and the President of Bristol Community College.
  - c. Sharing student perspective and feedback to the leadership of Bristol on matters related to the development or improvement of services, policies, and procedures at the College.

- d. Promoting ethical leadership, student advocacy, and inclusive participation throughout the College.
- 3. All actively registered Bristol students are represented by the Student Senate; eligibility for election or appointment is defined in Article III.
- 4. The Advisor of Student Senate shall be the Director of Student Engagement & Belonging. The Co-Advisor shall be the Associate Vice President for Student Success.
- 5. The Secretary of the Student Senate shall be the Administrative Assistant for Student Engagement and Belonging.
- 6. The governing body of Student Senate shall consist of Elected Student Senate Members: an Executive Board, Senators, and Campus Representatives

## **Article II – Student Senate Responsibilities & Duties**

- 1. The Student Senate shall establish procedures and processes for the implementation of the following responsibilities:
  - a. Encourage the creation of an atmosphere suitable for intellectual and social growth for students.
  - b. Allocate, deny, or terminate the granting of the Student Activity Funds to support the general well-being of the student population.
    - i. The Student Senate shall be informed in detail of the purpose of any expenditure.
    - ii. Any individual or group making use of funds derived from the Student Activity Funds shall submit a proposal and attend a Senate meeting to answer questions about the expenditures.
  - c. Design and create ad hoc committees as appropriate to carry out the intent of the Student Senate.
  - d. Hold regular meetings at the College.
  - e. Provide regular updates on Student Senate business to the student body and Board of Trustees through the Student Trustee.

## **Article III – Student Senate Membership and Elected Officials**

- 1. Any currently registered student, whether degree-seeking or non-degree, is eligible for an elected Student Senate position. This requires that students have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 and not currently on Disciplinary Probation or Suspension from the College.
- 2. Elected Student Senate Members may not consist of more than 49% of Executive Board members for any one Student Organization or Department recognized by the College.

3. Elected Student Senate Members consist of Executive Board Members, Senators, and Campus Representatives.
  - a. The Executive Board is comprised of the Senate President and elected or appointed Committee Chairs.
    - i. Committee creation and operation are governed by Article IX.
  - b. Each Executive Board Member has the following responsibilities:
    - i. Attend all Student Senate meetings .
    - ii. Meet every other week with the Student Senate Advisor.
  - c. The duties of each Executive Board position are listed below.
    - i. President
      1. Elected by the student body of Bristol Community College.
      2. Represents the interests of the Bristol Community College student body.
      3. Upholds the Student Senate Constitution.
      4. Serve as the designated representative of Student Senate in all internal and external capacities.
      5. Creates the agenda for all Student Senate meetings.
      6. Calls to order and presides over Student Senate meetings.
      7. Meets with the President of Bristol Community College or their designee at least once per semester.
      8. Is a voting member of Student Senate.
      9. Serves as a Bristol Community College representative on the Student Advisory Council for the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.
    - ii. Elected or Appointed Committee Chairs
      1. Each semester, the Student Senate shall create committees reflective of current priorities. Any Elected Student Senate Member is able to make a motion to create such a committee.
      2. Elected Student Senate Members may self-nominate for a Committee Chair position. Self-nominations will be put forward during a Student Senate meeting and voted on by the Elected Membership.
      3. Committee Chairs will be responsible for the following:
        - a. Leading the work of the assigned committee.
        - b. Providing regular updates to Student Senate.
        - c. Upholding the Student Senate Constitution.
        - d. Is a voting member of Student Senate.

- d. There are a total of 4 Senators representing students at Bristol Community College. Each Senator is elected by the student body and has the following responsibilities:
  - i. Attend Student Senate meetings as a voting member.
  - ii. Represents the Bristol Community College student body.
  - iii. Upholds the Student Senate Constitution.
  - iv. Serve as elected or appointed Student Senate Committee Chair.
- e. There are a total of 5 Campus Representatives representing students at each Bristol Community College location: Fall River, Attleboro, Taunton, New Bedford, and Online. Each Campus Representative is elected by the student body and has the responsibilities of a Senator plus the following responsibilities:
  - i. Attend Student Senate meetings as a voting member
  - ii. Represents the Bristol Community College student body
  - iii. Upholds the Student Senate Constitution
  - iv. Serve as elected or appointed Student Senate Committee Chair

#### **Article IV – Meetings of the Student Senate**

- 1. The Student Senate shall meet once every other week during the Fall and Spring semesters, except during scheduled breaks or days when the College does not hold classes or other operations.
- 2. The Advisor of Student Senate shall determine the time and location of such meeting. This information shall be published to the college community.
- 3. A quorum shall consist of 51% of the Elected Student Senate Members currently seated, excluding Ex Officio members.
  - a. If a quorum is not met, votes may be held by email or other College approved electronic means and must occur within five (5) business days.
  - b. A simple majority of 51% of all Elected Student Senate Members is needed to pass any motion before the Student Senate.
- 4. Special meetings of the Student Senate may be called by the President or the Advisor of the Student Senate or by a petition to the Student Senate President signed by 51% of the Elected Student Senate Members. Notice of all special meetings shall be posted two days in advance of such meetings.
- 5. Executive Session
  - a. Under the Laws of the Commonwealth, an Executive session may be held as allowed under Chapter 30A, Section of Mass Gen. Laws).
  - b. Any Elected Student Senate Member may request that all or parts of a meeting be closed to the general student body and/or guests for the purpose

of discussion of a sensitive topic, including but not limited to personnel matters, disciplinary issues, or legal considerations.

- c. During an “Executive Session,” only Elected Student Senate Members, the Student Senate Advisor, the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management and the President of the College may be present.
  - d. All executive sessions are considered confidential meetings. Minutes should be recorded during these sessions but are to be kept confidential and not included in the publicly posted minutes.
6. Attendance and Conduct
- a. All Elected Student Senate Members are expected to attend all Student Senate meetings.
  - b. An Elected Student Senate Member who misses three (3) meetings in a given semester will be removed from their role in Student Senate. They may still attend meetings if they so choose, but will not be a voting member.
  - c. After 30 minutes of lateness to or leaving 30 minutes early from a regularly scheduled meeting an Elected Student Senate Member will be considered tardy.
  - d. Two (2) tardy events will be considered an absence. Thus, an Elected Student Senate Member who collects six (6) tardy events or a combination of tardy events and absences will be subject to removal.
  - e. The conduct of an Elected Student Senate Member must be in compliance with general policies and procedures as they apply to Bristol Community College and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
    - i. Elected Student Senate Members must comply with the Board of Higher Education policy concerning conduct and Campus Rules and Regulations of Bristol Community College and General Laws of the State of Massachusetts.
  - f. The Student Senate Advisor has the responsibility to issue warnings to those Senate members that are in danger of violating these requirements.
7. Elected Student Senate Members should act as a liaison between individual students or groups and the Student Senate when appropriate.
8. Elected Student Senate Members holding any official position on a campus club or organization may not vote on any matter pertaining to that club or organization and must leave the room during the time of vote. However, they may present on behalf of their club or organization.

## **Article V- Conflict of Interest Policy**

1. A Conflict of Interest exists when an Elected Student Senate Member's personal, academic, financial, or organizational interests could reasonably be perceived as influencing their judgment or actions as a Student Senate representative.
2. Disclosure Requirements:
  - a. Elected Student Senate Members must disclose any potential conflict of interest to the Advisor and the Executive Board as soon as the conflict is known.
  - b. Conflicts may include, but are not limited to:
    - i. Holding a leadership position in an organization requesting funding.
    - ii. Personal or financial relationships with individuals or groups receiving Senate consideration.
    - iii. Academic or employment relationships that may bias Senate decisions.
3. Recusal:
  - a. Members with a conflict must recuse themselves from:
    - i. Discussion.
    - ii. Deliberation.
    - iii. Voting.
  - b. Members must physically leave the room (or virtual meeting) during related discussion and voting.
4. Recording and Enforcement:
  - a. All recusals must be documented in meeting minutes.
  - b. Failure to disclose a conflict may result in removal from office under Article VII.
  - c. The Advisor will assist in determining if a conflict exists when unclear.

#### **Article VI– Student Senate Advisor & Ex Officio Members**

1. The Student Senate Advisor is the Director of Student Engagement & Belonging. The Student Senate Advisor shall serve as an Ex Officio member of the Student Senate and is responsible for the integrity of all elections. The Advisor's role is limited to providing guidance on procedure, interpreting College policies, and ensuring meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order. The Advisor may confer with Elected Student Senate Members on matters of proper procedure but shall not vote.
2. The Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student Engagement & Belonging shall serve as the Secretary. The Secretary shall serve as an Ex Officio member of Student Senate. Their role is to take notes and draft minutes for Student Senate Meetings and maintain meeting minutes and notifications on the Bristol website.
3. The elected Student Trustee shall serve as an Ex Officio member of the Student Senate. Their role is to serve as a liaison to the Board of Trustees.

#### **Article VII– Election Procedures**

1. Elected Student Senate Members will be voted into office each fall semester. Elections will occur after the Add/Drop deadline for the given term. A second election will be held each spring semester for vacant positions if necessary.
2. Any Nominees must submit the Intent to Run with to the Director of Student Engagement & Belonging by the deadline.
3. All nominees must meet the qualifications to participate in Student Senate before they can be put on the ballot.
4. Campaigning Guidelines:
  - a. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that all Student Senate elections are equitable, respectful, and accessible to all candidates.
  - b. Permitted Campaigning:
    - i. Distributing campaign materials in accordance with College posting guidelines.
    - ii. Creating social media posts, digital materials, or videos that promote a campaign.
    - iii. Speaking with students, faculty, and staff about candidacy.
    - iv. Participating in Student Engagement organized forums or debates.
  - c. Prohibited Campaigning:
    - i. Harassment, intimidation, or disruption of College operations.
    - ii. Use of College funds, departmental supplies, or office resources for campaigning.
    - iii. Posting materials in prohibited locations or covering other candidates' content.
    - iv. Offering incentives, gifts, or financial compensation for votes.
    - v. Misrepresentation of other candidates or spreading false information.
  - d. Reporting Violations:
    - i. Any student may report campaign violations to the Advisor.
    - ii. Advisors will investigate complaints and may:
      1. Issue a warning.
      2. Remove materials.
      3. Disqualify a candidate for serious violations.
  - e. Campaign Timeline:
    - i. Campaigning may begin only after the candidate's Intent to Run has been approved and publicized.
    - ii. Campaigning ends when voting closes.
  - f. Elections will be held online, except for appointed positions.
  - g. Results will be tabulated by the Director of Student Engagement & Belonging and supervised by the Associate Vice President for Student Success or their

designee. Results will be made public within forty-eight hours of the election date.

- h. A candidate will be declared elected when they receive notification that they have received a majority of the votes cast for each particular position.
- i. In the event of a tie, candidates will be entered into a run-off election. They may choose to rewrite their platform statements and another election will be held to decide the office. The candidate with the majority of the vote will be declared the winner.
- j. Voting Eligibility:
  - i. Any currently registered student may vote in the Student Senate Election.
  - ii. All voters will be permitted to cast one vote only online and then will be removed from the active voting list for that election.
- k. Special Elections and Interim Positions:
  - i. Special elections shall be called as necessary at the discretion of the Student Senate Advisor in consultation with the Executive Board.
  - ii. Positions may be filled on an interim basis.
  - iii. Appointment to vacant roles must be passed by a simple majority.
  - iv. A statement of intent must be submitted to the Executive Board and a majority of Senate must vote in favor of appointing the candidate.
  - v. Interim appointments are intended as short-term solutions; special elections may be called when tenure, authority, or representation would otherwise be significantly affected.
- l. Vacancies and Succession:
  - i. Presidential Vacancy:
    - 1. If the President resigns or is removed, the Student Senate shall elect an Interim President from among the Elected Student Senate Members within 10 business days.
    - 2. The Interim President serves the remainder of the term unless a special election is called.
  - ii. Committee Chair Vacancies:
    - 1. Vacant Committee Chair roles are filled through self nomination and a majority vote of Elected Student Senate Members.
    - 2. Chairs appointed mid term serve until the end of the current semester.
  - iii. Senator and Campus Coordinator Vacancies:
    - 1. Vacancies may be filled by simple majority vote following submission of a Statement of Intent.

- iv. The Advisor may call a special election when a vacancy significantly impacts Senate operations.
  - v. Removal actions referenced elsewhere in this Constitution shall be executed under the procedures in this Article.
- m. Minimum Operational Membership:
  - i. Student Senate must maintain at least 51% of its elected seats filled in order to continue conducting votes.
  - ii. If membership falls below this threshold, the Advisor will initiate a special election process.

## **Article VIII– Resignation of Duties**

- 1. Resignation:
  - a. An officer steps down from their elected position because they are unable to fulfill the duties of the office.
  - b. The Elected Student Senate Member must inform the Senate of their intentions in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed resignation date.
- 2. Removal:
  - a. Any Elected Student Senate Member may be removed from office and/or put on probation if they fail to fulfill the responsibilities of their elected position, or those found to be in violation of the Bristol Student Code of Conduct or fall below the academic standard to serve.

## **Article IX– Committees**

- 1. Purpose of Committees:
  - a. Student Senate Committees exist to advance the priorities of the Student Senate and support meaningful student engagement.
- 2. Committee Creation:
  - a. Committees may be created each semester by a majority vote of the Elected Student Senate Members.
  - b. Any Elected Student Senate Member may make a motion to create a new committee.
  - c. The motion must define:
    - i. Committee purpose
    - ii. Scope of work
    - iii. Expected timeline or deliverables
- 3. Committee Membership:
  - a. Any Elected Student Senate Member may volunteer to serve on a committee.
  - b. Committees must maintain at least three members whenever possible.
  - c. Additional non-voting student participants may be invited at the committee's discretion.

4. Committee Chairs:
  - a. Committee Chairs may be elected or appointed under Article III.
  - b. Responsibilities include:
    - i. Setting meeting agendas
    - ii. Leading committee work
    - iii. Communicating progress to the Student Senate
    - iv. Ensuring compliance with the Constitution
5. Reporting Requirements:
  - a. Committees must provide updates at least once monthly during Student Senate meetings.
  - b. Final reports or recommendations must be submitted in writing before the end of each semester.
6. Committee Dissolution:
  - a. Committees dissolve at the end of each semester unless reauthorized by majority vote.

#### **Article X– Parliamentary Procedure**

1. The parliamentary authority in all matters pertaining to the operation shall be derived from Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

#### **Article XI– Amendments**

1. The Student Senate at Bristol Community College reserves the right to amend the Constitution.
2. An amendment process is initiated by a majority vote of the full Senate.
3. All amendments must be approved by the Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management or their designee.
4. All amendments must be made available for one full week to the student body.
5. A simple majority vote of the Senate certifies any such amendments.
6. Editorial changes may be made at the discretion of the Executive Board.

#### **Article XII– Bylaws**

1. Bylaws are the day-to-day amendable items that give context to the laws of the constitution.
2. Bylaws may be added or removed by a simple majority of the Student Senate.
3. Bylaws do not have to be published before being changed.