

**SENATE BILL: S008-110568-041796-04172002-05012002-09112002-01212004-04072004-05042005**

**TITLE: Office of the Student Advocate**

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate of the University that the following statute shall govern the establishment, authority, and procedure for appointment, responsibilities, grounds for removal, and removal procedure for the Association Office of the Student Advocate and the Student Advocate of the Association:

**Section 1. Establishment**

1.1 The office of the Student Advocate is hereby established as a non-political office of the Association for the resolution of any concern, problem, complaint, and/or grievance brought by members of the student fees-paying community at the University.

**Section 2. Authority**

2.1 The Office of the Student Advocate and the Student Advocate of the Association shall have all the authority necessary to effectively perform his or her duties in a timely and efficient manner provided that it is consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, Statutes, and official policies of the Association including the following specific powers:

2.1.1 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall have access to all pertinent files, records, electronic databases, research materials, data, and other informational resources of the University provided that such information may be obtained in compliance with all relevant local, state, and federal laws.

2.1.2 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff may not be excluded from any meeting of the Faculty Senate or its standing committees or temporary committees; University committees; and/or any Senate meetings, standing committee meetings or temporary committee meetings; including executive sessions, when seeking just solutions to any concern, problem.

2.1.3 All faculty members, administrators, staff persons, employees, and other personnel of the University will cooperate with requests from the Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff made through administrative channels in the performance of the responsibilities of the office.

2.1.4 The Student Advocate of the Association shall have full authority over the Student Advocate office budget, with individual expenditures not to exceed \$250. Expenditures over \$250 shall require the approval of the Senate in the form of a Funding Bill, submitted to the Treasurer of the Association.

### **Section 3. Procedure For Appointment**

- 3.1 An applicant for the position of Student Advocate of the Association shall be eligible to serve as Student Advocate of the Association if and only if:
  - 3.1.1 The applicant is a currently enrolled student at the University with at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average, and
  - 3.1.2 The applicant does not hold another Association position nor may he or she hold any other Association position during his or her term as Student Advocate of the Association, and
  - 3.1.3 The applicant will have completed at least one semester as an on-campus student at the University during the academic year prior to the appointment.
  - 3.1.4 Applicants for the position of Student Advocate of the Association must complete an application and schedule an interview with the President of the Association.
- 3.2 The President of the Association shall appoint an applicant to the position of Student Advocate of the Association, such action to be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Senate, excluding vacant seats. This appointment will be done on or before April 30 of each year. The appointment shall be a fourteen month term as follows: The newly-appointed Student Advocate of the Association shall train with the outgoing Student Advocate of the Association from May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>, which time shall serve as an initial orientation period for the appointee. Said appointee will officially assume office on June 1. The out-going Student Advocate shall continue to serve in an advisory position until June 30 of that year.
  - 3.2.1 In the event of the Student Advocate of the Association position being filled at any time other than the previously stated appointment date, the President of the Association may define specific training and advisory dates for both the incoming and outgoing Student Advocates of the Association.

### **Section 4. General Responsibilities**

- 4.1 Responsibilities
  - 4.1.1 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for helping students who approach him or her with a question, problem, concern, complaint, and/or grievance (hereinafter referred to as "concern") towards the resolution, if possible, of that concern.
- 4.2 Traffic Appeals
  - 4.2.1 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for assisting any student who approaches him or her with filing an appeal to the Traffic Appeals Committee regardless of whether the appeal is an "in-person" or "written only" appeal.
  - 4.2.2 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for speaking to the University Police Department Traffic Supervisor (hereafter referred to as "Traffic Supervisor" on a regular basis in regard to pending appeals in an effort to create a

professional and cordial working relationship between the University Police Department and the office of the Student Advocate.

- 4.2.3 The Student Advocate of the Association shall be responsible for obtaining copies of all student appeals that are to go before the Traffic Appeals Committee, and shall be responsible for attempting, at least once, to contact all appellants who have not already contact the Student Advocate, in an attempt to better advise students of how the appeals process works.
- 4.2.4 It shall be the sole responsibility of the Student Advocate of the Association to give advice to students in regard to whether they should appeal a traffic ticket or not, if the student himself or herself is unsure. Further, only the Student Advocate of the Association may attempt to “plea bargain” with the Traffic Supervisor on behalf of a student.
- 4.2.5 The Student Advocate of the Association shall be responsible for representing all students at regular sessions of the Traffic Appeals Committee to the best of his or her ability, regardless of whether he or she has met with a particular student. Only in cases where it is impossible for the Student Advocate of the Association to appear shall a member of the Student Advocate’s staff (or other designee) appear in his or her place.
  - 4.2.5.1 This shall not be construed to imply that the Student Advocate of the Association is required to attempt to have every ticket brought before the Traffic Appeals Committee overturned. If the Student Advocate of the Association feels that a ticket was truly deserved, he or she may choose to not advocate for its dismissal so that, when the Student Advocate of the Association does find a ticket that should be dismissed, he or she may argue with full credibility towards its dismissal.

#### 4.3 Academic Appeals

- 4.3.1 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff will work with students in preparing to file appeals to the Academic Appeals Court in consultation with the Academic Appeals Court coordinator.
- 4.3.2 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for obtaining any information necessary for the student’s appeal that the student has been unable to obtain on his or her own. This can include, but is not limited to, copies of the course syllabus, homework assignments and tests, and documented interviews with the members of the faculty related to the appeal.
- 4.3.3 At the request of the student, the Student Advocate of the Association shall represent the student before the Academic Appeals Committee meeting. The Student Advocate of the Association can act as a full representative and present the

- student's case himself or herself, or the Student Advocate of the Association can simply act as counsel for the student if the student chooses to represent himself or herself.
- 4.3.4 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall perform other duties that are necessary to best assist the student on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.4 The Student Advocate of the Association and her/his staff may follow these procedures to resolve students' other concerns:
- 4.4.1 Creating a temporary committee to be chaired by the Student Advocate of the Association or his or her designee to investigate the concern and provide a recommendation for how to handle the concern.
- 4.4.2 Obtaining and supplying information requested and/or referring the student to the proper source where information may be obtained.
- 4.4.3 Accepting suggestions and transmitting them to the appropriate persons within the University. He or she shall follow up on the disposition of these suggestions periodically.
- 4.4.4 Investigating concerns and recommending solutions to the parties concerned.
- 4.4.5 Recommending to the proper administrator and/or decision-making body a solution to the concern.
- 4.4.6 Explaining University policies and procedure to uninformed students and to students with unjustified complaints.
- 4.4.7 Mediating the situation between parties of a dispute to bring about a resolution to the dispute.
- 4.4.8 Reporting his or her findings and recommendations for a solution to a concern to the President of the Association, Vice President for Student Affairs and to other appropriate officials.
- 4.4.9 Referring a concern to an appropriate administrator if a conflict of interest arises.
- 4.4.10 Assisting a student, upon request by that student in preparing an appeal to University committees and courts.
- 4.4.11 Taking other appropriate action.
- 4.5 All concerns received by the Office of the Student Advocate must be resolved within thirty (30) days after they are received or the Student Advocate of the Association must explain the delay in general terms, without violating the confidentiality of the case, to the Senate.
- 4.6 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for documenting information on any person requesting the services of the office. A standardized form shall be completed which will include the student's name (only if they wish to have it documented), the date the concern is filed, the nature of the concern, and explanation of action taken by the Office of the Student Advocate. All individual case records shall be accessible only to the staff of the Office of the Student Advocate.

- 4.7 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for keeping a record of the number, nature, and disposition of concerns and shall report this information quarterly to the Senate.
- 4.8 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for publicizing the Office of the Student Advocate.
- 4.9 The Student Advocate of the Association and his or her staff shall be responsible for maintaining minimum office hours and research hours to be determined with the consultation of the President of the Association's Cabinet.

**Section 5. Grounds For Removal**

- 5.1 The following shall constitute grounds for removal of the Student Advocate of the Association:
  - 5.1.1 Failure to perform the prescribed responsibilities listed in this statute or other specific written responsibilities assigned by the President of the Association and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate.
  - 5.1.2 Failure to maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average.
  - 5.1.3 Failure to remain a currently enrolled student at the University.

**Section 6. Removal Procedure**

- 6.1 The Student Advocate of the Association may be removed from office at the request of the President of the Association; such request to be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) roll call vote of the entire Senate.

**Section 7. Staff of the Office of the Student Advocate**

- 7.1 The following positions are established to assist the Student Advocate of the Association in carrying out his or her responsibilities: Associate Student Advocate, Assistant Student Advocate, and Secretary to the Student Advocate. These positions may be left unfilled if the Student Advocate so chooses.
- 7.2 The Student Advocate of the Association shall have the authority to create necessary additional positions, provided that funding for such positions has been secured through the Student Fees committee and approved by the Senate.
- 7.3 The Associate Student Advocate, the Assistant Student Advocate, and the Secretary to the Student Advocate shall be hired by the Student Advocate of the Association in consultation with the President of the Association.
- 7.4 All staff of the Office of the Student Advocate shall report directly to the Student Advocate.
- 7.5 The staff shall have all the responsibilities assigned to the Office of the Student Advocate by this statute, as well as any additional responsibilities assigned to them by the Student Advocate.