



**By-Law Amendment**  
**Huda Syed, Parliamentarian**  
**Sheva Khaimov, Fatima Yahya, Rachel John**  
**7/05/2023**

**—BY-LAW AS WRITTEN—**

ATTENDANCE

- A. Senators are expected to regard attendance at all Senate meetings and functions as a primary obligation to their colleagues and this university.
- B. Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held on the first and third Thursdays of each month, whenever in-person classes are being held in-session, at a time to be determined by Senate for each term, unless the Senate decides otherwise. Terms are classified as the Fall Semester, the Winter Semester, and the period between the end of the Winter Semester and the beginning of the Fall Semester of the same calendar year.
- C. Special meetings may be called at any time by any five (5) Senate members who present their written request to the Senate President. A quorum must be present to hold a special meeting.
- D. The Senate President may call special meetings with the majority vote of their Executive board. A quorum of Senators must be present to conduct the special meeting.
- E. The Senate President may cancel general body meetings and executive board meetings with the majority vote of their Executive board only when unsafe circumstances present themselves.
- F. Failure to attend a regularly scheduled meeting will result in an unexcused absence, unless deemed excused by the Parliamentary Committee. Failure to attend two executive board meetings by an executive board member will result in one unexcused absence, unless deemed excused by the Parliamentary Committee. Failure to attend two consecutive meetings without any communication or notification in that period of time will result in the imposition of the maximum number of unexcused absences for a given semester, unless deemed excused by the Parliamentary Committee.
  - a. If a Senator arrives late or needs to leave a scheduled meeting early due to special circumstances, the Secretary will decide absence based upon said Senator's participation, alertness, and overall demeanor during the meeting. If the Secretary determines under this paragraph that the Senator shall be marked absent, the Secretary must so notify that Senator and the rest of the Parliamentary Committee. "Absences" under this paragraph may be appealed to the Parliamentary Committee within two calendar weeks after the member receives notification from the Secretary.
  - b. Attendance to Senate meetings must be taken seriously. Any member with 2 unexcused absences during Fall or Winter semester, will be automatically removed. Any member with 3 unexcused absences during Spring/Summer semester will be automatically

removed. Those members will be entitled to reinstatement only once per academic semester (excluding the Spring/Summer semester). For reinstatement procedures refer to Article IX, Section 4.

- c. *Unexcused Absences*. A member's absence is deemed "unexcused" unless the member, (1) within two weeks of the start time of the meeting at which the member was absent, the member requests that the Parliamentary Committee consider the absence excused, and (2) the Parliamentary Committee decides the absence is excused. Excused absences shall not count against a Student Senator's allowed number of unexcused absences.
- d. *Excused Absences*. The following reasons to be found "absent" from a General Body Meeting or Executive Board Meeting may be and should be deemed as excused by the Parliamentary Committee, upon timely application by the "absent" Student Senator:
  - i. Religious observances or holidays;
  - ii. Medical or familial emergencies or contagious illnesses;
  - iii. A death in the family; funeral observances; or
  - iv. An inability to attend the meeting because of a matter outside of the reasonable control of the Senator.
- G. The Parliamentary Committee may find that any of the above excusable reasons do not apply to a particular situation, and thus consider the absence unexcused.
- e. *Preventing Conflicts of Interest*. If the Parliamentarian be the member appealing an absence, a temporary Parliamentarian shall be elected among the Parliamentary Committee membership, who shall then temporarily proceed as Parliamentarian while deciding on the matter of the absence sought to be excused. If the Parliamentarian or other member of the Parliamentary Committee be the member appealing the absence, that person may not vote or deliberate on matters concerning the absence sought to be excused at the Parliamentary Committee meeting. That person shall receive no extra benefit (including, extra opportunity to speak on the matter) than that ordinarily afforded to a Student Senator who is not a Parliamentary Committee member.

*COMMENTS TO ARTICLE V. SECTION 1(I)-(K):*

- These comments are non-binding; however, they seek to clarify the intention of the Student Senate in adopting an excused absence policy in 2022. This intention may be useful or persuasive in guiding the Parliamentary Committee's actions or in guiding any applicable appellate review.
- The Student Senate adopted an excused absence policy with the ultimate purposes of (i) moving away from the previous scheme of automatic removal of elected Student Senators without review when a maximum number of absences occur, even when those absences occurred for legitimate or compelling reasons, and (ii) clearly defining under what circumstances the Parliamentary Committee may and should excuse an absence.
- (J)(b) and (J)(c) contemplate immediate family, extended family, and beloved family pets.
- (J)(d) is a catch-all, meant to be used on a case-by-case basis. The inclusion of (J)(d) necessarily allows some flexibility for the Parliamentary Committee to consider certain absences excused where the absence was not the fault of the subject Student Senator. When deciding whether absences are excused under (J)(d) in various situations, the

Parliamentary Committee should aim to set consistent standards during a Student Senate Term.

- Though the Parliamentary Committee, as implied by the language of the excused absence policy, may make a factual inquiry into the reasoning for a Student Senator's absence, it is not the intention of the Student Senate in enacting this policy that the Parliamentary Committee make a habit of requiring doctors' notes or other proofs, as this is customarily not required even in employment settings (this is a student organization) and some proofs can be quite expensive to obtain. In other words, the Parliamentary Committee should be able to make a factual inquiry but should proceed with due sensitivity and common sense when a Student Senator is requesting an excused absence in good faith.

## *Section 2*

### SPECIAL MEETINGS & CIRCUMSTANCES; EXCUSED ABSENCES

- H. *Special Meetings, Attendance.* In the event special meetings are called by Senate members, Senate President, or other officials and/or their designees for business, the rules of attendance still apply.

## **BY-LAW AS AMENDED— ATTENDANCE**

### ATTENDANCE

- A. Senators are expected to regard attendance at all Senate meetings and functions as a primary obligation to their colleagues and this university.
- B. Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held on the first and third Thursdays of each month, at a time to be determined by the Senate for each term, unless the Senate decides otherwise. Terms are classified as the Fall Semester, the Winter Semester, and the Spring/Summer Semester.
- C. Special meetings may be called at any time by any five (5) Senate members who present their request via email to the Senate President. A quorum must be present to hold a special meeting.
- D. The Senate President may call special meetings with the majority vote of their Executive board. A quorum of Senators must be present to conduct the special meeting.
- E. *Penalties.* Failure to attend two (2) consecutive meetings without any communication to the Secretary in that period of time will result in a mandatory meeting with the President, Vice President, and Parliamentarian (PVPP). It is their discretion to determine whether the imposition of the maximum number of unexcused absences for a given semester will be applied. In the event of an absence from the PVPP, the Secretary will serve as a stand-in; if the Secretary is unavailable, another Executive board member will substitute.
- F. The Senate President may cancel general body meetings and executive board meetings with the majority vote of their Executive board at the discretion of the president.

G. Failure to attend a regularly scheduled meeting will result in an unexcused absence, unless deemed excused by the Parliamentary Committee. Failure to attend one (1) executive board meeting by an executive board member will result in one half (½) of an unexcused absence, unless deemed excused by the Parliamentary Committee.

H. Senator Arrivals.

a. If a Senator arrives late or needs to leave a scheduled meeting early due to special circumstances, the Secretary will decide absence based upon said Senator's participation, alertness, and overall demeanor during the meeting. If the Secretary determines under this paragraph that the Senator shall be marked absent, the Secretary must notify that Senator and the rest of the Parliamentary Committee. "Absences" under this paragraph may be appealed to the Parliamentary Committee within two calendar weeks after the member receives notification from the Secretary.

I. Attendance Policies. Attendance at Senate meetings must be taken seriously. Any member with over two (2) unexcused absences during the Fall or Winter semester will be automatically removed. Any member with over three (3) unexcused absences during the Spring/Summer semester will be automatically removed. Those members will be entitled to reinstatement only once per academic semester (excluding the Spring/Summer semester). For reinstatement procedures, refer to Article IX, Section 4.

b. *Absences*. All absences are considered unexcused unless they fall under one of the following exceptions (i - iv.) and/or the absence was approved by the Parliamentary Committee.

i. Religious observances or holidays;

ii. Medical or familial emergencies or contagious illnesses;

iii. A death in the family; funeral observances; or

iv. An inability to attend the meeting because of a matter outside of the reasonable control of the Senator.

c. The member must send their request to the Parliamentary Committee for consideration via email to consider their absence excused at least one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting. The Parliamentary Committee will determine whether the absence is excused within 72 hours of the member's request. The member will then be notified via email by the Secretary.

The Parliamentary Committee may find that any of the above excusable reasons do not apply to a particular situation, and thus may deem the absence unexcused. This determination is non-negotiable. Excused absences shall not count against a Student Senator's allowed number of unexcused absences.

*Preventing Conflicts of Interest*. If the Parliamentarian is the member appealing an absence, a temporary Parliamentarian shall be elected among the Parliamentary Committee, who shall then temporarily proceed as Parliamentarian while deciding on the absence. If the Parliamentarian or other members of the Parliamentary Committee are the members appealing the absence, that person may not vote or deliberate on matters concerning the absence: That person shall receive no extra benefit (including extra opportunity to speak on the matter) than that ordinarily afforded to a Student Senator who is not a Parliamentary Committee member.

*COMMENTS TO ARTICLE V. SECTION 1(I)-(K):*

- These comments are non-binding; however, they seek to clarify the intention of the Student Senate in adopting an excused absence policy in 2022. This intention may be useful or persuasive in guiding the Parliamentary Committee's actions or in guiding any applicable appellate review.
- The Student Senate adopted an excused absence policy with the ultimate purposes of (i) moving away from the previous scheme of automatic removal of elected Student Senators without review when a maximum number of absences occur, even when those absences occurred for legitimate or compelling reasons, and (ii) clearly defining under what circumstances the Parliamentary Committee may and should excuse an absence.
- (I)(a) contemplate immediate family, extended family, and beloved family pets.
- When deciding whether absences are excused under (I)(a) in various situations, the Parliamentary Committee should aim to set consistent standards during a Student Senate Term.
- The Parliamentary Committee has the right to make a factual inquiry into the reasoning of the Senator's proposed absence. The Parliamentary Committee may not ask for further sensitive information, such as a doctor's note, from the Senator. This policy is in place in order to protect the privacy of each member, as well as ensure that the Senator requesting the absence does so in good faith.

*Section 2*

**SPECIAL MEETINGS & CIRCUMSTANCES**

- H. *Special Meetings.* In the event special meetings are called by Senate members, Senate President, or other officials and/or their designees for business, the rules of attendance still apply.