



**Appalachian State University  
Student Government Association**

**The Committee on Rules  
Legislative Guidelines**

Preamble:

Legislation is one of the most important ways that the Student Senate is able to reflect the needs, desires, and opinions of the students. It is an effective tool for implementing change within the University, keeping students engaged in decision-making, informing administrators and faculty, and developing civic responsibility. The following guidelines are used as a resource in the legislative process, but carry the same legality as the Rules Committee Bylaws.

**Section 1: Role of the Rules Committee in the Legislative Process**

**Section 1.1:** The Rules Committee is responsible for ensuring that all legislation is well researched and well written. It is important that Committee members understand the purpose of legislation and their roles in reviewing it.

**Section 1.2: Legislation may be written in order to:**

1. Make recommendations to the University;
2. Make recommendations for changes;
3. Make recommendations on improving existing programs;
4. Represent constituent needs;
5. Recommend elimination of unnecessary programs, policies, etc.
6. Change or develop Constitutional and/or Bylaw initiatives.

**Section 1.3 Overview of the legislative process:**

1. A need or opinion is expressed;
2. Research is conducted into this need and its desirability;
3. Solutions are identified or outcomes desired;
4. The bill and Research Form are reviewed by the Rules Committee;
5. After review by the Committee, the bill is introduced before the Senate;
6. The President of SGA is signs or vetoes the passed legislation;
7. The legislation is brought to the proper administrator if signed;
8. If the legislation is vetoed, it returns to the Senate floor for a possible override.

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**Section 2: Legislation**

**Section 2.1: Types of Legislation:**

1. **Statute Bill:** A bill that seeks to alter the Constitution of the Student Government Association or any other governing document that is used to govern the operations of the Student Government Association. Constitutional amendments and changes to Bylaws require a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the Senate. Additionally, Constitutional Amendments require ratification by the student body through a referendum (see Article IX, Sections 1 and 2 of the SGA Constitution). Bylaws include, but are not limited to, the Senate

Bylaws, any Committee Bylaws, Elections Bylaws, Elections Policies and Procedures, and the Student Bill of Rights.

2. **Enabling Bill:** A bill designation, authorizing, and executing action to be taken within the Student Government Association. Passage of an Enabling Act requires a majority vote of the Senate.
  3. **Policy Resolution:** A recommendation to a specific office of the administration, with regard to University policy, procedure, or program. A resolution of policy requires a majority vote of the Senate.
  4. **Support Resolution:** A declaration of opinion by the Student Senate on a matter beyond the legislative jurisdiction of the body. A resolution of support a majority vote of the Senate.
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### Section 3: Overview of Legislative Development

The development of legislative initiatives within the Senate is one of the most important roles of the body. In order for legislation to be well written, adequately and fairly reviewed, and seriously considered by the University, it must be researched fully. The process of researching legislation begins with whatever idea, need, concern, etc. is brought to the attention of a senator or student leader. It is important to differentiate between a need and a want as this will have an impact on the writing of the legislation. It is equally important that a senator recognize that not all issues require legislative initiatives. Many concerns can be addressed simply by discussing the idea or concern with the appropriate person and seeking a solution.

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### Section 4 Overview of Legislative Research

The process of research begins with adequately defining the need, issue, or concern to be considered. It is important that the senator clearly define this so that an adequate solution can be recommended. Once defined, it is necessary to begin with the “active” research process. This includes researching past legislation and inquiry into the topic by the Senate, talking with the individual(s) responsible for oversight, assessing student needs and opinions on the issue, assessing cost and benefit factors including, but not limited to: financial cost, institutional resources, personnel, political considerations, alternatives that are in place elsewhere, etc. Once this research is completed, a solution or recommendation can be developed if appropriate. It is important to note that legislation should be written after research on an idea is completed. There is no need to write legislation if any idea or concern does not have merit. Research will help determine the feasibility of an idea and therefore should be completed before a solution is suggested.

In writing the legislation, itself, it is important to include relevant information in the legislation. This can be done in the legislative history as well as the resolved clause. It is also important that any ideas for legislation be discussed with the Rules Chair so that he or she can provide the

senator with insight into process and consideration in writing. Once a piece of legislation is introduced into the Senate, it is referred to the Rules Committee for review and screening.

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### **Section 5: Screening Legislation:**

The Rules Committee may assign new legislation to a Committee member(s) for coordination of the review process. The Committee member is responsible for meeting with the introducer of the bill to discuss the legislation, reviewing research completed by the introducer to ensure credibility, and report to the entire Committee as to the findings. The other members of the Committee should have prepared questions in advance of the meeting. A list of example questions is typed below:

1. How did you become aware of this problem/issue/concern?
2. Have you met with any administrators/other SGA officials?
3. Did you conduct a survey of the students (if applicable)?
4. What is the history behind the current issue?
5. What cost, if any, will this be to the University?
6. Are there any alternative solutions?
7. Are there any similar ideas at other universities?
8. What will be the overall impact on the University?
9. What constitutes all of your research?

Almost all of the questions can be found on the Legislative Recommendation Report that Committee members complete during the questioning and turn into the Rules Chair.

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### **Section 6: Definitions**

#### Legislative Definitions and Descriptions

1. **Bill Number:** In order to correctly and efficiently categorize legislation. This shall be composed of three numbers to designate the Senate session and three more to identify the actual legislation number, for example: "044-001".
2. **Type of Legislation:** This is where it needs to be established whether this is a Statute Bill, Enabling Bill, Policy Resolution, or a Support Resolution.
3. **Long Title:** This should clearly state the purpose and what the act seeks to do. This should be concise and "to-the-point."
4. **Short Title:** The short title will be used for classification purposes. This should be the long title, just shortened to a few words, for example: "Part Bus Act".
5. **Introducer:** The senator introducing the bill itself. This must be a voting member of the Student Senate representing his or her constituency.

6. **Sponsor:** Any person or group of people may sponsor a bill. This is just showing that the person or group supports the legislative initiative.
7. **First Reading Date:** The date in which the legislation will be formally brought before either the Rules Committee or the Student Senate (if the Rules are suspended)
8. **Version Date:** The date in which the bill was drafted by the introducer(s).
9. **Version:** Either “Initial” or “Final” for the bill after Senate.
10. **Reference Line:** From which committee the legislation arose from.
11. **Whereas Clause:** To explain the need for the legislation and the basic purpose. Does not need to tell a story, just a brief explanation. Each line shall begin with the word “Whereas” and shall contain only one sentence each, ending in a semicolon along with the word “and”. The last clause in the “Whereas” shall end in a semicolon along with the words “now, therefore, be it”.
12. **Resolved Clause:** To state the action(s) that needs to be taken in addressing the issue/concern/idea. If there is a time frame that needs to be established, it would be listed in the clause. After the “Whereas” clause, it shall begin with the word “Resolve” and shall end in a period.
13. **Senate Vote and Signatures:** Here is where the formal vote is taken that was made in the Student Senate as well as the signatures of the President and Vice President (if not vetoed or if the legislation fails). This shall only be included in the Final Edition of the bill.

