

# Merrill Student Government Constitution

Amended December, 2016

Merrill Student Government (MSG) is the sole interpreter of the Constitution.

## **Preamble**

MSG is elected by Merrill College students and serves as a voice for students representing their interests and concerns to Merrill College administration and other campus constituencies. It allocates funds supporting social, cultural, and educational activities benefiting Merrill College and its students. MSG also contributes to the Merrill College community by assisting in college wide events and raising student awareness regarding important issues. MSG and its actions are grounded in Merrill College's commitment to promoting cultural identities and global consciousness.

## **ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP AND BODY**

### *SECTION 1.*

Membership in MSG is open to any student affiliated with Merrill College, in good academic and judicial standing, and paying Merrill college student government fees.

### *SECTION 2.*

Any registered Merrill Student can gain voting status from MSG by attending three consecutive meetings. These students will be referred to as Members At Large, and begin executing voting privileges during their 3rd meeting. Members at Large will retain voting status until such a time that they miss two consecutive MSG meetings. The MSG Secretary will maintain roll and members voting status. The MSG advisor will check enrollment status of potential members at large. Each Member at Large will have one vote in all decisions legislated by MSG.

### *SECTION 3.*

#### Sub a.

MSG consists of a minimum of seven students, elected by registered Merrill College students, governed by this Constitution . MSG officers are also governed by college and university rules and regulations.

Sub b.

MSG is comprised of positions, which include but are not limited to, the following: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Coordinator, Core Council Representative, three Student Union Assembly Representatives, Academic Senate Representative, Student Union Governance Board Representative, Merrill Activities Council Representative, Community Service Representative, Parliamentarian and Residential Assistant Liaison.

Sub c.

Whenever necessary, MSG has the power to appoint Merrill students as representatives of Merrill to other campus wide representative boards.

## **ARTICLE II. FUNCTIONS**

### *SECTION 1.*

MSG has the power to allocate funds derived from Merrill college student government fees to support programs and organizations that directly concern Merrill Students and reflect the college ethos of “Cultural Identities and Global Consciousness.”

### *SECTION 2.*

MSG functions as the legitimate student representation of Merrill College affiliated students, and their rights, on all campus wide government boards.

### *SECTION 3.*

MSG is responsible for conducting student elections and opinion polls.

### *SECTION 4.*

MSG will establish subcommittees, as it deems necessary and can include members of the public if deemed necessary. In the event that these committees require a limited membership, representatives will be chosen through a plurality of vote among MSG officers.

### *SECTION 5.*

MSG also contributes to the Merrill College community by assisting in college wide events and raising student awareness regarding important campus and statewide political issues.

### *SECTION 6.*

All MSG functions will be supervised by the MSG Advisor.

## **ARTICLE III: ATTENDANCE**

### *SECTION 1.*

When a member of MSG is going to be late or absent the member should notify the chair prior to the meeting. If prior notice is impossible, the chair should be notified as soon as possible after the meeting.

### *SECTION 2.*

Any absence due to illness, family emergency, or a planned university sanctioned academic event (i.e. supplementary lecture or T.A. study session) will qualify as an excused absence so long as the chair is notified as soon as possible. The chair will have the discretion to determine anything else that may qualify as an excused absence. Any member of MSG that acquires more than 3 excused absences in a quarter or 9 excused absences in an academic year will be subject to review by MSG

### *SECTION 3.*

Any absence that is not reported to the chair or does not qualify as an excused absence as stated above is an unexcused absence. Any member that acquires more than 2 unexcused absences in a quarter or 3 unexcused absences in an academic year will be subject to review by MSG and possible dismissal.

### *SECTION 4.*

Members that are dismissed and revoked of their voting status may regain their voting rights if and only if they follow normal procedure stated in Article 1 Section 2.

### *SECTION 5.*

The chair is also subject to the above stated regulations regarding absences, but the Chair must report any absence to the MSG Advisor. In this case, the MSG advisor has the responsibility to determine what constitutes an excused absence.

## **ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS**

### *SECTION 1.*

The duties of MSG officers include but are not limited the following expectations:

#### Sub a. CHAIR

The Chair is responsible for leading Merrill Student Government (MSG), facilitates the development and achievement of MSG's mission and goals, works closely with the MSG Advisor to achieve group goals and facilitate positive group development, is responsible for leading and preparing the agenda for weekly meetings, and represents MSG to Merrill College staff and other student groups. The Chair is to hold at least one weekly office hour in coordination with the MSG advisor. The MSG Chair will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub b. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair furthers the aims and goals of MSG by overseeing action committees created by the group and coordinating MSG's development of, and/or involvement in social events, Town Hall meetings, and other major college events. The Vice-Chair conducts MSG meetings in the chair's absence. The Vice-Chair is to hold at least one weekly office hour in coordination with the MSG advisor. The MSG Vice-Chair will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub c. SECRETARY

The Secretary is responsible for recording and preserving meeting minutes and members' attendance, providing weekly minutes to the Programs Office designee to be posted on the official MSG website, and communicating information to MSG membership. The MSG Secretary will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub d. TREASURER

The Treasurer maintains an updated balance of all MSG accounts, accepts all funding request forms, serves as a liaison between groups requesting money and MSG, and works closely with the MSG Advisor in distributing funding awards to student organizations. The MSG Treasurer will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub e. MERRILL ACTIVITIES COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Merrill Activities Council (MAC) Representative attends both MSG and MAC meetings to keep MSG members and Merrill College informed of MAC issues. This

representative will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor. The MAC Representative will work with the Community Service Representative to organize Merrill's involvement in Relay for Life®

#### Sub f. PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

The Public Relations (PR) Coordinator coordinates the creation and distribution of publicity for MSG events (e.g., posters, flyers, email postings, social media) and solicits the input of Merrill Students in MSG activities, discussions, and decisions. The PR Coordinator will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub f. CORE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Core Council Representative represents MSG in responding to funding requests presented to the Core Council and serves as a liaison between the two groups. The Core Council is a campus-wide funding body comprised of one student representative from each college.

#### Sub g. STUDENT UNION ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES (3)

The Student Union Assembly (SUA) Representatives attend both MSG and SUA meetings to keep MSG members and Merrill College informed of campus wide issues. The SUA provides a vehicle for students' voices at UCSC and is comprised of representatives from each of the colleges, representatives of ethnic and cultural organizations, and the officers of SUA. The representatives vote and speak for Merrill students at SUA meetings. The SUA Representatives are to hold at least one weekly office hour each in coordination with the MSG advisor. The Merrill SUA Rep who is elected in the spring SUA election will arrive prior to fall move in and participate in move in day as well as represent MSG at welcome week activities unless receiving prior approval of absence from the MSG advisor.

#### Sub h. STUDENT COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES REPRESENTATIVE

The Student Committee on Committees (SCOC) Representative attends both MSG and SCOC meetings to keep MSG members and Merrill College informed of campus wide issues. The SCOC is the student run advisory board, which reviews the activities of student involved committees and appoints new members. This representative votes and speaks for Merrill Students at SCOC meetings.

#### Sub i. ACADEMIC SENATE REPRESENTATIVE

The Academic Senate Representative attends MSG, Academic Senate, and Student Academic Senate meetings to keep MSG members and Merrill College informed of campus wide issues. The Academic Senate is a cooperative board with faculty, professors, and students on committee that propose and vote on legislation concerning academic issues. This representative speaks on behalf of Merrill College students.

#### Sub j. STUDENT UNION GOVERNANCE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

The Student Union Governance Board (SUGB) Representative attends both MSG and SUGB meetings to keep MSG members and Merrill College informed of campus wide issues. The SUGB is the student-run governing board dealing with the student union facilities and other event centers. This representative speaks and votes on behalf of Merrill College students.

#### Sub k. COMMUNITY SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

The Community Service Representative is responsible for creating events for MSG members to collaborate with any organization, faculty, staff, or anything deemed appropriate with the intended purpose of allotting community service opportunities. The Community Service Representative will work with the MAC Representative to organize Merrill's involvement in Relay for Life®.

#### Sub l. RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT LIAISON

The Residential Assistant (RA) Liaison is a current Merrill Residential Assistant who is responsible for exchanging information between the RA space and the MSG space.

#### Sub m. PARLIAMENTARIAN

The Parliamentarian is responsible for being familiar with the MSG Constitution and will be an advisor to the space when contending constitutional inquires. The Parliamentarian will be the chair of the Constitutional Committee and will be in charge of convening the Constitutional Committee a minimum of once per quarter as stated in Article XII. Sec. 3. The Parliamentarian will only have authority to make suggestions and comment on the changes they find appropriate. Only the MSG Advisor, MSG Chair, and MSG Vice-Chair can make the edits and changes to the constitution once Merrill Student Government has voted on the proposed amendments, as stated in Article XII, Sec. 1.

### *SECTION 2.*

Order of Succession for MSG Core Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, MAC Representative, & Public Relations.

*SECTION 3.*

All MSG officers have one vote in all decisions legislated by MSG.

*SECTION 4.*

Any MSG officer incurring more than three unexcused absences during a year term, or using more than two (2) unexcused absences in one (1) quarter will be subject to reevaluation and possible impeachment by the other voting members of MSG.

*SECTION 5.*

If any MSG officer is unable to meet their requirements as put forth by their external committees, the officer shall also be removed from position on MSG with the exception of the Spring Elected SUA Representative.

*SECTION 6.*

When an officer is going to be absent, the officer should notify the Chair at least one day prior to the meeting. There must be a compelling reason for an absence to be excused. In the event the Chair will be absent, the Chair should notify the Vice Chair and advisor.

*SECTION 7.*

If an officer cannot fulfill their duties for a quarter based on a conflict of schedules, this officer may request a leave of absence by notifying the Chair and advisor. Leave of absence approval is subject to the Chair's discretion.

*SECTION 8.*

In the event that neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair can attend a meeting, the Chair has the right to appoint an MSG officer to lead the meeting. This officer will be subject to implementing the agenda put forth by the Chair.

**ARTICLE V. RIGHTS OF STUDENTS**

*SECTION 1.*

MSG will serve as an advocate for students' rights.

*SECTION 2.*

MSG has the power to request assistance from the Student Union Assembly, and/or other college governments to insure student rights when MSG deems it necessary.

*SECTION 3.*

MSG has the power to petition any Merrill College administrative body or UC administrative body on Merrill students' behalf pertaining to college issues when MSG deems it necessary.

**ARTICLE VI. PROCEDURES**

*SECTION 1.*

MSG meetings occur weekly and are open to the public.

*SECTION 2.*

All decisions made by MSG require a quorum of 50% plus 1 of all MSG Voting Members in attendance.

*SECTION 3.*

MSG meetings will be governed by mutual respect and teamwork. The first goal in reaching a decision is achieving a consensus. MSG will default to a majority vote only as a last resort. A majority consists of 50% plus 1 of all voting members present. All voting members have one vote.

*SECTION 4.*

In the event that a decision cannot be made in an orderly or time efficient manner, the Chair reserves the right to invoke voting procedures in the following order.

Sub a.

The Chair reserves the right to implement a speakers list when debating a decision. All speakers will be limited to no more than two minutes of floor time.

Sub b.

After this discussion, a call to vote yea or nay will be implemented.

Sub c.

If a 50% plus 1 outcome in the favor of the proposal is met, a new discussion will be held to determine specifics of the decision such as monetary sums and stipulations on funding.



Sub d.

The Chair reserves the right to implement a speakers list for this discussion period if deemed necessary. All speakers will be limited to no more than two minutes of floor time.

Sub e.

After this discussion period, all proposals will be heard and voted upon in order of lowest monetary sum first along with any stipulations attached.

#### *SECTION 5.*

Emergency MSG meetings can be called by a petition signed by 5% of currently registered Merrill College students. Such a petition will specify issues to be discussed. The meeting will take place no more than 72 hours after the Chair receives a petition.

#### *SECTION 6.*

An emergency meeting can be called by MSG by simple majority, which consists of 50% plus one of voting members

### **ARTICLE VII. MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT AND MINUTES**

#### *SECTION 1.*

The time and place of MSG meetings will be publicized to the Merrill community via website.

#### *SECTION 2.*

Minutes of all MSG meetings shall be recorded. Minutes will be available no later than the beginning of the next meeting.

#### *SECTION 3.*

Anyone wishing to place an item on the meeting agenda must contact the MSG Chair 48 hours before that week's meeting. Funding request must be received one week prior to the meeting.

### **ARTICLE VIII. RECALL OF MSG ACTION**

#### *SECTION 1.*

All decisions, appointments, and issues addressed by MSG are subject to referendum by a petition presented to the MSG advisor and signed by 10% of the students of Merrill College. referendum will be held following a publicity period of one week and a town hall meeting. Any

vote required by the petition will be decided by a 50% plus 1 of the votes cast in the referendum. Any questions passed by referendum can be rescinded by referendum only.

## **ARTICLE IX. APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION PROCEDURES**

### *SECTION 1.*

All candidates for office will be subjected to all membership rules outlined in ARTICLE 1.

### *SECTION 2.*

#### *Spring Elections*

Six officers will be elected in the spring for the following year, namely the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, MAC Representative, PR and the elected SUA Representative will be elected by SUA Campus Elections . Should there be no candidates running for one of these officer positions , suggested nominations will be solicited within the current MSG body. Nominated individuals will be contacted to see if they are interested in running in the Spring Quarter election with a 24 hour window to accept or deny the offer to run for said position. The remaining officers will be elected in fall quarter of the following year.

#### Sub a.

One SUA Representative will be elected in the spring through the SUA elections. This representative will be expected to abide by all rules and regulations as stated in this constitution.

#### Sub b.

If there are any positions without candidates once the declaration period is over then suggested nominations will be accepted during the first MSG meeting after the declaration period ends with a 24 hour time frame to accept or deny the nomination.

### *SECTION 3.*

#### *Fall Elections*

Officers will be elected in the Fall for the current year, namely Academic Senate, Core Council, SCOC, SUGB, SUA (2), Community Service Representative, RA Liaison, and the Parliamentarian. Should there be no candidates running for one of these positions, suggested nominations will be solicited within the current MSG body on the ballot. Nominated individuals will be contacted to see if they are interested in running in the Fall Quarter election with a 24 hour window to accept or deny the offer to run for said position.

*SECTION 4.*

Merrill College students may become candidates for MSG office by submitting a candidate statement at least one week before the election. The statement will comprise no more than 150 words and state why the candidate is interested in running for a MSG officer position. This statement will be made public during the election.

*SECTION 5.*

MSG members, Merrill College Programs, and Leadership staff, and/or Residential Life student staff without a conflict of interest will monitor polling. All polling will be accomplished online and will be accessible through the Merrill website for the duration of the election. The polling place will be open for a minimum of four days. The MSG advisor or the appointed representative will be responsible for closing the election and downloading the results.

Sub a.

In the event that electronic voting is impossible a polling place will be open for a minimum of one day for a five hour period or at a large college event and will be monitored by MSG members, Merrill College Programs and Leadership staff, and/or Residential Life student staff without a conflict of interest.

*SECTION 6.*

Advertising for MSG elections will begin a minimum of four days before polling begins.

*SECTION 7.*

The election results shall be posted in a public place.

*SECTION 8.*

The new MSG officers will officially begin their term at the end of the last meeting of the old term. Voting rights will be invoked at that time.

*SECTION 9.*

In the event there are no alternates or candidates, MSG shall decide whether to hold elections or to appoint a replacement from among affiliated Merrill students who have communicated their desire to hold office and/or were nominated on the ballot given a one-week publicity period before election or appointment.

*SECTION 10.*

*Appointments*

Any MSG attendee who has communicated their desire to hold office and/or where nominated can run for an appointed position.

*SECTION 11.*

The chair must provide at least a one week notice to the space before any appointment can be made.

*SECTION 12.*

Each candidate for the position in question can make a speech during the MSG meeting in which the decision is being made.

Sub a.

The chair will allot the same amount of time for each candidate to speak.

SECTION 13.

The position will be filled by a vote requiring 50% plus 1 of all MSG Voting Members in attendance.

**ARTICLE X. RESIGNATION AND RECALL OF AN MSG OFFICER**

*SECTION 1.*

An MSG officer may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Chair. The Chair may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the advisor. Upon resignation, a replacement will be appointed. In the event of resignation of the MSG Chair, the position will be assumed according to the order of succession stated in Article IV Section 2.

*SECTION 2.*

All prospective applicants for vacated positions will be interviewed and chosen by MSG voting members, The selected candidate must be approved by a supermajority vote ( $\frac{2}{3}$  majority) by MSG in order to take over the position.

*SECTION 3.*

A MSG officer may be subject to a recall vote by a petition signed by 10% of registered Merrill students. This vote will be held following a publicity period of one week. A decision is established by a simple majority of the votes. Should the recall be successful, an alternate will replace the departing officer given a one-week publicity period.

*SECTION 4.*

An MSG officer may be subject to impeachment upon failure to meet all the officer's responsibilities. Impeachment proceedings require 2/3 supermajority vote of MSG officers to commence and 2/3 supermajority vote to impeach.

Sub a.

Appropriate actions will be taken by MSG to remove any Merrill representative that fails to meet that representative's duties to MSG or their respective committee(s).

**ARTICLE XI. MERRILL COLLEGE BUDGET**

*SECTION 1.*

An annual budget meeting will be held at the end of each academic year for the upcoming year to allocate funds for the Residential Education Office, College Programs Office, and The MSG fall training retreat.

*SECTION 2.*

MSG's financial relationship with Merrill College will be re-evaluated and determined on a year to-year basis.

*SECTION 3.*

Any student organization or college government, including MSG, requesting funding from MSG must complete and comply with MSG Funding Request and Guidelines as described on the Merrill College website.

*SECTION 4.*

Dispensation of funds remaining in the MSG account at the end of the academic year shall be allocated by the current MSG members.

*SECTION 5.*

The MSG Prior fund, being the accumulation of leftover monies from previous fiscal years, may be used by the current Government for funding, under the following guidelines:

Sub a.

The funding of improvements to Merrill that are of lasting benefit to the Merrill Community shall take priority of Prior funds.

Sub b.

The general funding of programs and requests brought before MSG may be funded by Prior if MSG determines that it is a correct use of Prior monies.

## **ARTICLE XII. MERRILL STUDENT GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE**

### *SECTION 1.*

The purpose of the MSG Constitutional Committee shall be to review the Constitution. The Parliamentarian is the Chair of the Constitutional Committee and will be in charge of convening the committee a minimum of once per quarter, excluding Summer. After a review has taken place, the MSG Constitutional Committee shall make recommendations to MSG on additions, deletions and amendments as the committee feels necessary on the Constitution.

### *SECTION 2.*

The MSG Constitutional Committee shall be composed of at least three members of MSG.

Sub a.

If quorum is not met, then it shall be the Parliamentarian's responsibility to review the Constitution. The Parliamentarian acting in this capacity can make recommendations on the grammatical structure and format of the Constitution and can make recommendations on the addition or deletion of content.

### *SECTION 3.*

The committee shall meet at least once per quarter excluding summer to discuss and review the Constitution.

Sub a.

The MSG Constitutional Committee's' recommendations shall be submitted at least by the last meeting of that quarter.

Sub b.

Any recommendations shall be entered into the agenda as a motion. Any vote on such changes requires a two-thirds vote of voting members present.

## **ARTICLE XIII. PASSING AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

*SECTION 1.*

In order to have a constitutional amendment passed within the MSG space it is required to have approval of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all the MSG voting members.

*SECTION 2.*

Any constitutional amendment is subject to a referendum by a petition signed by 10% of registered Merrill students.

Sub a.

The petition must be given to the Chair within two academic weeks after the motion to amend. The referendum shall take place one week after the Chair receives the petition.

Sub b.

The amendment will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast in the referendum.

Sub c.

In order for a vote to count, 20% of registered Merrill students must cast a ballot.