**CONSTITUTION OF**

**THE NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**STUDENT SENATE**

# **PREAMBLE**

In order to promote the general welfare of the student body, to stimulate interest in activities contributing to our improvement, and to provide every student with training and experience in democratic government, we, the students of Northwestern Connecticut Community College, do hereby decree this Constitution as the official Constitution of the Northwestern Connecticut Community College Student Senate.

# **ARTICLE I – THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

**Section 1.** The name of this organization shall be the Northwestern Connecticut Community College Student Senate.

**Section 2.** The Student Senate shall be composed of nineteen (19) Senators: four (4) from each class, as defined in the College Catalog, six (6) at-large seats, and five (5) Student Senate Officers.

**Section 3.** Each Senator shall have one vote with the exception of the President who shall vote only in the case of a tie.

**Section 4.** The powers and duties of Senators shall include the following:

 a. Senators may introduce any motions or resolutions which will advance the

 purposes of the Student Body or better enable the Senate to achieve its stated goals.

 b. Senators are obliged to keep themselves fully informed of the needs and interests of

 the general Student Body.

 c. Senators are obliged to attend meetings of the Senate. If a Senator misses four (4)

 meetings per semester regardless of the reasons, his/her seat may be revoked at the

 discretion of the Senate. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Senate membership is

 required to remove a Senate member for lack of attendance.

**Section 5.** The Senate shall have the power to enact such legislation as deemed necessary or advantageous for the proper functioning of its committees. In matters of procedure not regulated by the Constitution, the Senate and its Committees shall be governed by the latest edition of ***Roberts Rules of Order.***

**Section 6.** The Senate shall be regarded as the official representative body of the students at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and, in this capacity, shall have the authority to consult with and make recommendations to the faculty and administration regarding matters affecting student welfare.

**Section 7.** The Senate shall administer the Student Activity Fund and other sources of income, and shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records of income, expenditure, and current balances. Monies from the Student Activity Fund may be used only for purposes consistent with the interest of the Student Body. In the administration and use of monies from the Student Activity Fund and other sources, the Senate shall be governed by the policies of the State of Connecticut.

**Section 8.** The Senate shall, with approval of the President of the College, have the power to charter student clubs and organizations and to allocate funds to them.

**Section 9.** The Senate shall be responsible for the promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation between the College and the general community.

**Section 10.** The Senate shall, with the approval of the College President, have the power to enter intercollegiate student associations and organizations to promote the general interests of the College and the Student Body.

# **Section 11.** The Senate may undertake or support any projects or activities that will serve the general interests of the College, the Student Body, or the community. Any such projects or activities shall be subject to the approval of the President of the College.

**Section 12.** Student members who hold vested interest in decisions of the Senate will be excluded from voting on those matters. Questions concerning conflicts of interest shall be decided by the President of the College or his/her delegated subordinate.

**Section 13.** No Senate member shall be a Senate Officer and an officer of any Senate-supported club or organization concurrently.

**Section 14.** Regular meetings of the Student Senate shall be held weekly during the regular academic year when the College is in session. Special meetings shall be called by the President of the Senate or by the request of four (4) of the voting members of the Senate.

**Section 15.** All Senate meetings shall be on the College campus, and all meetings, regular or special, must be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

**Section 16.** Senate meetings must achieve quorum in order to transact business. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of voting members of the Senate. The President of the Senate is not considered a voting member of the Senate; therefore, the President is not included when deciding quorum.

**Section 17.** All meetings of the Student Senate shall be open to members of the Student Body unless otherwise specified. The full privileges of discussion at a Senate meeting may be extended to members of the Student Body at the direction of the Senate, but voting privileges shall at all times be reserved for the Senators.

## ARTICLE II - SENATE OFFICERS

**Section 1.** All Senate Officer candidates must have a combined grade point average (GPA) of 2.0, completed at least twelve (12) credit hours, attended two (2) semesters, and served one semester as a Senator. Waivers for these requirements must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Senate membership.

**Section 2. The President**

The executive officer of the Student Senate shall be President of the Student Senate. The President of the Student Senate shall be elected by the Student Body, and he/she shall exercise the following duties:

a. The President shall preside over Senate Meetings.

1. The President shall represent the members of the Student Body at official College ceremonies and/or meetings.
2. The President will act as the liaison between the Student Senate and the rest of the College community and will report all pertinent information and requests to the Student Senate.
3. The President may participate in debates at Senate meetings.
4. The President may vote only in the case of a tie vote.
5. The President shall, with advice and consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Senate membership, have the power to appoint students to fill vacancies occurring between regular elections for elected posts and committees.
6. The President shall have the power to investigate any expenditures or allocations from the Student Activity Fund and must report these findings to the Senate within thirty (30) days.
7. The President shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of all standing committees.

**Section 3.** **The Vice President**

The Vice President shall exercise the following duties:

a. The Vice President shall preside over the Senate meetings in the absence of the

 President.

b. The Vice President shall preside over all Judiciary Committee and Election

 Committee Meetings except in cases where conflict of interest exists.

c. In the event that the Presidency falls vacant between elections, the Vice President

 shall assume the office of President for the remainder of the elected President’s

 term. The Student Senate shall then elect, by a simple majority vote of those

 members present, a Vice President who shall assume the office for the remainder of

 the term. In cases of the withdrawal or removal from office of both the President and

 Vice President, the Student Senate shall elect these officers from the Senate, by a

 simple majority vote of those members present, to carry out the duties of the

 President and the Vice President for the remainder of the term.

d. The Vice President shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of all standing

 committees.

**Section 4. The Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall exercise the following duties:

1. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the administration of the Student Activity Fund in accordance with the policies defined by the State of Connecticut, the College administration, and the Student Senate.
2. The Treasurer shall maintain accurate records of income, expenditures, and current balances of the Student Activity Fund and other sources of income.
3. The Treasurer shall present a monthly Treasurer’s Report to the Student Senate and shall also submit a mid-year report showing all income, expenditures, and current balances of the Student Activity Fund.
4. The Treasurer shall report to the President any questionable expenditures or allocations from the Student Activity Fund.
5. The Treasurer shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Budget Committee and shall preside over all meetings.

**Section 5. The Recording Secretary**

The Recording Secretary shall exercise the following duties:

1. The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all regular and special meetings, including the attendance of Senators. Copies of all minutes shall be distributed, after approval by the Senate, to the President of the College and the Deans and shall be prominently posted.
2. The Recording Secretary shall post announcements of all special meetings.
3. The Recording Secretary is responsible for maintaining a file of Senate minutes. All minutes must be kept on file for a minimum of three (3) years.

**Section 6. The Corresponding Secretary**

The Corresponding Secretary shall exercise the following duties:

1. The Corresponding Secretary shall conduct all official Senate correspondences.
2. The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a file of official Senate correspondences. All correspondences must be kept on file for a minimum of three (3) years.
3. In the absence of the elected Recording Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary shall act as the Recording Secretary.

**Section 7. The Executive Board**

The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretaries shall form the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall set the Senate agenda. All agenda items must be submitted to the Executive Board no later than one (1) hour prior to the Senate meetings. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretaries may be requested to perform certain duties other than those enumerated herein which the Senate President may deem necessary or advisable, provided such requests are consistent with this Constitution and with the by-laws of the Senate.

**Section 8.** In the event that any Senate Officer seat becomes vacant, the Student Senate shall, by majority vote of those members present, fill the seat for the duration of the term.

**ARTICLE III – COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE**

**Section 1.** For the purpose of facilitating Senate work on matters that require close scrutiny or large amounts of time, the following standing committees of the Senate shall exist at all times. All committees will be formed within two (2) weeks following the fall elections.

1. **The Budget Committee**

The Budget Committee shall consist of no fewer than four (4) Senators, including the chairperson who shall be the Treasurer. All budgets of the chartered clubs and organizations shall go to the committee immediately after being received from the organization requesting funds. The committee shall examine each budget, then report its recommendations to the Senate, at which time the budget is acted upon by the Senate.

1. **The Election Committee**

The Election Committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) Senators, including the chairperson who shall be the Vice President. This committee shall be responsible for running the elections for Senators, Senate Officers, student representatives to College committees, and student representatives to assemblies and boards for the community college system.

 c. **The Program Committee**

The Program Committee shall consist of no fewer than six (6) Senators, including a non-voting chairperson who will be appointed by the President. The purpose of this committee is to propose and develop student activities for the academic year.

 d. **The Judiciary Committee**

The Judiciary Committee shall consist of no fewer than five (5) Senators, including the chairperson who shall be the Vice President. This committee has the responsibility to investigate cases of Senatorial dereliction of duty or misconduct. Minutes of this committee’s meetings must be submitted to the Senate at the conclusion of all investigations and kept on file for a minimum of three (3) years. This committee shall also render interpretations of the Student Senate Constitution for the Senate. Decisions on Constitutional interpretations are to be submitted separately with a copy of the Constitution and kept on file permanently. The Judiciary Committee shall convene at the request of the Senate. Quorum for this committee shall consist of all members.

**Section 2.** When the need arises, the Senate may create ad hoc committees.

ARTICLE IV – ELECTION PROCEDURES

**Section 1.** Any member of the Student Body with a combined grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 is eligible to run for the Student Senate. The requirements for election of Senate Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Corresponding Secretary) are defined in ARTICLE II, Section 1. No student may simultaneously be a candidate for more than one office. No Officer may be twice elected to the same office.

**Section 2.**  Elections of all Student Senate Officers and Senators shall be by secret ballot. Any Student Body member is eligible to vote for any or all Student Senate Officers or Senators.

**Section 3.** Elections for Student Senators and Student Senate Officers will be held each Spring Semester by April 15. Senators and Senate Officers shall begin their terms on the first day of the Spring Semester Final Examination period, and their terms will expire one year later.

**Section 4.** Any Senate seats or Senate Officer seats that remain vacant at the start of the Fall Semester will be filled by a special election held no later than the fourth (4th) week of classes. The term for these members shall begin immediately following the elections and run until the last day of class in the Spring Semester.

**Section 5.** For an elected position, a candidate must file a nomination application with the Student Senate at least two (2) weeks before an election. All applications must be endorsed by a minimum of twenty-five (25) members of the Student Body.

**Section 6.** The responsibility of conducting fair elections rests with the Election Committee. The Election Committee shall oversee the election returns and report the results to the Senate.

**Section 7.** The Judiciary Committee shall investigate complaints of voting irregularities, determine the recommended disposition of disputed ballots, and report its recommendations to the Senate. The Senate may declare an election null and void by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the entire Senate membership. The Senate will then determine a date for a new election. Any such election must be held no later than one (1) month after the original vote has been nullified.

**Section 8.** When election returns result in a tie vote, a one-day runoff election will be held no later than two (2) weeks after the initial election.

### ARTICLE V – IMPEACHMENT PROCEDURES

**Section 1.** Upon receipt of a complaint signed by at least fifty percent (50%) of the entire membership of the Student Senate or at least fifty (50) other members of the Student Body charging a Student Senate member with dereliction of his/her duties or misconduct in office, the Senate shall convene the Judiciary Committee for the purpose of holding an impeachment hearing. If requested, the Judiciary Committee shall call witnesses to testify at the hearing. The Committee will decide by a simple majority vote of those members present, whether the evidence warrants impeachment and will make recommendations to the Senate.

**Section 2.** The Student Senate, upon the Judiciary Committee’s recommendations, shall, carefully and fully, examine all evidence and testimony. After considering all evidence and testimony, the Senate shall, by secret ballot, render its verdict. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Senate membership is required to remove a Senator or Senate Officer.

**Section 3.** In the event that the accused holds a seat on the Judiciary Committee, another Senator must immediately replace that committee member on the Judiciary Committee. (See ARTICLE II, Section 2, f.)

### ARTICLE VI – PROCEDURES FOR AMENDMENT

**Section 1.** Any proposed amendment to this Constitution must be sponsored by no fewer than fifty (50) members of the Student Body. The proposed amendment will be introduced at a regular meeting of the Student Senate.

**Section 2.** The Recording Secretary of the Senate shall prepare multiple copies of the proposed amendment(s) and distribute them to all Senate members before the next regular meeting.

**Section 3.** At the second regular meeting of the Senate after introduction of the proposed amendment, the Senate shall vote to approve or reject it. Two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Senate membership must concur with the amendment in order for it to be passed. Before the end of the semester, the Senate must vote on all proposed amendments.

**Section 4.** All proposed amendments approved by the Senate must be submitted to the President of the College for his/her approval.

**Section 5.** If approved by the College President, the proposed amendment shall be presented within one (1) week to the members of the Student Body for a vote of approval. A simple majority of the votes cast is required for ratification. With approval, the amendment immediately becomes part of the Constitution.

**Section 6.** The Election Committee shall supervise the ratification process and report the results to the Senate. The Senate shall be the sole judge of the returns.

**Section 7.** If, at any point, the proposed amendment does not receive the required approval, it shall be declared defeated and shall not demand further action.

## ARTICLE VII – RATIFICATION OF THIS CONSTITUTION

**Section 1.** This Constitution shall be declared ratified after having been sponsored by fifty (50) members of the Student Body and approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the entire voting membership of the Student Senate, and by the President of the College, and by a simple majority of the Student Body voting in referendum.

**Section 2.** All debts against the Student Activity Fund incurred previous to ratification of this Constitution shall be valid.

**Section 3.** With ratification of this Constitution, all previous Constitutions are null and void.

***Approved by the Student Body on April 22, 2002***