

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Label SGAB-57005

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Sponsor(s): Speaker Cheng

Committee: Internal Affairs

Draft: Final

Public Engagement Reform Act

Whereas, public engagement is a crucial component of any elected office; and,

Whereas, Student Government Bylaws, Article III, Section 2 recognizes the above statement by requiring semesterly townhalls; and,

Whereas, implementing Student Government Bylaws, Article III, Section 2, historically results in low attendance from both the public and Senators, leading to ineffective public dialogue and possible expulsion of Senators from the Senate; and

Whereas, the Bylaws should allow flexibility to effectively recognize the importance of public engagement on the part of Senators and the practical elements of implementing semesterly townhalls.

Therefore, be it enacted by the Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

Strikes Student Government Bylaws, Article III, Section 2, and replaces it with the following:

“Section 2: Mandatory Public Engagement

Clause 1: For the purpose of facilitating communication between students and their representative(s) in the Senate, all Senators must engage in at least one of the following activities every Fall and Spring semester:

- (a) A town hall consisting of at least a presentation by the Senator(s) and a question and answer session with the attendees; or
- (b) A meeting between the Senator and student leaders of at least one Registered Student Organization (RSO) consisting of at least a presentation by the Senator(s) and a question and answer session with the attendees; or
- (c) Attendance at a minimum of one meeting of a RSO consisting of at least a presentation by the Senator(s) and a question and answer session with the attendees.
- (d) A tabling event in either a centralized location in an academic building on campus or in a centralized communal location on campus that includes an activity or handout pre-approved by the Speaker of the to engage constituents and encourage participation.

Clause 2: Such activities will be publicized in an appropriate way, such as through social media and an electronic mailing database, to the constituency involved at least seven calendar days prior to the activity taking place. Senators may rely on others to publicize the event on their behalf, such as the president of a RSO sending an email to the RSO's membership or a social media post created by a member of the Student Government Executive Branch.

Clause 3: Senators may partner to fulfill the requirements established in Clause 1.

Clause 4: A document may be developed to outline general guidance on how to conduct these activities. Time constraints may be imposed on the activities.

Clause 5: Failure to fulfill the requirements established in Clause 1 will result in an unexcused absence toward a Senator's Senate record, in accordance with the Senate Attendance Policy. Excused absences are left to the discretion of the Speaker.

Clause 6: Senators will notify the Speaker of the Senate of the date, time, location, and other logistical details, as applicable, of their public engagement activities outlined in Clause 1 at least five calendar days prior to the activity taking place. The Speaker of the Senate is charged with verifying all requirements under this Section are met.

Clause 7: Senators who conduct an activity outlined in Clause 1 will not receive an unexcused absence if no members of the public attend the activity, so long as there

was a reasonable effort by the Senator(s) to ensure attendance. The Speaker of the Senate will determine what is a reasonable effort under this Clause.”

Be it further enacted, the changes to the Bylaws described above will take effect at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester.


APPROVED



Jasmine Khademakbari

Student Government President

Date of President's Approval: 7/31/2020



Julian Cheng

Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 7/31/20

