



The Constitution of the Cowell Assembly

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The Cowell Assembly hereby adopts the following Constitution. It shall be made available to any member of the Cowell Assembly who requests it, at any time.

ASSEMBLY

Definition:

The Cowell Assembly (“Assembly”) consists of all properly registered students of Cowell College, students who are not affiliated with but reside at Cowell College, and all faculty and staff of Cowell College.

SENATE

I. DEFINITION, ROLE, MISSION STATEMENT

a. Definition:

The Cowell Senate (“Senate”) shall sit as the executive body of the Cowell Assembly.

b. Role:

The Senate shall advise the Provost and College administration on matters of the College policy as it relates to the Assembly, and shall prepare and supervise the expenditures of a budget for the disbursement of students’ funds assigned to Cowell College.

c. Mission Statement:

The Senate aims to represent the Cowell student body in campus-wide governance, concerns, and issues. It also serves to provide the Cowell Assembly with events and opportunities designed to benefit and enrich the Cowell community as a whole.

II. SENATE MEMBERSHIP

a. Duties

i. Senators

1. Any member of the Assembly who has attended four Senate meetings within one quarter, or four consecutive Senate meetings spanning over two quarters, shall be granted full voting rights and privileges and endowed with the title “Senator” of the Senate.
2. Senators shall serve as voting members of Senate.
3. Senators shall work with and assist the College Staff, notably the Programs Office, in sponsoring, directing, and executing programs and events.
4. The Senators shall be responsible for the proper execution of the legislation and directive of Senate.
5. The Senators shall be responsible for calling a meeting of the Cowell Assembly each spring to consider the budget for the following academic year. Other Assembly meetings may be called throughout the year as necessary.
6. The Senators shall provide adequate public notice, with the minimum of one week in advance, of all upcoming Senate and Assembly meetings.
7. A Senator shall be removed of their Senator status and officer title, if applicable, should they fail to attend four consecutive Senate meetings. Such removal shall remain in effect until the end of the quarter, at which point the removed party may begin the process of reinstatement as a Senator.
8. Alternatively, if a Senator must be absent from more than four Senate meetings, they may request a leave of absence and retention of the Senator status during that time. This request must be made in

writing, and reason for leave provided. Senators on leave shall not be counted toward quorum and shall resume their Senator status upon their return.

ii. Officers

The following are descriptions of the duties of the officers:

1. **Chairperson:** acts as the presiding officer of Senate meetings and works with all other officers to assure that the Senate runs smoothly.
2. **Vice-Chair:** acts as a substitute for elected officials when absent.
3. **Secretary:** acts as the official record keeper of the Senators.
4. **Treasurer:** is responsible for the Senate's finances in a manner consistent with the Constitution and with the approved budget for the current academic year.
5. **Publicity Chair:** Conducts outreach, publicizes information, and creates publicity for the Senate.
6. **Historian:** Responsible for documenting Senate events and activities.
7. **Parliamentarian:** Assures that all Senate and Assembly proceedings follow rules as set out in the Cowell Assembly Constitution; clarifies and rules on all questions of interpretation of the Constitution; may declare any of a meeting's proceedings invalid ex post facto if there was faulty posting of the Agenda, if any or all of the motions were not properly conducted, if quorum was not maintained during any or all voting procedures, or if there was any unconstitutional moving, voting, or other procedures.

iii. Representatives to Campus-wide Assemblies

1. Senate may elect a representative to any campus-wide assemblies.
2. Representatives to campus-wide assemblies are required to report back to the Senate on a regular basis. Any student member of the Cowell Assembly may be elected by the Senate to serve as Cowell's representative to a campus-wide assembly.

iv. Staff Advisor:

Cowell College shall designate a staff member to serve as a nonvoting Advisor to the Cowell Senate and all proceedings. The Staff Advisor shall oversee all business and financial transactions and also provide overall guidance and support.

v. **Committees:**

1. Committees shall be formed with a passage of a motion, and shall expire no later than the end of the academic year.
2. Any student Assembly Member may join any committee at any time, with the exception of the executive committee.
3. The following are standing committees that shall be formed annually:
 - a. **Executive Committee:** Meets at least once a month to review and discuss Senate business. The Minimum Members of this committee are the Staff Advisor, Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Secretary.
 - b. **Gift Committee:** Recommends one or more gifts that contribute to the Cowell community to Senate for approval annually.
 - c. **Budget Committee:** Proposes a budget for the following year and presents it to the Senate for approval. The proposed budget must then be approved during an Assembly meeting (See Article IV, C).
 - d. **Constitutional Review Committee (CRC):** Proposes changes and clarifications to the legislation of the Cowell Assembly and Senate. Ensures that the senators of the Senate understand the proposed changes and consequences of said changes throughout the year. Proposed amendments to the Constitution must be voted on and approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote by the Senate before being presented to the Assembly.

b. **Selection**

i. **Membership**

1. The founders of the Cowell student government subscribed to the Athenian principle that all

members of the community are equally fit to serve as representatives.

2. Senatorship initiation shall require eight lines of original poetry.
3. The Senators chosen at the end of spring quarter will represent Cowell Senate over summer so that Cowell Senate is never without a standing body.
4. The Senators are required to attend the first meeting of fall quarter to retain full voting rights.

ii. Elections

1. The Senators shall elect the Chair and Vice-Chair in the spring quarter of the previous year.
2. The remaining positions shall be elected in the fall quarter of the current year.
3. In fall quarter, Assembly members who attend the first meeting shall serve as the voting body of the election that shall be held during the second meeting.
4. Senators shall serve as the voting body of all elections except for the first election held in the fall quarter.
5. Should an officer wish to step down, this should be done at the beginning of a quarter. At that time, the position may be filled by the nomination and election of another current Senator.

iii. Impeachment

1. Definition:

Impeachment is the process by which an elected Officer or Representative of Cowell Senate shall, by a two-thirds majority vote, immediately be removed from office.

2. Officers and Representatives may be impeached by a two-thirds vote during any Senate meeting in which quorum is present.
3. Immediately following a successful impeachment, Cowell Senate shall hold a follow-up election to fill the impeached officer's previous and now vacant role. The impeached officer cannot run for reelection to this role during this particular election.

III. STRUCTURE OF SENATE MEETINGS

Note: All Senate meetings shall use as procedural reference Robert's Rules of Order.

a. General:

The Senate shall use the Bylaws of the Cowell Senate ("Bylaws") as its meeting's rules of procedure. These Bylaws shall not supersede this constitution.

b. Minutes:

Minutes shall be taken during each Senate meeting and posted online and on the Senate Board.

c. Motions:

Any Assembly Member may make motions, however, only Senators may second and vote on the motions.

d. Voting

i. Quorum

1. Voting on all regular motions and amendments to motions shall require a quorum of 50 percent of all Senators, including proxies.
2. No voting shall take place without a quorum.

ii. Discussion and Voting

1. Each member of the Assembly has the right to address the entire Senate.
2. Only Senators may vote and they shall be entitled to one vote only.
3. In order to maintain a Senate that makes fully informed decisions and to ensure the benefit of a full discussion of each issue presented during Senate meetings, proxies may only be used for those motions or issues that have been previously tabled and that the absent person has heard discussed in entirety.
4. All procedural points must receive rulings during the meeting. All motions must be passed, defeated, tabled, or withdrawn.
5. Discussion shall be allowed before a motion has been moved and after it has been seconded. During discussion, Assembly members may move to call the question.
6. Amendments to motions shall be allowed after the motion has been seconded.

iii. Passage of a Motion

1. All motions and amendments to motions during Senates meetings shall require an affirmative vote of simple majority in order to pass unless they fall within the standing rules of Senate, in which case they will require a two-thirds affirmative vote to pass
2. Abstention votes do not count against the majority vote.

e. Agenda

- i. The Agenda shall be posted online and the Senate board prominently no fewer than twenty-four hours before a meeting of the Senate.
- ii. The Agenda shall include a weekly Treasurer's report. It shall also allow for reports from other committees, Senators, guests in attendance, and general discussion.
- iii. The Agenda may be amended at the commencement of a Senate meeting by a passing motion in accordance with Senate rules regarding motions.
- iv. No meeting shall be held without a properly constructed, posted, and approved Agenda.

IV. STRUCTURE OF ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

Note: All Assembly meetings shall use as procedural reference Robert's Rules of Order.

a. Definition:

Assembly meetings are gatherings of the members of the Cowell Assembly and shall be held at least once a year for purposes such as, but not limited to, addressing important community issues, passing the annual budget, and making constitutional amendments.

b. Voting

i. Quorum:

Voting on all motions, shall require a quorum as specified in the Bylaws. No voting shall take place without quorum.

ii. Discussion and Voting

1. Each member of the Cowell Assembly has the right to address the entire Assembly.
2. Each member shall be entitled to one vote only, and only Cowell Assembly members may vote.

iii. Passage of a Motion

1. All motions and amendments to motions during Assembly meetings shall require an affirmative vote of simple majority in order to pass.
2. Abstention votes do not count against the majority vote.

c. Presentation of the Budget

i. Timing:

A budget sub-committee shall be formed to prepare and make recommended amendments to the Cowell Senate budget for the following year. By the seventh week of the spring quarter the budget shall be approved during a regular Senate meeting. By the ninth week of the quarter the budget will be presented before an open meeting of the Cowell Assembly. The budget shall be subject to amendment at both these meetings.

ii. Structure of Budget Presentation

1. The Senate will propose a budget for the following year based upon income projections for that year. Copies of this proposed budget shall be posted with the Agenda and be distributed at the meeting.
2. Budget Assembly meetings shall be publicly announced in writing at least one week in advance.
3. An agenda shall be posted prominently no fewer than 24 hours before the meeting. This agenda shall allow for general discussion.
4. At the meeting the Senate must propose a non-voting Moderator for the meeting, and the Assembly must vote to accept the Moderator. The Moderator shall then conduct the meeting and recognize Assembly members who wish to speak.
5. If at any point during the meeting quorum is lacking, the Moderator shall notify the Senate Chair.
6. If the proposed budget is not approved, the current budget shall be used for the following year. The Senate shall hold an Assembly meeting the next quarter to ratify the budget.

d. Constitutional Amendments and Ratification

- i. This Constitution shall become effective upon being passed by a simple majority vote of the Cowell Assembly.
- ii. Motions to amend the Constitution shall require a

two-thirds affirmative vote to pass.

(As Adopted 3 June 1969)

(As Amended 2 May 1979)

(As Amended Spring 1985)

(As Amended 18 October 2006)

(As Amended 27 May 2009)

(As Amended 28 April 2011)

(As Amended 8 May 2012)

(As Amended 14 April 2015)

(As Amended 15 May 2017)

(As Amended 21 May 2019)

(As Amended 20 May 2022)