

## **Texas Tech University Student Government Association Code of Ethics and Conduct**

The Student Government Code of Ethics and Conduct provides a codified set of expectations for those individuals who serve in elected or appointed positions within the Legislative, Executive, or Judicial branches of the Texas Tech University Student Government Association. All members of the Student Government Association, hereafter referred to as SGA, are held to the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Student Handbook of the University. However, service as a member of the Legislative, Executive, or Judiciary of SGA, hereafter referred to as a SGA Official, is both a privilege and a responsibility and as such, SGA Officials are held to a higher standard. The expectations for SGA Officials include fair and ethical behavior and full accountability to the Student Body of Texas Tech University. As campus leaders and role models, SGA Officials must be dedicated to increased campus unity and school spirit, to full and open communication with constituents, and to efforts for positive and realistic change.

The nature of serving as an SGA Official represents responsibility as Public Officials and Representatives of the Texas Tech Student Body. Each who serves as a SGA Official shall honor the

- Responsibility to the letter and the spirit of all laws, rules, policies, election codes, and duties related to the business of the SGA,
- Responsibility to standards of personal integrity and civic behavior as befits a member of the governing body of the SGA,
- Responsibility to the public trust and to put first the public interest and thereby avoid actions for private gain.

As a SGA Official, each member accepts and will act upon the Responsibilities outlined in this Code of Ethics and Conduct.

### **I. Responsibility to the Letter and the Spirit of all Laws, Rules, Policies, Election Codes, and Duties related to the business of the SGA, as such,**

1. SGA Officials agree to adhere to
  - a. the University Student Handbook,
  - b. the Constitution governing SGA, and all Laws, Rules, and Duties pertaining to and governing SGA and SGA Officials,
  - c. this Code of Ethics and Conduct.
2. SGA Officials accept the obligation to disclose knowledge of a violation or potential violation of adherence to the governing document to the appropriate party.

### **II. Responsibility to standards of Personal Integrity and Civic Behavior as befits a member of the governing body of the SGA,**

1. SGA Officials accept
  - a. the duty to participate as an active and positive member of the Texas Tech Community,
  - b. the commitment to strengthen individual skills and professional development abilities,
  - c. the obligation to remain up to date on emerging issues and potential problems facing the Student Body of the University,
  - d. the responsibility to address issues arising from the student body, respond to public concerns, questions, and inquiries within means that are publicly accessible, and are complete, clear, and honest, and in a manner that is timely,
2. SGA Officials shall
  - a. promote the Constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representation, responsiveness, and due process in an effort to protect Students' rights,
  - b. strive to provide the provision of a method by which Students have a means for civil dissent, an assurance of due process, and safeguards against reprisal,

- c. avoid interference with the administrative functions of the student government or the professional duties of its staff, nor impair the ability of the student government and its staff to implement policy decisions.
- 3. SGA Officials' behavior shall
  - a. demonstrate professional and personal conduct that is above reproach and shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of fellow SGA members, boards, committees, and commissions, as well as the University administrators, faculty, staff and the Student Body,
  - b. avoid even the appearance of impropriety and shall work to expose corruption or abuse of power wherever discovered.
- 4. SGA Officials shall strive to
  - a. ensure others receive proper credit for their work and contributions to the work of SGA and the University at large,
  - b. take responsibility for one's own errors and behaviors.
- 5. In meetings or functions of the SGA, each SGA Official shall
  - a. refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the matters of business addressed before the body, or otherwise interfere with the orderly conduct of meetings,
  - b. listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions held before the SGA, and focus on resolving the affairs of the student body in an expedient and proficient manner,
  - c. have respect for the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel, or affairs of the Student Body of the University.

**III. Responsibility to the Public Trust and to put first the public interest and thereby avoid actions for private gain.**

- 1. SGA Officials, in an effort to ensure the stewardship of the public trust as a primary concern, shall,
  - a. work for the common good of the Student Body of Texas Tech University,
  - b. be prepared to execute decisions that may be difficult.
- 2. SGA Officials shall
  - a. oppose all forms of discrimination, harassment, and the unfair treatment of any persons, claims, and transactions placed before the Student Senate, Executive Committee, the Student Supreme Court, or any boards, committees, or commissions thereof,
  - b. seek to involve the appropriate students and university administrators, faculty, and staff in policy-making decisions,
  - c. guard against conflicts of interest and the appearance thereof.
- 3. SGA Officials, understanding the priority needs of the Student Body of Texas Tech, shall make decisions based on the needs of the whole of the University and shall not
  - a. use their official positions to influence decisions in which benefit the interest of any private or personal being, with the exception of those times when acting in the role of advocate as designated in the governing documents of the organizations as noted in Section I.1
  - b. use their official positions for the sake of personal gain or advancement, or for any matter in which they may have material or personal interests,
  - c. use their official positions in matters wherein they may have an organizational responsibility to fulfill which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest; and thus, shall recuse themselves from any say or vote on such matters,
  - d. use public resources not available to the public in general, such as Student Government staff time and supplies; not to include the use of the office space or equipment in the course of time spent in the SGA office in an effort to increase availability to constituents.

The Student Government Association shall periodically review this Code of Ethics and Conduct.