

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

Senate Bill 14-7

Senator Rod Bridges
Committee on Governmental Operations

A BILL OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY AMENDING THE ASB CODE & CONSTITUTION TO ADD TITLE IX, "THE ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY STUDENT VOICE COMMISSION," WHICH SHALL READ:

Title IX

The Associated Student Body Student Voice Commission

Section 101. Purpose of the Associated Student Body Student Voice Commission.

The Associated Student Body (ASB) Student Voice Commission (SVC) shall be a standing commission that is used to gather public opinion throughout the student body on various issues: The ASB Student Voice Commission is tasked with evaluating events and circumstances that are generally deemed as controversial in the scope of the collective student body. It shall provide an evaluation that is independent of any past, current, or future form of evaluation presented from other organizations, councils, etc. The ASB Student Voice Commission is not a decision-making body--it has the ability to provide information on the issue-at-hand, collect student input/accounts, and/or recommend proactive and reactive solutions to current and future issues that may arise. In addition to evaluating incidents, the ASB Student Voice Commission shall be tasked with leading student discussions regarding current or future ASB policies that potentially affect the collective student body.

Section 102. Definition of an Incident.

A) An "incident" is any current event that occurs on a school-wide, local, state-wide, national, or international level that impacts the collective student body spirit and unity, conventionally in an unexpected or unpleasant manner.

B) The SVC shall conduct its review unless the incident is investigated by a legal authority on a school-wide, local, state, or national level.

C) Although the members of the Associated Student Body currently listen to *any* issue a student might have, the SVC shall be called to review an issue if the executive officials feel that there is a campus-wide impact or significance to the aforementioned issue.

D) The SVC shall also be called to convene to gather student input and information if ASB executive officials have policies, ideas, or legislation that have potential ramifications on the collective student body.

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

Section 103. Procedure.

A) Creation of the Student Voice Commission.

- 1) The current ASB President shall have the power to call upon the ASB SVC if he/she deems that an event needs to be evaluated through the scope of the SVC.
- 2) The current ASB Vice-President shall have the power to call upon the ASB SVC to investigate certain situations that the Senate deems as relevant in the scope of the SVC.
- 3) The current Attorney General shall have the power to call upon the ASB SVC if he/she deems that an event need to be evaluated through the scope of the SVC.
- 4) Two (2) of the three (3) executives must be in agreement before the SVC reviews an incident.

B) Appointment of Standing Members.

- 1) The President shall appoint two (2) standing members and one (1) alternate.
- 2) The Vice-President shall appoint two (2) standing members and one (1) alternate.
- 3) The Attorney General shall appoint two (2) standing members and one (1) alternate.
- 4) When the President, Vice-President, and Attorney General leave office for any reason, their respective standing members and alternates on the SVC shall also be removed.
- 5) Members and alternates shall be current students attending The University of Mississippi, shall be in good academic standing, and shall be members of the Associated Student Body.
- 6) If neither the appointed member nor the alternate is able to perform his/her duties under any circumstance, then the executive officials shall stand in until a new member is chosen.
- 7) These names shall be made available to the public and kept updated if changes are made.
- 8) The Associated Student Body President, Vice-President, and Attorney General shall retain the right to remove his/her appointed members and alternates at any time.

C) Choosing of the Student Voice Committee Chairman.

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

- 1) After six (6) members and three (3) alternatives are chosen by the three (3) listed executive officials, the standing members shall be required to elect a chairman before officially convening.
- 2) The chairman's position shall be rotated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) If, by majority vote, the previous chairman is chosen again, he/she shall be allowed to retain the position.
- 4) If the elected chairman is unable to perform his/her duties or recuses himself/herself from the case at any instance, it shall be the responsibility of the remaining standing members to elect a new chairman with immediacy.

D) Roles of the Student Voice Commission Chairman.

- 1) The chairman shall establish an agenda, shall coordinate meeting times and locations with other members, and shall act as a liaison between the Student Voice Commission and any respective organization that may be involved in the case being reviewed.
- 2) If necessary, the chairman shall also have the power to appoint a scribe, who shall already be considered a standing member in the SVC.
 - a) The scribe shall assist the chairman in writing the final report and shall assist in recording minutes of each meeting, including the open discussion.

E) Convention of the Student Voice Commission.

- 1) All standing members of the Student Voice Commission shall be required to attend all meetings that are set by the chairman.
- 2) If a standing member is unable to attend a meeting scheduled by the chairman and has notified the chairman of his/her absence, then it shall be the duty of that standing member to notify his/her alternate for his/her respective branch of the meeting.
- 3) The SVC shall retain the right to determine if its meetings remain closed or open by a three-fifths (~~3/5ths~~) majority of members present.

Section 104. Gathering of Information.

A) Means of Attaining Information.

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

- 1) The SVC shall invite students, faculty, administration or any individual involved in the case, if these individuals so wish, to provide input or insight into the situation.
- 2) The SVC can gather information from open sources that may include, but are not limited to, administrative, faculty, and student statements; social media; and public records.
- 3) Any information on the issue may be presented in person or through an aforesaid medium at any time.
- 4) Confidentiality can be retained if requested.

B) Implementation of a Student Discussion.

- 1) In gathering public opinion and information, the Student Voice Commission shall be responsible for leading a forum that is open to students, faculty, and administration.
- 2) The time and date shall be decided with consensus of the Student Voice Commission.
- 3) Decorum shall be established by the Student Voice Commission in which attendees shall comply.
- 4) The SVC shall not condone hate speech, slander, and libel during the discussion.
- 5) The SVC shall reserve the right to begin, delegate, and end the discussion as it sees fit.
- 6) The SVC shall request that all media coordinate with the commission before attending the discussion.
- 7) The SVC may request the Associated Student Body to aid in spreading notification to the general public of the open discussion.

Section 105. Final Report.

A) Objectives.

- 1) The final report shall be a collective view of the Student Voice Commission, after it has gathered information and has listened to student input.
- 2) The report shall describe the concerns of the students that are gathered during the Student Discussion.

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

a) The opinions, concerns, and statements gathered from the Student Discussion that are written in the final report are not, necessarily, representative of all viewpoints of the student body.

2) The report shall not be used as a definitive answer to any given situation, but shall be used as a supplementative viewpoint on behalf of the Associated Student Body.

B) Content.

1) The organization of the report information shall fall to the discretion of the SVC.

2) The information in the final report shall not incriminate nor judge persons based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

3) The information included in the final report shall not single out nor incriminate any individual.

C) Dissemination.

1) The report shall be submitted to the office of the Dean of Students, to the office of the Chancellor, and to the office of the Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs, in addition to the President, Vice-President, and Attorney General of the Associated Student Body.

2) It shall then be posted on the Associated Student Body website, as well as made available in hard-copy in the ASB office.

WHEREAS, this bill shall be referred to as The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014;

WHEREAS, an additional amendment shall be presented to provide consistency with the new title throughout the ASB Code & Constitution;

WHEREAS, there is a great need to create an ASB commission to represent the student body and student voice in evaluating incidents concerning the perception of the student body;

WHEREAS, the ASB is, arguably, the most prominent representative organization for students and should, therefore, be obligated to provide a collective report/statement on issues that it deems significant in impacting the student body;

WHEREAS, the ASB SVC is positioned to be an efficient, receptive, and reflective outlet to the student body in order to ensure students that their voices are heard when discussing incidents or future ASB policies;

The ASB Student Voice Commission Act of 2014

WHEREAS, the goal of the SVC's final report is to provide an objective review of the student body's concerns or of any student input that is received; AND

WHEREAS, this title will forever reassure the university and its future members that the Associated Student Body will always heed the voices of the students it represents on issues that impact the collective whole of student life and timeless culture.

THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED THAT THE ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY SENATE AMEND THE ASB CODE & CONSTITUTION TO INCLUDE TITLE IX, AS DETAILED ABOVE.

Date of Introduction _____ Date of Consideration _____

Committee Jurisdiction _____

Action of the Campus Senate _____

Senate President _____ Senate Clerk _____

ASB President _____

Administrative Acknowledgement:

Dean of Students _____ Vice Chancellor _____

Chancellor _____

Main & Miscellaneous Points

- The Student Voice Commission is created with the wellbeing of the student body in mind. Through the SVC's establishment, there would be an effective and swiftly efficient way to address any pressing issue that may directly or indirectly relate to students.
- The Student Voice Commission's final report will not be a simple "PR statement" given to the University of Mississippi by the Associated Student Body; it is a comprehensive synthesis of ideas and opinions from students that are written and compiled by the members of the SVC for public interest.
- The forum is aimed to provide the student body with an opportunity to adequately and safely voice their opinions in a non-threatening environment (think roundtable discussions or the jointly-sponsored "Open Mic").
- As of now, there is no feasible outlet for individuals to voice their convictions or views on issues that are significant and relevant to their careers and welfare while attending the University of Mississippi.
- The Student Voice Commission is aimed to promote cohesion and transparency within the student body; it inherently gives a voice to those who fight to be heard and will amplify those concerns to other areas of this Ole Miss campus.
- For example: Students feel strongly about the racial climate at The University of Mississippi (specifically, the most recent James Meredith statue incident)--how can we move forward? The ASB Senate is discussing potential legislation to prevent smoking on campus or to implement a \$50 student activities fee--what are the concerns students might have?