**Judicial Branch**

**Policies and Procedures**

**2025-2026**



**Chief Justice**

Jacob Gordon

**Deputy Chief Justice**

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# Mission and Purpose of the Judicial Branch

## Mission

### The Mission of the Judiciary shall be to serve the students by maintaining and ensuring a legal balance by exercising the powers vested in the branch by the University of North Florida Student Government Constitution and corresponding title among all the Branches and Offices of Student Government.

## Purpose

### The purpose of the Judiciary shall be to serve as the final deciding body for all disputes between Student Government employees, members, and/or elected officials which involve Student Government law.

# Membership of the Judicial Branch

## Court Occupancy

### The Judicial Branch shall be comprised of nine (9) Justices nominated by the President and confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate. A Chief Justice shall be elected annually from within the Judicial Branch and a Deputy Chief Justice shall be appointed annually by the Chief Justice.

## Membership Eligibility

1. Each member must be an A&S Fee-paying student, enrolled in at least one (1) class during both the fall and spring semesters at the University of North Florida, maintain at least a 2.5 institutional grade point average, unless otherwise approved by the Chief Student Affairs Officer, and not restricted from participation in Student Government by the University of North Florida’s Student Conduct Office. Students may seek membership to Student Government during their first semester and shall be exempt from the GPA requirement.

## Application and Appointment Process for Associate Justices

### Any individual interested in joining the Judicial Branch must fill out an application form found on Perch Portal. The Chief Justice will be notified of the application in writing.

### The application will be forwarded to the office manager to determine the applicant’s eligibility for participating in Student Government.

### Once the application is approved to move forward by the Student Government Director or their Designee, the Chief Justice will send a scenario to the applicant for them to complete.

#### If an applicant is denied the application will not move forward.

#### A denied applicant can re-apply no earlier than the first week of the following semester of the original application.

### Upon completion of the scenario, the applicant shall meet with the Student Body President (or proper designee) for an interview before confirmation hearings. Members of the Executive and Judicial branches may also be present to ask questions during the interview.

### The President shall forward a qualified nominee to the relevant Senate Committee.

### If forwarded by the relevant Senate Committee the nominee will then go before the Senate for final confirmation.

## Application and Appointment Process for Clerks of Court

### Any individual interested in joining the Judicial Branch must fill out an application form found on Perch Portal. The Chief Justice will be notified of the application in writing.

### The application will be forwarded to the office manager to determine the applicant’s eligibility for participating in Student Government.

### Once the application is approved to move forward by the Student Government Director or their Designee, the Chief Justice will schedule an interview with the applicant.

### Once the Chief Justice selects a Clerk of Courts, the Clerk shall be notified via email.

## Installation and Terms

### The Judicial nominee shall immediately be sworn in and installed as an active Justice upon the majority confirmation from Senate.

### If confirmed and sworn in, a Justice will complete onboarding with the Student Government Office Manager before or immediately after their first official duty. Once installed as a member of the Judicial Branch, Justices may serve a maximum of four (4) years or until they are no longer constitutionally qualified.

### Upon installation, Justices shall annually sign forms stating that they have read, understand, and agree to follow the Judicial Branch Policies and Procedures as well as an agreement to maintain confidentiality.

### Justices may request either a summer leave of absence or a three (3) week leave of absence in the fall or spring semester, within an academic year. A leave of absence request form must be submitted to the Chief Justice for final approval. Special exceptions may be granted by the Judicial Branch by two-thirds (2/3) vote. The leave of absence request must be submitted at least five (5) business days prior to the leave of absence. Justices shall provide written notice upon resignation to the Chief Justice or Acting Chief Justice.

## Resignation Process

### Justices shall submit a formal letter of resignation, including the date at which said resignation shall take effect, as least two (2) weeks prior to their graduation or intended resignation.

#### Such letter shall be emailed to the Chief Justice and forwarded to the Student Government Director and Judicial Branch Advisor.

# Judicial Branch Officers and Duties

## Duties of the Chief Justice

### To assign duties among the Justices and to divide the Associate Justices between the Primary and Supreme Courts, as prescribed by title.

### To find merit in the Supreme Court for Judicial Complaints.

### To find merit in Judicial Interpretations.

### To preside over all cases, except the Primary Court for Judicial Complaints.

### To be responsible for establishing hearings for which they preside, and for providing all necesarry individuals with appropriate hearing information.

### To inform Justices after statute changes have been passed by the Senate.

### To serve as Budget Director over the Student Government Judicial Index.

### To rule on questions related to Judicial Policies and Procedures that arise during the course of the year.

### To conduct and preside over meetings of the Judicial Branch.

### To determine the time, day, frequency, and place of the Judicial meetings of the Judicial Branch.

### To call a Judicial Branch meeting no later than two (2) weeks after the first day of classes of both fall and spring semester.

### To be responsible for establishing hearings, for which they preside, and for providing all persons necessary with appropriate information.

### To hear and decide on second level point appeals.

### To offer guidance to Justices during all deliberations in any Judicial business and/or matter.

### To administer the “Oath of Office” to all incoming Student Government officials.

### To inform the Judicial Branch of all Judicial resignations, removals, nominations, and appointments within five (5) business days.

### To collaborate with the other Justices in composing written Judicial Opinions, for all matters over which they preside.

### To make a conscious effort to remain vigilant of current events and issues within Student Government, particularly those that may impact the Court.

### To notify the Executive Branch of any new vacancies within the Judicial Branch.

### To issue a memorandum notifying the party responsible for updating the Constitution and Statutes when the Court decides to negate and remove statute.

### To inform members of the Judicial Branch of all mandatory meetings/events no later than the posting of such meetings/events.

### To only vote in the event of a tie, in all matters where the Associate Justices vote.

### To update the Chief Justice recognition plaque by adding their predecessor and a plate that contains only their name and start year.

### To arrange for the drycleaning of Judicial robes each summer, and to keep the robe cabinets organized.

## Duties of the Deputy Chief Justice

### To preside over the Primary Court during Judicial Complaints.

### To be responsible for establishing hearings for which they preside, and for providing all necessary individuals with appropriate hearing information.

### To conduct roll call at the beginning and end of each Judicial meeting.

### To keep a written record of attendance.

### To issue points for Justices in violation of the Judicial Policies and Procedures

### To hear and decide on first level point appeals.

### To keep a written record of all points assessed.

### To collaborate with the other Justices in composing written Judicial Opinions, for all matters over which they preside.

### To make a conscious effort to remain vigilant of current events and issues within Student Government, particularly those that may impact the Court.

### Ensure Justices are informed that any points assessed were removed in accordance with section (V) (A) (7) of this document, “Absence points will reset after one (1) year according to when a Justice was confirmed by Senate. This date repeats each year in accordance with when that Justice was appointed.”

### To declare when there is a possible conflict of interest.

### Other tasks delegated by the Chief Justice.

## Duties of Associate Justices

### To attend parking appeal hearings.

### To vote on matters of Judicial business.

### To attend all mandatory meetings.

### To be well versed and knowledgeable in a matter that comes before the Court.

### To complete tasks relevant to the business within the Judicial Branch that have been assigned by members of Judicial Leadership.

### To make a conscious effort to remain vigilant of current events and issues within Student Government, particularly those that may impact the Court.

### To collaborate with other Justices in composing written Judicial opinions.

### To attend one (1) Senate Committee meeting a semester.

### To attend two (2) Senate meetings a semester.

### To declare when there is a possible conflict of interest when a Justice is voting and recuse themselves when appropriate.

## Duties of the Clerk(s) of Court

### To attend hearings and meetings of the Judicial Branch.

### To assist the Presiding Officer in preparing the courtroom prior to hearings and meetings, excluding the handling of evidence or evidence packets.

### To record minutes and attendance at meetings

### To record objections and objection rulings at hearings.

### To alert the Presiding Officer, via nonverbal cues, when an individual has reached the limit of their speaking time at hearings and meetings.

### To serve as a Bailiff during hearings by announcing the entry of the Court.

### Items one (1) through four (4) will be delegated to the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice in the event that there is no Clerk of Courts.

### Clerks of Courts are not representative officers of the Student Government of the University of North Florida. Clerks of Courts are volunteers selected by the Chief Justice.

## Chain of Command

### The chain of command shall be the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice, and the Associate Justices (in order of tenure).

### The Deputy Chief Justice shall assume the duties of the Chief Justice in the event of their absence.

### The most senior Associate Justice who accepts the role shall assume the duties of the Deputy Chief Justice in the event that the Deputy Chief Justice is absent or assumes the role of the Chief Justice.

# Internal Procedures of the Judicial Branch

## Judicial Leadership Selection

### Chief Justice Elections

#### Elections for the Chief Justice shall be held annually, during the month of April. If the Chief Justice position is vacated prior to the formal end of the term, or the Chief Justice intends to step down, a special election will be held within twenty (20) business days of the seat vacancy. During the interim, the Deputy Chief Justice will assume all duties of the Chief Justice.

#### The Presiding Officer shall call for nominations on the floor. After all nominations have been made, a motion to close the floor for nominations must be made.

#### After the nominations have been closed, Justices may have the option to ask the candidates questions.

#### If the candidate happens to be the Presiding Officer currently, then the next person in the aforementioned chain of command (who is not running for the same position) shall preside for the remainder of the election.

#### After all candidates for this position have spoken, the Judicial Branch shall cast its votes via a roll call vote.

##### A candidate must receive a majority vote in order to be elected.

##### Should a majority decision not be reached, a runoff election will be held amongst the two (2) candidates who received the highest number of votes.

#### The newly elected Chief Justice shall be sworn in as soon as the results are announced.

#### A transition period of twenty (20) business days will occur between the current Chief Justice and the succeeding Chief Justice that will start the day of the judicial election.

### Deputy Chief Justice Appointment

#### The Chief Justice must submit a nominee for the Deputy Chief Justice position to the Judicial Branch within the first twenty (20) business days of their term.

#### If there is a vacancy in the Deputy Chief Justice position before the election of a new Chief Justice, then the current Chief Justice must submit a nominee for the Deputy Chief Justice position to the Judicial Branch within twenty (20) business days.

#### At the next Judicial meeting, the Judicial Branch will vote to confirm the selected nominee by a simple majority vote.

#### Upon a successful confirmation, the new Deputy Chief Justice shall be installed immediately.

#### In the event that the Deputy Chief Justice is not confirmed by the Judicial Branch, the Chief Justice shall submit a different nominee. The Judicial Branch will vote to confirm the new nominee by a simple majority vote.

### Removal of Judicial Leadership

#### Removal of the Chief Justice from their office requires a three-fourths (¾) majority of the remaining Justices eligible to vote.

#### The Chief Justice may remove the Deputy Chief Justice at any time if they feel it is in the best interest of the student body. The Judicial Branch may override the Chief Justice’s decision with a two thirds (2/3) vote at the next regularly scheduled Judicial meeting.

## Judicial Meetings

### Quorum for a Judicial meeting, excluding Parking Appeals, shall be defined as more than half of the current membership.

#### Current membership shall be defined as all active Justices and shall exclude Justices excused from their duties on a Leave of Absence or current vacancies within the Branch.

### The Chief Justice shall schedule meetings with the Branch whenever necessary.

### A simple majority of the Judicial Branch may call a meeting whenever necessary.

#### Meetings may be closed to the public at the discretion of the Chief Justice or by a majority vote of the Justices. The Student Government Advisor, the Student Government Director, and members of the University of North Florida Administration and their guests shall be allowed to attend. Any other parties may request permission to attend the meeting(s) from the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice’s decision may be overturned by a majority vote of the other Justices.

#### All meetings of the Judicial Branch in which the Policies and Procedures or Hearing Guidelines are changed will be subject to Florida Sunshine Law and should therefore be following the requirements.

## Policies and Procedures

### Changes shall be made by a simple majority vote of the Judicial Branch.

### In the event that the Policies and Procedures and/or the Hearing Guidelines are changed after once merit has been determined in a case (for a Judicial Complaint, Judicial Review, Judicial Appeal Hearing, et cetera), but before the conclusion of the aforementioned hearing, then the original copies of the Policies and Procedures and/or the Hearing Guidelines will be used as the point of reference.

# Judicial Branch Point System

## General Provisions

### Each Justice shall attend all Judicial meetings.

### If a Justice is on an approved leave of absence, no points can be accumulated through the duration of that said leave.

### If a Justice is not in attendance at any mandatory meeting, Parking Appeals, and/or scheduled event, then the Justice will receive an absence point. If a meeting is called with less than 48 hours’ notice, points cannot be assessed to any Justice.

### The Deputy Chief Justice shall be responsible for assigning points to the Associate Justices. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the Chief Justice to assign points to the Deputy Chief Justice.

### It is the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Justice to notify a Justice that they received a point within two (2) business days. If the Deputy Chief Justice fails to notify the Justice in time, then the Justice will not receive a point.

### The Chief Justice may suspend the point system in the event the point system hinders the Judicial Branch’s business and/or proves to be ineffective at that time.

### Absence points will reset after one (1) year according to when a Justice was confirmed by Senate. This date repeats each year in accordance with when that Justice was appointed.

## Point Assessment

### Dress code: One (1) point

#### Dress codes for meetings shall be provided with the meeting notice, and include business casual, business professional, and business professional with robes.

### Tardiness: One (1) point

#### If a Justice is more than five (5) minutes late to a Judicial meeting, they will be given one (1) point.

#### If a Justice is late to a meeting with multiple roll calls their tardy points will be assessed as one (1) point per missed roll call.

#### Tardiness to a public hearing will result in an absence from the hearing if the Justice arrives after the hearing has been called to order.

### University Wide Committee Absence: One (1) point

#### Justices are required to participate in any appeals system outside of Student Government (i.e., Parking) that requires the involvement of the Judicial Branch. Participation shall be in whatever capacity is deemed necessary to efficiently sustain a fair appeals system.

### Public Hearing Absence: Two (2) points

#### Public hearings shall include all hearings that are open to the public including, but not limited to, Judicial Complaint, Judicial Review, and Impeachment Hearings.

### Formal Meeting Absence: Two (2) points

#### Formal meetings shall include any meetings of the Judicial Branch called by the Chief Justice.

#### If part of the meeting is attended, points will be reduced to one (1).

### Conflict of Interest: Two (2) points

#### If a Justice fails to declare a conflict of interest, they shall accumulate two (2) points. Conflict of interest is to be determined by a simple majority vote of the Judicial Branch.

### Confidentiality Violations: Four (4) points

#### If a Justice violates the standards of confidentiality with regards to activities that are conducted as a part of Student Government (i.e., Parking Appeals or Academic Appeals), the Justice shall accumulate four (4) points.

## Point Appeals

### If a Justice wishes to appeal an assessed point, a point appeal must be time-stamped and submitted to the Deputy Chief Justice within five (5) business days from the notification of the assessed point(s).

### If the point appeal is denied by the Deputy Chief Justice, it may be appealed to the Chief Justice.

### There are three (3) outcomes for evaluating an appeal: approved (no points), reduced (half of the value to the predetermined point assignment), and denied (full number of points).

### The final decision on point appeals shall be made by the Chief Justice.

## Impeachment Recommendation Due to Points

### If a Justice accumulates four (4) points in a calendar year from the date of their Senate confirmation, then the Chief Justice must call a Point Appeal Hearing.

### The Point Appeal Hearing shall be open to the public and will consist of the Justice presenting their case, and the Court deliberating whether to reduce the number of points or recommend the Articles of Impeachment against the Justice.

### The Chief Justice must provide the Justices with any relevant documentation, including prior point appeals submitted by the Justice and written reprimands (if applicable).

### When the Court gets to the matter during the hearing, the Chief Justice or presiding officer must make a statement outlining the issue at hand, as well as the reasons that the Justice has received the points throughout the year. The Justice in question must then be permitted to make a rebuttal.

### A period of questioning must follow. Once all other Justices have the information they need, the Justices must leave the room to engage in private deliberation. If a simple majority of the Justices vote to recommend the Articles of Impeachment, the Chief Justice must inform the President and Senate immediately through a Formal Recommendation from the Judicial Branch.

# Business of the Judicial Branch

## Judicial Hearings

### The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for furnishing all parties involved in any case with the Formal Hearing Guidelines, Guide for Counsel, and motion templates.

### The Presiding Officer is required to post notice of all Judicial Hearings in accordance with state and federal law.

### Formal Hearings are required to take place if a Judicial Review Process is being utilized.

### The Judicial Branch may only vote on business when quorum is established.

### Minutes shall be recorded at any meeting where there are items of action or voting occurs.

### Participation in Judicial Deliberations is exclusive to active members of the Judicial Branch. However, the General Counsel of the University of North Florida and professional staff of the Student Government of the University of North Florida may be involved in Judicial Deliberations at the request of the Court.

## Parking Appeals

### Quorum for parking appeals is established when at least three (3) justices are present.

### Absence from parking appeals may result in the assessment of one (1) point unless excused by the Chief Justice or Deputy Chief Justice.

### If a Justice has a recurring academic involvement that prevents them from attending, they shall notify the Chief Justice or Deputy Chief Justice in advance.

### Parking appeal procedures are to be guided by the most recent version of the Non-Moving Parking/Traffic Infraction Citations Student Appeal Board Bylaws established by the University of North Florida

# Judicial Education

## Associate Justice Orientation

### The Judicial Leadership shall be responsible for training new Associate Justices.

### At least two (2) orientations shall be held per year, once in the fall and spring.

####  Associate Justice Orientations shall be outlined as follows: An initial orientation detailing the roles and duties of an Associate Justice as prescribed in the Judicial Policies and Procedures and Judicial Leadership

#### An introduction into University Wide Committees as prescribed by the Judicial Leadership.

## Mock Trial

### Judicial leadership must organize and set at least two (2) Mock Trials per semester. The Mock trial must reflect the current statues and prescribed law of the University of North Florida Student Government. Attendance shall be required of all Judicial Branch members unless excused by the Chief Justice.

## Case Studies, Lectures, Ongoing Training

### The Chief Justice shall reserve the right to call additional training as deemed necessary or proper. The Chief Justice shall reserve the right to make said trainings mandatory.