



University of Southern California
Undergraduate Student Government

CONSTITUTION

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTION

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University of Southern California Undergraduate Student Government Constitution

Preamble

We, the undergraduate students of the University of Southern California, in order to encourage freedom of scholarship, preserve and encourage student rights, promote a unified and cohesive student body, and maintain forums to discuss our views and rights do hereby form and establish the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Southern California.

Purpose Statement

We, the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Southern California, are the representative voice of the undergraduate student body. We serve the following purposes:

- to foster scholarship in an atmosphere of free and objective inquiry;
- to insist upon academic freedom, responsibility, and excellence;
- to assume responsibility for exercising and preserving student rights;
- to promote cohesion within the student body;
- to maintain a forum for expressing students' diverse views and interests;
- to initiate, coordinate, and guide student efforts aimed at improving student life and activities;
- to seek and obtain effective communication and relations within the University and external communities;
- to insist upon quality education at an affordable cost, thereby providing educational opportunities for persons of all economic strata;
- to provide opportunities to develop student leadership qualities;
- to facilitate the individual and collective welfare of the undergraduate student body; and—
- to uphold the University Code of Ethics.

We serve these aforementioned purposes via support and representation of student views and needs to the University of Southern California administration, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.

THEREBY, this Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Southern California is affirmed and established.

Article I: Framework and Eligibility

I.A. The body established herein shall be known as the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Southern California, hereinafter referred to as “Undergraduate Student Government” or “USG.”

I.A.1. This organization will use the name or its shortened form, USG, in all publicity materials and correspondence.

I.B. The Undergraduate Student Government shall consist of the Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, and Legislative Branch.

I.B.1. The Executive Branch shall be composed of the Communications Department, the Programming Department, and the Funding Department all as defined in the USG Bylaws.

I.B.2. The Judicial Branch shall be composed of the Judicial Council as defined by the USG Bylaws.

I.B.3. The Legislative Branch shall be composed of the Senate, the Legislative Committees, and the Advocacy Department as defined in the USG Bylaws.

I.C. All registered undergraduate students at USC shall be members of the Undergraduate Student Government and shall be subject to this Constitution, Bylaws, and Code of Ethics.

I.D. As a prerequisite to run for and hold office, all elected or appointed officers shall be full-time undergraduate students in good standing as defined by the Registrar, and are required to maintain a cumulative two-point-five (2.500) minimum GPA.

I.D.1. Students who maintain at least six (6) units during their final semester at USC are exempt from the full-time requirement.

I.D.2. Under special circumstances, part-time students may run for and hold office with the consent and approval of the Division of Student Life.

I.E. The term of the President, Vice President, and Senators shall be one (1) year and concurrent with the respective Senate term.

I.E.1. All other stipend roles shall be for the duration of the Senate term to which they are confirmed.

I.E.1.i. Stipended positions in the Judicial Branch have two-year terms.

I.E.1.ii. The President-elect and Vice President-elect may nominate officers for their term which may be confirmed by the outgoing Senate.

I.E.2. Those serving in stipend roles shall not hold other stipend roles in USG.

I.E.3. Those serving in stipend roles shall serve a maximum of two (2) terms in the same capacity if hired more than once upon re-application, or if they are re-elected.

I.E.3.i. This term limit does not apply to stipended officers of the Judicial Branch.

Article II: The Executive Cabinet

II.A. All executive powers of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be vested in the Executive Cabinet, which includes the President, the Vice President, the Chief of Staff, the Speaker of the Senate, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Programming Officer, the Chief Communications Officer, and the Chief Diversity Officer.

II.A.1. These positions shall be appointed or elected as outlined in Article II of the Bylaws.

II.B. The Executive Cabinet shall:

II.B.1. Meet regularly to discuss problems, plans, and goals of the Undergraduate Student Government.

II.B.2. Ensure all pertinent issues are being addressed by the Undergraduate Student Government through an elected or appointed officer.

II.B.3. Communicate and interact with University organizations and administrators to carry out goals set forth by the Undergraduate Student Government.

II.C. The President and Vice President shall be directly elected by the University of Southern California undergraduate student body.

II.C.1. The President and Vice President shall obey constituency guidelines as defined in the Bylaws.

II.C.2. The President and Vice President shall be elected in accordance with the Bylaws and on the same ballot as the Senators.

II.C.3. The term of office shall be one (1) year and concurrent with the respective Senate term.

II.C.3.i. The President may serve only one (1) term in that office.

II.C.3.ii. The Vice President may not serve more than two (2) terms in this capacity.

II.C.4. If the President is unable to finish the term, the Chief Justice shall swear in the Vice President as the new President and the Speaker of the Senate as the new Vice President at the next Senate meeting.

II.C.4.i. This partial term shall not count against the one (1) term limit.

II.C.5. If the Vice President is unable to finish the term, the Chief Justice shall swear in the Speaker of the Senate as the new Vice President at the next Senate meeting.

II.C.5.i. This partial term shall not count against the two (2) term limit.

II.C.6. If the Speaker of the Senate is unable to finish their term, the Senate shall elect a new Speaker of the Senate as outlined in the Bylaws.

II.C.7. In the event that there are concurrent vacancies in the Presidential and Vice Presidential positions, the Speaker of the Senate shall be sworn in as the President at the next Senate meeting, and the Senate shall directly elect a new Vice President from among their body, once the vacant Senate seat of the Speaker has been filled.

II.C.8. The President and Vice President may be removed from office in accordance with the process outlined in the Bylaws.

II.D. The President may veto legislation as passed by the Senate, as outlined in the Bylaws.

II.D.1. Amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and confirmation of personnel are not eligible to be vetoed.

II.D.2. The Senate, with a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote, may override the President's veto.

Article III. The Legislative Branch

III.A. The Legislative Branch shall act as a deliberative body to advocate for the undergraduate students on any University or pertinent issues.

III.B. The Legislative Branch shall create or sponsor resolutions as defined in the Bylaws.

III.C. The Legislative Branch shall hold the other branches of USG accountable to uphold all federal, state, university, and Undergraduate Student Government policies and procedures.

III.D. The Legislative Branch shall stay informed of university issues and policies by attending meetings, performing research, contacting members of the USC community, and any other means that are necessary to carry out this responsibility.

III.E. The Legislative Branch shall perform all other duties that may be assigned by the Constitution or Bylaws.

Section 1: The Senate

III.F. All legislative powers of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be vested in the legislative body, or "Senate."

III.G. The legislative body shall be composed of twelve (12) Senators.

III.H. Senators shall fulfill all duties as defined in the Bylaws.

III.H.1. Each Senator shall have one (1) full vote.

III.H.2. One (1) Senator shall serve as the Speaker of the Senate. The Speaker of the Senate shall be selected as outlined in Article II of the Bylaws.

III.H.3. If a Senator is unable to finish the term, a new Senator shall be sworn in as soon as possible, in accordance with the Bylaws.

III.I. The Vice President shall serve as President of the Senate.

III.I.1. The President of the Senate shall chair the Senate during its meetings.

III.I.2. The President of the Senate shall cast a vote only to break a tie.

III.J. Senatorial elections shall be held in accordance with the Bylaws.

III.K. The Senate shall approve all budget appropriations pursuant to the Bylaws.

III.K.1. Senate-approved budgets shall be made public.

III.L. The Senate shall approve appointments in the Executive Branch, the Judicial Branch, and the Legislative Branch in accordance with procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

III.M. The Senate shall approve certain expenditures as outlined in the Bylaws.

III.N. Senators may be removed from office in accordance with the process outlined in the Bylaws.

Section 2: Legislative Committees

III.O. The policy-making and advocacy powers of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be vested in Legislative Committees, or “Committees.”

III.O.1. There shall be permanent standing committees overseen by the Vice President-as defined in the Bylaws.

III.O.2. The duties and responsibilities of each Committee shall be defined in the Bylaws.

III.P. Committees shall maintain contact with stakeholders about issues affecting students.

III.Q. Each Committee shall be composed of Senators and General Members.

III.Q.1. Of these, one (1) General Member shall serve as the Committee Chair.

III.Q.1.i. Chairs shall be appointed by the President, with the advice of the respective outgoing Chair, the Executive Cabinet, and the Advisor(s).

III.Q.1.ii. Chairs may be removed from office in accordance with the process outlined in the Bylaws.

III.Q.2. Those serving on Committees shall fulfill all duties as outlined by the Bylaws.

III.R. New Committees may be incorporated, for permanent or temporary jurisdiction, in accordance with the process outlined in the Bylaws.

Section 3: Advocacy Department

III.S. The Advocacy Department shall:

III.S.1. Serve as a platform for representatives from various communities to discuss issues that affect vulnerable communities on campus.

III.S.2. Advise the Chief Diversity Officer and Legislative Branch on ways to address campus climate issues.

III.S.3. Conduct advocacy work to increase the representation and inclusion of underrepresented communities on campus.

III.T. The Advocacy Department shall be composed of the Chief Diversity Officer and Advocacy Liaisons.

III.T.1. The Advocacy Liaisons shall be nominated by their respective communities and appointed by the President prior to the first meeting of the Advocacy Department as outlined in the Bylaws.

III.T.2. Advocacy Liaisons may be removed from their position in accordance with the process outlined in the Bylaws.

Article IV: The Funding Department

IV.A. The Funding Department shall provide fiscal support and resources to various recognized student organizations and undergraduate students.

IV.B. The Funding Department shall consist of the Chief Financial Officer and the following six (6) funds: the Philanthropy Fund, the Professional Fund, the Academic Research Fund, the Performing and Visual Arts Fund, the Social and Recreation Fund, and the Startup Fund. They shall function and serve the purposes as outlined in the Bylaws.

IV.C. The Funding Department Directors and Associate Directors shall be appointed by the President and the Chief Financial Officer, with the advice of the Executive Cabinet, the respective outgoing directors, and the Advisor(s).

IV.C.1. Directors and Associate Directors shall fulfill their duties as outlined in the Bylaws.

Article V: The Communications Department

V.A. The Communications Department shall act as a liaison and facilitate communication between USG and the student body.

V.B. The Communications Department shall ensure the current governing documents and the budget are accessible and updated on the USG website.

V.C. The Communications Department shall consist of the Chief Communications Officer and the following four (4) teams: Creative, Digital, Media, and Public Relations.

V.D. The Communications Department Directors and Associate Directors shall be appointed by the President and the Chief Communications Officer, with the advice of the Executive Cabinet, the respective outgoing Directors, and the Advisor(s).

V.D.1. Director and Associate Directors shall fulfill their duties as outlined in the Bylaws.

Article VI: The Programming Department

VI.A. The Programming Department shall program events for the student body that benefit the students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.

VI.B. The Programming Department shall consist of the Chief Programming Officer, Programming Committees and Programming Assemblies.

VI.B.1. Each Programming Committee and Assembly outlined in the Bylaws shall have an Executive Director or two (2) Co-Executive Directors.

VI.B.1.i Assembly Executive Directors shall be elected by their respective groups in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and procedures of the Programming Department and the respective Assembly.

VI.B.2 Committee Executive Directors and Committee Assistant Director(s) shall be appointed by the President and the Chief Programming Officer, with the advice of the respective outgoing officers, the Executive Cabinet, and the Advisor(s). The appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate, in accordance with the Bylaws.

VI.C. Additional Programming Committees and Assemblies may be incorporated as outlined in the Bylaws.

Article VII: The Judicial Branch

VII.A. All judicial powers of the Undergraduate Student Government shall be vested in the Judicial Branch.

VII.B. There shall be one (1) body of the Judicial Branch, the Judicial Council, or “Council”.

VII.B.1. The Council shall adjudicate all cases where the constitutionality of an act by any member of the other branches is called into question.

VII.B.2. The Council shall be the final court for all judicial decisions.

VII.B.3. The Council shall also be the final court for all cases pertaining to interpretation, enforcement, and adjudication of the Elections Code.

VII.C. Officers of the Judicial Branch shall be confirmed by the Senate in accordance with procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

VII.C.1. Officers of the Judicial Branch may not concurrently serve in any other Branch of the Undergraduate Student Government.

VII.C.2. Vacancies in the Judicial Branch shall be filled within three (3) academic weeks.

VII.C.3. If an officer of the Judicial Branch takes a leave, temporary or otherwise, they remove themselves from their respective body.

VII.C.4. Officers of the Judicial Branch may be removed from office in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

VII.D. The Judicial Branch shall remain an impartial, objective, and autonomous body to review and adjudicate all cases brought before them by an officer of the Undergraduate Student Government or any interested undergraduate student against an officer of the Undergraduate Student Government.

VII.D.1. Hearings and deliberations of the Council shall be closed to the public.

Section 1: The Judicial Council

VII.E. The Judicial Council shall be responsible for interpretation, enforcement, and adjudication of all cases regarding infractions of USG governing documents.

VII.E.1. For complaints concerning, but not limited to, the USC Student Handbook, local, state, or federal law, the Chief Justice may order compliance and refer the complaint to the appropriate governing body, including, but not limited to, the Office of Community Expectations, and law enforcement authorities.

VII.E.1.i. Rulings in those bodies may be grounds for sanctions as determined by the Council.

VII.F. There shall be five (5) justices.

VII.F.1. Of these, four (4) shall be Associate Justices and one (1) shall be the Chief Justice.

VII.F.2. Justices shall be appointed by representatives from each Branch of the Undergraduate Student Government in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

VII.G. In cases where the Council makes a ruling regarding constitutionality, the Senate must make legislative changes to respond to the decision by resolving the conflict between the written legislation and the interpretation of the Council before the end of the Senate term.

VII.H. The Council shall oversee elections for the President, Vice President, Senators, and Referendums.

VII.I. A simple majority of all Justices, including the Chief Justice, shall be present to conduct business regarding complaints, infractions of the Elections Code, and sanctions.

VII.I.1. There shall be an Elections Code for all general and special elections.

VII.I.1.i. The Elections Code shall be defined, created, and amended in accordance with procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

VII.I.2. The Judicial Council may impose sanctions for violations of the Elections Code.

Article VIII: Faculty/Staff Advisor(s)

VIII.A. The Undergraduate Student Government shall have an official advisor(s) from the USC faculty and/or staff.

VIII.A.1. Other persons may serve as special advisors as needed.

VIII.B. The Advisor(s), in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws, shall:

VIII.B.1. Actively monitor the policies, actions, and behavior of the Undergraduate Student Government and its officers.

VIII.B.2. Guide USG officers and provide mentorship, leadership training, and structure to the organization.

VIII.B.3. Help create the environment and provide resources for student leaders in the Undergraduate Student Government to successfully serve undergraduate students' needs and interests.

VIII.C. The Advisor(s) may not vote on any Senate business or unduly influence decisions of the Undergraduate Student Government.

Article IX: Affiliations

IX.A. The Undergraduate Student Government is a recognized student organization at the University of Southern California, but is not part of the University itself.

IX.A.1. In all correspondence and business transactions, it may refer to itself as an organization at USC, but not as part of USC itself.

IX.B. The Undergraduate Student Government agrees to abide by all pertinent USC policies and regulations.

IX.B.1. Where USC policies and regulations and those of the Undergraduate Student Government differ, the policies and regulations of USC will take precedence.

IX.C. The Undergraduate Student Government recognizes and understands that the University assumes no legal liability for the actions of the organization, and that the University is not providing blanket indemnification insurance coverage for any activities of the organization, unless those activities expressly benefit and further the goals of the University, and have received prior review, approval, and consent of Campus Activities, Risk Management, and/or General Counsel.

IX.D. Prior to the first Senate meeting of fall semester, the Undergraduate Student Government President shall develop a document, called the "Collaborative Working Agreement," with the Director of Campus Activities.

IX.D.1. The Agreement shall contain the following elements.

IX.D.1.i. A clear description of how officers of the Undergraduate Student Government and members of Student Life will work collaboratively during the upcoming year.

IX.D.1.ii A clearly articulated understanding of the relationship between the Undergraduate Student Government and Student Life.

IX.D.1.iii. An outline of Senate involvement in decision-making processes including, but not limited to, hiring of Student Life administrators, financial decisions and processes, and programming issues.

IX.D.1.iv. An understanding of the relationship between the Undergraduate Student Government and Programming Department Advisors and Student Life.

IX.D.1.v. Any other issues that either party may care to address.

IX.D.2. The USG President, on behalf of the Undergraduate Student Government and undergraduate students, and the Director of Campus Activities, on behalf of the University and Student Life, shall sign the Agreement on behalf of the students and the administration at the first Senate meeting of the fall semester.

Article X: Amendments

X.A. Any proposed changes to this Constitution must go through a one week grace period before it is introduced to the Senate as an item of new business.

X.A.1. During the one week grace period, the Parliamentary Secretary shall look over the proposed amendment(s) to ensure that there is no conflict with any other standing documents in the form of, but not limited to: contradictions, inconsistencies, etc.

X.A.2. During the one week grace period, the Parliamentary Secretary shall present the proposed amendment(s) to the Director of Campus Activities for approval.

X.A.3. If the steps listed above are not taken, no changes to the USG Constitution can be made.

X.B Amendments to the Constitution must be approved by five-sixth majority vote of the Senate, a two-thirds vote of the Executive Cabinet, and a two-thirds vote of the Judicial Council.

X.C. If a proposal to correct cosmetic changes, such as numbering and spelling, to this Constitution receives approval by a majority of the Senate, the Constitution shall be declared duly amended.

Article XI: Bylaws

XI.A. This Constitution shall be interpreted in conjunction with the Bylaws of the Undergraduate Student Government.

XI.A.1. This Constitution supersedes the Bylaws in cases of conflict.

XI.B. The Bylaws shall include the duties of the officers of the Executive Branch and Judicial Branch and the conditions of their offices.

XI.C. The Bylaws shall include the duties of the officers of the Legislative Branch and the overall legislative process.

XI.D. The Bylaws shall include the process for appointments and elections of all officers.

XI.E. The Bylaws can be amended by a five-sixths vote of the Senate, a majority vote of the Executive Cabinet, and a majority vote of the Judicial Council.

XI.E.1. Amendments will go into effect as stated in the Bylaws.

XI.F. Any proposed change to the Bylaws must go through a one-week grace period before it is introduced to the Senate as an item of new business.

XI.F.1. During the one (1) week grace period, the Parliamentary Secretary shall present the proposed amendment(s) to the Director of Campus Activities for approval.

Article XII: Enactment

XII.A. This Constitution shall be in full force and effect following a positive vote by two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate. In all cases of discrepancy regarding the policy, procedure, Judicial Branch

rulings, governing documents, or other business of the Undergraduate Student Government or its member organizations, this Constitution shall take precedence.