

Charter of the United States Student Association

Preamble

We, the students of the institutions of higher education of the United States of America, in order to represent, promote and defend the needs, interests, and welfare of students to the federal government and higher education stakeholders; to provide the opportunity to develop leadership qualities within our student populations; to enhance and complement the educational experience in the United States; and to ensure a future where higher education is accessible, affordable, and inclusive, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States Student Association.

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the “United States Student Association,” and shall be hereinafter referred to as the “USSA.”

Article II: Mission

The mission of the United States Student Association is to serve as the dedicated federal lobbying arm and serve as the official voice of the students enrolled at institutions of higher education within the United States. The association shall work to amplify student voices, coordinate nationwide advocacy efforts, engage students in civic literacy and ensure student representation in federal policy discussions.

Article III: Association Membership

Section 1: General Provisions

- A. There shall be two categories of membership within the USSA.
 - a. Individual Campus Members
 - i. Any duly elected campus-wide student government or representative organization of students at an accredited institution of post-secondary education located within the territorial boundaries of the United States may seek and secure recognition and association membership status within the USSA.
 - ii. Members recognized through this category of membership shall be hereinafter referred to as an “Individual Campus Member,” or simply as an “ICM.”
 - b. Statewide/Systemwide Student Association (SSA)

- i. Any state or systemwide association of students, student governments, student organizations, or institutions of postsecondary education as defined previously.
- ii. Members recognized through this category of membership shall be hereinafter referred to as a “Statewide/Systemwide Student Association,” or simply as an “SSA.”
- c. “Member association” shall refer to both Individual Campus Members and Statewide/Systemwide Student Associations.

Section 2: Rights and Responsibilities of Members

- A. Each member association shall have the right to:
 - a. Participate in all USSA meetings and decision-making processes.
 - b. Nominate representatives for the governance, participation, and leadership of the USSA.
 - c. Receive updates and communications regarding the activities, strategies, and lobbying efforts of the USSA.
 - d. Access resources, training, and materials to assist in advocacy and student leadership development.
- B. Each member association shall have the responsibility to:
 - a. Ensure the active participation of their representatives in USSA activities, including voting and policy development.
 - b. Adhere to this charter, and other rules established by the association through the procedures outlined in this charter.
 - c. Promote the mission and goals of the USSA within their respective student communities and institutions.

Article IV: Interim Governance

Section 1: Interim Governance Council

- A. Prior to the adoption of a Constitution of the United States Student Association, the governance of the association shall be vested in an Interim Governance Council, and shall be hereinafter referred to as the “IGC”.
- B. The IGC shall oversee operations, structure, and development of the USSA until a Constitution and other permanent rules are ratified.
- C. The IGC shall consist of one representative per ICM, and two representatives per SSA with additional representatives being granted in accordance with the following:
 - a. 100,000-250,000 students: 1 additional representative
 - b. 250,001-500,000 students: 2 additional representatives
 - c. 500,001-1,000,000 students: 3 additional representatives
- D. These representatives shall be chosen by their respective member associations and must be currently enrolled students.

Section 2: Powers and Responsibilities

- A. The IGC shall be responsible for the following duties prior to the ratification of the USSA Constitution.
 - a. Overseeing the drafting, deliberation, and ratification process of the USSA Constitution.
 - b. Overseeing the membership process, and attracting new member associations to the USSA.
 - c. Overseeing the development and planning of future programming, conferences, and other events necessary to achieve the mission of the USSA.
 - d. Determining and implementing additional structural provisions as deemed necessary to guide the USSA that do not contradict this charter.
 - e. Developing methods to establish the official opinion of the association on federal policy issues, and to direct organizing, strategy, and lobbying efforts at the national level.
 - f. Managing financial decisions, budget allocations, and fundraising efforts in collaboration with the United States Student Association Foundation.
 - g. Facilitating regular meetings with students from member associations, and prospective member associations to build and ensure interest and transparency.
- B. The IGC shall have the authority to:
 - a. Develop rules to effectuate the powers and duties enumerated in this charter, and to faithfully abide by the provisions outlined throughout this charter.
 - b. Approve or deny entry into contractual relationships on behalf of the association with external partners, potential employees, and others as deemed necessary to guide the mission of the USSA.
 - c. Establish committees, task forces and other working groups to focus on specific aspects of the organization, including but not limited to:
 - i. Development of the USSA Constitution, and other general internal rules and policies.
 - ii. Federal policy issues, strategy, and organizing.
 - iii. Membership and outreach efforts.
 - iv. Programming and public relations efforts.
 - v. Finances and fundraising efforts.
 - d. Elect Officers from their membership according to their adopted rules.

Section 3: Voting System

- A. Each representative on the IGC shall be entitled to one vote.
- B. No state shall hold more than 33% of the vote at any given time.
 - a. The IGC shall determine how to enact this provision within their adopted rules.
- C. Representatives of the IGC are responsible ~~and encouraged~~ to ensure that their respective member associations are consulted, prior to casting votes on any item of business.
- D. Those elected as officers from within the membership of the IGC shall relinquish their seats as representatives of their member association and become ex-officio, non-voting members of the IGC, with the exception of the Chair, who shall vote only in the event of

a tie. Their respective member associations may appoint a new representative to fill their vacated seat.

- E. All business of the IGC shall at least require a simple majority vote (50% + 1) in order to pass. The IGC may set higher thresholds of approval within their adopted rules. Additionally, at least one vote from a majority of the member associations present must be in favor of the item of business for it to pass.
- F. All business of subsidiary committees, task forces, and other similar groups as established by the IGC shall at least require a simple majority vote (50% + 1) in order to pass.

Section 4: Dissolution

- A. All committees that have been working to re-establish the United States Student Association prior to the ratification of the Charter, shall dissolve upon the first meeting of the IGC. The committees shall continue their work and operations, and support the transition to the IGC.
- B. Upon the ratification of the USSA Constitution, the IGC shall be dissolved immediately, and all rights and responsibilities shall fall to the governance system outlined in the Constitution.

Article V: Alumni Association

- A. An Alumni Association may be established as a separate entity to maintain the legacy and continued support of the USSA's mission. This entity shall focus on fostering connections between past members and the USSA while supporting the continued growth and advocacy efforts of the organization.
- B. This organization shall seek recognition as a registered nonprofit organization.
- C. Fundamentally, the USSA shall be and always remain a student-led, student-ran organization. Members of the Alumni Association shall support and assist the efforts of the USSA, but all final decision making authority shall rest with the students, unless otherwise delegated by the students themselves.

Article VI: Legal Status

- A. Upon the ratification of this charter, the USSA shall immediately seek recognition as a registered nonprofit organization that may engage in lobbying.
- B. The USSA shall remain non-partisan ~~in all its operations and activities~~, advocating solely for the interests and welfare of students. The USSA shall be issue focused, and shall not support candidates or specific political parties.

Article VII: Ratification

- A. This Charter of the United States Student Association shall be ratified by the member associations through a formal vote.
- B. To be ratified, the charter must receive approval through a two-thirds majority vote of the

total votes cast by all eligible member associations.

- a. Eligible member associations are those who are present at the vote, and have passed resolutions to join the USSA by the time the vote takes place.
- C. In addition to the two-thirds majority vote requirement, at least one vote from a majority of the member associations present must be in favor of the charter for it to be ratified.
- D. Votes for the ratification of the charter shall be delegated by the member associations to their student representatives. Each member association shall select and authorize representatives to cast votes based on the size of their student population, as outlined below. These authorized representatives shall be referred to as “delegates.”
 - a. Each member association shall be entitled to three votes, with additional votes granted in accordance with the following.
 - i. 2,501-10,000 students: 1 vote
 - ii. 10,001-25,000 students: 2 votes
 - iii. 25,001-50,000 students: 3 votes
 - iv. 50,001-100,000 students: 4 votes
 - v. 100,001-200,000 students: 6 votes
 - vi. 200,001-300,000 students: 8 votes
 - vii. 300,001-500,000 students: 10 votes
 - viii. 500,001-750,000 students: 12 votes
 - ix. 750,001 - 1,000,000 students: 14 votes
- E. Upon receiving approval from the required two-thirds majority of votes and simple majority of associations, this charter shall be considered ratified and shall immediately serve as the governing document of the United States Student Association.
- F. Following ratification, the following shall happen:
 - a. Signatures of students present from the member associations shall be affixed to this document, certifying the result and attesting to its authenticity.
 - b. Each member association shall be formally notified of the results, and the final version of the charter shall be made publicly available for all members and stakeholders of the USSA.

Article VIII: Amendments

- A. This Charter shall be amended through a two-thirds majority vote of the IGC or through a three-fifths majority vote of the membership at a formal meeting of the USSA under the procedures outlined in Article VII.
- B. The IGC shall establish rules for proposing, debating, and approving amendments.

This document has been reviewed and adopted by the founding members of the United States Student Association.

On the part and behalf of their respective member associations, and in witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names on March 23rd, 2025, affirming our support and the authenticity of this charter.

Arizona

California

Florida

Massachusetts

New York

Washington