

# **The Constitution of The University Student Senate at Saint Joseph's University**

Preamble: We the members of Saint Joseph's University Student Senate, subscribing to the regulations and policies of Saint Joseph's University, establish this Constitution to govern the matters within our organization.

## Article I: Organization

*Section 1:* The name of this organization shall be the University Student Senate of Saint Joseph's University. Hereafter, the University Student Senate shall be known as USS.

*Section 2:* The authority of the USS shall be derived from the consenting majority of the registered Saint Joseph's University day students.

*Section 3:* The organization shall be made up by the following members:

*Subsection 1:* The following officers shall make up the Executive Board:

The Student Body President, the Student Body Vice President, the Student Body Treasurer, the Secretaries, and the Speaker of the Senate.

*Subsection 2:* The following representatives shall make up the Administrative Board: 28 elected Class Senators (seven per class year) and up to seven appointed At-Large Senators, one of which will be designated specifically for a commuter student representative.

## Article II: Purpose

*Section 1:* The purpose of the USS shall be to provide full representation of the views and opinions of the students; it shall act as a conduit between the students, faculty, staff and administration, as well as strongly advocate the sentiment and interests of the students in both University and community affairs. The USS shall also incorporate the student voice in the policy and decision-making processes of the University.

*Section 2:* The Executive Board shall serve as the steering committee for the USS by coordinating efforts and activities to fulfill the purpose and mission of the USS as a whole.

*Section 3:* The Administrative Board shall seek to carry out the directives set forth by the Executive Board, further its own initiatives, and provide an official voice for the student body.

## Article III: Membership

*Section 1:* The membership of the USS shall be composed of Saint Joseph's University undergraduate day students serving in elected and appointed positions.

*Section 2:* In order to be eligible to serve on the USS, the student must fit election qualifications and comply with all election procedures as outlined in Article VI, Elections.

*Section 3:* The terms of office for all elected and appointed members of the USS shall begin the Monday following April General Elections, as outlined in Article VI, Elections, and end the following year.

*Section 4:* Any elected or appointed member may be impeached by three-fourths vote of the Administrative Board or by a majority of those voting in a referendum as outlined in Article IV, Procedures.

*Section 5:* Any elected or appointed member may be impeached for failure to perform the duties and responsibilities of their position, including but not limited to three unexcused absences from weekly meetings as outlined in Article IV, Procedures.

*Section 6:* Any elected or appointed member may be automatically removed from office due to failure to uphold their good academic or judicial standings, as outlined in Article VI, Elections.

*Section 7:* In case of a vacancy in the President position, the Vice President shall assume the position of President. In case of a vacancy in the Vice President position, the Speaker of the Senate shall assume the position. An internal election shall be conducted immediately, facilitated by the President, to fill any vacancies affected by these changes. The Administrative Board shall vote and appoint a replacement by a three-fourths majority.

*Section 8:* In case of a vacancy in a Secretary position or in the Speaker position, the Administrative Board shall vote and appoint a replacement by a three-fourths majority. In case of a vacancy in a Senator position, the President shall appoint a replacement that must be approved by a three-fourths vote of the Administrative Board. Any student seeking to fill a vacancy must meet all membership requirements as outlined in Article VI Elections.

#### Article IV: Procedures

*Section 1:* Attendance at weekly meetings is mandatory, and absences shall be delineated as either Excused or Unexcused. An absence is Excused if notice of missing a meeting is provided to and approved by the Speaker at least 24 hours in advance, proof of a legitimate sickness is provided to the Speaker, or other extraordinary circumstances exist with the final discretion left up to the Speaker. An absence is Unexcused if it is unexplained, an excuse is provided less than 24 hours in advance, or an excuse is provided that does not meet the approval of the Speaker.

*Section 2:* The Executive Board shall meet monthly as set by the President; the Administrative Board shall meet weekly as set by the Speaker; and committees shall meet as necessary.

*Section 3:* Meetings shall be structured in the following manner:

*Subsection 1:* All meetings shall be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise noted and led by the Speaker. In the event that the Speaker is absent, the meeting shall be led by the President. In the event that both the Speaker and President are absent, the meeting shall be led by the Vice President.

*Subsection 2:* A meeting may be delineated as either Formal or Informal. During a Formal meeting, all representatives present must wear business attire. A Formal meeting is most appropriate when speakers from outside of the USS are presenting or when new

business must be addressed. During an Informal meeting, it is permissible for those present to wear casual attire. An Informal meeting is most appropriate when the time allows for committees to work and there is no new business to address.

*Subsection 3:* A quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present at a properly called meeting in order to legitimately conduct business on behalf of the USS. The ratio for quorum shall be a simple majority of voting members.

*Section 4:* Non-members must petition the Speaker to have a formal presentation added to a meeting's agenda, with final approval and the choice of meeting at the discretion of the Speaker.

*Section 5:* Legislations and Resolutions

*Subsection 1:* Legislation may be voted upon and passed with a simple majority whenever the USS decides to allocate its own resources for the implementation of initiatives that fulfill its purpose.

*Subsection 2:* Resolutions may be voted upon and passed with a simple majority whenever the USS deems it necessary to announce a decision or a call-to-action to the student body and other student organizations.

*Section 6:* Referendums

*Subsection 1:* A referendum is a general vote by the student body whose outcome is meant to direct the USS to either make or reject an action.

*Subsection 2:* A referendum may be initiated by the USS through a simple majority vote. One may also be initiated by the student body through a petition signed by one-tenth of all undergraduate day students, which may only be open to sign for one week. The completed petition must be submitted to the Speaker.

*Subsection 3:* Once a referendum is properly opened, the USS shall hold a week-long vote. All policies and procedures for the vote shall be regulated and managed by the Executive Board.

*Subsection 4:* One-third of the student body must vote in the referendum in order to validate its results. Of this group, a simple majority is needed to accept or reject the referendum.

*Subsection 5:* In the event that a referendum passes, the USS shall vote to accept the referendum through the creation of a resolution no later than one week following the end of the voting period.

## Article V: Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities

*Section 1:* Executive Board

*Subsection 1:* The Student Body President shall preside over the USS, serve as chief officer of the Executive Board, and act as the chief representative of the USS and the student body.

*Part 1:* The President shall serve on University committees as deemed necessary by university personnel.

*Part 2:* The President shall only vote in case of a tie.

*Part 3:* The President shall have the ability to veto any USS legislation or resolution. The President shall within one week publicly present the veto to the Administrative Board. The veto is subject to an overriding two-thirds vote by the Administrative Board.

*Part 4:* The President shall make recommendations to fill any vacancies on the USS and shall appoint USS representatives to any university committees as requested.

*Part 5:* The President shall be responsible for updating and maintaining the list of standing chair positions that fall under the oversight of the Secretaries and is also responsible for choosing the Administrative Board members to fill these positions.

*Part 6:* The President shall oversee all internal elections.

*Part 7:* The President shall be responsible for the hiring of student workers to serve as administrative assistants for the USS. These individuals may not be current members of the USS. Before their hiring, the President must receive the Administrative Board's approval to create or fill a position through a majority vote.

*Part 8:* The President shall be responsible for running the meetings in the absence of the Speaker.

*Subsection 2:* The Student Body Vice President shall serve as chief officer of the Administrative Board.

*Part 1:* The Vice President shall only vote at USS meetings if his or her vote is necessary to meet quorum.

*Part 2:* The Vice President shall assist the President in covering all executive duties, oversee all Secretary positions and their chairs, and supervise the creation of all select committees and the appointment of their chairs.

*Part 3:* The Vice President shall be responsible for running meetings in the absence of the Speaker and the President.

*Subsection 3:* The Student Body Treasurer shall be directly responsible for managing the budget of the USS.

*Part 1:* The Treasurer shall serve as chair of the Student Budget Advisory Committee, to which he or she shall also be responsible for appointing two USS representatives.

*Part 2:* The Treasurer shall serve as chair of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee on a bi-annual basis, beginning the year 2008.

*Part 3:* The Treasurer shall serve as a voting member of the Administrative Board.

*Part 4:* The Treasurer shall keep accurate and honest records of all USS finances and shall present current financial standings regularly to the Administrative Board.

*Subsection 4:* The Secretaries shall be directly responsible for and shall oversee the chairs of the subcommittees within their domain as need arises. The Secretaries shall serve to guide members of the USS in order to ensure the success of their initiatives.

*Part 1:* The Secretaries shall serve as voting members of the Administrative Board.

*Part 2:* The Secretaries shall oversee all initiatives and chair positions within their domain and shall meet monthly with their chairs.

*Part 2:* In the event of a vacancy in a chair position within his or her domain, a Secretary must fill the position in the interim until a new chairperson is internally appointed.

*Part 3:* The Secretaries shall be able to form and/or chair ad hoc subcommittees to achieve general or specific purposes.

*Subsection 5:* The Speaker of the Senate shall provide an official voice for the USS by creating and distributing an agenda each week, by being the overall voice during meetings, and by overseeing the creation and distribution of the minutes.

*Part 1:* The Speaker is not a voting member of the USS, but can vote in the event of a tie during the absence of the President.

*Part 2:* The Speaker is responsible for tracking attendance of each USS member along with determining Excused or Unexcused absences as outlined in Article IV, Procedures.

*Part 3:* The Speaker shall determine when legislation and resolutions are presented to and considered by the USS.

## *Section 2: Administrative Board*

*Subsection 1:* The Administrative Board shall act as the working body of the USS, and shall be responsible for the creation and implementation of initiatives that best serve the undergraduate student body.

*Subsection 2:* The Administrative Board shall be responsible for the passage of legislation and resolutions, and shall all serve as the voting body of the USS.

*Subsection 3:* The Administrative Board can override any veto of the President with a two-thirds majority vote within one week following the veto.

*Subsection 4:* The Administrative Board shall have the power to stop the disbursement of USS funds within one week following their approval to be moved with a two-thirds majority vote.

*Subsection 5:* The Administrative Board members are eligible for appointment to chair positions by the President at any point during their term.

## Article VI: Elections

### *Section 1: General Elections*

#### *Subsection 1: Candidate Requirements*

*Part 1:* All candidates must be currently enrolled as undergraduate day students in both good academic and judicial standing, and must maintain these standings throughout their terms. In addition, all candidates must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours during each semester during his or her term. Members must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA at the time of their candidacy and throughout their term.

*Part 2:* A candidate may run for one Executive position and one Administrative Board position, but can only serve in one of the positions if elected.

*Part 3:* In order to be eligible to run for an Executive Board position, a candidate must have served at least one full term, cumulatively, on the USS by the time he or she may assume the elected role. A full term may be fulfilled either by serving one academic year on the USS or by serving on the USS the entirety of one semester and the majority of another.

#### *Subsection 2: Elections Committees*

*Part 1:* By the third week of March, the Executive Board is responsible for creating an Elections Committee that shall manage and regulate the elections to determine the next President, Vice President, and Treasurer, as well as the Senior, Junior, and Sophomore Class Senators. The Executive Board shall also select an individual to chair this committee.

*Subpart 1:* This committee shall be made up of members of the current session of the USS that will not be running in the elections and are willing to serve on the committee.

*Subpart 2:* No candidate or campaign worker may serve on the Elections Committee if they are running or assisting someone in the race.

*Subpart 3:* This committee shall be responsible for establishing campaigning requirements, write-in candidate rules, and elections procedures. It shall also place sanctions on and disqualify candidates that violate these rules and procedures by a simple majority of its members.

*Subpart 4:* It shall also decide whether the new USS term shall commence on the second or third Monday in April by a simple majority of its members.

*Part 2:* At the commencement of the fall semester, the Executive Board is also responsible for creating a Freshman Elections Committee that shall manage and regulate the elections to determine the group of Freshman Class Senators. The Executive Board shall also select an individual to chair this committee.

*Subpart 1:* This committee shall be made up of any members of the current session of the USS that are willing to serve on the committee.

*Subpart 2:* No candidate or campaign worker may serve on the Elections Committee if they are assisting someone in the race.

*Subpart 3:* This committee shall be responsible for establishing campaigning requirements, write-in candidate rules, and elections procedures. It shall also place sanctions on and disqualify candidates that violate these rules and procedures by a simple majority of its members.

*Subpart 4:* This committee shall be responsible for selecting the Monday in September that the newly elected Freshman Class Senators shall join the USS by a simple majority of its members.

*Part 3:* Each Election Committee is required to publish an Elections Packet prior to the commencement of the election season which it governs. This packet must outline the committee's chosen policies and procedures for the election, with final discretion on the material left to the committee chair. In the event that the USS disagrees with a policy or procedure, the group may vote to strike or amend it with a simple majority.

*Part 4:* Each Election Committee is responsible for hearing complaints regarding candidate campaign and elections procedures. Within 24 hours after receiving a formal complaint, the committee must respond to the complaint. And then following an additional 24 hours, the committee must release a ruling. In the event of dissatisfaction in the ruling of the committee, a panel consisting of the Vice President for Student Life (or a designee), the Elections Committee chair, and the USS Advisor shall serve as the appellate body. They can choose whether to hear a case or to let the committee's decision stand. This decision will be final.

## *Section 2: Primaries*

*Subsection 1:* If there are three or more candidates running for the position of President, Vice President, and/or Treasurer, a run-off election shall be held. The USS voting members shall participate in this election, as well as the candidates in the event that one is a non-voting member of the USS.

*Subsection 2:* The Elections Committee is responsible for deciding how the candidates shall present their platforms to the USS at a weekly USS meeting.

*Subsection 3:* The election shall be conducted via secret ballot, immediately following the candidates' presentations. The secret ballot nominations shall be tallied by the Elections Committee chair and the Advisor of the USS.

*Subsection 4:* The two candidates for each position who receive a plurality of votes in the primary shall be the winners of the primary and can continue to run for the position they seek.

*Part 1:* The Student Body President shall issue the deciding vote in case of a tie. If the President runs in a tied primary, the Vice President shall cast the tiebreaking vote. And if both the President and Vice President run in a tied primary, the Speaker shall cast the tiebreaking vote.

*Part 2:* Primary election results shall be announced before the conclusion of the meeting during which the run-off is performed.

### *Section 3: Secretaries and Speaker*

*Subsection 1:* The election of the Secretaries and Speaker of the Senate shall occur after the start of the new session of the USS and before the end of the spring semester during a weekly USS meeting. This internal election shall be facilitated by the President.

*Subsection 2:* The USS voting members shall participate in the election of the Secretaries and Speaker, which shall be conducted via secret ballot. The candidates who receive a plurality of votes shall be the winners of their election. The votes shall be tallied by the Student Body President and the Advisor of the USS, and results shall be announced before the conclusion of the weekly meeting during which the election is performed.

*Subsection 3:* The President shall issue deciding votes in the event of any ties. Additional procedures governing this election, as well as candidate eligibility, shall be determined by the President, Vice President, and Treasurer.

## Article VII: Advisors

### *Section 1: The Advisor of the USS*

*Subsection 1:* The USS shall have an advisor from the university's administration to provide input and guidance at meetings that help to align the organization with the university's mission as well as the USS' mission. This individual shall also assist in the completion of USS initiatives whenever necessary.

*Subsection 2:* The Advisor of the USS shall be assigned to the organization by the Vice President for Student Life.

### *Section 2: The Chaplain of the USS*

*Subsection 1:* The USS may have a chaplain to help the organization align its mission with the university's Jesuit Catholic identity.

*Subsection 2:* The Chaplain of the USS shall be selected by the Executive Board if such a person from within the university community is willing to hold the position.

## Article VIII: Bylaws and Amendments

*Section 1:* Bylaws are defined as additional information regarding the processes or procedures of the USS. Bylaws require a majority vote of the USS voting members for approval.

*Section 2:* Amendments are defined as any changes made to the USS Constitution. These must be agreed upon by a three-fourths majority of USS voting members.



*Section 3:* Any member can propose a bylaw or amendment, but must do so at an Administrative Board meeting. Then, the motion must be immediately tabled until the next meeting, at which point it may be discussed and voted upon.

#### Article IX: Ratification

*Section 1:* This Constitution has been ratified by a two-thirds majority of the USS as a whole on Monday, March 21, 2016. Henceforth, this document shall determine the direction and procedures of the USS.

### **Bylaws to the Constitution**

#### Bylaw I: Secretaries

*Section 1:* The following shall make up the Secretary positions of the Executive Board of the USS.

*Subsection 1:* The Secretary for Academic Affairs shall oversee all student issues and initiatives pertaining to academic affairs, maintain ongoing communication with academic leadership on campus, and maintain student academic resources.

*Subsection 2:* The Secretary for Student Affairs shall be responsible for reviewing all matters affecting the quality of the student environment and life at the university.

*Subsection 3:* The Secretary for Communications shall be responsible for the public relations of the USS, as well as facilitating all internal and external correspondence and publications of the USS.

*Subsection 4:* The Secretary for Mission shall monitor the actions of the USS to ensure they are in line with the ideals of the university, find new ways to incorporate the Jesuit Mission into the lives of SJU students, and oversee any USS service-related initiatives.

*Subsection 5:* The Secretary for Inclusion and Equity shall advocate for initiatives and actions that ensure inclusion within the SJU community and especially strive to promote equity and prevent discrimination on the basis of any personal characteristic(s) (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability).

#### Bylaw II: Chair Positions

*Section 1:* The following shall make up the chair positions of the Administrative Board of the USS as chosen by the President.

*Subsection 1:* The Academic Affairs Chair Positions are as follows: College of Arts & Sciences, Haub School of Business, School of Health Studies and Education, Honors, Library, Bookstore, and Career Development.

*Subsection 2:* The Student Affairs Chair Positions are as follows: Public Safety, Information Technology, Dining, Alumni & Advancement, Facilities, and Athletics and Recreation.

*Subsection 3:* The Communications Chair Positions are as follows: Marketing & Public Relations, Community Relations, and Media Production.

*Subsection 4:* The Mission Chair Positions are as follows: Campus Ministry, Health Center, Sustainability, Lewis-Biden, and CAPS.

### Bylaw III: Service on Standing University Committees

*Section 1:* The President and Treasurer shall serve on the university's Planning and Budgeting Committee.

*Section 2:* The President, Secretary for Academic Affairs, and Secretary for Student Affairs shall serve on the University Council.

*Section 3:* The President may appoint another member of the USS to serve on a Standing Committee in the event that one of these members cannot fulfill the duty or wishes to delegate the responsibility as per Article V, Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities.

### Bylaw IV: Parliamentary

*Section 1:* The Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Executive Board and elected with a three-fourths vote of the Administrative Board.

*Section 2:* The Parliamentarian shall report directly to the Speaker of the Senate.

*Section 3:* The Parliamentarian shall assist the Speaker on the issue of following parliamentary procedure. If at any time parliamentary procedure is not followed during a meeting, the Parliamentarian shall halt the meeting. If the Parliamentarian halts the meeting on the issue of parliamentary procedure, then he or she will inform the Administrative Board of the parliamentary infraction and immediately resume the meeting.

*Section 4:* The Parliamentarian will serve as the USS' authority on all matters regarding parliamentary procedure.

*Section 5:* The Parliamentarian shall serve as a non-voting member of the USS.

### Bylaw V: Executive Funds

*Section 1:* The President may spend up to 5% of the USS' budget for all matters that concern the good of the organization. Such matters include, but are not limited to, the funding of initiatives that pass over their budgeted allowance as well as spending to promote April General Elections.

*Section 2:* The Executive Board may spend up to 10% of the USS' budget for all matters that concern the administrative wellbeing of the organization. Such matters include, but are not limited to, the purchase of office supplies, as well as the funding of events and retreats for the

organization. The Executive Board must come to unanimous agreement in order to approve the disbursement of these funds.

*Section 3:* The President and Executive Board must announce their decision to spend these funds to the Administrative Board no later than one week after exercising these rights. The Administrative Board shall have the power to stop the disbursement of these funds within one week after their announcement by a two-thirds majority vote as per Article V, Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities.

#### Bylaw VI: Oath of Office

*Section 1:* Upon taking office on the Administrative Board or Executive Board, every member of the USS must be sworn into their position by taking the following oath: I do solemnly swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the Saint Joseph's University Student Senate, and to serve the student body to the best of my ability, so help me God.

### **Amendments to the Constitution**

**Section 1:** Bylaw II, Section 1, Subsection 2 of the USS Constitution, shall read, "The Student Affairs Chair Positions are as follows: Public Safety, Information Technology, Dining, Alumni & Advancement, Facilities, *Athletics* and Recreation."

23 October 2017

**Section 2:** Bylaw II, Section 1, Subsection 2 of the USS Constitution, shall read, "The Academic Affairs Chair Positions are as follows: College of Arts & Sciences, Haub School of Business, *School of Health Studies and Education*, Honors, Library, Bookstore, and Career Development.

22 October 2018

**Section 3:** Article 1, Section 3, Subsection 2 of the USS Constitution, shall read, "The following representatives shall make up the Administrative Board:

28 elected Class Senators (seven per class year) and *up to seven* appointed At-Large Senators, *one of which will be designated specifically for a commuter student representative.*

5 November 2018

**Section 4:** Bylaw I, Section I, Subsection 5 of the USS Constitution, shall read "The Secretary for Inclusion and Equity shall advocate for initiatives and actions that ensure inclusion within the SJU community and especially strive to promote equity and prevent discrimination on the basis

of any personal characteristic(s) (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability).”

29 April 2019

**Section 5:** Bylaw II, Section I, Subsection 4, shall read “The Mission Chair Positions are as follows: Campus Ministry, Health, and The Green Fund.”

29 April 2019

**Section 5:** Bylaw II, Section I, Subsection 4, shall read “The Mission Chair Positions are as follows: Campus Ministry, Health Center, Sustainability, Lewis-Biden, and CAPS.”

20 September 2021