

## Constitution of the School of Public Health Student Council

### Preamble

We, the students of the School of Public Health Program at the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center (SUNY Downstate), do hereby establish the School of Public Health Student Council (the SPH Council) as set forth under this Constitution. The Constitution of the SPH Student Council shall take effect upon ratification by a majority of voting members present, and its certification by the campus (FSA President). All authority and power granted under this Constitution, and all responsibilities delegated to the organization by the administration of SUNY Downstate Medical Center, shall be vested in the SPH Student Council.

### Article I. Name

The name of the organization will be the School of Public Health Student Council henceforth referred to as the SPH Council.

### Article II. Student Body Membership

All students currently enrolled in the SUNY Downstate School of Public Health Program, referred to as SPH, are members. The SPH Membership and its Council does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, or on the basis of rights secured by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Members shall have the right to vote, hold office and be elected to or appointed to committees. During the 2013-2014 academic year and subsequently each year thereafter, the Membership shall elect representatives to serve on the SPH Student Council under staggered terms of office as specified in Article III.D.

### Article III. School of Public Health (SPH) Student Council.

A seven (7) member representative voting student council shall be established and annually elected by the Membership. Those members meeting all requirements of membership as set forth in Article II will be granted voting privileges to elect the representatives on the SPH Student Council.

A. **Purpose:** The SPH Council is a forum for enhancing the education of SPH students as well as the community at large. Its goals are to create a supportive learning environment in which SPH students can benefit from one another's expertise, continue learning through ongoing educational lectures and functions, and give back to the community surrounding Downstate Medical Center.

1. The mission is to improve the cohesiveness of the SPH student body and to serve as a voice for the student body;
2. To represent and advocate for the interests of SPH students to the Director of the SPH Program, the faculty of the SPH Program and any others within SUNY Downstate whose actions or positions may affect the interests of SPH students;
3. To promote the visibility of the SPH Program at SUNY Downstate and within the community;
4. To promote the sharing of current public health information, to encourage professional development, and to promote academic endeavors related to public health; and
5. To encourage and facilitate social activities of the membership, including the requirements of budgeting and managing the SPH Student Activity Fee.

B. **Election Committee:** The incumbent SPH Council Officers shall serve as the Election Committee supervising the nomination process, ballot process, as well as establishing any additional procedures or clarifications as needed during each Spring semester. The Student Council retains the right to establish a separate Election Committee comprised of Membership if and when desired.

C. **Nominations:**

1. Nominees must be eligible members of the student body for the term of office they seek.
2. The incumbent SPH Council Officers shall announce and disseminate to the SPH student body a call for nominations no less than three calendar weeks prior to the established election date with a closing date and time for all nominations to be submitted. The Student Body shall be advised of the procedure for nominating candidates. Methods of communication are to include, but not limited to,

class announcements, notices on bulletin boards, and electronic mail system. Nominations shall be accepted from any eligible SPH student and can be self-nominated or nominated by any fellow student(s). Each individual nominee shall retain the right to decline their nomination before their name is placed on the election ballot. All resulting nominees shall have their names placed on the election ballot.

- D. **Election Process**. All elections shall be conducted on the SUNY-DMC campus or using an electronic interface sanctioned by the Election Committee. Each student of the Membership shall be permitted to cast one vote each for up to the total number of representatives to be elected. Results of elections of the Representatives shall be posted to the Student Body no later than one (1) week after the date of elections.
- E. **Council Representative Terms of Office**. The SPH Student Council representatives shall have a term of two years, beginning on June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and continuing through May 31<sup>st</sup> of the second following year. Terms shall be staggered pursuant to Section G.4 below. There is no limitation on the number of terms of Office to which a representative can be elected.
1. The Secretary shall maintain the record of each elected representative's applicable term of office.
- F. The seven (7) representatives (Student Council members) then meet to elect Student Council Officers pursuant to Article IV.
- G. **Election Transition Clause**: The Membership's initial election of all 7 representative council members shall be conducted during the Spring 2014 term. In order for the terms of office to become staggered, the initial and subsequent annual elections and corresponding terms of office shall be conducted as follows:
1. In the Spring 2014 election, the 4 candidates receiving the highest four number of votes shall each be elected to a term of TWO years, that shall be effective June 1, 2014 and ending May 31, 2016.
  2. In the Spring 2014 election, the 3 candidates receiving the fourth through seventh highest number of votes shall be elected to a term of ONE year effective June 1, 2014 and ending May 31, 2015.
  3. During the Spring 2015 election cycle, the Membership will elect 3 representatives for those representatives whose term of office expires May 31, 2015. The 3 candidates with the three highest number of votes shall be elected.
  4. In the Spring 2016 and all subsequent annual elections, the membership's election of representatives shall continue in a staggered term of office format, with each annual election being conducted only those members whose term of office ends at May 31<sup>st</sup> of the current election year.
- H. **Meetings**
- Regular meetings of the Council will be held at least quarterly at a date and time selected by the SPH Council, and shall be open to the Membership. The date, time and location shall be scheduled in advance and announced to the Membership. The SPH Student Lounge is available as a location for meetings. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the President as needed.
1. Each meeting of the SPH Student Council will be announced by email to all membership (all SPH students) no less than 7 calendar days in advance of the meeting date. All agenda items must be submitted to the President no less than 5 calendar days prior to each meeting. The President will disseminate the agenda to all SPH students no less than 3 calendar days prior to the meeting. Additionally, meeting agendas will be posted to the SPH Student Council web-based communication tool (i.e., the Prime site).
  2. A meeting shall proceed when a quorum of Fifty percent (50%) of the SPH Student Council members are present.
  3. At the beginning of each meeting, the Secretary shall distribute the minutes of the previous meeting. Any issues with the minutes will be added to that meetings agenda. Sign in sheets will be available at every meeting and function in order to secure active participation. The Secretary shall keep these records.
  4. Any decision duly approved at a meeting can not be overturned at a subsequent meeting unless the intent to overturn is submitted to the President as an agenda item for that meeting in accordance with procedures for submitting agenda items. Notwithstanding the amendment requirements of Article VIII, the quorum to overturn a decision must be two thirds greater than the quorum that was present for its initial passing.

#### **Article IV. Officers**

Immediately following the annual election of SPH Student Council Representatives each Spring, the seven (7) representatives shall meet to elect from amongst themselves, a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The three remaining representatives serve as Members-at-large.

##### **A. Election of Officers Process:**

1. **Annual Organizational Meeting:** An organizational meeting of the student council representatives shall be held as soon as practical but no later than one week following each annual Spring Council election. The former incumbent President shall serve as Chairperson at this organizational meeting.
2. **Officer Nominations:** The Chairperson will take nominations from the floor for each office listed and in the sequential order listed in Article III section B. The nomination process must be closed and the movement seconded. The nominated parties must be present and are permitted to vote. Unless unanimously waived by the 7 representatives present, all voting shall be done by secret ballot to be collected and tabulated by the Faculty/Staff Advisor.
3. The remaining student representatives that are not elected to a specific office serve as members-at-large on the Student Council.

##### **B. Officer Responsibilities, Term of Office, Vacancy and Removal from Office**

1. The **President** shall:
  - a. Preside at all meetings of the SPH Council and set the Agenda.
  - b. Maintain the power to appoint, initiate, terminate and accept as otherwise provided, all committee chairpersons.
  - c. Vote only in the event of a tie.
  - d. Act as the official external representative of the SPH Council and will communicate the interests, concerns, and activities of the membership to the SPH Administration and the campus community.
2. The **Vice President** shall:
  - a. Assume all of the duties of the President in his/her absence.
  - b. Serve as an ex officio member of all committees of the SPH Council.
  - c. Assist the President, as required.
3. The **Secretary** shall:
  - a. Take minutes at all meetings and keep records of all proceedings of the SPH Council, consistent with the DMC Guidelines on SAF Meeting Minutes.
  - b. Maintain current membership, mailing, email and telephone lists and distribute announcements, notes, meeting notices and minutes to the members.
  - c. Submit minutes, monthly activity reports, as required by SUNY Downstate Student Organization Guidelines.
  - d. Develop an annual summary of the SPH Council's activities and accomplishments for inclusion in the SPH Council's history and archives.
4. The **Treasurer** shall:
  - a. Maintain all financial records of the SPH Council.
  - b. Timely prepare all budgets, budget requests and sign all payment requests for SPH Council funds, as described further in Article VI.B.4.
  - c. Prepare financial reports for the SPH Council Meetings, and coordinate any deposits in the name of SPH Council.
  - d. Prepare and present an annual financial report to the officers and members of SPH Council.
5. **Staff/Faculty Advisor.** A staff/faculty advisor shall be elected by a majority vote of eligible voting members of the SPH Council who are present at the election meeting either in person or by absentee ballot. The advisor shall serve until the advisor resigns, becomes ineligible, or the Council elects a new advisor, whichever comes first. The roles and duties of the advisor include attending meetings, provide general guidance to the Council, assist in the annual transition of Officers, and maintain the archives of the organization. Candidates for Advisor must be willing to serve in this capacity. The staff/ faculty advisor shall be an ex officio member without voting power.

6. **Officer Terms of Office:** The officers will serve a term of ONE year beginning on June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and continuing through May 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year or until a successor is duly elected. There is no limitation on the number of terms of Office to which an Officer can be elected.
7. **Replacement of Council and Officer Vacancies:** Vacancies occur when an officer or representative resigns, or are no longer able or eligible to serve (student status), or are removed.
  - a. If the President resigns, is recalled, or is no longer eligible or able to serve, the Vice President shall immediately fill the office.
  - b. If the office of the Vice President becomes vacant, a special election shall be held at the next regular Council meeting to replace that officer. A special meeting may be called for this purpose, if desired.
  - c. If the office of the Secretary becomes vacant, a special election shall be held at the next regular Council meeting to replace that officer. A special meeting may be called for this purpose, if desired.
  - d. If the office of the Treasurer becomes vacant, a special election shall be held at the next regular Council meeting to replace that officer. A special meeting may be called for this purpose, if desired.
  - e. If there is a vacancy in any of the remaining elected representatives at large on the Council, the remaining Council members shall conduct an election at the next regular Council meeting to replace that representative. At the Council's option, a special Council meeting may be called, or a special election may be conducted by the Student Body for this purpose, if desired.
8. **Removal from Office**

Any SPH Student Council officer or representative in violation of the organization's purpose or Constitution may be removed from office by the following process:

  - a. A written request detailing a justification/ basis must be signed by at least three members of the Student Body and delivered to all Council representatives.
  - b. Written notification of the request must be provided to the Council officer or representative, requesting his/her presence at the next meeting prepared to speak on his/her own behalf. The matters in question shall be fully discussed, appropriately investigated to the extent possible and practical by the Student Council prior to a vote being conducted.
  - c. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Council is necessary to remove the officer.

#### **Article V. Committees**

- A. Committee membership is open to the Membership (all SPH students).
- B. The Council may establish any committee it deems necessary by a majority vote of the Council, specifying the scope, mission, size, and chair of the desired committee.
- C. Standing Committees intended to permanently continue for a mission or purpose may be established by the Council.
- D. If not specified in the Council's formation of a committee, the Committee chair may be appointed by the President of SPH Council.

#### **Article VI. Finances**

The SPH Council is responsible to budget and oversee the Student Activity Fee (SAF) paid by its membership.

- A. **Governing Guidelines:** All income and expenses shall be governed by the requirements of the SUNY Board of Trustee Guidelines on Student Activity Fees (SAF) and the policies of the Faculty Student Association of Downstate Medical Center, Inc. (FSA).
- B. **Annual SAF Budget:** An annual budget for all anticipated income and expenses shall be prepared by the Treasurer and presented for approval by the SPH Council in April of each year. This approved budget shall then be submitted to FSA for certification. All expenditures of funds shall be consistent with the certified budget and disbursement procedures of the FSA.
  1. Upon the campus certification of the Budget, All fees shall be collected by the SUNY Downstate Medical Center Bursar.
  2. All funds shall be deposited into a designated account(s) in the FSA.
  3. All disbursements shall follow the established Faculty Student Association policies and procedures.

4. All payments forms shall be signed by the Treasurer. However, in the absence or unavailability of the Treasurer, any other Council officer may sign a payment form but must provide a copy of the payment form they signed to the Treasurer within five days.
- C. **SAF Rate:** The initial SAF rate to be paid by all enrolled students in the SPH program upon the ratification of this Constitution shall be \$10 per semester for each of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, regardless of number of course credits in which a member is enrolled. Any subsequent increase in rate shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the council present at an SPH Council meeting. Any subsequent decrease in rate shall be approved by a majority vote of the council present at an SPH Council meeting.
- D. **Fundraising:** The SPH Council may conduct fundraising activities only if and when any fundraising activities have been reviewed with and pre-approved by the DMC Philanthropy department, and deposited in accordance with Article VI.B.2
- E. **Dissolution:** In the event of the dissolution of the SPH Council, the Board of Directors of the FSA shall be responsible for allocating funds to a succeeding organization, or amongst SUNY DMC student activity organizations, or to programs or projects that benefit SUNY DMC students at large.

#### **Article VII. Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the SPH Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the SPH Council shall adopt.

#### **Article VIII. Ratification**

The Constitution of the SPH Council shall take effect upon ratification by a majority of voting members present. Upon ratification, this Constitution shall supersede and replace all previous Constitutions of the SPH Council including the original Constitution that brought this organization into being on November 21, 2003.

#### **Article IX. Amendments**

This Constitution is binding upon all members of the SPH Council, but the Constitution is not binding unto itself. An Amendment to the Constitution may be proposed in writing by any voting member of the SPH Council at any meeting. Such amendments will then be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the SPH Council. The proposed amendments will become effective following approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present, in person or by proxy. The provisions of Article III.H.4 shall not be applicable to Amendments.

#### **Article X. Registration Renewal**

The SPH Council will apply to the Department of Student Life for registration on an annual basis one week after SPH Council's new officer elections or one week after any change in the officers of SPH Council.

*11/21/2003: Original Constitution ratified by the Membership and certified by campus.*

*7/6/2009: Amended to change all references of Masters of Public Health (MPH) to School of Public Health (SPH) approved by Membership on 7/16/09 and certified by campus.*

*May 2015: As amended by SPH Student Body vote and certified on behalf of campus 5/14/15.*