



**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCIL
OF SUNY DOWNSTATE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY**

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the organization shall be the University Student Council of the State University of New York Downstate Health Sciences University (SUNY-DHSU), hereinafter referred to as University Council.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the University Council shall be to promote and advocate for the interests and welfare of all the students at SUNY-DHSU on campus-wide issues and activities. Functions and responsibilities are further defined in Article III.

ARTICLE III: UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION 1: Specifically, it shall be the function and responsibility of the University Council to:

- A. Serve as a liaison group between students and administration on all pertinent matters to the total student body by communication with designated officials within the Office of the President, the Office of Policy and Planning, and the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- B. Stay in communication with SUNY-DHSU administration regarding development and execution of educational initiatives that span multiple SUNY-DHSU Colleges/Schools.
- C. Stay in communication with SUNY-DHSU faculty via SUNY-DHSU Centerwide Committee participation.
- D. Submit a budget approved by the University Council to the Faculty Student Association for certification, noting income and expenditure of student activity fees, based on requests submitted by campus wide organizations.
- E. Sponsor and oversee clubs and organizations that possess an interest on campus.
- F. Communicate with the executive officers and advisors of the Student Center Governing Board to discuss financial matters, and the planning and implementation of campus-wide events.
- G. Distribute meeting minutes to all other SUNY-DHSU student councils, to keep them up to date with University Council business.
- H. Maintain a forum for the student body to share ideas for institution-wide improvement with University Council leadership.
- I. Advocate for SUNY-DHSU on the state level via SUNY-SA representation and resolution writing.
- J. Stay up-to-date regarding student relevant discussions at SUNY Council meetings via SUNY Council student membership.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP, VOTING PRIVILEGES

SECTION 1: All students that have paid a Student Activity fee at SUNY-DHSU are members of the student body of University Council.

SECTION 2: Voting Representatives: The University Council shall have 14 representatives, hereinafter referred to as "voting members," 10 of which are directly elected to the University Council by the student body during the month of April of each year by the membership defined in Section III.2. Voting members will, at minimum, include one student from the College of Medicine (COM), one student from the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), one student from The College of Nursing (CON), one student from the School of Health Professions (SOHP) and one student from the School of Public Health (SPH). The other 4 voting members are the 2 SUNY Student Assembly voting representatives (Article V.1.F), elected by voting members of University Council and 2 student voting member of the SUNY-DHSU SUNY Council (Article V.1.G) that is elected by the student body. All other members of University Council are encouraged to attend University Council meetings, but shall be participants in a non-voting capacity.

- A. **Nominations:** The Secretary shall issue a call for Voting Member nominations to all eligible students during the month of March of each year, requesting any student who wishes to nominate themselves or another eligible student to submit the nomination to the Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Student Life office or designee no later than the last day of March of each year. In the absence of a nomination from the COM, SGS, CON, SOHP or SPH, the name of the current President of the applicable student council shall be added to the nominations.



- B. Election: All nominations shall be placed on a voting ballot with the nominee's college, and made available to all eligible students for voting for a period of at least two days during the first three weeks of April of each year. Elections shall take place by a ballot method on campus either in person or a campus electronic system with the appropriate voting controls to assure integrity.
- C. Results shall be reviewed by the AVP for Student Life, Director of the Student Center or designee and the voting members shall be elected as follows: The highest number of votes received elect a minimum of one member each from COM, SGS, CON, SOHP, and SPH. Once this has been completed, the remaining members shall be elected on the highest number of votes received. In the event of a tie vote to determine the tenth elected member a run-off ballot shall be conducted during the last week in April amongst the current voting University Council members to elect the member.
- D. Term of Office: The term of office for each member elected in accordance with the above process shall begin on June 1st of each year.
- E. Officer Elections: Immediately following the election of all voting members of the University Council, a meeting of the voting members shall be scheduled during the last week of April in order to nominate and elect from amongst themselves, the Officers of the University Council pursuant to Article V.2.
- F. Vacancies: Once elected, if a member resigns, is no longer a bona-fide SUNY-DHSU student, or is removed from office pursuant to Article IV.2.G then the remaining voting members of the University Council shall vote to select a new voting member to replace said member pursuant to the constituencies in Article IV.2.A. In such cases, a majority vote of the voting members of the University Council in person or by proxy shall determine the new member.
- G. Attendance and Removal of the Voting Members: Each voting member of the University Council is expected to attend in person or by proxy each University Council meeting. Any voting member of the University Council may be removed from office if the member has been absent in person or by proxy from two consecutive meetings of the University Council. Officers may be removed from the office held in accordance with Article V.3.
- H. Advisors: The AVP Student Life, or specified designee, shall participate as a non-voting advisor for University Council. The VP Student Affairs and Director of Student Center shall be invited to attend all UC meetings in a non-voting capacity and receive all UC meeting materials (agendas, minutes etc.).
- I. Proxies: Voting members unable to attend a specific meeting may designate another voting member as their proxy for attendance and voting purposes. Said proxy must be issued to the Secretary in writing or via email prior to the meeting, and must specify the meeting date and name of the voting member being designated.
- J. If a vacancy during an academic year leads to one of SUNY-DHSU's 5 colleges/ schools (COM, CON, SGS, SOHP, SPH) not having a voting member in University Council, the President of that school/college's Student Council may function as a voting-member of University Council, until a successor candidate nominee is identified and elected.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND MEMBERS DUTIES

SECTION 1: Officer and Member Duties and Functions

There shall be four elected University Council Officers as President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary whose duties shall be as follows:

- A. President:
 - a. Shall be chief spokesperson for the University Council, and act as liaison between students, faculty, and administration. This shall include direct communication with the SUNY-DHSU Office of the President, all relevant SUNY-DHSU offices (e.g. Office of Policy and Planning, and the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs), and represent the University Council to other DMC internal or external organization and groups.
 - b. Shall preside as chairperson at all meetings.
 - c. Shall serve as the representative of SUNY-DHSU in the SUNY Student Assembly unless or until such a representative is otherwise separately elected (Article V.1.F and Article V.2.D).
 - d. Shall ensure attendance of a University Council student representative to SUNY-DHSU Centerwide Committee meetings, primarily via coordination with SUNY Student Assembly representatives.
 - e. Shall establish subcommittees as needed and appoint members to these committees.



- f. The President shall not have a vote except in cases of (1) a tie vote of the council, whereby the President shall cast the deciding vote, and (2) in council elections.
 - g. Establishes the agenda for meetings upon standard monthly University Council business, current issues, as well as special member requests.
 - h. Coordinates the orientation of new University Council members.
 - i. Shall maintain and update the University Council website and include there select communication documents between University Council and administration.
 - j. May co-sign payment requests.
 - k. If at any time during an academic year one of SUNY-DHSU's 5 schools/colleges does not have a voting member representative in University Council, the President of that respective school's student council shall serve as the school's voting member of University Council. The University Council President shall duly notify the respective SUNY-DHSU school/college's President of this position.
- B. Vice President:
- a. Shall assist the President in carrying out his/her duties as assigned by the President.
 - b. Shall be the Parliamentarian for all University Council meetings, serving as the keeper of the bylaws and ensuring its policies are upheld.
 - c. Shall serve as an ex officio member at meetings of any subcommittees which have been established.
 - d. Shall ensure timely nomination of a chairperson for all subcommittees of University Council.
 - e. Shall assume the President's duties in the President's absence.
 - f. Shall in February of each year, assist the Treasurer in preparing, completing and submitting, the University Council Budget for the next fiscal year.
 - g. May co-sign payment requests.
- C. Treasurer:
- a. Shall keep a record of and report on finances of the Council.
 - b. Shall prepare and present all Budget documents.
 - c. Shall attend the March annual budget meeting in conjunction with the Medical Council Treasurer, pursuant to Article VIII.
 - d. Shall communicate with the President of the Faculty Student Association to finalize University Council Budget allocation for the upcoming fiscal year by the end of April.
 - e. Must cosign payment requests in accordance with the certified budget of the Council, except as provided in Article VII.1.B.iii.
 - f. Shall assume the President's duties in the absence of both the President and Vice-President.
- D. Secretary:
- a. Shall record attendance of those present in person or by proxy at all meetings in accordance with SUNY-DHSU Guidelines for Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Shall e-mail notices of all meetings to the entire student body at least six business (Mon-Fri, excluding holidays) days in advance.
 - c. Shall keep minutes at all meetings, make available electronically to all members, and distribute signed copies with all applicable attachments to Advisors, FSA Business Office, and the SUNY-DHSU Office of the President's Administrative Fellow via email. If unable to personally attend any meeting, shall appoint in advance a recording secretary to record minutes in his/her absence.
 - d. Distribute meeting minutes to all other DMC student council's Presidents via email
 - e. May co-sign payment requests.
 - f. Shall maintain and keep up-to-date all appropriate communication and document sharing with the student body and advisors, using available appropriate technology.
- E. There 10 voting members and officers that are representative of their respective DMC Schools/Colleges (Medicine, Graduate Studies, Nursing, Health Related Professions, and Public Health) shall:
- a. Bring to the UC, the needs of their respective college/school.
 - b. Maintain communication between University Council and their respective college/school councils.
 - c. Attend University Council meetings as indicated in Article IV.2.G.
 - d. May be assigned to attend SUNY-DHSU Centerwide Meetings



- F. The 2 University Council voting members that function as SUNY-Student Assembly (SUNY-SA) representatives shall:
- Maintain communication with the SUNY SA Executive committee Graduate Granting Institution representative(s).
 - Represent and write resolutions on behalf of the interests of SUNY-DHSU students at SA meetings.
 - Attend, at minimum, one of the bi-annual SUNY SA conferences, and thereafter present a written report at the next following UC meeting to be included in the UC meeting minutes.
 - Shall communicate New York State level policy changes, issues and ideas relevant to the student body between SUNY-DHSU Faculty Senators, SUNY-DHSU Centerwide Committee, and University Council.
 - Attend all University Council monthly meetings.
 - Upon the request of the University Council President, have the possibility to attend SUNY-DHSU Centerwide Meetings.
- G. The University Council voting member that also functions as the SUNY-DHSU Council voting student member shall:
- Attend the SUNY Council quarterly meetings, representing the interests of all SUNY-DHSU students.
 - Maintain communication of issues and ideas relevant to the student body between SUNY-DHSU Council and University Council.
 - Report at UC meetings on SUNY-DHSU Council meeting discussions and presentations relevant to the student body.

SECTION 2: Officer Nominations and Election.

- A. **Officer Nominations:** Pursuant to Article IV.2.E, nominations for positions for the forthcoming year will be accepted at a meeting following the election of voting members during the last week of April each year. Any one individual voting member may be nominated for more than one office.
- B. **Officer Elections:** Shall be held at the general meeting following the Nominations meeting and shall be held no later than May 31st of each year, and
- Officer Elections are to be conducted in the following order: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. No one individual may be elected to hold more than one office.
 - Officer Elections are to be carried out by simple majority secret ballot. Ballots are to be tallied by the Vice-President and a University Council Advisor. In the event the current Vice-President is running for office, that ballot is to be tallied by another officer with the Advisor.
 - Every possible effort shall be exhausted to avoid electing all officers from the same college.
- C. **SUNY Assembly Representatives:** Shall be an internal application process organized by the University Council President biannually, whereby applications will be reviewed by the voting members of the University Council to select the 2 SUNY-SA representatives.
- Applications and interviews will be completed in the Fall, and if necessary, in the Winter so that new SUNY-SA representative has a semester overlap period with the more senior SUNY-SA representative.
 - The details of the application process are at the discretion of the University Council voting members, aside from.
 - An interview must be conducted by the University Council President, Vice President, current SUNY SA members, and any past SUNY SA members that are currently a member of UC. The top candidates will then be presented to the full University Council voting members for final consideration.
 - The SUNY-SA representatives must be full time students of one of SUNY-DHSU's 5 colleges/schools for the entirety of their 1 year term.
- D. **SUNY Council Student Voting and Non-Voting Members:** Shall be an election process independent from University Council. This election shall be organized and executed by the Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Student Life office or designee no later than April of each year. Elections shall take place the first three weeks of April by a ballot method on campus either in person or a campus electronic system with the appropriate voting controls to assure integrity.



SECTION 3: Removal of Officers. In the event a situation arises in which there is a demand for an officer to be removed from his/her position, a special meeting shall be held by the other officers and the AVP for Student Life and Director of Student Center to determine if the demand is justifiable. If so warranted, a special vote shall be held among the voting members to resolve the said issue.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

SECTION 1: All meetings are open to the membership as defined in Section IV.1 and are encouraged to provide input for discussions. Only select members as defined in Article IV.2 shall qualify for voting member status. Additionally,

- A. **Regular meetings:** of the University Council shall be held at least once a month (from September through May) in the Student Center of SUNY-DHSU.
- B. **Emergency meetings:** may be added as needed by the President, or must be called if requested by six voting members. In the event that an urgent University Council matter must be voted upon between monthly meetings, an electronic vote via email may be conducted, with a University Council Advisor defined in Article IV.2.H serving as a non-voting moderator. Notwithstanding, the said eVote shall be binding for the urgent circumstance(s) for which it was necessary. Minutes of the eVote shall be documented and presented for ratification at the next regularly scheduled UC meeting.
- C. **Notice:** of all meetings shall be e-mailed to the entire student body and University Council Advisors at least six business days (Mon-Fri, excluding holidays) in advance of the meeting.
- D. **Quorum:** A quorum of University Council to conduct business shall require at least seven voting members in person or by proxy.
- E. **Orderly Meetings:** Meetings shall be conducted in an orderly manner and with mutually respectful conduct, recognizing any member who wishes to speak, and shall follow Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.
- F. **Agenda:** will be in the general format as follows:
 - a. Attendance sign in/Call meeting to Order
 - b. Approval of the prior meeting minutes.
 - c. Old business.
 - d. New business.
 - e. Open forum.
- G. A motion shall be considered an official action if carried by a majority voting members present or by proxy.
- H. In the event of a tie vote of the Council, the President may cast the deciding vote pursuant to Article V.1.A.f.

ARTICLE VII: STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE (SAF)

SECTION 1: Members of the student body of the SUNY-DHSU shall be assessed at fall registration and spring registration a student activity fee, which shall be collected by the Bursar, in accordance with SUNY Board of Trustee Guidelines and consistent with the University Council's annual budget that is certified by the campus. Furthermore,

- A. The SAF and all other funds of the University Council and its clubs shall be deposited in a designated account for the University Council at the Faculty Student Association (FSA) in accordance with SUNY guidelines.
- B. **Disbursements:** Expenses drawn from the University Council account shall be in accordance with the certified budget in place at that time, and in accordance with SUNY and FSA disbursement policies and procedures, and
 - a. shall be made from appropriate accounts requiring two authorized signatures as follows:
 - i. For all non-club/organization accounts, authorized joint signators shall be (1) the University Council Treasurer plus (2) ONE additional University Council officer.
 - ii. For Clubs and Organization accounts funded by University Council, authorized joint signators shall be (1) the University Council Treasurer plus (2) ONE Club/Organization Officer.
 - iii. Should the University Council Treasurer be unavailable for signature of an urgent payment, another University Council officer may co-sign a Payment Form, but in such cases the officer signing the form is responsible to provide a copy of the Payment Form to the University Council Treasurer within five (5) business days of having signed said form.



SECTION 2: SAF Rate for the University Council is currently twenty dollars (\$20) per year per full time student, and is pro-rated by the campus Bursar for part time students.

- A. Increases in the activity fee shall require the University Council to provide at least six business days (Mon-Fri, excluding holidays) advance notification to all other SUNY-DHSU Student Councils, including the proposed rate change and its rationale, prior to the University Council voting on any increase in SAF rate. Decreases in rate require no advance notification.
- B. Changes in SAF rate require a majority vote of the voting members and must be in accordance with the SUNY Board of Trustee guidelines for SAF, shall be subject to the campus certification as well as any applicable campus Bursar billing cycle requirements.

ARTICLE VIII: ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS

SECTION 1: The Annual Budget cycle shall coincide with the fiscal year of the FSA, currently from June 1 to May 31st of each year.

- A. During March of each year, there shall be a Budget Planning Meeting coordinated with other SUNY-DHSU student councils that provide funding to center wide student Clubs and Organizations. The University Council President and Treasurer are expected to be in attendance, but all University Council Officers are invited to attend.
- B. All students representing a campus-wide club or organization are welcome to attend the Annual Budget Planning meeting to request SAF funds for the coming year.
- C. All clubs and organizations must be properly registered with the Office of Student Life before receiving SAF funding.
- D. If any existing club or organization does not have representation at this annual budget meeting, its funds for the following year will be at the discretion of the University Council.
- E. Students requesting funds must submit a written budget, outlining expenditures for the fiscal year. These budgets must also contain the names and telephone of the students responsible for managing the club or organization.
- F. SUNY Guidelines require that a Reserve Fund be established to address unforeseen circumstances.
- G. If at the end of the budget request period, then University Council will prepare a balanced budget and where necessary reassess the individual club and event requested budgets to present and approve a balanced budget at its April meeting.
- H. The University Council approved budget for the next fiscal year beginning June 1 will be submitted to the FSA for campus certification in accordance with SUNY Board of Trustees Guidelines.

ARTICLE IX: FUNDING OF THE CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1: The University Council provides funds to all student clubs and organizations that conduct meetings or hold events, or any other type of forum, that is open to all SUNY-DHSU students and comply with Article VIII.B, C, D and E. Furthermore,

- A. Funding priorities shall include, but are not limited to, organizations that primarily fund activities and have membership that span across multiple colleges of SUNY SUNY-DHSU.
- B. University Council will fund clubs and organizations at a rate relative to the SAF funding distribution between University Council and other councils.

SECTION 2: The University Council shall adopt additional "UC Funding Guidelines" by majority vote. "UC Funding Guidelines" can be amended by majority vote.

ARTICLE X: SAF RESERVE FUND

SECTION 1: The SAF Reserve Fund is a separate account made up of interest generated during the year from University Council and all SUNY-DHSU student councils.

SECTION 2: University Council has been designated by the FSA President to oversee expenditures of this fund, which shall be primarily intended for unplanned student related urgent situations and major capital projects.



ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of the organization provided for in this Constitution, the Board of Directors of FSA shall assume responsibility for the disposition of the unexpended funds which shall be distributed to any such successor campus wide student government organization, or if none, shall be distributed amongst the remaining SUNY-DHSU college student councils in the percentages based on the number of students each school has of the total student body at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE XII: RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: This Constitution, having been written under the authority of the University Council voting members, shall be considered as ratified and in force when approved by a two-thirds majority of voting members of the University Council and certified by the campus FSA President.

SECTION 2: Amendments to this Constitution shall be approved in the same manner as ratification, provided the amendment is approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting members of the University Council. Advanced notice of proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be made available to (1) all eligible voting members, (2) All Advisors, and (3) all SUNY-DHSU Student Councils. An open forum shall be provided at the next following council meeting, prior to a University Council vote.

Amended and approved by UC on October 22th, 2020 and certified by FSA President on behalf of campus. Adopted by Student Body Ratification on October 22th, 2020 and certified by FSA President on behalf of campus.