

Congress 2010 Passed Administrative Resolutions

1. Community Colleges and Recruitment Agenda

(Items 1.2 & 1.3 bundled)

02. In Regards to Developing an Informational Packet about USSA to Community College Student Government; Mandy Beatty, RAC(s): Community College Caucus

03. In Regards to the Recruitment of Community Colleges; Nathaniel Robinson, RAC(s): Community College Caucus

In 1999, community college students made up 52.2 percent of all students in higher education. During our current era of recession, enrollment at community colleges has increased 47 percent nationwide. With their larger numbers of campuses and open enrollment policies, community colleges create greater diversity and allow for greater access and ultimately serve the values of the United States Student Association (USSA). Yet, community college students are frequently unaware of USSA and its work, despite how deeply that work affects the student population at their institutions. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will develop a packet of information to distribute at both member and non member community colleges to educate their student life departments and respective student governments about the goals and vision of USSA. Furthermore, the USSA Board of Directors will develop and strategize a way to best recruit more community colleges to USSA with the goal of introducing 10 additional community colleges by the 2011 Congress and ultimately increasing the student power of USSA.

04. Membership Possibilities Evaluation Task Force; Maxwell Love

The current funding and membership structure of the United States Student Association is currently limited to Student Government Associations and State Student Associations. Continuing this limited funding structure hampers the student movement by denying membership into the United States Student Association for students who choose not to engage with these groups or who lack electoral power within their campuses. Student advocacy groups around ethnicity, class, political ideology, religion, or other identities may lack representation in their student governments due to a variety of factors; yet, these organizations possess financial, organizational, and membership resources that are not necessarily at the disposal of the respective student governments. Therefore, the United States Student Association Board of Directors will establish a National Task Force on Membership and Recruitment led by the Outreach Officer and the Vice President to report to the Board of Directors of the Association on the feasibility and logistics of admitting student advocacy groups which may not be affiliated with campus student governments. Furthermore, the Task Force will report to the Association over the course of the year, with a final report issued before the 2011 National Student Congress, whereupon the Board of Directors will decide whether to continue the Task Force or vote on its dissolution.

05. Youth Training and Recruitment; Dan Block

Many high school students are daunted by the large barriers between them and higher education, as exemplified by the recent 32% fee increase in the UC system. These high school students are powerful allies in issues close to USSA's, but lack the opportunity and the tools to organize effectively. Outreaching and providing training to youth will give necessary tools for underrepresented students to fight for access to higher education, reinforcing USSA's principles that education is a right for all students. Thus, the Non-Traditional/First Generation Chair and the National People of Color Student Coalition Chair will be responsible for making sure the USSA Training Director finds at least 5 colleges campuses that are willing to outreach to high school students for their EAT and/or GROW Training. These campuses will host no more than 10 high school students with the intention of giving them tools to advocate important educational issues and to recruit future constituents to USSA. Campuses will participate on a voluntary basis to be the model for possible expansion of the program in the future.

2. Constitutional Amendments

01. Changing of Private College Caucus to Minority Institution Serving Institutions Caucus; Iman Sandifer, RAC(s): Southeast Region

Over the past few years, the Private College caucus of USSA has not had the representation needed to fight for the issues that those students that identify with such a caucus may face daily. In an effort to represent a group of students whose issues are currently on the rise, the USSA Constitution will be amended to change the Private College caucus to the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) caucus. It is essential that the United States Student Association provide a space for these schools to convene and work in unison. With a caucus of this nature being formed, institutions across America will have an active safe haven to fight for the issues that affect them daily on a local, state and national level with some of our country's brightest "change agents."

02. Create a DREAM Students Caucus at USSA; Luis Roman, RAC(s): Golden Pacific Region, La Coalicion Caucus, National People of Color Students of Color Coalition

The current caucuses in the United States Student Association do not completely represent the specific needs and holistic experiences of students directly affected by the DREAM act (DREAMers). USSA should continue to prioritize in providing a safe space for all students, especially underrepresented, underprivileged students and should institutionalize the needs and concerns of DREAMers by implementing that a member of the community sits on USSA's Board. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will create a DREAM Students Caucus and an elected representative from that caucus will have a seat on the Board of Directors with full voting privileges.

3. Diversity

*01. Accessibility to Higher Education for Students with Disabilities; Justin Riordana, RAC(s):
Students with Disability Caucus*

Students with disabilities are not accurately represented within higher education and often forgo furthering their education beyond high school due to a multitude of reasons. USSA needs to fully understand the lack of accessibility for students with disabilities to actively work towards accurate representation of students with disability(ies). Thus, the Disability Chair and Vice Chair will conduct a nation-wide study of the number of disabled students who enter and complete educational degrees in traditional higher education serving institutions and compare these statistics with those of graduating high school students. Furthermore, the USSA Board of Directors will conduct a case study of disabled students in traditional higher education programs with emphasis on those who are active in the university community and are able to sustain outstanding performance in their academics. Finally, the USSA Board of Directors conduct a study on the reasons that students with disabilities do not continue education beyond high school, and ways in which higher education can be more accessible to them.

(Items 3.2 & 3.6 bundled)

*02. Advocating for Cultural, Ethnic, and Identity Departments and Programs;
Christopher Santos, RAC(s): Golden Pacific Region*

*06. Institutionalizing Diversity; Stanley Hardy, RAC(s): People of Color Caucus,
Southeast Region, Great Lakes Region, Golden Pacific Region*

Students in states across the country are not seeing their cultural representation in faculty, student bodies, departments, and curriculum. There is disproportionate representation of people of color in higher education institutions making governing decisions (i.e. Administration, Faculty Senate and Student Senate etc.) on behalf of the total student population. Furthermore, all across the United States, the on-going budget crisis has led to an increase in the number of campuses eliminating cultural, ethnic and identity departments and programs that provide many resources to under-represented students such as academic curriculums, retention, outreach, and conscious support. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will (1) make a commitment to research how diversity requirements have been implemented on various universities (2) produce tangible evidence from such research as to why this increase in diversity on campuses would affect students (3) make such evidence available to the USSA member and non-member institutions (4) provide such research electronically. Additionally, USSA will actively campaign against the elimination of cultural, ethnic and identity departments and programs and will advocate for the administrative representation of any underrepresented community through academic departments and programs.

*03. Concerning Gender Inclusive Bathrooms on College Campuses; Daniel Ramos, RAC(s):
National Queer Student Coalition & USSA Board of Directors 2009-2010*

Many college campuses experience a hostile campus climate towards students who identify as transgender, gender queer or gender non-conforming. Furthermore, gender-inclusive

bathroom spaces are often overlooked on college campuses based on fear and misunderstanding by students, staff, and faculty. Thus, a research team comprised of one Caucus Chair, one Regional Chair and one Affiliate will create a “Gender-Inclusive Bathroom Toolkit,” based on the compiled information collected through the Gender Neutral Facilities Resolution of 2009. The toolkit shall be distributed and utilized to pursue gender-inclusive bathrooms on campuses, advocate for positive campus climates, and understand the social justice issues of gender-inclusive bathroom spaces. Additionally, the United States Student Association shall compile a list of college campuses with multi-stall gender-inclusive bathroom spaces, including information on education and implementation processes, stakeholders and decision-makers, and any other relevant information.

04. Cultural Resource Expansion and Development; Farbodd Ganjifard, RAC(s): Pacific Northwest Region

Some campuses have institutionalized student resources for groups such as First People, Queer students, La Coalicion, Asian Pacific Students, People of African Descent and others; yet, there are still groups such as Multi/Bi-racial students, Middle Eastern students & South Asian students who are forced to categorize themselves into non-identifiable spaces or no space at all. In order to respect equality, and to recognize underrepresented groups, spaces & programs must be created for those communities. Programs for underrepresented students create safe spaces and give students access to academic and campus resources. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will research campus resources for underrepresented students on campuses across the nation; and create guides for students to create safe student spaces on campus.

05. Increasing Womens’ Representation in Higher Education Administrative Positions; Christin Battle, RAC(s): South East Region, Golden Pacific Region, Great Lakes Region

The underrepresentation of women in higher education administrations perpetuates a system that lacks gender equality, despite the substantial representation of women on college campuses. An equal representation of women to men in higher education administrations will encourage women students to recognize their own capabilities and contribute their viewpoints to higher education administrations and the professional world. Thus, the National Women’s Student Coalition Chair and Vice Chair and the Women of Color Caucus Chair and Vice Chair will conduct the needed research to accurately gauge the root of underrepresentation of women in higher education administrations to aide in the discovery of a tangible solution.

07. Women’s Centers on all Campuses; Alma Natalia; RAC(s): National Women’s Student Coalition

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), college age women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than any other age group with one in every four of college women being the victim of a sex crime during the duration of their academic careers. Women’s Centers within a college campus provide a wide range of services to students such as assault prevention programs including sex crime education for the general population, self-defense training, rape crisis counseling, and health services. Thus, the USSA

National Women's Caucus Chair and Vice Chair in conjunction with the National Women of Color Caucus Chair and Vice Chair and their allies will conduct a survey sent via email to assess how many colleges and institutions of higher education have a Women's Center and proper funding as part of their student services and student life programs as well as a rape prevention program integrated with their Women's Center Facilities. Additionally, the USSA National Women's Caucus Chair and Vice Chair in conjunction with the National Women of Color Caucus Chair and Vice Chair will draft a letter communicating the importance of a Women's Center to those campuses which are found to not have a Women's Center or a Women's Center with Rape Prevention Program integrated as a result of the survey.

4. Externally Focused

03. College Board Effectiveness; Chidi Agu, RAC(s): Atlantic Region

Students are subjects of the amenities provided by their high schools and in most cases cannot control the educational standards of their high school. CollegeBoard should provide colleges and universities the appropriate information regarding a high school's curriculum. When selecting students to attend their college or university, colleges and universities need to be aware about the various curriculums of high schools so they are able to make a holistic review of applicants in relation to the context of the accessibility of their education. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will develop a healthy, long-term relationship with CollegeBoard for potential assistance with future projects regarding providing the number of AP classes offered, average GPA, and average test scores of the high schools of college applicants, so that such information is readily available for college and universities during the application process.

04. Developing a more active relationship with Student Veterans of America to support Veterans Resource Center; Kailei Higginson, RAC(s): Veteran's Caucus

The United States Student Association has made it a priority to support veterans in their pursuit of formal education and to build relationships with similar organizations that support such students and their needs. Meanwhile, veterans may need to seek additional support and services while pursuing their academic goals that may not be provided their campus. Thus, the United States Student Association will seek and develop a relationship with the organization, Student Veterans of America. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Student Veterans of America, United States Student Association will develop a tool kit for organizing a Veteran's Resource Center on various member campuses.

5. Financial Aid

01. Federal Financial Aid Application and Award Process; Josh Diller, RAC(s): Rocky Mountain Region

Non-traditional and returning students face unique challenges when attempting to enroll in college. The federal financial aid application award process does not recognize the differences between the financial situations of a non-traditional and a traditional student. Federal financial aid is based off of the previous year's income, while non-traditional students must often leave their job or take a lower paying position in order to attend college. Non-traditional students often have contractual financial obligations significantly greater than those of traditional students, while no allowance is made for this in the federal financial aid award system. Thus, the Chair of the 1st Generation/Non-traditional Student Caucus shall work with USSA staff and the USSA Board of Directors to develop a campaign which might be adopted as an Action Agenda item. This campaign should seek to identify differences in the needs of non-traditional and traditional students; determine outcomes, which would bridge the financial aid gap created by these differences; and establish a timeline for achieving legislative victory on this campaign.

02. Pell Grants Not Being Priority Issue; Kendra Neal; RAC(s): South Eastern Region

Higher education funding for students is becoming harder to obtain because funding is no longer a priority. States are using national education budget cuts as a means to increase tuition for students, yet, they offer students a Pell grant with qualifications students can't actually meet. This situation leaves students in the position to no longer qualify for federal funding and face elevated cost of tuition. Thus, in order for our country to progress and provide access to education to all students, further research will be done to calculate the root of this issue and to pinpoint strategic ways to make Pell grants mandatory spending.

6. Internally Focused

01. Communication and Transparency within the SSAs; Madison Parker, RAC(s): SSSAC

Communication between members of SSSAC has been sporadic and poorly maintained year to year and certain aspects of USSA do not foster effective communication between the SSAs and the USSA. Thus, the chair of SSSAC will maintain and distribute a contact list consisting of SSA Leadership and Staff. Additionally, the USSA Board of Directors will produce, publish and distribute meeting agendas five business days before any meeting, maintain and publish meeting minutes within two weeks of the meeting, and make all governing documents, minutes and agendas easily accessible on the USSA website.

02. Concerning the Intersectionality of Environmental Justice and Social Justice; Daniel Ramos, RAC(s): Rocky Mountain Region

College campuses produce hundreds of tons of waste every year which is taken to local landfills, creating an environmental justice issue. Environmental justice is a social justice issue since many landfills are primarily located in communities of color and low-income communities, often times, damaging their way of life. Sustainable programs and practices can save students money, putting money back in their pockets and re-investing money into student programs on campus. Thus, the United States Student Association shall look at ways to reduce its waste and

attempt to make arrangements for recycling receptacles at each of its Board of Directors Meetings and Conferences. Furthermore, USSA shall explore different ways to facilitate dialogue on the intersections of environmental and social justice, upholding its mission to advocate for a socially just world. USSA will also research the different ways sustainable programs and practices on college campuses save students money and how these savings could be better allocated, which shall also include the positive impact college campuses have on their communities by reducing the amount of waste they produce.

04. The creation of the SSSA Cross Communications Committee; Victor Sanchez, RAC(s): Golden Pacific Region

The State and System Student Association Coalition (SSSAC) is a space to help foster communication between State and/or System Student Associations (SSAs) who are members of the United States Student Association (USSA). There is a current need to find new and creative ways at enhancing communication and relationship-building between existing SSA leadership, staff, USSA Board Members and staff, along with the SSSAC Chair and Vice Chair. Thus, the SSSAC Chair will convene the SSSA Cross Communications Committee (SSSACCC) quarterly by means left up to his/her discretion, to better enhance communication and investment amongst the SSA community. The creation of the SSSACCC will help ensure the effective collaboration between SSAs and USSA in hopes of bettering communication and building and strengthening the national student movement.

7. Misc. Resolutions

01. Textbook Affordability Directive; Madison Parker, RAC(s): Pacific North West Region

The average student takes on over \$20,000 of debt in order to obtain a college degree. The cost of an education is continually skyrocketing and growing further and further out of reach for many people. One significant cost is the annual cost of textbooks. The average US student spent about \$900 a year on textbooks in 2005 and now textbook prices are rising four times the rate of inflation. The textbook market is dominated by a handful of companies. These companies, along with wholesalers and bookstores wield considerable power in determining the cost of textbooks. Thus, the USSA Board of Directors will develop a report on the options to increase textbook affordability in the United States. This report will be a basic outline of the benefits and disadvantages of certain legislative actions that could positively change the textbook market to be more affordable and accessible to students.