

## **Preamble**

We, the students of the United States, through democratic participation in our representative body, the United States Student Association (USSA), as student activists and advocates dedicated to the principles of expanding access to higher education for all persons regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, financial constraint, political affiliation, veteran's status or religious affiliation, do hereby ordain this constitution.

Moreover, USSA hereby states its purposes as the following:

1. To improve standards of higher education.
2. To ensure equal access to higher education.
3. To promote and defend student interests in state and national bodies.
4. To provide a forum for debate and presentation of student opinions without regard to race, gender, age, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, disability, political affiliation, veteran's status and/or religious affiliation.
5. To encourage diversity with regard to race, gender, age, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, disability, financial status, political affiliation, veteran's status and/or religious affiliation within educational institutions and within USSA.
6. To enable students from various institutions such as community colleges, four year colleges and universities, and both public and private institutions to gain access to USSA's available information.

In light of these stated purposes, it shall be the policy of USSA to encourage membership from all institutions of higher learning and not to alienate any institutions because of characteristics pertaining to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, financial constraint, political affiliation, veteran's status, or religious affiliation.

Moreover, USSA recognizes that the presentation of diverse viewpoints and opinions serve a number of purposes, including:

1. Making USSA's representation of student interests realistic, inclusive and democratic.
2. Allowing adversarial argumentation that results in a change of position or a compromise between factions.

The effect of USSA's pursuing a cosmopolitan understanding of issues is to render the organization as believable, respectable and influential as possible.

## **Article I: Membership and Voting**

### **1.1 Categories and Eligibility**

Individuals and organizations shall be eligible for membership in USSA as one of the following:

1. **Campus member.** Any duly elected campus-wide student government or representative organization of students at an institution of post-secondary education located within the territorial boundaries of the United States which has been recognized by the Department of Education or is eligible for federal aid programs.
2. **State or system-wide association of students, student governments, student organizations or institutions as defined in ARTICLE 1.1.1 of this constitution.**

### **1.2 Qualification**

Any organization eligible for membership may qualify by paying dues for the current year. Membership can be affected either by action of the applicant's governing body or a referendum of the applicant's members or constituents.

### **1.3 Dues**

1. **Amount.** The board of directors shall regulate the amount of dues for each category of membership in USSA with ratification of a majority of the members of USSA at the first National Student Congress (NSC) following establishment of any new dues structure.
2. All Community, Junior, Technical, and Tribal Colleges shall be subject to a graduated rate reduction of the Membership Dues. The graduated reduction rate shall also apply to all USSA conference fees.

### **1.4 Rights and Privileges**

1. All members shall be entitled to voting representation at USSA membership meetings as provided for in this constitution.
2. All members shall be entitled to avail themselves of all services of USSA at member rates, and shall be eligible to attend all meetings, conferences and functions of USSA at member rates.
3. All members shall be entitled to receive publications of USSA including but not limited to:
  - a. The annual budget;

- b. Financial and administrative reports;
  - c. Minutes from meetings of the membership, the board of directors and its committees and the executive committee;
- |                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| 3,501-5,500 students   | 6  |
| 5,501-8,500 students   | 7  |
| 8,501-13,500 students  | 8  |
| 13,501-20,500 students | 9  |
| 20,501-30,500 students | 10 |
| 30,501 +               | 11 |

- d. A list of all member schools with contact information that includes a contact name, address and phone number, at the discretion of the president, provided that cause is shown.
4. Affiliates may additionally establish desks and/or operate programs in the USSA national office and solicit dues and/or contributions from USSA members in conjunction with USSA's regular dues solicitation process.

3. Each state or system-wide member shall be entitled to representation (delegates) as follows:

0-60,000 students	3
60,001-120,000 students	4
120,001 and above	5

- 4. No individual may hold more than one set of voting credentials at any one time.
- 5. During a roll-call vote, a campus may submit a delegate-by-delegate breakdown of their votes, for the record.

**1.5 Suspensions or Termination of Membership**

- 1. **Nonpayment of dues.**  
Any member that fails to pay its required dues within sixty (60) days of the date of written notice that they are due shall be automatically suspended from membership and shall be reinstated upon payment of all dues in arrears. The President may use discretion under special circumstances to grant a 60 day extension to pay dues.
- 2. **Cause.**  
Any member may be suspended or expelled for violation of the constitution or bylaws of USSA or for actions, which are destructive to the policies of common interest of USSA. Suspension or expulsion of any member shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a membership meeting. No member shall be expelled unless a statement of charges has been mailed by certified mail to the respective member at least thirty (30) days before the final action is taken.

**1.7 Proxy Voting**

Proxy voting shall not be allowed in any meeting.

**1.8 Participation**

All voting and ex officio members of the board of directors and officers shall be entitled to exercise all rights and privileges of voting delegates at membership meetings, except that they shall not be entitled to vote unless so provided elsewhere in this constitution.

**1.6 Voting**

- 1. The right to vote at membership meetings shall be limited to duly accredited delegates representing USSA members, pursuant to ART. 4.2 of this constitution. A voting delegate must either be a registered student or have been registered within the past two years.
- 2. The number of voting delegates to which each campus member shall be entitled shall be determined by the actual student enrollment on the campus in accordance as follows:

0-3,500 students	5
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**Article II: Officers**

**2.1 Composition**

The officers of the corporation shall be the national president, the vice president, the corporate secretary, the financial officer, the outreach officer, the community/labor liaison officer, and the grassroots legislative officer.

**2.2 National President**

The membership shall elect a national president at the annual meeting of the NSC. The national president shall take office at the close of the NSC at which they are elected and shall hold office until their successor is elected and has qualified for office. The national president shall have the authority and responsibility to:

- 1. Serve as chief executive officer and chief spokesperson for USSA.
- 2. Preside over all meetings of the membership, and serve in an ex officio capacity to the board of directors.

3. Appoint all official representatives of USSA and nominate all international representatives of the USSA to the board.
4. Direct all organizing, fieldwork, and recruitment efforts of USSA.
5. Determine the process for supervision of all USSA staff.
6. Submit brief written reports to the board monthly and to the membership every third month.
7. Perform all duties as assigned by the membership or the board of directors.

### **2.3 National Vice President**

The membership shall elect a national vice president at the annual meeting of the NSC. The vice president shall take office at the close of the NSC at which they are elected and shall hold office until their successor is elected and has qualified for office. The vice president shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Preside over meetings of the board of directors and the executive committee.
2. Coordinate communications with the board of directors.
3. Act in the absence of the national president.
4. Submit brief written reports to the board monthly and to the membership every third month.
5. Perform any and all duties as assigned by the membership or the board of directors.

### **2.4 Corporate Secretary**

The board of directors shall elect a corporate secretary at the first meeting of the board of directors following the annual meeting of the NSC. The secretary shall take office immediately upon their election and shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Record and maintain minutes of all meetings of the membership, the board of directors and its executive committee.
2. Submit a record of all motions adopted at each board meeting to the next meeting of the board, and convey all motions from meetings of the executive committee or any other committees of the board, to the full board.
3. Maintain official copies of the USSA Constitution, Bylaws, Policy Platform, Articles of

Incorporation, Administrative Resolutions and Policies. Official copies shall be kept at the national office.

4. Record all amendments or additions referred to in ART. 2.4.3 within sixty (60) days after the annual meeting of the NSC.
5. Record all amendments or additions referred to in ART. 2.4.3 after passage by the board of directors or any other meeting of the congress.
6. Present a report to the membership at the NSC including the text of all major resolutions passed by the board during the preceding year.
7. Distribute to all congress members, regions, coalitions, and caucuses a copy of the USSA Policy Platform, as well as the newly amended bylaws and the constitution, no later than January 1 following the annual congress that they attended.
8. Distribute to all congress members, regions, coalitions, and caucuses a copy of the minutes of the USSA Administrative and Issues Plenary sessions no later than April 1 following the annual congress that they attended.
9. Perform all duties as assigned by the board of directors.

### **2.5 Financial Officer**

The board of directors shall elect a financial officer at the first meeting of the board of directors following the annual meeting of the NSC. The financial officer will take office immediately upon their election, and shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Prepare financial reports for the board of directors at each board meeting and to the membership every six (6) months.
2. Submit a record of all financial decisions made by the executive committee to the board of directors.
3. The financial officer shall chair the Finance Committee of the board of directors.
4. Perform all duties as assigned by the board of directors.
5. Shall ensure that accurate records of financial data and transactions are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

### **2.6 Outreach Officer**

The board of directors shall elect an outreach officer at the first meeting of the board of directors following the annual meeting of the National Student Congress. The outreach officer will take office immediately upon their election, and shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Oversee the implementation of the national recruitment plan developed by the USSA national office and the USSA Board of Directors.
2. Oversee the enforcement of the Diversity Guidelines at all meetings of the congress, the regions and Legislative Conference.
3. Enforce the diversity guidelines for all congress committees at the annual meeting of the NSC.
4. Maintain a record of all delegations that violate the diversity guidelines to present to the board of directors, the Congress Steering Committee (CSC) and the membership.
5. Oversee the implementation of efforts within USSA to promote understanding of the purpose for and enforcement procedures of the diversity guidelines.
6. Perform all other duties assigned by the board of directors.
7. It is recommended that the outreach officer shall be a person who self-identifies as a member of a USSA identity-based caucus or affiliate as defined in the USSA Constitution.
8. The outreach officer and the president of USSA shall designate one member of the national office to serve as staff liaison to the outreach officer.

### **2.7 Community/Labor Liaison**

Because a strong alliance between community and civil rights groups, and labor unions is necessary for building a strong movement for social justice, the board of directors shall elect a community/labor liaison following the annual meeting of the NSC. The community/labor liaison shall take office immediately upon their election and have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Oversee the development of a long-term coalition-building plan developed by the community/labor taskforce consisting of a national staff/officer liaison, the board of directors, and membership.

2. Act as a liaison between the national office, the board of directors, and the membership in the creation of a comprehensive plan to do coalition work (i.e., events, conferences, campaigns, research, training, etc.).
3. The community/labor liaison shall chair the community/labor taskforce of USSA.
4. Perform all duties as assigned by the board of directors.

### **2.8 Grassroots Legislative Officer**

The board of directors shall elect a grassroots legislative officer at the first meeting of the board following the annual meeting of the NSC. The grassroots legislative officer will take office immediately upon their election, and shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Coordinate with the national office the development of national grassroots legislative campaigns.
2. Work with the national office to develop USSA's legislative strategies.
3. Work with the national office to develop legislative materials.
4. Ensure that all member campuses, state or system-wide associations of students and members of the board have access to regular legislative updates through the USSA website as well as other communications media.
5. Perform all duties assigned by the board.

### **2.9 Transition Period**

A two-week transition period shall take place during the first two weeks of each officer's term of office, during which the outgoing officers shall advise their successors.

### **2.10 Vacancies**

1. In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the vice president shall assume the position and duties of the president. In the event the vice president declines the office of president, the vice president shall serve as acting president until the board elects a new president as provided for in Art. 2.10.2.
2. Except as provided for in ART. 2.10.1, a vacancy in office because of death, resignation, removal or other cause may be filled by the board of directors.

## **2.11 Removal**

Any officer elected or appointed by the board of directors may be removed by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the directors voting at the meeting, whenever in their judgment the best interests of USSA would be served thereby. The president and/or vice president may be removed by two thirds (2/3) of the entire membership of the board of directors at a special meeting called for that purpose whenever in their judgment the best interest of USSA would be served thereby. The officer may respond in writing within two weeks, by providing justification for remaining in the position.

## **Article III: Advisory Council**

### **3.1 Composition**

The advisory council shall consist of voting members to be elected as provided or in ART. 3.3. of this constitution. Each council member shall take office immediately upon election, and serve until the end of the next congress.

### **3.2 Ex Officio Members**

1. The national president shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of the advisory council.
2. The national vice president shall vote only in the case of making or breaking a tie.

### **3.3 Voting Members**

Each officer, with the exception of the national president and national vice president, shall be voting members of the advisory council. The national vice president shall vote only in cases of a tie.

1. Each of the ten (10) regions, provided in ART. 5 of this constitution shall elect one (1) chair and one (1) vice-chair at the National Student Congress. Either the chair or vice-chair shall be a person who self-identifies as a member of the USSA identity based caucus or affiliate as defined in the USSA Constitution. When there are member schools present from more than one state within the same region, the chair vice-chair cannot come from the same state.
2. The following shall elect one (1) chair and one (1) vice chair: National Women's Student Coalition (NWSC), National People of Color Student Coalition (NPCSC), National Queer Student Coalition (NQSC), Non-Traditional Caucus, Community College Caucus, National Coalition of Students with Disabilities, People of African Descent, La Coalicion, People of Middle Eastern and

South Asian Descent, the First People Coalition, Students of the Jewish Community, National Queer Students of Color (NQSoC), National Coalition of Student Veterans, Graduate and Professional Students, Private Colleges, State and System Student Association (SSSAC), Women of Color, International Students, and the Working Class Student Caucus.

### **3.4 Meetings**

The advisory council shall meet three times a year, once at the National Student Congress, once at the October board meeting, and once at the National Grassroots Legislative Conference.

### **3.5 Duties**

Each member of the advisory council shall have the responsibility to:

1. Provide insights, perspectives and advice to the congress, to the board of directors, to the national president and vice president, and to the national office.
2. Attend all meetings of the advisory council.
3. Serve on committees as appointed by the national president, national vice president of the board of directors.
4. Implement all grassroots legislative campaigns.
5. Facilitate communications within their respective constituencies.
6. Recruit new member schools and state and system-wide student organizations.
7. Host the National Grassroots Legislative Conference.

## **Article IV: Board of Directors**

### **4.1 Ex Officio members**

The USSA president and vice president shall be ex officio members of the board. Ex officio members shall have the right to attend all meetings of the board of directors and to speak at them, provided, however, that the board may exclude any ex-officio member from a meeting during a discussion pertaining to the performance of their duties and/or responsibilities.

### **4.2 Voting Members**

1. Each director and chair sitting on the advisory council shall be a voting member voting of the board of directors.

2. Each officer, with the exception of the national president and the national vice president, shall be full, voting members of the board of directors. The national vice president shall vote only in cases of a tie.
3. Whenever the representation of people of color on the board of directors is less than fifty percent (50%), the NPCSC shall elect students at-large to compensate for the difference. Whenever the representation of women on the board is less than fifty percent (50%), the NWSC shall elect students at-large to compensate for the difference. Whenever the representation of openly lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender students on the board of directors is less than thirty percent (30%), NQSC shall elect students at-large to compensate for the difference, at least fifty percent (50%) of their representatives must be people of color and fifty percent (50%) must be women.

#### 4.3 Meetings

##### 1. Regular Meetings.

The board of directors shall meet at least five (5) times annually, including immediately before and/or after the NSC and the annual Legislative Conference, at places that maximize participation by the various geographical regions. The president, the vice president, or any ten (10) voting members of the board may call meetings of the board of directors.

##### 2. Notice of Meetings.

Written notice stating the place, day, and hour of board of directors Meetings shall be delivered to all voting and ex officio directors, personally or by mail, at least ten (10) and not more than forty-five (45) days prior to such meetings.

##### 3. Special Meetings.

The president, vice president, or any ten (10) members of the board may call a special meeting of the board in exceptional circumstances. All voting and ex officio members must be notified of a special meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours but no more than ten (10) business days prior to the meeting, either personally, by mail, telephone, e-mail, or FAX. Such notice shall include an agenda of all items to be discussed and acted upon, and shall include any urgency items as defined in 4.3.4. No action shall be taken on any other item. Special meetings may be held by teleconference, after which each participant shall send

an affidavit to the national office, which shall be considered as proof of attendance at the meeting. Members of the board of directors who are unable to attend a special meeting shall not be subject to penalties.

##### 4. Urgency Items.

Urgency items are those extraordinary items, which are of exceptional importance, and could not be adequately resolved at a subsequent regular meeting of the board. A statement demonstrating urgency shall accompany each urgency item and shall be presented to the congress at its next meeting. Bylaw changes may not be urgency items but removal of officers and directors may be urgency items.

##### 5. Quorum.

One-half (1/2) plus one of the whole number of voting directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the board of directors. The act of a majority of directors present at a meeting at which quorum is present shall constitute action by the board of directors.

#### 4.4 Duties

The board of directors shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Supervise and execute policies established by the membership.
2. Confirm by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at a meeting all official representatives of USSA nominated by the president.
3. Enact policies deemed necessary and proper.
4. Create such standing and/or ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.
5. Have final approval and/or disapproval over the hiring and firing of all staff as well as the establishment and/or elimination of staff position.
6. Approve the USSA budget prior to the start of each fiscal year.
7. Delegate such duties, as it deems appropriate to other individuals and committees.
8. Exercise all other powers vested in the board of directors by law, the articles of incorporation, constitution or bylaws.

9. The Board of Directors is responsible for reviewing the bylaws and constitution annually.

#### **4.5 Committees**

There will be, in addition to such ad-hoc committees that the vice president or the board designates, standing committees as defined in the bylaws.

#### **4.6 Membership Review**

The members of the organization shall have the privilege to review any action or decision by the board of directors or the executive committee at the first full meeting of the membership immediately following said action/decision. The membership may overturn any action or decision of the board of directors or the executive committee, provided the action of the membership is without prejudice to the contractual rights of those contracting with USSA, pursuant to action of the board of directors or the executive committee.

#### **4.7 Removal**

1. A director may be removed for misfeasance, malfeasance or non-malfeasance by the affirmative votes of three-fourths (3/4) of the directors voting at a meeting.
2. A director may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the region or affiliate. Notification of a removal vote must be sent to all members of the respective region or affiliate three (3) weeks prior to a vote for removal. The person being removed has the right to appeal in writing two (2) weeks prior to the board meeting. The appeal must be based on constitutional, bylaw or regional bylaw procedural violations.
3. A director shall be removed from the board of directors for missing one meeting of the board of directors, without providing written/oral notification to the national office or the corporate secretary, with the exception of the board of directors meeting immediately following congress. Directors missing one meeting will be automatically removed at the next meeting of the board of directors
4. A director shall be removed from the board of directors for missing two excused meetings of the board of directors, with the exception of the board of directors meeting immediately following congress. The director will automatically be removed at the next

meeting of the board of directors. Excusal will be granted at the discretion of the board of directors.

5. Any person who is brought up on a complaint and found guilty of sexual harassment, sexual assault, verbal and non-verbal assault shall be asked to leave the Event for the remainder of sessions pending results from any appeal. If the decision holds, the individual shall be removed permanently from the position and expelled from USSA.
6. Any officer or member of the board of directors or advisory council found guilty of bias related violence or harassment, verbal or non-verbal, including that based on gender, at any time during their tenure, shall be removed permanently from the board of directors pending decision of the executive committee of the board of directors.

#### **4.8 Vacancies**

1. Vacancies on the board of directors shall be filled in accordance with the bylaws of the respective region or affiliate, and pursuant to ART. 4.2.1 and ART. 5.3.7. If the region or affiliate has no bylaws, the board of directors shall determine the mechanism by which the vacancy shall be filled. A director elected or appointed pursuant to this paragraph to fill a vacancy shall be elected or appointed for the unexpired term of their predecessor in office.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of ART. 4.7.1, vacancies or vacancies filled by the board of directors shall be open for election by the representative region or affiliate at the Legislative Conference. Voting shall be conducted in the same manner, as was the voting for the previously elected director.
3. In the event that a chair is removed from the board or cannot attend a board meeting, the vice-chair can assume the chair's voting responsibilities until the chair is able to resume their duties or be replaced.

#### **4.9 Executive Committee**

##### **1. Composition**

An Executive Committee of the board of directors composed of each officer position as defined in ART. 2 of the constitution and the chairs of NPCSC, NWSC, NQSC and SSSAC.

##### **2. Ex officio members.**

The national president and national vice president shall serve as ex-officio members

of the executive committee and are expected to attend all meetings.

### **3. Meetings**

#### **1. Meetings.**

The president, the vice president, the board of directors, or a majority of the voting members of the executive committee may call meetings of the executive committee.

#### **2. Notice of Meetings.**

The president or vice president shall provide written notice to all members of the Executive Committee, both voting and non-voting and ex officio, of the date, time and location of each meeting at least ten (10), but not more than forty-five (45) days prior to the respective meeting.

#### **3. Notice of Special Meetings.**

All voting and ex officio members must be notified of a special meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours, but no more than ten (10) days prior to the meeting, whether personally, by mail, telephone, e-mail or FAX. Such notice shall include an agenda of all items, as defined in ART. 4.3.3. Special meetings may be held by teleconference, after which each participant shall send an affidavit to the national office, which shall be considered proof of attendance at the meeting.

#### **4. Quorum.**

One-half (1/2) plus one of the full number of voting executive committee members then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the executive committee.

### **4. Duties.**

The executive committee shall have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Perform all duties assigned in the by-laws or by the board of directors.
2. Act between meetings with the full powers of the board of directors as necessary, with respect to all matters, except those that are required by the articles of incorporation, constitution or bylaws to be taken by an extraordinary majority of the board of director.

## **Article V: National Student Congress**

### **5.1 Authority**

1. The congress shall be the ultimate decision-making authority for USSA with all officers and directors being accountable to the members of the congress.
2. The members and delegates consider, amend and approve an annual action agenda and additions and changes to the policy platform for the subsequent year; consider, amend, approve or reject resolutions; and exercise any and all other powers reserved to the members by law or by USSA's Articles of Incorporation, Constitution or Bylaws.

### **5.2 Delegate Selection and Diversity Guidelines**

1. Delegates shall be selected by duly constituted student governments of campus members and by duly constituted state and system-wide student association. Delegates representing campus members must have student status at that campus or have graduated from that campus within the past year. Delegates representing state student associations must have student status at a member's campus of that state student association within the past year or be an officer or a staff member of that state student association. Delegates representing affiliates must be members of that affiliate as provided for in ART. 5.3.7.
2. All delegations of three (3) or more must have among that delegation at least one (1) person of color and at least one (1) woman delegate, who shall not be the same person. Delegations of five (5) or more must fill the following diversity guidelines:
  1. 5: 1 woman, 1 woman of color, 1 person of color, 1 queer, non-traditional, student with disability, veteran, international student or working class student.
  2. 6: 1 woman, 1 woman of color, 1 person of color, 1 queer, non-traditional, student with disability, veteran, or international student or working class student.
  3. 7: 1 woman, 1 woman of color, 1 person of color, 1 queer, 1 non-traditional, student with disability, veteran, or international student, 1 working class student.
  4. 8: 2 women, 1 woman of color, 2 people of color, 1 queer, 1 non-traditional, student with

- disability, veteran, or international student, 1 working class student.
5. 9: 3 women, 1 woman of color, 2 people of color, 1 queer of color, 1 non-traditional, student with disability, veteran, or international student, 1 working class student.
  6. 10: 4 women, 1 woman of color, 2 people of color, 1 queer of color, 1 non-traditional, student with disability, veteran, or international student, 1 working class student.
  7. 11: 4 women, 1 woman of color, 2 people of color, 1 queer, 1 queer of color, 1 non-traditional, student with disability, or international student, 1 working class student.
  8. Delegates may fulfill multiple roles under above subsections 1-7, except that the delegate fulfilling the women of color guideline may not also fulfill the people of color or woman guidelines.
  9. USSA strongly encourages delegations to bring diverse non-voting students in excess of the voting delegations guidelines.
  10. For the purposes of these guidelines, delegates will self-identify with caucuses and affiliates. Self-identification shall mean that a delegate identifies with a particular community to the extent that they feel it is comfortable and appropriate to attend the closed, safe space of a caucus or affiliate meeting. For the purpose of credentialing, a delegate's declared identity will not be subject to question or review by any means.
  11. For the purposes of these guidelines, a delegate shall be said to identify as a person of color only if they identify with NPCSC, Women of Color Caucus, or National Queer Students of Color Caucus. A delegate shall be said to identify as a woman if they identify with NWSC or Women of Color Caucus. A delegate shall be said to identify as queer if they identify with NQSC or National Queer Students of Color Caucus. All other identities shall be determined by identification with the corresponding caucus.
  12. Delegates are strongly encouraged to attend the meetings of all caucuses and affiliates with which they identify. In the event that a delegate identifies with but fails to attend scheduled caucus or affiliate meetings, it shall be considered appropriate for the Chair, with the utmost discretion as approved by the President and Vice President, of that particular caucus or affiliate to reach out to the delegate on a one-on-one basis for the purpose of understanding reasons for non-attendance and encouraging future participation in the caucus or affiliate.
  13. Forms which contain information regarding the caucus and affiliate identification of a delegate shall remain confidential, to be viewed only by the Outreach Officer, members of the Credentials Committee, USSA Staff, and the USSA President and Vice President. Lists of self-identified, voting members of caucuses and affiliates will be provided to those caucus and affiliate Chairs and Vice Chairs and shall also remain confidential.
  14. Delegation credential reports are matters of public record and may display identity information provided that they protect the anonymity of individual delegates.
  3. Any member school that counts graduate/professional enrollment in the determination of their voting delegation must include at least one (1) graduate or professional student in its delegation.
  4. For the purpose of verifying diversity guidelines, the board of directors shall appoint a standing credentials committee consisting of Article 5.9.1 – 5.9.6.
  5. Delegations not conforming to the guidelines herein at the Legislative Conference shall be placed on probation for the next meeting of the NSC.
  6. The outreach officer, or their designee, shall review and determine whether each delegation has met the diversity qualification and credential requirements to participate in a NSC, Leg Con, regional meetings, and affiliate and regional votes which affect representation on the national board of directors. Except when a delegation has satisfied the diversity guidelines and has been fully credentialed, credentialing decisions by the Outreach Officer shall be subject to appeal at NSC or at Leg Con.
  7. Delegates that register after the official registration period at the NSC shall forfeit the right to vote at the regional meeting, caucus

meeting or Congress plenary session immediately following the time of actual registration, except that the outreach officer at their discretion, may grant voting credentials if they determine that there is adequate time to conduct a full credential check. The decision of the outreach officer may be subject to appeal at NSC or the Legislative Conference.

8. Any delegation found in violation of the diversity guidelines or that is in arrears must be notified by mail by the outreach officer of the disposition of credential review or the final decision of the outreach officer.

9. **Appeals at the National Student Congress**

All appeals shall be heard by the Congress Steering Committee (CSC) as referred to in 5.5. All appeals at the National Legislative Conference will be heard by the Executive committee as referred to in 4.9.1.

### 5.3 Meetings

1. The annual membership meeting of the USSA shall be held during each summer at places which maximize participation by the various geographical regions, as designated by the board of directors.
2. Special meetings of the congress may be called by a majority of all directors then in office. At least one-tenth (1/10) of the potential delegates of USSA members must register at a special meeting for the transaction of business.
3. A majority of the registered delegates at any meeting shall constitute quorum for a plenary session of the congress.
4. At least one month prior to each congress, the board of directors shall distribute to all member campuses and delegation leaders written notice stating a place, day and time for the meeting. All new delegates and members shall receive a copy of the USSA Constitution, Bylaws, and Policy Platform with their notice regarding the congress. Notice of a special meeting shall include the purpose or purposes for which the meeting has been called. All pre-registered delegation members shall receive an email copy of the USSA Constitution.
5. The board of directors shall allocate sufficient time at each congress for amendment of the constitution, by-laws, and Policy Platform and for meetings of the regions and affiliates.

6. Meeting time will be set at each USSA conference for allies of the caucuses and affiliates in order to meet. The meeting will be open to all including members of the caucuses and affiliates to discuss how to support the agenda of the caucuses and affiliates. There will be neither voting power nor board representation as a result of these meetings.

7. In order to participate in caucus and regional votes at any time, which directly affect representation on the board of directors, delegations shall be in accordance with the diversity guidelines. Voting shall only be by registered and certified delegates.

8. The Legislative Conference shall be held in Washington, DC, at a time designated by the board of directors. The purpose of the conference shall be to focus on current legislative and lobbying concerns. The Legislative Conference shall not be considered a special meeting of the congress unless so designated.

9. Caucuses and regions should be prepared to conduct internal business at the Legislative Conference.

### 5.4 Policy Documents

#### 1. Action Agenda

1. The USSA Action Agenda is the core statement of the issues the organization will work on in the following year.
2. A 2/3 vote by the members present and voting at the congress shall establish the Action Agenda.

#### 2. Policy Platform

1. The policy platform is a broad statement of the principles of the organization. The inclusion of an issue in the policy platform does not imply an organizational commitment to act on that issue.
2. A majority vote by the full members present and voting at the congress shall establish the policy platform of USSA.

#### 3. Resources

1. In allocation of legislative and lobbying resources, educational issues shall have the highest priorities.

### 5.5 Congress Committees

1. The Congress Steering Committee (CSC), the Administrative Plenary Committee (APC), and the Issues Plenary Committee (IPC) shall be responsible for the administration of meetings of the congress, except as provided herein.
2. Each congress committee shall consist of one (1) voting member from each region, and one (1) member of the board of directors (who shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting liaison).
3. Each congress committee must include at least one-half (50%) women (which must include at least one (1) woman of color), at least one-third (33%) people of color, at least one-seventh (17%) lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or Transgender students (which must include at least one (1) lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender student of color, and at least one (1) member of the following constituencies: non-traditional students; students with disabilities; graduate and professional students; veteran; or international students. In the event that the elected regional representatives do not meet these guidelines, the appropriate affiliates shall have the opportunity to elect additional representatives to the affected committee in order to meet these guidelines.
4. Quorum for each congress committee shall consist of a majority of the respective committee.

## **Article VI: Regions and Affiliates**

### **6.1 Regions**

1. The members shall be divided into the following regions:
  1. Atlantic - DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV
  2. Great Lakes - IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI
  3. Blue Ridge - AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN
  4. Empire Garden - NY, NJ, PR, Virg. Isl.
  5. Great Plains - IA, KS, MO, NE
  6. Golden Pacific, AZ, CA, HI, NV, Guam, Amer. Samoa
  7. New England, CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
  8. Pacific Northwest - AK, ID, OR, WA
  9. Rocky Mountain - CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY
  10. South Central - AR, LA, NM, OK, TX
2. Every five (5) years the board will review regional structure and provide recommendations for any necessary redistricting. Amended 8.98

### **6.2 Governance**

Each region and affiliate can have bylaws and they must be in accordance with the USSA Constitution and Bylaws.

### **6.3 Communication**

Region chairs will maintain a contact list of at least one contact person on each member campus in the region. Affiliate chairs will be responsible for timely distribution of information and materials from the USSA Board, staff and officers, for coordinating national actions, for recruitment and general communication.

## **Article VII: Bylaws**

1. The board of directors shall enact bylaws to supplement this constitution.
2. The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the directors in office. Amendments to the bylaws shall take effect immediately upon passage, unless otherwise specified. All such amendments shall be reported to the NSC, for informational purposes.
3. The bylaws may also be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting at a meeting of the NSC. Upon passage, amendments to the bylaws shall take effect at the end of that meeting of the Congress, unless otherwise specified.

## **Article VIII: Indemnification**

To the extent, if any, that the board of directors may determine, the corporation may indemnify any director, officer, official representative or staff member, against reasonable expenses (including attorney's fees) actually and necessarily incurred by their connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which they are made party by reason of being or having been such director, officer, official representative or staff member, except in relation to matters as to which they shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of a duty. Such indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any rights to which such director, officer, official representative or staff member may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of the board of directors, or other provision.

## **Article IX: Amending the Constitution**

1. This constitution may be amended or repealed by a three-fifths (3/5) vote of the registered voting delegates at a meeting of the NSC.
2. Upon passage, amendments to this constitution shall take effect at the end of that meeting of congress, unless otherwise specified by the congress.

**Article X: Ratification**

Ratification of this constitution shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the registered voting delegates at a meeting of the NSC.

This constitution and its bylaws take effect at the close of the 1998 annual meeting of the NSC, at which time they will replace the old constitution and bylaws.

**Article XI: National Days of Action**

Every October 30<sup>th</sup> shall be proclaimed National Affirmative Action Day. On and around this day, members of USSA will campaign on Affirmative Action, including recruitment and retention.

Every November 17<sup>th</sup> shall be proclaimed National Day of International Action; in conjunction with the International day of Action proclaimed by the International Union of Students. On and around this day members will campaign on international and international student issues, through celebration and/or education of the international community.

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