

# **The Constitution of the Social Science Students' Council At the University of Western Ontario**

## **1.00 - Mission Statement**

1.01 The Social Science Students' Council will strive to enrich the experience of every Social Science student by representing students, providing opportunities and delivering services.

## **2.00 Definitions and Interpretations**

2.01 In this constitution and all other policies and procedures, unless it is stated otherwise:

(1) "Academic Year" refers to the fall/winter Academic year as defined by the Western Academic Calendar;

(2) "Ad-hoc" refers to a temporary committee formed to address a specific issue;

(3) "All-candidates Meeting" refers to the meeting attended by eligible persons for election;

(4) "Council" refers to the members listed under section 5.00 of this constitution;

(5) "Quorum" refers to the presence of at least fifty plus one percent of voting members at any meeting of council;

(6) "Meeting of Council" refers to a meeting that is not the Annual General Meeting, where:

(i) "Annual General Meeting" refers to a meeting of council in which the existing council is dissolved and the most recently elected council is ratified;

(ii) "Duly Called Meeting" refers to a meeting of council called according to the notice provisions as provided for in this constitution in section 7.00;

(iii) "Duly Constituted Meeting" refers to a duly called meeting of council at which quorum is met;

(iv) "Emergency Meeting" refers to a meeting of council that was unanticipated or called unexpectedly;

(7) "Ex-Officio" refers to a member who holds a position by virtue of office;

(8) "Member" refers to a duly elected, acclaimed, or appointed member of the Council, where:

(i) "Voting Member" refers to anyone listed in section 5.06;

(ii) "Non-voting Member" refers to any member not listed in section 5.06;

(9) "Observer" refers to any person in attendance at a duly called or duly constituted meeting who is not a member of council;

(10) "Person" refers to any individual;

(11) "Senator" refers to any undergraduate student member of the Senate or the University of Western Ontario;

(12) “Simple Majority” refers to a vote by more than half of the persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks and absentions;

(13) “SSSC” refers to the Social Science Students’ Council;

(14) “Social Science Student” refers to any person registered as a full-time or part-time undergraduate student in the Faculty of Social Science for either, or both of, the fall or winter terms;

(15) “Member-at-large” refers to a social science student who is not a voting member of Council;

(16) “Two-thirds vote” refers to a vote by at least two-thirds of voting members including blanks and absentions;

(17) “USC” refers to the University Students’ Council;

(18) “UWO” refers to the University of Western Ontario;

(19) “Signing Authority” refers to the discretion to authorize expenditures;

(20) “Speaking Rights” refers to the ability to speak at any meeting of Council.

(21) “All-candidates Meetings” refers to the meeting attended by all eligible persons

2.02 In this constitution and all other policies and procedures:

(1) Words, phrases, or sentences written in singular form include the plural.

(2) Words, phrases, or sentences written in feminine form include the masculine.

### **3.00 Organizational Powers**

3.01 The jurisdiction and powers of the SSSC set forth below have been conferred upon it by the USC.

3.02 The authority of the SSSC shall extend over all undergraduate students registered in the Faculty of Social Science.

### **4.00 Signing Authority**

4.01 Any purchase made by a member with signing authority shall be made with the prior consent of the President.

4.02 Any member with signing authority making a purchase or signing a contract without the prior consent of the President shall be held personally responsible, financially and otherwise, to the scale of the transaction.

4.03 No member may commit to a contract with a term that exceeds the length of their membership on the Council.

## 5.00 Membership

5.01 The Executive shall be composed of five members, of whom the President is elected by Social Science students directly and the remaining Executives are elected by the SSSC at the Annual General Meeting:

- i. President
- ii. Vice-President Finance
- iii. Vice-President Academics
- iv. Vice-President Student Events
- v. Vice-President Communications

5.02 There shall be twenty elected Department Representatives, of which there shall be two from each department within the Faculty of Social Science:

- i. Anthropology
- ii. Economics
- iii. First Nations Studies
- iv. Geography
- v. History
- vi. Management and Organizational Studies
- vii. Political Science
- viii. Psychology
- ix. Sociology
- x. Women's Studies and Feminist Research

5.03 There shall be external representation from the USC, Residence Councils, and the Senate. These members shall be appointed or elected as dictated by the authority of their respective Council.

- i. Ten USC Councillors
- ii. Two Social Science and Information and Media Studies Senators
- iii. First year representatives, one from each of the following constituencies:
  - a. Alumni House
  - b. Delaware Hall
  - c. Elgin Hall
  - d. Essex Hall
  - e. Medway-Sydenham Hall
  - f. Perth Hall
  - g. Saugeen-Maitland Hall
  - h. Off-campus

5.04 There shall be eleven Commissioners whose titles shall be:

- i. Advertising Commissioner
- ii. Charity Commissioner
- Commissioner-at-Large Academic
- iii. Commissioner-at-Large Communications
- iv. Commissioner-at-Large Finance
- v. Commissioner-at-Large President
- vi. Commissioner-at-Large Student Affairs
- vii. Editor-in-Chief of Social News

- viii. Graphic Design/Merchandise Commissioner
- ix. Homecoming Commissioner
- x. Internet Commissioner
- xi. Orientation Commissioner

5.05 There shall be three Administrative Officers whose titles shall be:

- i. Speaker of Council/ Chief Returning Officer
- ii. Deputy Speaker of Council/ Deputy Returning Officer
- iii. Secretary

5.06 Voting Members of the SSSC shall be:

- i. The Executive
- ii. Department Representatives
- iii. External Representatives

### **6.00 Additional Rights**

6.01 Signing Authority shall be distributed only among the Executive and the Orientation Commissioner.

6.02 Signing Authority shall in all cases be held by the President, but any other member of the Executive is eligible to receive it, at the discretion of the President.

6.03 Speaking Rights shall be given to all voting members of council, and they shall have the right to defer such rights to any Member or Observer.

### **7.00 Meetings**

7.01 The SSSC shall meet bi-weekly within the duration of the Academic Year following the first meeting of council, where:

- (1) Members are expected to attend all meetings;
- (2) Members have a right to be informed about meetings at least 48 hours in advance, except for in the case of an emergency meeting which requires 24 hours notice;
- (3) In the event of an expected absence, members must notify the Speaker at least twenty four hours prior to the meeting with appropriate reasoning;
- (4) Members who do not notify the Speaker within this duration will be deemed unjustifiably absent;
- (5) Members are allowed three absences where twenty fours notice was not provided, at which point the individual in question is obligated to meet with the Executive to discuss the impeachment procedure, which the Executive may or may not pursue.

7.02 The most current revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all SSSC meetings.

- 7.03 The Speaker shall dutifully discharge their responsibilities as a neutral and impartial moderator of council meetings.
- 7.04 If the Speaker is unable to attend a meeting, he or she has the additional responsibility of contacting the President and the Deputy Speaker;
- i. In the event that the Deputy Speaker is not able to replace the Speaker, the Speaker is responsible for temporarily training another member of Council.

## **8.00 Elections and Selections**

- 8.01 The purpose and spirit of the election guidelines, which will govern all electoral activity, are as follows:
- i. To ensure fairness and democracy;
  - ii. To provide a manner of balloting that is efficient, effective, impartial and confidential;
  - iii. To allow any student to be a candidate in an election, regardless of financial status;
  - iv. To raise the level of debate surrounding student issues;
  - v. To protect the reputation of the SSSC on campus and elsewhere
- 8.02 The guidelines for eligibility are inspired by the aforementioned principles and are as follows:
- i. Any full-time or part-time Social Science Student registered in a module, or will take a minimum of 2.0 credits in the department they wish to represent is eligible to run as a Department Representative, so long as they remain a Social Science Student during their term in office;
  - ii. The Annual General Meeting can be scheduled no later than fifteen days after the deadline for candidacy declaration.
- 8.03 The electoral process begins with nominations, which will proceed as follows:
- i. Nominations for Vice-President and Department Representative positions shall not be required. Candidates shall advise the Speaker, or her designate, of their candidacy by completing the appropriate declaration of candidacy form available from the Speaker and submitted the form by the close deadline prescribed by the Speaker;
  - ii. All eligible candidates have one week to submit their declaration of candidacy form;
  - iii. The Annual General Meeting can be scheduled no later than 15 days after the deadline for candidacy declaration.
- 8.04 Elections shall be administered in the following manner:

- i. Vice-Presidential and Department Representative elections shall be conducted and supervised by the Speaker of Council/CRO, assisted by the Deputy Speaker of Council/DRO, in consultation with the President of the Council;
- ii. The Speaker of Council or her designate shall:
  - a. Be responsible for holding one All-Candidates Meeting to inform candidates of election guidelines and answer questions from candidates or their proxy;
  - b. Ensure that all materials adhere to the USC Community Standards Policy;
  - c. Be responsible for the composition of the ballot ensuring that only the legal names of the candidates, or a reasonable derivation thereof, appear on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name;
  - d. Provide candidates the opportunity to inspect the ballots;
  - e. Be responsible for the ballot-counting procedure with assistance from a designated scrutiner;
  - f. Issue official election results to candidates, Council and the media

8.05 Campaigning shall be carried out as follows:

- i. The distribution and/or posting of any material designated and/or likely to influence voters shall not take place prior to the designated campaign period;
- ii. Campaign activities shall not impede any member of Council from carrying out his/her designated duties;
- iii. The campaign period shall be set to commence at 12:01am the day after the All-Candidates Meeting and shall end at 11:59pm the day before the AGM ;
- iv. All pre-existing social media sites are permitted to remain operational on the day of the AGM, however, candidates are not permitted to use such sites to advocate on their own behalf, with the exception of non-candidate specific voting encouragement ;
- v. No form of campaigning shall be allowed within the SSSC office except for the distribution of campaign materials to current Council members through mailboxes and the availability of materials for pick-up for incoming voting members of Council;
- vii. Any voting member of Council who does not wish to be personally contacted by phone and/or e-mail may communicate this to the CRO who will inform all candidates of this wish;
- vii. Vice-Presidential candidates shall be given a maximum of five minutes per individual speech, followed by a successive fifteen minute question period, with the option for extensions;
- viii. Department Representatives shall be given a maximum of two minutes per individual speech, followed by a successive ten minute question period, with the option for extensions.

8.06 No candidate may be deprived of investing money into his or her campaign, but all expenditures must comply with the following conditions:

- i. The maximum spending limit for Vice-Presidential candidates shall be fifty Canadian per candidate;
- ii. The maximum spending limit for Department Representatives shall be twenty Canadian per candidate;
- iii. All candidates must submit to the Speaker or the President original receipts of all expenditures by noon, one day prior to the AGM. Failure to submit receipts as required may result in disqualification. Overspending will result in the disqualification of a candidate.

8.07 Elections of Vice-Presidents and Department Representatives shall be by secret paper ballot; where:

- i. Each voting member of the outgoing Council, the President-elect and the incoming USC Councillors shall be entitled to one vote per ballot for any given Vice-President/Department Representative position;
- ii. No member shall cast more than one ballot for each Vice-President or Department Representative position;
- iii. Voting will proceed by a method of preferential voting by a numbered ballot such that:
  - a. In the preferential ballot for each position, each voter must indicate the order in which she prefers all of the candidates by placing a numeral 1 beside her first preference, a numeral 2 beside her second preference, and so on for every possible choice;
  - b. A ballot is considered spoiled unless it indicates a numeral beside each preference;
  - c. When counting, a sum of all numerals will be determined for each candidate, and the candidate with the lowest sum wins the election;
  - d. In the event of a tie, the election shall be resolved in favour of the candidate with the most first place votes, and if still tied, the candidate with the most second place votes, and so on until the election is resolved;
  - e. If the aforementioned process fails to produce a winner, a second vote of Council will be conducted at the earliest possible time, after which a coin toss will be employed to determine the winner if needed.
- iv. The proper voting procedure will be explained prior to the commencement of voting;
- v. Each Vice-President/Department Representative candidate may designate an agent to act as her scrutiner during the counting of the ballots;
- vi. All ballots shall be counted after all voting has concluded;
- vii. Ballots shall be counted in an area designated by the CRO prior to the commencement of the AGM. This area shall be private where booking allows; all ballots will be counted by the CRO or his or her designate. This counting will be observed by the scrutiners.

8.08 Violations and Disqualifies shall proceed as follows:

- i. The CRO or his/her designate shall be responsible for determining if a violation has occurred in accordance with this section;
- ii. A violation is any act which contravenes any policies or expectations upon the candidate as well as any act that fails to comply with the spirit and purpose of this elections code, as determined by the CRO;
- iii. In the event of a violation, the CRO, in consultation with the President, will request a meeting with the accused to discuss the appropriate course of action including suspending campaigning (partially or completely), presenting violations to Council at the AGM, and/or disqualification.

8.09: If at any point a voting-member becomes incapacitated, a By-election shall follow.

8.10 Selections for non-elected positions shall proceed as follows:

- i. Commissioners and Administrative Officers shall be selected by the Executive as well as two members of the Nominating Committee elected by the Nominating Committee;
- ii. The Executive and the two elected members of the Nominating Committee will participate in all interviews;
- iii. Upon completion of the interview process, the Nominating Committee will submit their recommendations to the Executive for the final decision.

8.11 The following are additional details specific to certain positions:

- i. The Presidential elections shall be governed in accordance with the USC's by-laws;
- ii. USC Councillor elections shall be governed in accordance with the USC's by-laws;
- iii. First-Year Representatives shall be elected by their constituency and are subject to the approval of Council;
- iv. Vice-Presidential elections shall take place during the Annual General Meeting of the SSSC in accordance with the procedures outlined in this section;
- v. Department Representative elections shall take place during the Annual General Meeting of the SSSC in accordance with the procedures outlined in this section.

## **9.00 Committees of Council**

9.01 There are eight standing committees of Council, consisting of the following:

- i. Executive Committee;
- ii. Departmental Committee;
- iii. Communications Committee;
- iv. Finance Committee;
- v. Student Affairs Committee;
- vi. Internal Review Committee;
- vii. Levy Fund Committee;

viii. Nominating Committee.

- 9.02 The members may, by a resolution of Council, create or dissolve standing Committees and Ad-hoc Committees to most accurately reflect the needs and objectives of Council.
- 9.03 The composition and procedures of each committee shall be outlined in the SSSC Committee Composition By-law.
- 9.04 Membership in all SSSC Committees shall be ratified by Council no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 9.05 Each SSSC Committee will convene no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 9.06 Each Committee shall report through its chairperson to Council on all matters referred to or otherwise dealt with by the respective Committee.

**10.00 Impeachment and Forfeiture**

- 10.01 Any member of the SSSC provides grounds for impeachment when she fails to fulfill her duties as defined by this constitution and/or its by-laws
- 10.02 Any member of the SSSC who unjustifiably misses any three meetings or office hours will appear before the Executive to justify her absence. The Executive shall decide then whether to initiate the impeachment process or not
- 10.03 The impeachment process takes place in two steps. The first is the initiation of the impeachment process, by which it is resolved that a vote to impeach will come before the Council. The second is the impeachment vote itself, which must go before Council
- 10.04 The member shall be notified in writing no later than twenty-four hours prior to the impeachment vote, and shall be given the opportunity to provide an explanation to Council before the vote is cast
- 10.05 All votes of impeachment, as well as votes to initiate the impeachment process, must be conducted by secret ballot
- 10.06 All votes of impeachment require a two-thirds majority of Council. Such a motion shall be moved only once for each occurrence of each offense
- 10.07 Impeachment of members of the Executive shall proceed as follows:
  - i. The impeachment process of any Executive member must be initiated either by the passing of a motion in Council, or by a resolution from the remaining members of the Executive;
  - ii. In the event of the impeachment of an Executive member, the President is responsible for appointing a replacement for the vacated position. This will be an interim position, lasting until April 1<sup>st</sup>;
  - iii. In the event of the President's impeachment, the VP Finance assumes the responsibilities of the President in the interim in addition to his prior responsibilities as VP Finance, until a two-thirds vote at the next available meeting of council to confirm her as President;

- iv. In the event the VP Finance is not ratified, the VP Finance will remain as interim President until the following meeting of council, where an election will take place as directed by the CRO where any voting-member is eligible to run.

10.08 The impeachment of Departmental Representatives, Commissioners, and Administrative Officers shall proceed as follows:

- i. The impeachment process of a Department Representative, Commissioner, or Administrative Officer must be initiated by a resolution from the Executive;
- ii. In the event of the impeachment of an aforementioned member, the Executive are responsible for appointing a replacement for the vacated position. This will be an interim position, lasting until April 1<sup>st</sup>.

10.09 The impeachment of External Representatives shall proceed as follows:

- i. The impeachment process of an External Representative is initiated upon the removal of the member from their constituent Council, or it may be initiated by a resolution from the Executive;
- ii. In the event of the impeachment of an External Representative, the position shall be filled in accordance with the procedures of their constituent Council.

10.10 Any member who forfeits her position on the SSSC must do so by addressing a signed declaration to the President. The vacated position shall be filled by the same procedure as dictated in the aforementioned impeachment provisions.

### **11.00 Amendments**

11.01 Amendments to this constitution may be made at any general meeting of Council.

11.02 Amendments to this constitution require a two-thirds majority of all voting members of Council present at a meeting-of- Council.

11.03 An affirmative vote of at least ninety percent of all voting members present is required to amend the amending formula.

### **12.00 By-laws**

12.01 The SSSC shall be empowered to establish, amend, and enact by-laws to this constitution that further outline procedures and duties of the Council and its constituent committees.

12.02 Amendments to the by-laws may be passed by a two-thirds majority, following appropriate discussion. Such amendments will take effect immediately upon SSSC approval.