

**Summary of Student Senate  
Organizational Review Process and Constitution Updates  
Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**Prepared by: Student Trustee, Christa Harvey and members of the Student Senate  
Organizational Review Working Group**

**Problem Statement & Charge:** The UNC Student Senate has a history and culture of addressing individual legislative and organizational issues on a case-by-cases basis rather than confronting larger, systematic/structural causes. Specifically, Student Senate spends an inordinate amount of time rectifying issues surrounding lack of bylaw/constitution clarity, election code violations, elected member accountability and a number of other, procedural problems.

**Resolution Process:** In order to address these systematic and structural issues (addressing the illness, not the symptoms) the Student Senate engaged in an organizational review process. Through this process the Student Senate:

- Developed a Student Senate organizational review working group
- Gained an understanding of the Associated Student Government (ASG), Student Government Association (SGA), and Student Senate structures
- Reviewed peer institution student government structures
- Conducted site visits and information gathering meetings with other Colorado student governments
- Discussed and propose a new organizational structure
- Present the new organizational structure to the UNC Board of Trustees
- Will host a Spring 2023 Special Election for the Student Body to vote on the Constitution updates (February 22, 2023)
- Will conduct the regular Spring Election 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> week of April) with the updated and approved Constitution and structure

This document provides a summary of the peer review process, details site visit information/insights gathered from other Colorado institutions and outlines the significant changes the Student Senate made to the organizational structure and Constitution to complete the organizational review process.

**Peer Review Process:**

The members of the Student Senate working group reviewed and assessed different student government models from peer institutions. The group utilized UNC peer institutions identified in 2011 for Colorado Department of Higher Education performance reporting and enrollment planning, as well as those identified in 2006 by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Working group reviews were based on the initial problem and resolution statements from the charge as well as the following inquiry questions:

- Which organizational structures (positions, branches of government, order of succession, eligibility requirements, etc.) would alleviate issues identified in the problem statement?
- Which SGA Constitution sections/headings are missing from the current UNC Student Senate Constitution?
- What are pieces from the current UNC structure (positions, processes, and policies) that should remain in the new structure?
- What SGA Constitution formatting was the easiest to understand and read?

The working group (consisting of the Student Trustee, Student Body President, Parliamentarian, two Senators, and a Graduate Student and Undergraduate Student intern) then developed a pro/con list for each of the ASG, SGA and Student Senate structures and identified the most appropriate organization aspects to be incorporated into the new UNC student government.

#### **Site Visits and Connections with other Institutions:**

- On May 19, 2022, the Student Senate President, Student Trustee and Advisor attended the Colorado Student Government Coalition (CSGC) Summit. During this visit, the Student Senate Advisor met with Student Government Advisors from 12 other institutions of higher education to discuss their student government structures. During this meeting, the Student Senate Advisor gathered government structure information, which was reported back to the President, Trustee, and was utilized for guiding working group homework, research, and discussions
- On July 7, 2022, Student Senate President, Student Trustee and Advisor conducted a site-visit with the members of the Associated Students of Colorado State University (ASCSU) Government and Advisors. At this meeting, the group learned about the Associated Student Government system and how this form of government operates as a 501(c)(3)
- In September of 2022, the Student Senate purchased a membership with the American Student Government Association (ASGA) gain access to Constitution templates, tools, and resources to better inform the SGA portion of the structure review process
- On 10/14/22 a member of the working group and Student Senate Advisor met with representatives from ASCSU and the Utah State University Student Association (USUSA) to gather more clarification on the ASG model and to learn about USUSA's structure. At this meeting, information was gleaned about the larger organizational structures of the ASG and how USUSA operates more like a Student Senate with both an Executive Council and Academic Senate structures

#### **ASG Review:**

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, the ASCSU site-visit information, and the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, the group found that due to the size of government structures within the ASG, the 501(c)(e3) status, and overall complexity of the ASG model, UNC would be better served through a different organizational structure to alleviate the issues outlined in the charge document

#### **Student Senate Review:**

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, the information gathered about the USUSA structures and processes, the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, and the own, internal review of the current UNC Student Senate structure, the group found that the Student Senate would be better served with a different form of government structure to meet the goals outlined in the outlined in the charge document

#### **SGA Review:**

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, working group review of ASGA tutorials, templates, and resources, and the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, the group determined that the SGA structure would be the best model to follow to meet the goals outlined in the outlined in the charge document

## Summary of significant changes and rationale:

### 1. Name and Purpose Updates:

- Change in name from Student Senate to Student Government Association (SGA)
  - i. “Senate” was not a true articulation of the governing structure of process of the organization
- Developed and added a mission statement
- The association is more inclusive and aligns with our mission of being a coalition with all on-campus groups
- Clarified organizational authority deriving from the UNC Board of Trustees
- Identified clearer purpose of the student government organization
  - i. Actively address matters of student affairs and experiences
  - ii. Promote understanding and communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students
  - iii. Work with administration in all matters affecting the welfare of the University of Northern Colorado

### 2. Structure Update: Development of a Three Branch system

- The SGA name is a clear articulation of the actual governing structures (3 branches) of the new organization
- Each of the 3 branches has clearly defined structure, process for filling vacancies, member accountability processes/removal processes, and eligibility standards
  - i. Specific number of credit hours to run for positions
  - ii. Being in good judicial standing at UNC
  - iii. Specific GPA requirements
  - iv. Having served in previous leadership positions on Senate for Executive officers
- The Executive Branch has a more structured form of organization with role clarity
  - i. Specific requirements for office for each Executive member are important for ensuring the roles are managed and fulfilled well
  - ii. Added and retitled positions to further represent a true governing structure
    - 1. Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief of Staff
- The Legislative Branch will have Senators based on year-classification rather than Academic College
  - i. Provides more access for students by updating the number of Senators from 15 to 25
  - ii. Allows for more organizations on campus to have representation and involvement in SGA
- The Judicial Branch has a more clearly defined purpose and more opportunities for students to serve
  - i. More students are eligible to hold Judicial Member positions (expanded from 5 to 10)
  - ii. Will serve to interpret and rule on all questions and grievances pertaining to SGA Constitution and Bylaws

3. Student Trustee role clarification
  - Clarified the Student Trustee serves as a liaison between the SGA and the Board of Trustees rather than an Executive Officer of SGA
  - Further clarifies the exact duties of the Student Trustee and establishes clear expectations of their role during their term
  - Defines clear directives on where to find eligibility requirements to act as the Student Trustee (In Board of Trustees Policy and CO law)
  - Diminishes any confusion about the Trustees' position and expectations
  
4. Order of Succession processes
  - Ensures that in times of crisis that there is a clearly defined path for who replaces whom, who is responsible for hiring, and without causing any further instability to the governmental system

**Articulation of how the structure and Constitution updates provides more representation for the students of UNC.**

1. Readjusts the purpose of the organization:
  - i. Clearly defines the SGA role of supporting/advocating for student welfare and serving as a communication conduit between the students and the administration
2. Adds a non-discrimination policy to our purpose
  - i. We the Student Government Association, uphold the values of our University, do not discriminate on any basis, including but not limited to age, race, gender, religion, non-religion, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin
3. Provides more student access to serve on Student Government
  - i. Creation of the 3 branches and expanded representation
4. Sets clearer expectations about running for and holding positions
  - i. Clarified order of succession, removal from office, eligibility requirements (GPA, previous leadership experience, number of credits to hold various positions, and being in good judicial standing at UNC)
5. Clarifies qualifications for holding office: credit hours, GPA, previous leadership experience
6. Ensures the SGA mission and goals are updated and aligning with UNC initiatives
  - i. Updated Mission and purpose statements were designed with UNC initiatives in mind (providing access, inclusivity, advocate for student needs, representation)
7. Removes confusing, contradictory, and unclear language, policy, and procedure from the previous Constitution

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

**Formally approved by the UNC Student Senate at the Wednesday, January 18, 2023  
Student Senate Meeting**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) Student Government Association serves as the representative body for all students at UNC and its members shall function in an open and available capacity to all members of the campus community. The members of the Student Government Association shall fulfill their obligations to advocate for student rights and interests, encourage student involvement, and promote student wellness while maintaining an open, informed, and responsible relationship with the students, faculty, and staff of UNC.

**ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose**

**SECTION A: Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of the University of Northern Colorado (SGA). It is recognized that the University of Northern Colorado is a state educational institution operating under the authority of the Board of Trustees Policy.

**SECTION B: Purpose of Student Government Association**

1. Actively address matters of student affairs and experiences.
2. Promote understanding and communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Work with administration in all matters affecting the welfare of the University of Northern Colorado.

**SECTION C: Non-Discrimination Policy**

We the Student Government Association, uphold the values of our University, do not discriminate on any basis, including but not limited to age, race, gender, religion, non-religion, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin.

**ARTICLE II: Executive Branch**

**SECTION A: Executives**

1. The Executive Officers of the Student Government Association shall be chosen by the direct vote of the student body no later than the last full week of April and will begin a full-year term the following August 1<sup>st</sup>

2. The time between the certification of the elections and May 15th shall be used as a transitional period, during which the Officers-elect shall work with the current Executive Officers to create a smoother transition.

#### SECTION B: Elected Executive Officers

There shall be elected from among the students of UNC, the following Student Government Association Executive Officers: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Parliamentarian, and Treasurer.

#### SECTION C: Executive Officer Qualifications

1. The President must have completed forty (40) semester hours, thirty (30) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a committee chair or executive officer for one semester in good standing.

2. The Vice President must have completed thirty (30) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.

3. The Recording Secretary must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.

4. The Treasurer must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.

5. The Parliamentarian must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.

6. Any additional executive officers must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, Twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of UNC. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.

7. To be qualified as an executive officer, in addition to all other specified requirements, a student must have and maintain an institutional grade point average of 2.75 or higher. If an officer's GPA falls below that requirement, he or she shall be automatically removed from office at the end of the current academic semester.

8. Good judicial standing with the university shall be a requirement for all students running for executive offices. Furthermore, if any executive officer should fall into poor judicial standing with the university they shall be subject to a mandatory hearing with the Student Judicial Board. The Judicial Board will then have the authority to remove any executive officer whom the justices deem unfit to hold office due to their judicial standing by way of a simple majority vote.

#### SECTION D: Cabinet Positions

1. The President or President-Elect of the Student Government Association shall have the power to create executive cabinet positions that shall be charged with the operation and management of executive tasks and programs.

2. The President or President-Elect shall propose the creation of new cabinet positions to the Senate for confirmation with a simple majority vote.

3. The President or President-Elect shall appoint any full-time student in good academic standing that they sees fit to fill a created position and shall also retain the power to remove a student from a position at any time for any reason.

4. A cabinet position, created by the President and confirmed by the Senate, shall expire at the end of each academic year; the executive branch must re-create each cabinet position each year if the President-Elect desires to retain staff operations in a recurring manner.

5. The Senate shall have the power to review a cabinet position at any time, and upon a (2/3) vote may eliminate a cabinet position.

#### 6. Additional Cabinet Positions

- The Director of Student Affairs shall be appointed by the newly elected Student Government Association President, no later than 30 days after the spring election, and be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority approval of the current Senate.
- The Chief of Staff shall be appointed by the newly elected Student Government Association President, no later than 30 days after the spring election, and be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority approval of the current Senate.
- The Election Commissioner shall be appointed by the newly elected Student Government Association President, no later than 30 days after the spring election, and be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority approval of the current Senate.

#### SECTION E: Succession to the Executive Office

1. In the event of a President's inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, the Vice-President of the Student Government Association shall become President. If the Vice-President does not meet the qualifications of President the succession will go down the line in the following order of succession to the Presidential Office: Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Chief of Staff.

2. In the event of a Vice-President's inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, or filling the position of President, the Recording Secretary shall serve the remainder of the term.

3. In the event of the Recording Secretary, Treasurer, or Chief of Staff is the inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, a qualified replacement shall be chosen among the Senate members, by the Student Government Association President and shall be approved by two thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate, to serve the remainder of the term.

### **ARTICLE III: Legislative Branch**

#### **SECTION A:**

The Legislative Officers of the student body shall be chosen by the direct vote of the student body by the first thirty (30) days of the fall semester and will begin their one-year Senate term upon taking the "Oath of Office" as a senator.

#### **SECTION B: Membership**

1. The membership of the Senate shall be apportioned by class status
2. There shall be five (5) Senators from each of the following classes: 1<sup>st</sup> year, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior
3. Classification shall be determined by the number of credit hours earned at the time of the senate election.
4. In addition, there shall be five (5) at-large Senators, with one (1) position designated for each college, that shall be open to any qualified candidate regardless of class rank.

#### **SECTION C: Qualifications**

1. Any enrolled student at UNC with a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher, and in good academic standing, shall be eligible to run for election or be appointed to the Senate. If a senator's GPA falls below the requirement, he or she shall be automatically removed from office at the end of the current academic semester.
2. If any Senator should fall into poor conduct standing with the university, they shall be subject to a mandatory hearing with the Student Judicial Board. The Judicial Board will have the authority to remove any senator whom the justices deem unfit to hold office, due to their judicial standing, by way of a simple majority vote.

## SECTION D: Organization

1. The Vice President of the Student Government Association shall preside as President of the Senate.
2. The Recording Secretary of the Student Government Association shall serve as the Clerk of the Senate. In the absence of the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer shall serve as the Clerk of the Senate.
3. The Senate shall follow Robert's Rules of Order in all instances where the Constitution and By-Laws do not apply.

## SECTION E: Quorum

The Senate must have a quorum to conduct business. Quorum is defined as having a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of all Senators in attendance, excluding Senators with excused absences.

## SECTION F: Legislation

1. Bills – A bill is defined as legislation that is a request for funding from the Student Government Association by an approved Recognized Student Organization. No bill shall be passed unless it is by the Senate. The Senate shall adopt no bill until all affected individuals or organizations have had at least one (1) week to be heard. All bills must be referred to the Appropriations Committee in either their original or amended form for a minimum of one week before a vote may be taken.
2. Resolutions – All other legislation is defined as a resolution. No resolution shall pass unless it is by the Senate.
3. Before enactment, all legislation must be:
  - a) Read before the Senate.
  - b) Entered into the minutes.
  - c) Passed by a Senate majority vote.
  - d) Signed by the Student Government Association President.
4. All legislation that passes through the Senate must then be presented to the Student Government Association President. The President has the authority to:
  - a) The President can approve the legislation by signing it.
  - b) The President can return it with objections in the form of a line-item veto.

c) The President can veto the entire bill or resolution and return it to the Senate within two (2) weeks after presentation through the Recording Secretary of the Senate.

5. Every resolution, having been enacted by the Senate and approved by the Student Government Association President shall be submitted to the President of UNC.

6. Senate Action of vetoes:

a) Legislation vetoed by the Student Government Association President can be overridden by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Senators.

b) Line-item vetoes by the Student Government Association President can be overridden by a two-thirds (2/3) majority votes of Senators

#### SECTION G: Succession of Senators

If the seat of a Senator is vacated by resignation, academic probation, recall election, non-enrollment at UNC, or otherwise, the Student Government Association President will receive a slate of candidates from the remaining Senators within that classification and, from this list, shall appoint a new Senator. The newly elected/appointed Senator shall take office during the next regularly scheduled Student Government Association meeting, after taking the “Oath of Office.”

#### SECTION H: Senator Absence Policy

1. If a senator has accumulated 3 unexcused absences from scheduled meetings and/or events, the senator shall be removed from office.

2. Mandatory meetings include regular meetings of the Senate and a particular senator’s scheduled committee meetings, both standing and ad-hoc committees.

3. Additionally, committee chairs may make events directly associated with their committee mandatory for the members of their committee.

4. Any senator may propose an event to be mandatory for the Senate at large; however, the said proposition must pass a simple majority roll call vote of the Senate.

5. Senators may be excused from mandatory events, or regular meetings of the Senate, provided they contact the Clerk of the Senate and present a valid excuse for their absence at least 24 hours in advance.

6. Senators wishing to be excused from committee meetings, or events made mandatory by their committee chair, must appeal to their respective committee chair for an excused absence.

## **ARTICLE IV: Student Trustee**

The Powers of the Student Trustee shall be vested within the UNC Board of Trustee Bylaws and the Student Government Association Constitution. The position of Student Trustee shall be elected through the annual SGA Elections and shall report to the Board of Trustees as expected in their position description.

### **SECTION A: Responsibilities of the Student Trustee**

1. Report to the Student Government Association Senate and Executive Board weekly and as the calendar permits.
2. Report to the SGA within two (2) weeks following each Board of Trustees meeting if the calendar permits.
3. Serve of the UNC Board of Trustees, attend the Board of Trustees meetings, and report to the Student Government Association.
4. Meet as necessary with the President of the University and Chief of Staff (or equivalent position) and report to the Student Government Association.
5. Meet monthly with the University President and report to the Student Government Association.
6. Meet monthly with the President of the Student Government Association
7. Be responsible for presenting the views of the UNC student body to the Board of Trustees.
8. Be responsible for presenting the views of the UNC student body to other state colleges, universities, legislators, and other elected officials as deemed necessary.
9. Take office on July 1 after elections and remain in office until June thirtieth of the following year. If the predecessor trustee graduates or leaves the institution before July 1, the succeeding trustee will take office upon the date the predecessor separates from the University.
10. The Student Trustee is not permitted to serve a role in the SGA.

## **ARTICLE V: Judicial Board**

### **SECTION A:**

The Student Judicial Board is responsible for hearing cases through an educational peer review process. The process, which ensures fundamental fairness and appropriate sanctions determines student accountability pertaining to the SGA Constitution and Bylaws.

## SECTION B: Composition of the Judicial Board

1. The Judicial Board shall consist of five (5) student members and one (1) faculty/staff advisor.
2. The SGA President shall select a chair responsible for conducting pre-hearings, hearing, and any task necessary for the operation of the Judicial Board.
3. The Judicial Board chair shall be a full-time student, in good standing, and shall not be a seated member of the Judicial Board, a seated Senator, or an SGA executive.
4. The SGA President shall appoint all student positions comprising the Judicial Board.

## SECTION C:

Judicial Board members shall be students of UNC in good academic standing and disciplinary standing when they are appointed and during their term in office. They must have a grade point average of 2.50 or higher and be in good academic standing. Judicial Board members shall serve one calendar year from the time they are appointed in the fall semester of each academic year.

## SECTION D:

The Judicial Board Chair shall present a slate of candidates to the Student Government Association President who shall appoint ten (10) student members. Since the Student Judicial Board exists primarily to provide an educational peer review process, at least six (6) of the student members must be students at the main campus.

## SECTION E: Jurisdiction

1. The Judicial Board shall interpret all policies of the Student Government Association and have original jurisdiction in any cases concerning Student Government Association policies, laws, impeachment hearings, and activities, including elections.
2. The Judicial Board will also handle disputes concerning approved Recognized Student Organizations.

## **ARTICLE VI: Advisor**

### SECTION A:

There shall be at least one professional staff member employed by UNC to work with the Student Government Association in the role of Advisor

### SECTION B: Selection

The Advisor shall be selected by the UNC Administration in consultation with the members of the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association

#### SECTION C: Qualifications

The qualifications for the Advisor shall be determined by the UNC Administration in consultation with the members of the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association

#### SECTION D: Advisor Responsibilities

1. Assisting in and advisory capacity in the day-to-day operations of the Student Government Association
2. Attending and participating as an active advisor at all Student Government Association regularly scheduled meetings
3. Acting as an administrative liaison between the Student Government Association and the UNC Administration

### **ARTICLE VII: Compliance and Approval**

#### SECTION A: Amendments

Amendments to the Student Government Association Constitution must be approved by the UNC Board of Trustees and ratified by a majority vote of the student body in either a regular or special election.

#### SECTION B: Access to information

In order to ensure open and responsible information sharing, Student Government Association documents (not dealing with student grievances, personnel, or legal items) shall be open and available to the public, pursuant to the Colorado Open Records Act.