

Policy 7.15 Student Government and University Student Senate

1 Eligibility for The University Student Senate

In accordance with its policy making authority and responsibilities, the University Trustees have determined that satisfactory academic achievement and progress as a degree-seeking student at a college of the University is an essential prerequisite to holding and adequately fulfilling the responsibilities of student office.

It is the responsibility of the University, and its Trustees as fiduciaries, to insure that the educational and extracurricular programs of the University are operated in the best interests of students and all other affected constituencies of the University. The academic standards hereby adopted are considered essential for the personal well-being and academic progress of students who seek to take on the additional responsibility of student leadership, as well as for the students and other members of the University community.

The following guidelines apply to each semester a student is running for and/or holding office, whether by election, appointment, or ex-officio status, in student governments, the University Student Senate and other bodies. The positions subject to these guidelines are the members (senators, representatives, delegates, etc.) and officers of student governments, members of faculty-student disciplinary committees, members of the governing boards of college associations and auxiliary enterprise boards, members of allocating bodies of student activity fees, members of college governance bodies including college councils and senates, editors of student publications and officers and directors of radio and television stations, members of student elections review committees, members of personnel and search committees, members and alternate members of Board committees, and the chair, vice-chairs, the delegates, the alternates, and any other officers established by the University Student Senate. In these guidelines, credit hours refer to actual credit hours, and not equivalent or contact hours.

- a) Students must be matriculated in a degree or credit-bearing certificate program at the college in which they serve or which they represent.
 - (i) Full-time undergraduate students must carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.
 - (ii) Part-time undergraduate students must carry a minimum of 6 credit hours.
 - (iii) Graduate students must carry a minimum of 3 credit hours.
 - (iv) In order to serve each semester, a student must have completed and earned passing grades in at least 50% of the credits for which they registered the prior semester, but in no event less than 3 credits.
 - (v) Full-time doctoral students at Levels II or III shall be making satisfactory progress and shall not be subject to subdivisions c and d hereof.
- b) Undergraduate students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and be in good standing to participate in student government, the University Student Senate and the other student leadership positions covered by these guidelines. Chief executive

officers and the Chairperson of the University Student Senate must have a minimum GPA of 2.5. Colleges may continue to administer or adopt higher academic standards for service in their campus student government and the other student leadership positions covered by these Guidelines. As of the fall 2016 semester, any new adoption of higher standards must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the student government or a simple majority of the student body in a referendum, subject to approval by the Chancellor.

- c) Transfer students shall have the right to be a candidate in elections for student leadership, student government and for delegate positions of the University Student Senate as long as they meet the minimum G.P.A requirement for the position.
- d) Undergraduate students may not serve in any one of the following student leadership positions: as officers of student government, as members of the governing boards of college associations and auxiliary enterprise boards, as members of allocating bodies of student activity fees, as members of college governance bodies including college councils and senates, and editors of student publications and officers and directors of radio and television stations for more than a total of five years, to include no more than three years at community colleges. Students shall be permitted to serve in the same executive office in a student government.
- e) Graduate students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Law School students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5. Graduate students or Law students may not serve in student government and/or any other student leadership positions covered by these Guidelines for more than a total of five years. Graduate/Law students shall be permitted to serve in the same executive office in a student government, the University Student Senate or other student leadership position for a maximum of two years, except that Co-chairs of the Doctoral Student Council shall be limited to a maximum of three years.
- f) Students may not serve in leadership positions at two or more CUNY institutions simultaneously but may hold a campus and USS position at the same time.
- g) Any student who applies/petitions to graduate prior to the start of the Fall semester is ineligible to run for a leadership position in the Spring elections unless that student has been accepted into a graduate program at the same college or it is determined that the student will not have fulfilled the graduation requirements.
- h) In order to participate in the University Student Senate, on Board committees, campus student governments or serve in the other student leadership positions covered by these Guidelines students must be certified as being in compliance with these Guidelines by the college president, or his/her designee, to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

2 Scheduling of Elections

Regular student government elections shall be held at each of the colleges beginning no earlier than 15 March, and ending no later than 30 April.

The newly elected student government(s), where such is the practice, shall elect delegates and alternate delegates to the USS no later than 10 August, if possible, from the elected members of the student government. Where delegates and alternate delegates are directly elected by their student bodies, such elections shall be held in conjunction with regular student government elections. The newly elected USS delegates and alternate delegates shall have a term of office that begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August and does not hold over after the expiration of their terms of office.

The college presidents shall certify the newly elected delegates and alternate delegates to the USS to the Vice Chancellor for Student Development, with respect to procedures and eligibility criteria, no later than ten days after the election.

Elections of officers of the USS shall be held in October, at least ten days prior to the scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees, for a term of office commencing on the day of the scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees. Officers of the USS are elected for terms of office ending on the day preceding the subsequent scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees, and do not hold over after the expiration of their terms of office. In the event there is no scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees, elections for officers shall be held at least ten days prior to the fourth Monday in October, for a term of office commencing on the fourth Monday in October.

Each community college and senior college without a graduate division shall have two delegates to the University Student Senate, one a day session student and one an evening session student. Each senior college with a graduate division shall have three delegates to the USS, one a day session student, one an evening session student, and one a graduate student. The Graduate School, the Law School, the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, and the Graduate School of Journalism shall each have one delegate. If a college, for governance purposes, does not distinguish between day and evening students, it shall instead have two undergraduate student delegates.

Each college shall also elect alternate delegates for each allowed delegate. An alternate delegate may vote in the USS and count towards a quorum only when the specific delegate for whom the person is an alternate is absent. Where a college has two undergraduate delegates, a first alternate and a second alternate delegate shall be elected, to vote and count towards a quorum in that order in case one or both undergraduate delegates are not present.

All officers of the USS must be elected by the delegates. Only delegates and alternate delegates may run for and be elected to an office of the USS. If a delegate or alternate delegate has been elected as an officer of the USS and subsequently resigns or otherwise ceases to be a delegate or alternate delegate, the student will simultaneously forfeit his or her office in the USS, with the exception of the transitional period at the end of the one-year term of office from 1 September until the day of the scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees provided that the student meets all other eligibility criteria.

A quorum of the USS shall be one more than one half of the number of delegates that have been certified by the college presidents to the Vice Chancellor for Student Development. Only certified delegates, or certified alternate delegates when applicable, may vote at USS meetings.

The election of officers of the USS shall be managed by a non-partisan agency or organization, such as the League of Women Voters or the Honest Ballot Association, approved by the Vice Chancellor for Student Development. The selection of the Parliamentarian for the elections shall be effected by the University Student Senate after consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Student Development. The cost will be assumed by the USS and, in the event that the USS does not have sufficient funds, will be paid for by the administration.

In the event the office of Chair of the University Student Senate is vacated, another officer shall become interim Chair to serve until a new chair is elected by the delegates. The order of succession among the Vice Chairs of the USS shall be:

- a) Legislative affairs
- b) Graduate affairs
- c) Senior college affairs
- d) Community college affairs
- e) Evening and part-time student affairs
- f) International student affairs
- g) Disabled student affairs
- h) Fiscal affairs

Such succession shall occur only to the office of interim chair. The interim chair shall serve as chair for a period not to exceed forty-five calendar days or the unexpired portion of the term, whichever is shorter. At the end of the forty-five-day period, if the USS has failed to elect a chair, the Office of the Chair shall be vacant until it is filled by a vote of the student body. The eligibility of the interim chair shall be subject to the certification of the Vice Chancellor for Student Development.

In the event a student who is an officer of the USS graduates at the end of a semester, the student may continue to hold office until 1 February for the fall semester, or 1 September for the spring semester, following which date, the office shall be deemed vacated unless the student has enrolled in another degree program at the University prior to the applicable date. In addition, a student who is Chair and graduates at the end of the spring semester, or thereafter but prior to the scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees, may continue to hold the office of Chair until the completion of the term of office ending on the day preceding the October meeting of the Board of Trustees, even if the Chair does not enroll in another degree program at the University for the fall semester.

3 Absences

3.1 Excused Absences

An excused absence shall be an absence from any regularly scheduled USS meeting, for which the delegate or alternate delegate has filed five days advance written notification with the USS Chair and the chief student affairs officer of the affected college demonstrating good cause for not attending. In the case of a delegate, he or she must also notify the alternate delegate that he or she will not be attending the meeting. In the event of an emergency absence that precludes five days advance written notification, written or oral notification shall be given to the USS Chair as soon as possible, and application for an excused absence based upon emergency circumstances may be made to the Steering Committee.

3.2 Unexcused Absences

Delegates and alternate delegates to the USS from each college student body division may be removed by a majority vote of the USS for three consecutive unexcused absences at regularly scheduled USS meetings at the third such meeting, subject to review and certification by the Vice Chancellor for Student Development. If a quorum is not present at the regular USS meeting of the third consecutive unexcused absence, then removal may be by an affirmative vote of a majority of the full Steering Committee. Following each unexcused absence of both the delegate and alternate delegate for a student body division of a college, the delegate, alternate delegate, and the chief student affairs officer of the affected college shall be notified by the Chair of the USS, by regular mail, that the applicable student body division was not represented at the USS meeting and that three unexcused absences of the delegate or the alternate delegate may result in their removal. Where there are two undergraduate delegates from a college, this provision shall apply when there are unexcused absences for one or both of the undergraduate seats, by the notification of those delegates and alternate delegates who have unexcused absences and the chief student affairs officer of the affected college. The determination to remove a delegate may be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Student Development within fifteen days of mailing of the determination by certified mail. The removal of a delegate pursuant to this provision shall be effective upon the expiration of the time to appeal to the Vice Chancellor for Student Development or the denial of such an appeal. A delegate or alternate delegate who is removed pursuant to this provision shall be ineligible to serve as a delegate or alternate delegate for a period of one year following the effective date of removal.

4 University Student Senate Elections Review Committee

There shall be a USS Elections Review Committee with responsibility for reviewing and certifying the results of elections for officers of the USS, in accordance with election procedures approved by the USS Elections Review Committee and the USS. Students may file appeals with the University Student Senate Elections Review Committee. The Committee shall adopt campaign rules, after considering the recommendations of the University Student Senate.

The Committee will consist of five members:

- a) Two administrators appointed by the Chancellor
- b) One faculty member elected by the University Faculty Senate
- c) Two students elected by the USS, at least one of whom is a student government president who is not a member of the USS

The members of the Committee shall serve a term of one year. The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chancellor. The Committee shall issue rules on its procedures, and the filing and review of appeals.

5 Budget and Expenditures

The following Policy on Budget and Expenditure Procedures for the USS was approved

The fiscal year of the USS shall be from 1 January through 31 December.

Beginning with the fiscal year commencing on 1 January 1991, the budget for each fiscal year shall be adopted during the preceding month of December by the newly elected USS, which has taken office during the preceding September. At least ten days prior to the adoption of the budget in December, a budget hearing shall be held to which all delegates and student government presidents are invited to attend and speak. A notice of the budget hearing, including a copy of the proposed budget submitted by the newly elected chair of the USS, shall be circulated in advance of the budget hearing.

Modifications of the adopted budget may be made by the Steering Committee of the USS, under the following conditions:

- a) The Steering Committee may only make modifications within sixty days of the last meeting of the USS at which a quorum was present, except following the May meeting during which modifications may be made within one hundred and twenty days.
- b) Modifications shall be limited to a maximum increase or decrease of a budget line by twenty-five percent up to a maximum of \$4,000 between meetings of the USS at which a quorum is present.
- c) Modifications made by the Steering Committee shall be reported at the next meeting of the USS, and to the extent monies have not already been expended, the modifications shall also be subject to approval at the next meeting of the USS.
- d) The Steering Committee consists of at least seven officers of the USS directly elected by the USS. In the event of a vacancy in an office, the outgoing officer shall have the right to make an appointment of a qualified interim officer, until a successor is elected by the USS. The designation of an interim successor shall be in writing to the Chair of the USS, shall be made no later than thirty days after the vacancy occurs, and shall be subject to certification of eligibility by the Vice-Chancellor for Student Development.

- e) A quorum of the Steering Committee shall consist of at least a majority of the seats on the Steering Committee. This requirement will prevail regardless of whether or not all seats are filled.

In the absence of a budget approved by the USS by 1 January of each fiscal year, the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs and Special Programs shall authorize expenditures of a continuing nature for rent, utilities, essential staff, and other fixed overhead, and continuing contractual commitments.

The budget adopted by the USS shall, at a minimum, contain the line items set forth in this policy. Within the budget, staff salaries and student officer stipends shall be specifically lined out.

The appointment of personnel shall be subject to the approval of the full USS. Such personnel may serve based upon appointment of the Chair pending the next meeting of the full USS at which a quorum is present. Personnel shall not be appointed for a period extending beyond the following 1 November in order to permit the Chair taking office on the day of the October Board of Trustees meeting to recommend his or her own staff appointments.

Contractual commitments extending beyond the fiscal year of the USS shall require the approval of the full USS. The annual cost of all such commitments (e.g. space and car rentals, leases, etc.) shall not exceed fifteen percent of the USS budget.

Within the budget adopted by the USS, the Chair of the USS shall be able to make expenditures. The Vice-Chair for Fiscal Affairs of the USS, or his or her designee, shall make an itemized written report on expenditures and encumbrances to all the members of the USS on a monthly basis. Nothing herein, however, should be construed as limiting the amount of detail with which the USS may adopt a budget.

Within the budget adopted by the USS, expenditures over \$3,000 shall require the specific approval of the Steering Committee. This requirement for Steering Committee approval shall apply to each item or service purchased, and to each individual traveling.

5.1 University Student Senate Budget Categories

The following are the budget categories for the University Student Senate:

- a) Advertising
- b) Albany Office Rent
- c) Audit
- d) Auto Expenses
- e) Books/Subscriptions
- f) College Work Study
- g) Committee Activities
- h) Conferences
- i) Consultants
- j) Equipment Rental

- k) Equipment Repair and Maintenance
- l) Facilities Repair and Maintenance
- m) Fringe Benefits
- n) Furniture and Equipment
- o) Gasoline
- p) Meeting Expenses
- q) Memberships
- r) Newspaper
- s) Office Supplies
- t) Personnel
- u) Postage and Shipping
- v) Printing
- w) Research Foundation Overhead
- x) Stipends
- y) Telephone
- z) Travel
- aa) Utilities (Albany)

(Board of Trustees Minutes,1986,03-24,7,A; Board of Trustees Minutes,1987,01-26,7,A; Board of Trustees Minutes,1987,03-30,8,B; Board of Trustees Minutes,1990,03-26,7,A. Amended: Board of Trustees Minutes,1992,06-22,6,Y; Board of Trustees Minutes,1993,06-28,9,C; Board of Trustees Minutes,1993,11-22,7,B; Board of Trustees Minutes,1994,06-27,7,C; Board of Trustees Minutes, 1996,09-30,6,A; Board of Trustees Minutes,1998,10-26,8,A; Board of Trustees Minutes,2001,06-25,8,E; Board of Trustees Minutes,2003,05-27,9,B; Board of Trustees Minutes,2003,06-23,7,A; Board of Trustees Minutes,2005,06-27,8,B; Board of Trustees Minutes,2006,06-26,8,B; Board of Trustees Minutes, 2016,06-27,8)