

Student Activities Council

U N I V E R S I T Y o f P E N N S Y L V A N I A

Constitution

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Student Activities Council of the University of Pennsylvania, affirming our responsibility to the student body, and realizing we have in common certain problems unique within the campus community, hereby establish these by-laws for the purpose of recognizing, supervising, and funding undergraduate activities and to provide for greater communication and cooperation among activities and between the activities and the University administration.

ARTICLE I. Membership

SECTION A.

The Student Activities Council will be composed of one representative of every recognized activity. One representative and two alternate representatives shall be registered in September with the Executive Committee and changes can be made at any time prior to a Council meeting by making appropriate additions or changes on the Student Organization Registration Form kept on file and posted on the website of the Office of Student Life. Each activity must have one representative and two alternates registered with the Executive Committee at all times. The Student Activities Council recommends that the treasurers or business managers of organizations serve as their organization's SAC representative.

SECTION B.

In the event that a person is the board member for more than one SAC recognized organization:

1. one of the organizations may assign another board member to be the SAC representative for the year.
2. the organizations may choose to allow their common representative to represent both groups, though he or she will only have one vote in the Council.

ARTICLE II. Recognition of Activities

SECTION A.

Recognition shall be of two types. Comprehensive recognition shall entitle an activity to membership on the Council, funding eligibility and all other advantages granted to Student Activities Council (SAC) recognized student groups. Restricted recognition shall entitle an activity to membership on the Council and other advantages granted to SAC recognized student groups but will prohibit the submission of an annual budget for annual operating activity. Groups holding restricted recognition may submit contingency requests per Article V, Section C for events which meet the criteria of the SAC Funding Policies and Guidelines. Recognition status of a group may be changed by the Executive Committee if that need arises.

SECTION B.

Any activity may be recognized if a need for the existence of that activity within the entire Penn community can be shown and a fulfillment of that need by that activity can be demonstrated to the Executive Committee.

SECTION C.

Any group wishing recognition by the Council shall submit a written request to the Executive Committee at least one week in advance of the meeting at which it wishes to be interviewed for recognition. In addition, representatives of the group shall submit all appropriate paperwork to the Executive Committee for the interview. The Executive Committee shall decide on the recognition of groups. Minutes of the Committee's meetings on recognition shall be made publicly available in the Office of Student Life. Each newly recognized group should briefly introduce itself to the Council at the next meeting. All negative recognition decisions by the Executive Committee will be reviewed by the Council.

SECTION D.

A change in the constitution including statement of purpose or in membership criteria of any given activity must be reported to the Executive Committee. If deemed a significant change by the Executive Committee, it must be reevaluated by the Executive Committee.

SECTION E.

A change in the statement of purpose or in membership criteria of any given activity must be reported to the Executive Committee. If this is a significant change, the organization may be subject to reevaluation by the Executive Committee.

SECTION F.

All officers must be registered, full-time undergraduate students of the University of Pennsylvania. The only exception for officers shall be part-time undergraduate students in their last academic semester. The majority of members must be full-time undergraduates.

SECTION G.

Each activity must register with the Office of Student Life by the end of September to maintain its status as a recognized activity. Registration shall include submitting a list of officers.

SECTION H.

Challenges can be made to the recognized status of any activity at any time. Loss of recognition is contingent upon 2/3 vote of the Council.

ARTICLE III. The Executive Committee

SECTION A.

The Executive Committee will be comprised of eight undergraduate student representative members of Council organizations and the UA Treasurer. These representatives shall be elected at the October and February SAC meetings, four at each. The new Executive Committee shall assume office before the next general body meeting. The Executive Committee shall elect from its membership a Chairperson by majority vote (see Executive Committee by-laws). The Treasurer of the Undergraduate Assembly shall be a fully voting member of the Committee. The UA Chair shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Committee. No member of the Executive Committee may concurrently serve as any group's SAC Representative. The Chair of the Executive Committee will vote at general body meetings only in the event of a tie. At no other time will any member of the Executive Committee vote at a general body meeting.

SECTION B.

To be eligible for election to the Executive Committee one must:

1. have been an officer in a SAC-recognized organization since the first day of classes of that Fall semester
2. have been an undergraduate at Penn for at least two semesters (including the semester ending that December)
3. not be scheduled to graduate or study abroad less than one year from the date of election.

SECTION C.

The slate of names for the four elected positions in each election will be prepared from nominations from the floor and/or from nominations accepted in advance. Elections to the Executive Committee will be run by the Nomination and Elections Committee.

SECTION D

Should any vacancy occur, the position will be filled by a majority vote on nominations from the floor at the next meeting of the Council.

SECTION E.

The nine members of the Executive Committee should be equipped to discuss any issues or problems initiated by any member activity. The Executive Committee:

1. shall make recommendations resolving scheduling conflicts
2. shall prepare and publish meeting agenda, as well as publish the reports of its committees and shall announce meetings of the Council and Committee.
3. shall review all budget and contingency requests and make recommendations to the Student Activities Council on those requests.

SECTION F.

Executive Committee shall have the authority to act for the Council. The Executive Committee also has the authority to establish standing committees as deemed necessary. The Council has the right to reverse a decision of the Executive Committee with a majority vote.

SECTION G.

The Executive Committee shall continually explore and investigate the current use of funds, ways to use funds more efficiently, ways to better use existing facilities and ways to encourage financial cooperation between activities. The Committee shall bring to the attention of the Council any inconsistencies that they discover. The Executive Committee shall conduct investigations and hearings on the budgets of all activities. The Committee shall compose the budget form and is responsible for submitting a recommendation figure for a contingency fund.

SECTION H.

Members of the Executive Committee may be recalled by the Council with a 2/3 vote.

ARTICLE IV. Meetings

SECTION A.

A meeting shall be called when the Executive Committee so rules or when 25% of the registered representatives present a petition to the Executive Committee of the Council specifying the agenda for that meeting. The Executive Committee shall then call a meeting within the next (5) school days. The Executive Committee shall give at least 48 hours notice prior to that meeting.

SECTION B.

A quorum shall consist of 50% of the registered activities.

SECTION C.

The meetings of the Student Activities Council will be chaired by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

SECTION D.

All roll-call votes shall be tabulated by activity and permanently retained by the Executive Committee.

SECTION E.

By missing 2 meetings per academic year, an activity loses recognition. The activity must then follow again the procedures for recognition. Upon re-recognition, the activity's SAC grant will be cut by 10% for that year. After one meeting, the activity shall be notified by the Executive Committee of the consequences of having missed the meeting.

SECTION F.

A voting member shall be defined as a Student Activities Council representative who is present at the meeting and is not abstaining from the vote. Therefore:

1. an affirmative majority vote is a vote requiring more than 50% of the voting members
2. an affirmative 2/3 vote is a vote requiring 67% of the voting members.

SECTION G.

A motion may only be brought on to the floor by a voting Student Activities Council representative and seconded by a voting Student Activities Council representative. Motions will be attended to in the order in which they are proposed.

SECTION H.

If a representative arrives between 1 and 30 minutes after the start of a Council meeting, he or she will be marked "late." If a representative is late to any meeting in an academic year, the representative's activity will incur one half absence. If the representative arrives 30 minutes or more after the start of the meeting, the representative will be considered absent. By missing any two meetings, or the equivalent of two absences, in an academic year, the representative's activity loses recognition. If an organization's primary SAC representative is unable to attend a Council meeting then any other officer in their organization may serve as a substitute SAC representative for that meeting. No organization may be represented by a substitute SAC representative at more than two meetings of any academic year.

SECTION I.

An activity must send two representatives to the annual Drug and Alcohol Resource Training (DART). An absence by one individual will be equivalent to a half-absence at a meeting of the Council.

SECTION J.

Meetings shall be run in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V. Allocation of Funds

SECTION A.

All allocations to activities must be approved by the Student Activities Council or by the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Council. Activities desiring financial support shall first submit complete budgets and allocation requests to the Executive Committee. All budgets shall be available for review by any student through the Office of Student Life.

SECTION B.

1. Annual budgets must be submitted by all activities requesting funds for the following year on a timetable established by the Executive Committee.
2. The Executive Committee will conduct hearings and review all allocation requests.
3. After reviewing the budgets, the Executive Committee will:
 - a. file marked copies of each activity's budget and issue a "Brief," which provides an explanation of any changes and reasons for them.
 - b. for appeals to the Executive Committee upon the written request of the concerned activities.
4. The Executive Committee must publish and make available a summary report of the budget allocations to all activities.

SECTION C.

A special meeting of the Student Activities Council will be held during the second semester of each year to review and act upon the annual allocation requests submitted by the member activities.

1. The Student Activities Council shall first consider the Executive Committee recommendation concerning the contingency fund figure and shall determine the final amount of the contingency fund. A minimum of 15% of the estimated funds available for activities will be held in the contingency fund until the following September. A minimum of 7 1/2% of total funds available for activities must be held in the contingency fund until the following January. The Executive Committee shall establish a fund for the purpose of budgetary appeals at the annual allocations meeting.
 - a. The Contingency Fund shall be used to allocate money:
 - 1) to new activities;
 - 2) to activities not funded under normal allocation procedures;
 - 3) for additional allocation requests from existing activities.Special attention should be given to requests for activities that involve more than two SAC groups, especially when those groups rarely interact.
 - b. The process for receiving allocations from the Contingency Fund will be the same as above in Section B, with the exception that after 2 contingency requests for the same budgetary item by an organization, a motion to cut off consideration of further contingency requests for the same budgetary item by the organization shall be a privilege motion, and shall require a majority vote.
 - c. Acting in the capacity of an Executive Committee, the entire Student Activities Council will then hear appeals of dissatisfied budget applicants.
 - i. The order of appeals will be determined by the alphabetical order of recognized activities on the Council roll beginning with one randomly selected letter of the alphabet. The appeal will require an affirmative majority vote of the Council.
 - ii. . The discussion of an appeal shall begin with presentation of the Executive Committee brief and with the points with which the activity concerned takes exception.
 - iii. The appeal roll-call shall continue cyclically until no further responses are heard to the roll-call or until the annual allocations reserve fund is exhausted.
 - iv. All appeals on annual budgets must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee by a date established by the Executive Committee.
2. The Student Activities Council will next consider challenges to the Executive Committee recommendations.
 - a. Challenges will be heard in the order determined by the alphabet lottery.
 - b. Debate and rebuttal time will be provided to the challenge.

- c. A vote may be taken on a new budget figure arising from the challenge (the challenger may suggest an alternative figure).
 - d. Any newly approved budget figure will then achieve the status of a Executive Committee recommendation and may consequently be subjected to further challenge.
 - e. The challenge roll-call shall continue cyclically until no further responses are heard to the roll-call.
3. Upon completion of all appeals and challenges, the activities' allocations will be considered approved by Council. If the total of all allocations approved by the Council exceeds the estimate of funds available, a percentage reduction will be made in all activities allocations in order to coordinate the two figures.

ARTICLE VI. Usage of Funds

SECTION A.

All activities receiving funds from the Student Activities Council must maintain all funds and income within the University accounting system. Deviations from this system must be approved by the Student Activities Council.

SECTION B.

All activities must maintain their own financial records subject to audit by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VII. Powers of the Council

SECTION A.

1. The Executive Committee is empowered to mediate intragroup disputes as well as to review and investigate any organization that it deems to be in violation of its own rules and regulations or those of the Council. When necessary, a binding decision will be made by a majority vote of the Council.
2. The results of failure to comply with the decision may be, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. loss of funds
 - b. loss of recognition

SECTION B.

All powers not delegated to a component of the Student Activities Council are reserved to the Student Activities Council.

ARTICLE VIII. Amendments to the Constitution

SECTION A.

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by a petition of 15% of the representatives of the Student Activities Council to the Executive Committee or by the Executive Committee itself.

SECTION B.

Such proposals must be ratified by a 2/3 majority of the Student Activities Council.

SECTION C.

All amendments shall be voted on at the next meeting of the Student Activities Council.

ARTICLE IX. By-Laws

SECTION A.

By-laws are the rules adopted by this organization for the governance of its members and or the regulation of its affairs.

SECTION B.

By-laws to the Constitution may be proposed by a petition of at least 15% of the representatives of the Student Activities Council to the Executive Committee or by the Executive Committee itself.

SECTION C.

Such proposals must be ratified by an affirmative 2/3 vote of the Student Activities Council.

SECTION D.

Proposed by-laws shall be voted on at the next meeting.

SECTION E.

SAC Funding Policies and By-Laws For Activities Council Recognition are both to be considered by-laws of the Student Activities Council. SAC Guidelines for Funding are not by-laws - they are neither binding on the Executive Committee nor on the body.