ACADEMIC RESEARCH GRANT
BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE: The purpose of these By-Laws is to provide structures and procedures to implement the Associated Student Constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME & PURPOSE

Section 1 The name shall be the AS Academic Research Grant Selection Board (herein referred to as the Board).

Section 2 The primary purpose of the Board is to provide funds to subsidize USD undergraduate academic research.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership shall consist of:

A. The AS Director of Academics

B. Four faculty reviewers – one AS advisor from the Student Affairs Department and three faculty/professors from the departments with the highest number of proposals submitted the previous academic year as non-voting members of the Board.

C. The Honor Council will make up the voting portion of the Board. The appointed members must represent departmental majors not represented by the AS Director of Academics.

   a. Membership shall remain confidential and members must not divulge their participation on the Board. The only two members who may be known publicly are the AS Director of Academics and the AS advisor from the Student Affairs Department.

   b. Any and all concerns and conflicts must be directed to the AS Director of Academics who, at his/her discretion, may consult the AS advisor from the Student Affairs Department.
ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Section 1 The AS Director of Academics shall:

A. Serve as chairperson of the Board.

B. Serve as the presiding officer at all meetings of the Board.

C. Serve as the AS Senate representative of the Board.

D. Act as the official liaison between the AS Research Grant Selection Board and all USD students, faculty, staff, and administration.

E. Manage and implement the AS Research Grant Program each semester, including the following:
   
a. In this capacity, he/she may make decisions that reflect the best interests of the grant applicants, the Associated Student Body, and/or the AS Research Grant Selection Board at times when it is unfeasible or inappropriate for the Board to convene over the specific issue(s).

b. Amend any and all materials related to the AS Research Grant program.

c. Decide deadlines related to the AS Research Grant Program.

d. Make decisions and organize any and all processes and procedures that relate to any component of the AS Research Grant Program.

e. Revoke a grant award on behalf of the Board if the AS Director of Academics has evidence that the procedures, guidelines, principles, and/or stipulations of the AS Research Grant Program were violated in some manner.

F. Act as the official representative to the AS Finance Committee in the Fall and Spring semesters to advocate and help determine the specific amount allotted for the AS Research Grant Program in the AS Annual Budget.
Section 2  The Chair Pro Tem shall:

A. Preside over the Board in the absence of the AS Director of Academics and shall act for the chairperson in times of temporary incapacity.

B. Assist the AS Director of Academics in preparation, coordination, and planning during the Academic Research Grant process as deemed necessary by the AS Director of Academics.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1  Meetings of the Board shall take place within two weeks of the application deadline.

Section 2  The Board shall, as many times as needed each semester, meet in order to distribute the AS funds for research grants. The allocation of funds will also depend on the Board’s decision of whether to implement a semester-based or annual-based budget.

Section 3  The Board shall meet otherwise, as deemed necessary by the chairperson or the AS Student Senate.

Section 4  Board meetings are considered closed meetings and will only be open to the members of the Board.

Section 5  The Board may, at its discretion, hold open meetings subject to a two-thirds vote.

Section 6  Non-voting members of the Board, except the chair may miss meetings due to prior commitments.

ARTICLE V. BOARD ACTION

Section 1  Unless otherwise provided herein, action by the Board may be taken only at a meeting where a quorum is present (as stated in Article VI, Section 1).

ARTICLE VI. QUORUM & VOTING

Section 1  Two-thirds (2/3) of the Boards’ membership shall constitute a quorum.
Section 2  A simple majority shall constitute voting procedures of the Board (each member casting one (1) vote unless otherwise obtaining a valid proxy).

A. A valid proxy is determined by the AS Director of Academics.

B. Only in the event of a tie will the chair be able to cast a vote.

ARTICLE VII. QUALIFICATIONS & PROCEDURES

Section 1  All applicants must be currently enrolled undergraduate USD students in good academic standing with the University.

Section 2  All applications must be received by the established deadline set by the AS Director of Academics.

Section 3  A complete AS application form must include: applicant information, project title and goals, brief abstract, timeline, amount requested, budget details, and at least one letter of support from a faculty advisor.

A. All applicants will be required to acknowledge that they have read and fully understood the research grant bylaws and FAQs. In the event that a student makes an acknowledge under false pretenses, any awarded grant in the future for that academic year may be considered subject to null and void.

Section 4  The application should reflect an independent undergraduate research project. Whether or not funds will be allocated towards course-assigned projects is a decision to be made by the members of the Board.

Section 5  Applications submitted by the stated deadlines of the Board shall be considered on an equal basis. Depending upon the availability of remaining funds, all applications received thereafter shall be considered in the order in which they were submitted.

Section 6  Applications will be first reviewed by non-voting faculty/professors to determine the merit of the proposal. The reviews will then be submitted to the AS Director of Academics to be forwarded to the voting members of the Board.

Section 7  Upon presentation of reviews to the voting members of the Board, the initial decision to fund or not fund the proposal will be made
by a simple majority vote. If the project gets voted to receive funding, the proposer’s budget will be analyzed, adjusted accordingly and confirmed by simple majority vote.

Section 8  Upon the acceptance of a research grant, the researcher must submit an updated report throughout the completion of the project to the AS Director of Academics (format, length of the report, and the number of times to be submitted is to be decided by the AS Director of Academics and/or the Board).

Section 9  At the completion of the research project, a copy of the completed project must be submitted and becomes the official property of the AS.

A. All items purchased under the AS Research Grant Program are official property of the AS.

B. Specific allocation of items purchased under the AS Research Grant Program is outlined in the Materials Tracking Agreement, subject to AS Senate approval.

Section 10  The Board reserves the right to deny any project even if said project conforms to the rules as stated. After the Board has made its determination and in its absence, the AS Director of Academics may revoke a grant award under the conditions outlined in Article III, Section 1, Sub-section E, Title e.

Section 11  The Board reserves the right to revoke the grant upon proof of mishandling of the project. In the absence of the Board and with evidence, the AS Director of Academics may revoke a grant award under the conditions outlined in Article III, Section 1, Sub-section E, Title e.

ARTICLE VIII.  FUNDING

Section 1  Disbursement of grant money shall, upon the approval of the Board, be arranged through the AS Director of Academics and the AS Finance Chair.

Section 2  Grants shall be used for purchasing needed materials. All materials purchased with research grant monies shall be remain property of the Associated Students. Upon the discretion of the AS Director of Academics and the AS Senate, materials may be on temporary or permanent loan to the University of San Diego or the student.
researcher pending the submission of a complete and approved Materials Tracking Agreement.

Section 3  
When requests for grants exceed the funds available, the following criteria shall be followed in selecting grant recipients.

A. Written application: Quality of presentation. A solid overview stating the relationship between the objective(s) of the research, the process by which the student will test his/her hypothesis to arrive at the aforementioned objective, and the relationship of the materials requested to such research.

   a. The application must be submitted by the deadline set by the AS Director of Academics

   b. The application must contain all of the elements required by the AS Director of Academics.

B. Nature of research: Whether the projects constitutes “academic research” and whether the project is consistent with the goals of the University of San Diego and of the AS Research Grant Program.

C. Advisor letter of recommendation: The Faculty/Staff Advisor to the project may corroborate or speak to the merits of the applicant and/or to the nature and quality of the research being performed. The letter shall serve as a secondary source of information and shall not be used as a primary evaluation criterion.

   a. If deemed necessary by the Board, the project’s Advisor may be consulted only under extenuating circumstances and when it is deemed necessary by a simple majority (51%) of the Board.

   b. The letter of recommendation is to be turned in or mailed in via sealed envelope with valid signature by the Faculty/Staff Advisor of the project.

D. Evaluation Terms

   a. The number and amount of grants previously awarded within individual major departments shall be considered in the awarding of grants
b. The number and amount of grants previously awarded to individual recipients shall be considered in the awarding of subsequent grants.

c. The principal factor in awarding grants shall be the Boards’ assessment of the quality of the research project.

Section 4

Year-long grants shall be awarded in the fall and shall be deducted from the fall budget. Only under extenuating circumstances and subject to the approval of the AS Finance Committee, shall these terms change.

A. The deadlines for year-long applicants are determined by the AS Director of Academics and are usually set in the spring semester.

B. Year-long grant recipients may not reapply for funds in the following semester of the same academic year.

ARTICLE IX. APPEALS PROCESS

Section 1

Research grant applicants may appeal an unfavorable ruling only under extenuating circumstances and if he/she can prove the Board made its decision in a manner that is inconsistent with its charge, as it was previously outlined in these By-Laws.

Section 2

All appeals must be made to the AS Student Senate within one (1) week of receiving the notification letter and must be filed with both the AS President and the AS Director of Academics by the aforementioned deadline.

Section 3

The appeals process will commence in the following order:

A. The AS President shall place the appeal on the agenda of next meeting of the AS Student Senate after ensuring the criteria stated in Article IX, Section 2 is met.

B. The AS Director of Academics shall introduce the appeal and explain the appeals process to the AS Senate before the appeal presentation is made. The AS Director of Academics may not give his/her personal opinion until after the appeal presentation is made.
C. The appellant will state the grounds and rationale for his/her appeal to the entire body of the AS Senate. The time allotted for the appellant’s presentation is up to the discretion of the AS President.

a. If there are multiple members of the group, they must choose a delegate to make the presentation. Only one member may present. The faculty advisor may not present on behalf of the student group.

b. The positions of the remaining members and/or faculty advisor may be shared in written form and must be submitted to the AS President immediately following the appellant’s presentation.

D. After the appellant’s presentation, the appellant must leave the AS Senate chamber, after which the AS Director of Academics is allowed to make a counter-argument on behalf of the whole Board. The time allotted for the AS Director of Academics’ presentation is up to the discretion of the AS President.

E. The AS Senate will then vote on 1) Whether to uphold or deny the appeal and 2) If the appeal is upheld, the specific amount of the appeal award.

a. The AS Senate must have a quorum in order to vote.

b. If a quorum is not present, the appellant may be asked to present, again, at a subsequent meeting.

F. The AS President will draft a formal letter to the appellant stating the AS Senate’s ruling and, if the AS President chooses, the AS Senate’s rationale. The ruling of the AS Senate is final and may not be appealed.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

Section 1 These By-Laws may be amended in the following way:

A. Any member of the Board or the AS Senate who is entitled to full participation in its activities may at any regular meeting of the Board or Senate, submit a proposed amendment.

B. The Board or Senate must approve the proposed amendment no sooner than the next scheduled meeting.
C. Board or Senate Recording Secretary must then keep the proposed amendments posted publicly for a period of five (5) days.

D. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of this Board or Senate shall be necessary for the adoption of any amendment to these By-Laws.

E. Final approval of an adopted amendment lies with the AS Senate.

ARTICLE XI. RATIFICATION PROCEDURES

Section 1 The By-Laws shall be submitted by the AS Director of Academics to the AS Vice President yearly for administrative approval.

Section 2 Final ratification of these By-Laws will be effected by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the AS Senate.

REVISED January 18, 2011