

USD SOLES-GSA BYLAWS



**SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION SCIENCES (SOLES)**

**SOLES GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SGSA)**

**BYLAWS**

---

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the School of Leadership and Education Sciences Graduate Student Association (SGSA), hereinafter referred to as the SOLES Graduate Student Association or SGSA.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The mission of the SGSA is to support the development of a professional, scholastic, and social community in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES).

Scholarship and professional development will be promoted by the following:

- Increasing awareness of, and participation in, professional associations, conferences, certifications, and workshops
- Providing a vehicle for student input into programs and policies
- Partnering with administration to improve connections with alumni

Cooperative community building will be promoted by the following:

- Sponsoring social events
- Acting as liaison between students, faculty, and administration
- Providing information to students
- Advocating for student representation in program planning, staff/faculty hiring, and in the USD graduate community
- Offering networking opportunities as a means to form connections among students and between students and faculty

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

### 3.1 Eligibility

All registered full-time or part-time graduate students in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, who have paid the requisite student fees, are members of the SGSA. Faculty members and alumni are eligible for honorary membership.

### 3.2 Membership Classes

There are two (2) classes of members: active and honorary.

- a. Active Members are eligible to vote.
- b. Honorary Members are not eligible to vote.

Active members are registered graduate students with all other members (faculty and alumni) being honorary members.

### 3.3 Voting Rights

Each active member of the SGSA shall be entitled to one (1) vote on matters submitted by the members to the SGSA Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) for a decision by the entire graduate student body. Each active member is entitled to one (1) vote in the Council election process and one (1) vote in any SOLES referendums.

### 3.4 Membership Termination

The Council, by the affirmative vote of the majority of all Council Officers, may suspend or expel a member from SGSA for cause after an appropriate hearing.

- a. Said hearing shall be held no earlier than fifteen (15) days after the member is mailed written notice of the Council's intention.
- b. The hearing committee shall comprise the SGSA Advisor, President, and two (2) appointed SGSA members.

## ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

### 4.1 Composition

The Council shall comprise eleven (11) SOLES graduate students elected by the SGSA student body categorized into eleven (11) Officer positions:

- President
- Financial Director
- Communications Director
- Special Events Director
- Counseling Program Officer
- Leadership Program Officer
- Learning & Teaching Program Officer
- Marital & Family Therapy Program Officer
- Doctoral Officer
- Graduate Student Council Officer
- First Year Program Officer

The Council's roles are as follows:

- a. Fulfill the mission and goals of the SGSA
- b. Implement plans determined by the Council
- c. Encourage communication at all levels of the SGSA

### 4.2 Term

The term of position of a Council Officer shall be for one (1) year.

### 4.3 Executive Committee

The President and the three directors compose the SGSA Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee's roles are as follows:

- a. Manage the affairs of the SGSA. The Executive Committee shall have all powers and authority to execute the affairs of the SGSA.
- b. Adopt rules and regulations as it may deem proper for the economy, progress, and success of the SGSA provided they do not conflict with the bylaws.

#### 4.4 Duties of Officers

The Council shall adopt policies necessary for the efficient operation of the SGSA. Such policies will have the same force and effect of these by-laws and will be adhered to accordingly. SGSA policies may be amended or waived at any regular Council meeting by a majority vote of the Officers present. Policies will be written and signed by the Executive Committee. A Council Officer shall perform the duties of office, including duties as a member of any Council committee on which she may serve, in good faith, in a manner such member believes to be in the best interests of this association, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, as an ordinarily prudent person in a like situation would use under similar circumstances.

**President.** The President is the leader of the Council and is responsible to:

- a. See that the Council Officers carry out all functions effectively and efficiently
- b. Call all Council meetings and set agendas for meetings in consultation with Council Officers
- c. Carry out Council legislation, policies, bylaws, regulations, and resolutions
- d. Coordinate Council activities
- e. Represent the Council at official functions and public occasions
- f. Ensure the development of Council goals, priorities, and policies
- g. Conduct financial transactions in the absence of the Financial Director
- h. Have such additional powers and duties as provided herein, or as from time to time may be conferred upon or assigned by the Council.

**Financial Director.** The Financial Director shall:

- a. Keep the financial books belonging to the SGSA including keeping full and accurate account of all receipts and disbursement
- b. Be responsible for the deposit of all funds, securities, and other valuable effects in such depositories as the Council may designate for that purpose
- c. Disburse SGSA funds, as may be ordered by the Council, taking proper receipts for such disbursements
- d. Sign all checks, drafts, and orders for payments
- e. Prepare the annual budget to be presented to the Council for approval
- f. Render a report of all financial transactions whenever requested by the President or the Council
- g. Be responsible for SGSA merchandise
- h. Have such additional powers and duties as provided herein, or as from time to time may be conferred upon or assigned by the Council.

**Communications Director.** The Communications Director shall be responsible for facilitating communication with students, including:

- a. Coordinate the Communications Committee
- b. Publish a monthly newsletter, e-newsletter, and regular announcements
- c. Maintain SGSA bulletin boards
- d. Maintain and update SGSA Web site

- e. Maintain and keep SGSA records
- f. Assist the President with Council meeting responsibilities
- g. Exercise the powers and be charged with the duties of President in the extended absence or inability of the latter, or when a vacancy in the President position exists
- h. Have such additional powers and duties as are provided herein, or as from time to time may be conferred upon or may be assigned by the Council.

**Special Events Director.** The Special Events Director shall be responsible for directing and coordinating student and special events, including:

- a. Organize the monthly social events
- b. Coordinate the Orientation and Commencement Committee
- c. Chair the Social Committee or appoint a chair in consultation with SGSA Executive Committee
- d. Have such additional powers and duties as are provided herein, or as from time to time may be conferred upon or assigned by the Council.

**Program Officers.** The seven (7) Program Officers each shall:

- a. Report on the activities, proceedings, and policies of the SGSA to students in their respective programs
- b. Gather and represent student views and assist in the coordination of student participation
- c. Serve on at least one SGSA committee
- d. Undertake such other responsibilities as may be delegated to them by the SGSA Executive Committee, including participation on a University or SOLES committee as approved by the Executive Committee

**GSC Councilor SOLES Representative.** Any regular member of the GSC may be elected to the position of Councilor. Each graduate school is entitled to a minimum of one (1) Councilor, and a maximum of two (2) Councilors at any meeting of the GSC. Thus, the SGSA GSC Representative and another appointed SGSA Officer (typically the President) constitute as Councilors on the Graduate Student Council.

#### 4.5 Vacancies

The Council shall appoint an Officer within thirty (30) days of the first day of the SOLES Academic year to fill any Council vacancy. If after 30 days no one has been appointed, an interested member can be selected by a committee that will include all executive members and program representatives that are available.

#### 4.6 Vacancies in the Executive Committee

Executive Committee vacancies, anticipated or otherwise, however caused, shall be announced at a Council meeting. The program Officers shall announce the vacancy to their constituents. At the following months Council meeting, any active SOLES-GSA

members may state their interest in the vacant Executive Committee position(s). After presentation by all interested parties, the Council shall elect a member to fill the vacancy(ies). In the event there are no interested parties, the vacancy(ies) shall be filled at the next annual election and until such time, all rights, duties, and obligations attached to the vacant office(s) shall be divided among the remaining Executive Committee members.

#### **4.7 Removal**

Any Council Officer who fails to perform the duties of office, or whose conduct is deemed prejudicial, may be removed from position by 2/3 vote of the Council membership. Prior to such removal, the President shall counsel the Officer. An Officer shall be given an opportunity to produce, before the Council, evidence to refute such charges.

#### **4.8 Non-Performance**

Any Council Officer absent from two (2) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, or three (3) meetings within one (1) year, shall be counseled by the President and may be asked to resign from the Council unless, in the opinion of the President and the Council, such absences are permissible. The President will counsel Officers that are not fulfilling the obligations and opportunities of their positions. Committee Chairs will counsel committee members that are not fulfilling their obligations.

#### **4.9 Council Honoraria**

Although the SGSA is a service organization that relies on volunteers, honorariums shall be awarded in recognition of active participants who will have carried out the work of the association for one year. Each member of the Executive Committee (the President and the three Directors) will receive \$400. The Program Officers will each be awarded \$200. If more than one person fills a position, the compensation shall be shared equally. The total amount of compensation will not exceed the amount of SGSA funds available. Disbursements will be made in two installments. The first installment will be half of the total honorarium and will be made by December 15<sup>th</sup>. The second installment will be the remaining amount and will be made by May 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition, honorariums shall be disclosed during Spring Elections and during the recruitment of any positions that need to be filled throughout the year.

#### **4.10 Council Volunteer of the Year Award**

This award was created to reward a SGSA Council volunteer (appointed or elected) who goes “above & beyond” assigned duties. All SGSA active members are eligible for the award, including Council Program Officers but excluding Executive Committee members. The amount of this award can be up to \$200 for the year and may be divided between two awardees. The Executive Committee, by consensus, shall determine if the

award will be distributed and to whom. The award will be distributed at the Annual Spring Social Event.

## **ARTICLE V. MEETINGS**

### **5.1 Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings for the conduct of business shall be held bi-monthly at a time and place agreed upon by the Council.

### **5.2 Special Meetings**

The President may call special meetings at any time or by a consensus of the Council by means of at least ten (10) days advance notice to each Council Officer of the time, place, and purpose thereof.

### **5.3 Quorum**

A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum. Decisions made by the Council shall be binding for the SGSA.

### **5.4 Unexcused Absences**

Any Council Officer missing more than two (2) meetings without reasonable excuse will be counseled by the President and may be dismissed from the Council.

## ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

### 6.1 Standing Committees

Committee chairs shall appoint members of their committees. The council shall determine necessary standing committees that might include the following:

- Executive
- Communication
- Nominating
- Orientation and Commencement
- Social

### 6.2 Special Committees

The Council may appoint special committees as needed for specific tasks; these committees shall be dissolved upon completion of said tasks.

### 6.3 Nominating Committee

There shall be appointed by the President, a Chief Electoral Officer as Coordinator of the Nominating Committee. The Chief Electoral Officer shall not be a candidate running for a position on SGSA. The President appoints the Nominating Committee at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Election of the SGSA. This committee prepares a slate of nominees containing (if possible) two (2) nominees for each vacancy to be filled, listing the qualifications of each. The slate is distributed to the membership at least ten (10) days prior to the election meeting. This committee shall ascertain the eligibility of all nominees as well as advise potential officers of the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications.

### 6.4 Duties of Committees

Committee members plan and implement the decisions of the SGSA Council. Committee members must be members in good standing and may be honorary or voting members. Committee members make recommendations and proposals to the Graduate Student Council. In creating student ownership of SGSA programs, committees are essential in giving students voice and input into the decisions of the Council.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTORAL PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 Number of Members and Term of Office**

The Council consists of eleven (11) members. The term of membership is one (1) year. The number of elected program officers may also change as SOLES expands.

### **7.2 Balloting Procedures For the Council**

An election for the Council shall be called annually or upon the termination of an Executive Officer. Nominees for Executive Officer positions do not necessarily have to be nominees for a Program Officer's position although a nominee is not precluded from running and being elected in both positions. In such circumstances the Officer has but a single vote and would count as a single person towards quorum. Such elections shall be presided over by the Chief Electoral Officer.

### **7.3 Method of Balloting**

- a. Two (2) weeks prior to spring break, nomination applications will be available and distributed to all SGSA members.
- b. Nominations will close at the end of the two-week period.
- c. At close of nominations, candidates will have an opportunity to begin campaigning and submit election ballots.
- d. The election will close at 5 p.m. on the second Friday following spring break.
- e. The appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer shall be announced at least five (5) weeks prior to an election date.
- i. The Chief Electoral Officer shall conduct the nomination procedures as prescribed herein.

### **7.4 Election Procedures**

- a. Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.
- b. Voting instructions shall be enclosed.
- c. One ballot shall be put in the mailbox of each active member of the SGSA.
- d. All nomination forms and ballots shall be the property of the Council.
- e. A member shall vote for one nominee per office.
- f. Ballot forms shall indicate the following: the vacant executive office, the full name; the signature; the return campus mailing address of the Chief Electoral Officer.
- g. Ballots shall designate clearly the nominee of the voter's choice in order to be counted.

## **7.5 Chief Electoral Officer**

The Chief Electoral Officer shall accept returns until 6 p.m. of the election date. The Chief Electoral Officer shall announce prior to the election date the time and place of the counting of the returns, which shall be subsequent to 6 p.m. of the election date. A Nominee shall have the right to appoint one auditor who may be present during the counting of the returns.

## **7.6 Re-Counting**

In the presence of any scrutinizer, the Chief Electoral Officer shall conduct the counting of the ballots and shall determine valid and invalid ballots. As soon as they are known, the results shall be announced by the Chief Electoral Officer to the incumbent Executive Officers, to the Nominees, and to the Council.

In the event of any tie there shall be a run-off election within four (4) days of the original election date. The election results shall be announced to the membership of the SGSA within one (1) week. The ballots shall be counted by the Chief Electoral Officer and shall be retained for a period of forty-eight (48) hours after which period of time they shall be destroyed. The results of the election shall be communicated to the members of the SGSA by any means so designated from time to time by the Council.

- a. A simple majority shall determine the results.
- b. Each Nominee has the right for one recount.

## **7.7 Replacing Council Members**

When a Program Officer's position on the Council needs to be filled prior to annual elections:

- a. All graduate students must be given an equal opportunity to fill the position.
- b. If more than one person is interested in the position, a democratic process is followed in filling the position.
- c. The current Program Officer should begin advertising that the position needs to be filled. The advertisement should include the date when the position will be open and the deadline for nominations.

## ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES

### 8.1 Disposition of Funds

The Executive Committee may authorize on behalf of SGSA any contribution, gift, loan, or any other disposition of funds for SGSA authorized purposes. Any expenditure over \$250 needs the signature approval of the SOLES Advisor. Any disbursement of funds in excess of \$1000 for any reason will require approval of the President and two other Executive Committee members. The SGSA Advisor will be notified of all expenditures exceeding \$250 in writing or by electronic mail.

### 8.2 Gifts

The Executive Committee may accept on behalf of the SGSA any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for any SGSA purpose.

### 8.3 Loans

This association shall not make any loan of money or property to or guarantee the obligation of any director, officer, or member.

### 8.4 Self-Dealing Transactions

The Council shall not approve a self-dealing transaction. A self-dealing transaction is one in which the association is a party and in which one or more members of the Council have a material financial interest.

### 8.5 Equipment and Supplies

No Council Officer shall retain for personal use any supplies or equipment obtained by and for use by the SGSA. Council Officers may receive merchandise under certain circumstances as approved by the Executive Committee. Association merchandise shall be kept under lock and key as to prevent loss. All SGSA equipment and supplies shall be transferred to the new SGSA administration on July 1 of each year.

## ARTICLE IX. INDEMNIFICATION

### 9.1 Indemnification

For purposes of this provision, “agent” means any person who is or was a director, officer, volunteer, or other agent of this association, or is or was serving at the request of this association as a chair, director, officer, volunteer, or agent; “proceeding” means any threatened, pending, or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative; and “expenses” includes without limitation attorney’s fees and any expenses of establishing a right to indemnification under these Bylaws. To the extent that an agent is found liable for a claim, judgment, or award, based upon his or her authorized action on behalf of the association, the SOLES Graduate Student Association, also known as the SGSA agrees to indemnify agent for any and all expenses reasonably incurred in said proceedings. If such person either settles any such claim or sustains a judgment against him or her, then indemnification against expenses, judgments, fines, settlements, and other amounts reasonably incurred in connection with such proceedings shall be provided by this student association, to the extent allowed by law.

## ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

### 10.1 Amendments of Bylaws

These articles and bylaws may be amended or repealed or new bylaws may be adopted by a vote of the majority of the officers of the Executive Committee in consultation with the SGSA Advisor, except in the case of increasing honorariums. These bylaws supersede all prior bylaws or constitutions and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or repealed as provided in this section.

### 10.2 Copies of Bylaws

Copies of bylaws will be available in the SGSA office, Assistant Dean’s office, and by request to the President.