

SOLES Graduate Student Association Bylaws
Approved January 29, 2026

ARTICLE I. NAME	2
ARTICLE II. PURPOSE	2
ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP	3
3.1 Eligibility	3
3.2 Voting Rights	3
3.3 Membership Termination	3
ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS	3
4.1 Composition	3
4.2 Term	4
4.3 Executive Committee	4
4.4 Duties of Officers	4
President	5
Communications Director	5
Financial Director	5
Special Events Director	6
Program Representatives	6
4.5 Vacancies in the Council	7
4.6 Vacancies in the Executive Committee	7
4.7 Removal	7
4.8 Non-Performance	7
4.9 Council Honoraria	8
ARTICLE V. MEETINGS	8
5.1 Regular Meetings	8
5.2 Special Meetings	8
5.3 Committee Meetings	8
5.4 Quorum	8
5.5 Unexcused Absences	9
ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES	9
6.1 Standing Committees	9
6.2 Special Committees	9
6.3 Duties of Committees	9
ARTICLE VII. ELECTORAL PROCEDURES	10
7.1 Number of Members and Term of Office	10

7.2 Elections Procedures	10
7.3 Replacing Council Members	11
ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES	11
8.1 Budget	11
8.2 Committee Budgets	11
8.3 Dispensation of Funds	12
8.4 Equipment and Supplies	12
ARTICLE IX. INDEMNIFICATION	12
9.1 Indemnification	12
ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS	12
10.1 Amendments of Bylaws	12
10.2 Copies of Bylaws	13

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:

- A. Increasing awareness of, and participation in, professional associations, conferences, certifications, and workshops;
- B. Engaging students in program and policy decision-making;
- C. Partnering with administration to improve connections with alumni;
- D. Providing grants (dedicating at least 20% of the cumulative budget) in awards to support students' professional development and research opportunities.

A collaborative community will be promoted through the following:

- A. Sponsoring social events;
- B. Acting as liaison between students, faculty, and administration;
- C. Providing relevant information to students;
- D. Advocating for student representation in program planning, staff/faculty hiring, and in the USD graduate community;
- E. Offering networking opportunities as a means to foster connections among students

- and between students and faculty;
- F. Taking up initiatives and a stance on topics that are salient and important to SOLES students' education and experience;
- G. Representing and advocating for the student voice in university administrative policy;
- H. Providing opportunities for community outreach, philanthropy, and/or service learning.

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 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 and reflective of the SOLES student body voice. Each active member is entitled to one (1) vote in the Council election process and one (1) vote in any SOLES referendums.

3.3 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 notified 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 eight (8) SOLES graduate students elected by the SGSA student body categorized into eight (8) Officer positions:

- A. President
- B. Financial Director
- C. Communication Director
- D. Special Events Director
- E. Counseling and Marital and Family Therapy Representative

- F. Leadership Studies Representative
- G. Learning & Teaching Representative
- H. Doctoral Representative

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, participation, and involvement at all levels of the SGSA activities and SOLES community;
- D. Work to foster community and collaboration across other graduate student programs;
- E. Actively represent the SOLES student voice.

4.2 Term

The term of position of a Council Officer shall be for one (1) academic 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 reserves the right to oversee the affairs of the SGSA;
- B. Establish rules and regulations deemed necessary for the efficient operation, progress, and success of the SGSA, provided they do not conflict with the bylaws.

4.4 Duties of Officers

A Council Officer shall perform the duties of their office, including any responsibilities as a member of Council committee(s) on which they serve, in good faith and in a manner the officer reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the association, exercising the care, including reasonable inquiry, that an ordinarily prudent person would use under similar circumstances.

In addition, each officer will hold responsibility to ensure accurate reporting on the activities, proceedings, and policies of the Council and SOLES community to the Graduate Student Government (GSG). Per the GSG Bylaw's Section IV.I, it reads "Each graduate school is entitled to a minimum of one (1) Councilor, and a maximum of three (3) Councilors at any meeting of the GSG." Each Councilor can vote. The Council must have at least one officer present at each meeting to represent the SOLES graduate student voice.

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 in alignment with SGSA's mission;
- G. Ensures the representation and participation of the Council within Graduate Student Government (GSG);
- H. Conduct financial transactions in the absence of the Financial Director;
- I. Perform additional duties and exercise such powers as provided herein or as assigned by the Council.

Communications Director

The Communications Director shall be responsible for facilitating communication with students and USD Community will:

- A. Collaborate with committees to assist in communication and advertising efforts;
- B. Collaborate with SGSA Advisor for design and distribution of SOLES Scoop to SOLES student body.;
- C. Create and distribute advertisements for SGSA events, both hard and electronic copies;
- D. Maintain and update SGSA website, social media platforms, and email account.;
- E. Maintain and keep SGSA meeting 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 President, or when a vacancy in the presidency exists;
- H. Be eligible to represent SGSA at Graduate Student Government (GSG) meetings upon request;
- I. Perform additional duties and exercise such powers as provided herein or as assigned by the Council.

Financial Director

The Financial Director shall be responsible for all SGSA finances and will:

- A. Maintain the financial records of the SGSA, including keeping full and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements;
- B. Coordinate with Senior Coordinator, Personnel and Finances to deposit all funds, securities, and other valuables.

- C. Disburse SGSA funds, as may be ordered by the Council, taking proper receipts for such disbursements;
- D. Coordinate with SGSA advisor for purchases made on behalf of SGSA;;
- E. Prepare the annual budget to be presented to the Council for approval by majority vote;
- F. Collaborate with the President and Special Events Director to create budgets for all Standing Committees and Special Committees;
- G. Provide a report of all financial transactions whenever requested by the President or the Council;
- H. Be responsible for SGSA merchandise;
- I. Be eligible to represent SGSA at Graduate Student Government (GSG) meetings upon request;
- J. Perform additional duties and exercise such powers as provided herein or as assigned by the Council.

Special Events Director

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

- A. Oversee and coordinate with Standing Committees and Special Committees to plan and implement social events and special programs.;
- B. Collaborate with the Financial Director to create budgets for the Standing Committees and Special Committees responsible for special and social event programming;
- C. Chair the End of the Semester Event each semester;
- D. Collaborate with the Communications Director to create and distribute event advertising;
- E. Chair the Social Committee or appoint a chair in consultation with SGSA Executive Committee;
- F. Be eligible to represent SGSA at Graduate Student Government (GSG) meetings upon request;
- G. Perform additional duties and exercise such powers as provided herein or as assigned by the Council.

Program Representatives

The four (4) Program Representatives each shall:

- A. Report on the events, proceedings, and policies of the SGSA to students in their respective programs (Learning and Teaching, Leadership Studies, Counseling and Marital and Family Therapy, and Doctoral Representative);
- B. Gather and represent student views and assist in the coordination of student participation;
- C. Serve on at least one SGSA committee- committees may be defined as per the board's needs;

- D. Perform additional duties and other responsibilities as may be delegated to them by the SGSA;
- E. Be eligible to represent SGSA at Graduate Student Government (GSG) meetings upon request

4.5 Vacancies in the Council

The Council shall advertise any open positions to the SOLES community and then can appoint a Representative replacement within thirty (30) days of the first day of the position being open 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 consist of all executive members and available program representatives. This committee will continue to actively advertise and recruit until the position is filled.

4.6 Vacancies in the Executive Committee

Executive Committee vacancies, anticipated or otherwise, however caused, shall be announced at a Council meeting. The program representatives shall announce the vacancy to their constituents. At the following month's Council meeting, any active SGSA 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. A committee consisting of all remaining Executive Committee members and available program representatives will continue to actively advertise and recruit until the position is filled.

4.7 Removal

Any Council Representative who repeatedly 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. In the instance that the President has failed to perform their duties, the SGSA Advisor shall counsel the President. An Officer shall be given an opportunity to produce, before the Council, evidence to refute such charges.

4.8 Non-performance

The President will counsel Officers that are not fulfilling the obligations or opportunities of their positions, and/or having continuous unexcused absences. In the instance that the President has failed to perform their duties, the SGSA Advisor shall counsel the President. 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 up to \$400. The Program Representatives will each be awarded up to \$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, and upon recommendation of the Executive Officers, in consultation with the advisor. Disbursements will be made by the end of the spring term. In addition, honorariums shall be disclosed during Spring Elections and during the recruitment of any positions that need to be filled throughout the year.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

5.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings for the conduct of business shall be held no less than monthly, at a time and place agreed upon by the Council. Meetings will be open for members of the SOLES and graduate student communities to attend.

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 seven (7) days advance notice to each Council Officer of the time, place, and purpose thereof.

5.3 Committee Meetings

Council officers are expected to arrange and/or attend committee meetings on an as needed basis for all special and standing committees.

5.4 Quorum

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

5.5 Unexcused Absences

Any Council Representative absent from two (2) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings,

or three (3) meetings within one (1) academic 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 SGSA Advisor, such absences are permissible.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

6.1 Standing Committees

Standing committees will be formed at the beginning of each semester and may extend through the school year. Each member of SGSA is expected to serve on at least one standing committee. The Council will choose standing committees by the beginning of the academic year. SGSA members will then indicate their preference for standing committee placement within a week of the committees being established and the SGSA Executive Committee will place members of the Council into standing committees based on the documented preferences. Standing committees will organize meetings on an as needed basis. The chair of the committee will provide the SGSA council with monthly updates of progress and challenges at the meetings. The Council shall determine necessary standing committees that may include the following:

- A. Philanthropy
- B. Grant Review
- C. Elections
- D. Executive
- E. Communication
- F. Celebration of Excellence
- G. Special Events

6.2 Special Committees

The Council may appoint special committees as needed for specific tasks or special events; these committees shall be dissolved upon completion of said tasks. Special committees will organize meetings on an as needed basis. The chair of the special committee will provide the SGSA Council with monthly updates of progress and challenges at the meetings.

6.3 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 eight (8) members. The term of membership is one (1) academic year. The number of elected program officers may also change as SOLES expands at the discretion of the Executive Committee in consultation with the SGSA Advisor.

7.2 Elections Procedures

An election for the Council shall be called annually or upon the termination or resignation of an Executive Officer as per the needs of the Council.

- A. Elections will be held at the end of the Spring semester and may be reopened at the beginning of the Fall semester as needed or with the intention of recruiting first year student participation.
- B. Elections will operate on the basis of appointment through a detailed application and review process.
- C. The President will serve as the Chief Elections Officer. In the event the President is running for a position(s) on SGSA or is unable to fulfill the duties of Chief Elections Officer, then succession of this role is as follows: the Communications Director, Financial Director, Special Events Director, other member of SGSA upon agreed appointment by the Executive Committee in consultation with the SGSA Advisor.
- D. The election of an officer requires an affirmative vote at any SGSA meeting in which quorum has been reached. Each outgoing SGSA officer will have one (1) vote except in the case of a current officer who is running for a second term or a different position. In this case, the officer will not be a part of the discussion or have a vote for the specific position(s) they are running for.
- E. In the event that only one (1) person is interested in a position, a vote of confidence (in which the majority of present Council members vote in support of electing this person) is required.
- F. Elections processes and applications will be widely advertised and distributed to the SOLES graduate student population.
- G. Applications must be open for a minimum of two (2) weeks. Elections may be rolling if positions are not filled within the initial priority election session.
- H. Candidates may apply for more than one position.
- I. The Chief Elections Officer will accept, sort, and distribute applications to voting members of the SGSA and may organize interviews and/or speeches if necessary.
- J. The Chief Elections Officer will organize, mediate, and facilitate the discussion by the outgoing SGSA officers process and should make all attempts to stay unbiased.
- K. The Chief Elections Officer is responsible for tallying the votes and will not have a

vote, except in the event of a tie.

- L. Eligible SGSA Officers will vote via a secret ballot system and positions will be considered in the following order: President, Communications Director, Financial Director, Special Events Director, and Program Representatives.
- M. The Chief Elections Officer will present the slate of proposed officers to the SGSA Advisor for final approval.
- N. Upon approval, each candidate will be individually contacted. Subsequently, an announcement will be made to the SOLES community.

7.3 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. The replacement of any council member will follow the election procedures provided in section 7.2. If a council member needs to be replaced during the summer session (June-August) then the SGSA Advisor may consult with returning and/or incoming members for discussion.
- C. The Communications Director 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 Budget

A comprehensive budget will be prepared at the beginning of each year by the Financial Director to be presented and approved by majority vote of the Council. The budget can be amended on an as-needed basis by the majority vote of the Executive Committee and should be reviewed monthly. At least 20% of the cumulative budget will be committed to SGSA Supplemental Grants for the professional development of SOLES students.

8.2 Committee Budgets

The Financial Director in consultation with the President and Special Events Director shall create budgets for Standing Committees and Special Committees. Committee members are expected to follow said budget and must get unanimous approval from the Executive Committee in order to spend additional funds. Committees must report actual spending to the Financial Director as purchases are made and will turn in original receipts within five (5) business days. Committee reports will include budget summaries.

8.3 Dispensation of Funds

The Executive Committee may authorize on behalf of SGSA any contribution or other disbursement of funds for SGSA authorized purposes. Any purchase or disbursement of funds in excess of \$250 for any reason will require approval of the Executive Committee and SGSA Advisor.

8.4 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 to prevent loss. Any costs associated with the loss or misuse of the key or space will be the responsibility of the respective Executive Committee member. All SGSA equipment and supplies shall be transferred to the new SGSA administration Executive Committee by May 31 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 the 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 on the SGSA website and by request to the President.