

**Summary of Student Senate
Organizational Review Process and Constitution Updates
Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**Prepared by: Student Trustee, Christa Harvey and members of the Student Senate
Organizational Review Working Group**

Problem Statement & Charge: The UNC Student Senate has a history and culture of addressing individual legislative and organizational issues on a case-by-cases basis rather than confronting larger, systematic/structural causes. Specifically, Student Senate spends an inordinate amount of time rectifying issues surrounding lack of bylaw/constitution clarity, election code violations, elected member accountability and a number of other, procedural problems.

Resolution Process: In order to address these systematic and structural issues (addressing the illness, not the symptoms) the Student Senate engaged in an organizational review process. Through this process the Student Senate:

- Developed a Student Senate organizational review working group
- Gained an understanding of the Associated Student Government (ASG), Student Government Association (SGA), and Student Senate structures
- Reviewed peer institution student government structures
- Conducted site visits and information gathering meetings with other Colorado student governments
- Discussed and propose a new organizational structure
- Present the new organizational structure to the UNC Board of Trustees
- Will host a Spring 2023 Special Election for the Student Body to vote on the Constitution updates (February 22, 2023)
- Will conduct the regular Spring Election 2023 (1st week of April) with the updated and approved Constitution and structure

This document provides a summary of the peer review process, details site visit information/insights gathered from other Colorado institutions and outlines the significant changes the Student Senate made to the organizational structure and Constitution to complete the organizational review process.

Peer Review Process:

The members of the Student Senate working group reviewed and assessed different student government models from peer institutions. The group utilized UNC peer institutions identified in 2011 for Colorado Department of Higher Education performance reporting and enrollment planning, as well as those identified in 2006 by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Working group reviews were based on the initial problem and resolution statements from the charge as well as the following inquiry questions:

- Which organizational structures (positions, branches of government, order of succession, eligibility requirements, etc.) would alleviate issues identified in the problem statement?
- Which SGA Constitution sections/headings are missing from the current UNC Student Senate Constitution?
- What are pieces from the current UNC structure (positions, processes, and policies) that should remain in the new structure?
- What SGA Constitution formatting was the easiest to understand and read?

The working group (consisting of the Student Trustee, Student Body President, Parliamentarian, two Senators, and a Graduate Student and Undergraduate Student intern) then developed a pro/con list for each of the ASG, SGA and Student Senate structures and identified the most appropriate organization aspects to be incorporated into the new UNC student government.

Site Visits and Connections with other Institutions:

- On May 19, 2022, the Student Senate President, Student Trustee and Advisor attended the Colorado Student Government Coalition (CSGC) Summit. During this visit, the Student Senate Advisor met with Student Government Advisors from 12 other institutions of higher education to discuss their student government structures. During this meeting, the Student Senate Advisor gathered government structure information, which was reported back to the President, Trustee, and was utilized for guiding working group homework, research, and discussions
- On July 7, 2022, Student Senate President, Student Trustee and Advisor conducted a site-visit with the members of the Associated Students of Colorado State University (ASCSU) Government and Advisors. At this meeting, the group learned about the Associated Student Government system and how this form of government operates as a 501(c)(3)
- In September of 2022, the Student Senate purchased a membership with the American Student Government Association (ASGA) gain access to Constitution templates, tools, and resources to better inform the SGA portion of the structure review process
- On 10/14/22 a member of the working group and Student Senate Advisor met with representatives from ASCSU and the Utah State University Student Association (USUSA) to gather more clarification on the ASG model and to learn about USUSA's structure. At this meeting, information was gleaned about the larger organizational structures of the ASG and how USUSA operates more like a Student Senate with both an Executive Council and Academic Senate structures

ASG Review:

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, the ASCSU site-visit information, and the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, the group found that due to the size of government structures within the ASG, the 501(c)(e3) status, and overall complexity of the ASG model, UNC would be better served through a different organizational structure to alleviate the issues outlined in the charge document

Student Senate Review:

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, the information gathered about the USUSA structures and processes, the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, and the own, internal review of the current UNC Student Senate structure, the group found that the Student Senate would be better served with a different form of government structure to meet the goals outlined in the outlined in the charge document

SGA Review:

- Through a review of the information gathered during the CSGC meeting with Student Government Advisors, working group review of ASGA tutorials, templates, and resources, and the Student Senate working group review of peer institution structures, the group determined that the SGA structure would be the best model to follow to meet the goals outlined in the outlined in the charge document

Summary of significant changes and rationale:

1. Name and Purpose Updates:

- Change in name from Student Senate to Student Government Association (SGA)
 - i. “Senate” was not a true articulation of the governing structure of process of the organization
- Developed and added a mission statement
- The association is more inclusive and aligns with our mission of being a coalition with all on-campus groups
- Clarified organizational authority deriving from the UNC Board of Trustees
- Identified clearer purpose of the student government organization
 - i. Actively address matters of student affairs and experiences
 - ii. Promote understanding and communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students
 - iii. Work with administration in all matters affecting the welfare of the University of Northern Colorado

2. Structure Update: Development of a Three Branch system

- The SGA name is a clear articulation of the actual governing structures (3 branches) of the new organization
- Each of the 3 branches has clearly defined structure, process for filling vacancies, member accountability processes/removal processes, and eligibility standards
 - i. Specific number of credit hours to run for positions
 - ii. Being in good judicial standing at UNC
 - iii. Specific GPA requirements
 - iv. Having served in previous leadership positions on Senate for Executive officers
- The Executive Branch has a more structured form of organization with role clarity
 - i. Specific requirements for office for each Executive member are important for ensuring the roles are managed and fulfilled well
 - ii. Added and retitled positions to further represent a true governing structure
 - 1. Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief of Staff
- The Legislative Branch will have Senators based on year-classification rather than Academic College
 - i. Provides more access for students by updating the number of Senators from 15 to 25
 - ii. Allows for more organizations on campus to have representation and involvement in SGA
- The Judicial Branch has a more clearly defined purpose and more opportunities for students to serve
 - i. More students are eligible to hold Judicial Member positions (expanded from 5 to 10)
 - ii. Will serve to interpret and rule on all questions and grievances pertaining to SGA Constitution and Bylaws

3. Student Trustee role clarification
 - Clarified the Student Trustee serves as a liaison between the SGA and the Board of Trustees rather than an Executive Officer of SGA
 - Further clarifies the exact duties of the Student Trustee and establishes clear expectations of their role during their term
 - Defines clear directives on where to find eligibility requirements to act as the Student Trustee (In Board of Trustees Policy and CO law)
 - Diminishes any confusion about the Trustees' position and expectations

4. Order of Succession processes
 - Ensures that in times of crisis that there is a clearly defined path for who replaces whom, who is responsible for hiring, and without causing any further instability to the governmental system

Articulation of how the structure and Constitution updates provides more representation for the students of UNC.

1. Readjusts the purpose of the organization:
 - i. Clearly defines the SGA role of supporting/advocating for student welfare and serving as a communication conduit between the students and the administration
2. Adds a non-discrimination policy to our purpose
 - i. We the Student Government Association, uphold the values of our University, do not discriminate on any basis, including but not limited to age, race, gender, religion, non-religion, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin
3. Provides more student access to serve on Student Government
 - i. Creation of the 3 branches and expanded representation
4. Sets clearer expectations about running for and holding positions
 - i. Clarified order of succession, removal from office, eligibility requirements (GPA, previous leadership experience, number of credits to hold various positions, and being in good judicial standing at UNC)
5. Clarifies qualifications for holding office: credit hours, GPA, previous leadership experience
6. Ensures the SGA mission and goals are updated and aligning with UNC initiatives
 - i. Updated Mission and purpose statements were designed with UNC initiatives in mind (providing access, inclusivity, advocate for student needs, representation)
7. Removes confusing, contradictory, and unclear language, policy, and procedure from the previous Constitution