

Constitution of the Graduate School of Social Work Student Association of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – New Brunswick

I: Name and Purpose

A: The official name of this organization shall be the Rutgers University School of Social Work Student Association (SSWSA). The organization may be referred to as the Social Work Student Association.

B: The purpose of the Rutgers University School of Social Work Student Association shall be: (1) to support and encourage the academic, social, and professional pursuits of its constituents, insuring recognition of students' cultural, social, academic, and professional concerns (2) to promote unity among all students of the Graduate School of Social Work (3) to promote student scholarship and leadership (4) to promote cohesiveness and communication among students and faculty (5) to enhance the community awareness of our Social Work department and its constituents and (6) to advocate for students with faculty, staff and administration.

C: The SSWSA will be responsible for developing and disseminating information to promote awareness of School and professional issues. The SSWSA shall exist to improve educational opportunities within the University. The SSWSA shall sponsor, co-sponsor, and/or facilitate activities that promote communication and understanding of ideological and practical issues as they relate to the Field of Social Work.

II: Membership

A: All social work graduate students are automatically members as part of their University-collected student fee shall be members of the SSWSA. In this document, said members will be referred to as SSWSA members. In accordance with NASW Code of Ethics, this organization does not discriminate against a person on the basis of gender, age, race-ethnicity, sexual preference, religious belief, national origin, marital status, political belief, physical or mental illness or handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status.

III: Council

A: The representative branch of the SSWSA shall be known as the Council.

B: The Council shall be composed of the following members: Co-Chairpersons, Faculty Advisor, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, First Year Representatives, Second Year Representatives, Doctoral Representative, Community Liaison, and a Communication Representative. The Committee Chairs are yet to be determined and will be decided by a vote of the School of Social Work graduate student body upon recognition of the official status of the SSWSA.

C: Each officer of the SSWSA shall be elected by a vote cast by the student body held during the spring semester before the commencement of their term in office. The term in office shall be approximately one year from the time of their respective appointments to the graduation date in May of the following year.

D: Each member of the Council shall have one and only one vote.

E: All policies and decisions pertaining to the SSWSA shall be decided by the Council and in certain instances voted upon by constituents or student affiliates.

IV: Meetings of the Council

A: All officers are required to attend at least one (1) regular meeting of the SSWSA, which shall be held at least two times each semester, with the option of additional meetings to be held during the semester or summer interim. Regular meetings of the SSWSA are held in the Graduate School of Social Work graduate student lounge, unless otherwise noted. These meetings will be open to student constituents and made known in advance to council members and student constituents, unless otherwise noted. Meetings will use *Roberts Rule of Order, Revised* as a guide to the proceedings.

B: At the first regular meeting in September, the Council shall establish a schedule specifying the time, date, and place of all subsequent regular meetings for the remainder of the academic year.

C: Special meetings can be called by the Council or Committee Chairs.

V. Administration Role of Council Members

A: Serve as a sanctioned spokesperson of the SSWSA to School students, faculty, and staff and to outside organizations. All officers shall serve without salary or other financial remuneration.

B: Form and coordinate ad hoc committees and Task Forces to support SSWSA, student, and School functions as necessary.

C: Maintain a file of records and reports of SSWSA business.

D: Attend to the student body through ongoing discourse and correspondence.

E: Take responsibility for maintaining SSWSA financial accounts in an appropriate and legal manner.

F: Coordinate and/or delegate the continuation of duties for any SSWSA officer who becomes temporarily unavailable or incapacitated during the course of the SSWSA term.

G: Maintain an ongoing open and professional dialogue with School administrators, faculty, and staff.

VI. Service of Council Members

A: Maintain and provide for Social Work students a variety of educational, professional, cultural, and social events, resources, and caucuses designed to enhance the growth of the student affiliates.

B: Maintain and provide for School students use of a file of prior course syllabi and course evaluations and descriptions, to assist them in course and concentration planning.

C: Participate in the planning and implementation of orientation activities and informational packets for incoming students.

D: Advocate for students through communication with the Office of Student Services, the various Deans and Assistant Deans and other personnel and departments within the School.

E: At least once each semester, publish and distribute throughout the School of Social Work, a newsletter, either electronically through a list-serve, on the SSWSA's website or through distribution of a hard copy version in student mailboxes. (This newsletter will serve as a vehicle for internal communication among students and other School members. It can be used to disseminate summarized reports from School members; communicate committee, student, student group, and SSWSA business; and to present and inform School members about local, state, federal, and international issues concerning social workers.)

VII. Miscellaneous Activities of the Council

- A: Fundraising: Coordinate and participate in fundraising activities for the SSWSA, in continuing support of student programming and professional development, and the SSWSA's own functioning.
- B: Elections: Participate in and ensure equitable elections for our SSWSA successors.
- C: Technology: Communicate and interact with necessary support staff to develop and/or maintain technology-based mechanisms for communication and education of the School population and prospective members (i.e., email, World Wide Web sites, etc).
- D: Publicity: Publicize and inform the School population of the purpose, procedures, and a activities of the SSWSA.

VIII: Voting and Elections

A: All substantive matters shall be decided by a simple majority of the legal votes cast, unless the matter is one that is explicitly specified either by this Constitution or by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised as requiring more than a simple majority. The number of members present to conduct business shall be 50% of the council members plus one.

B: A procedural ruling made by the chair may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

C: The election of officers of the Council shall be run by the Elections Committee, which may devise such rules and procedures as it deems necessary, subject to advance approval by the Council. Any such rules must be posted in a public place and be made available to those constituents who request a copy.

D: General Elections shall be held by secret ballot. Any graduate student registered in the School of Social Work may vote in SSWSA elections.

E: Any graduate student matriculated in the School of Social Work and currently enrolled in class at least part time may hold an SSWSA office.

F: Nominations for SSWSA officer positions shall be submitted in writing or via electronic mail to the current SSWSA officers. Nominations must be received no more than twenty-one (21) days before and no less than fifteen (15) days prior to the election. The current SSWSA officers will determine a nomination deadline, after which time, no further nominations shall be accepted for the SSWSA elections.

G: Persons qualified to hold SSWSA office may be nominated by themselves or by another registered School of Social Work graduate student. All SSWSA officer election ballots shall provide space for "write in" candidates.

H: No candidate may run for more than one office at a time.

I: Campaigning may begin on the first Monday following the nomination deadline.

J: Candidates for SSWSA offices may not receive and/or collect monetary contributions for their campaigns.

K: Elections must be accessible to on-campus, registered School of Social Work graduate students on at least one Monday, one Tuesday, one Wednesday, one Thursday, and one Friday throughout the course of elections; and elections must be held at least three (3) of these days consecutively.

L: Candidates must receive a simple majority of votes to be elected to an SSWSA office.

IX - Office Vacancies

A: In the event a SSWSA office becomes vacant due to the resignation of an officer, a replacement will be selected by a simple majority vote of the remaining members.

X- Specific officer duties

A: Council Chairpersons and Members

- 1 Preside over the SSWSA meetings on a rotating basis, on a schedule to be determined when the council has been established, either through voting or nominations.
- 2 Appoint temporary officers to the SSWSA for the Spring/Summer term in the event that responsibilities would otherwise go unmet.
- 3 To maintain the timely registration of the SSWSA with Rutgers University as an official student organization.
- 4 To represent the SSWSA to the Dean, faculty, and staff of the Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work, the Alumni Association, professional social work organizations, the community, and the student body-at-large.
- 5 Inform the student body about School and University committees, publicize committee vacancies, and coordinate student participation on these committees.
- 6 Act as liaisons between the SSWSA and the student body, communicating SSWSA activities to the students through regular verbal and technical updates.
- 7 Assist other members of the SSWSA with their duties.
- 8 Assume responsibility for any other duties deemed relative to their position as representative or through their participation in committee or council duties.

B: Recording Secretary

- 1 Take minutes of the SSWSA meetings and keep them on file.
- 2 Manage the SSWSA office.
- 3 Assist in the coordination and publication of the SSWSA newsletter on a regular basis during the Fall and Winter semesters.

C: Community Liaison

- 1 Coordinate social and community service activities and academic development for the SSWSA affiliates.
- 2 Coordinate social and community service activities within the School, the University, and with outside groups as deemed appropriate.
- 3 Create and manage a committee of School students and/or including alumni for coordination of School related academic, social and community service related functions.

D: Treasurer

- 1 Serve as primary accounts manager for SSWSA financial matters.
- 2 Maintain detailed and accurate records of SSWSA financial transactions and account statements.
- 3 Establish an ongoing professional dialogue between the SSWSA and relative Rutgers University student life departments.
- 4 Serve as a liaison between the SSWSA affiliates and student organizations, informing them of SSWSA funding procedures and funding availability.
- 5 To maintain the timely registration of the SSWSA with Rutgers University as an official student organization.

E: Communication Representative

- 1 To coordinate and update, in conjunction with the Secretary, the SSWSA student Online newsletter and website on a regular basis.
- 2 To assist in the maintenance of the SSWSA website and keep current postings, information, and the list-serve communiqués.
- 3 To act as a liaison to community, University, and professional organizations and to inform the SSWSA affiliates of any relevant information via the website or newsletter.
- 4 To advertise and publicize any SSWSA events, lectures, professional development

opportunities, and academic calendar occurrences as deemed important and relevant to the SSWSA affiliates.

XI Accountability of roles

A: Officer roles shall be flexible, and need not be permanently assumed so long as required functions of the SSWSA are met.

B: Officer roles may shift according to the skills, preferences, and time constraints of the SSWSA members, so long as all members are in unanimous agreement of such role shifts.

C: All SSWSA officers shall make it publicly known and/or have information readily available to affiliates as to whom is responsible for required duties and functions at any given time, to ensure access to and accountability of their positions.

Article XII - Amendments and By-laws of the Constitution

A: Any registered and currently enrolled student in the Graduate School of Social Work may petition to have this constitution amended. The petition must specify the amendment in question or state the amendment to be added, must have a rationale for the change or addition, and must be signed by 2/3 majority of votes cast.

B: A constitutional amendment referendum may also be called at the discretion of the SSWSA officers, with majority vote cast in support of the referendum.

C: A constitutional amendment referendum must be called within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of a valid petition to the SSWSA office.

D: Any constitutional amendment referendum must be held for voting purposes on a minimum of three (3) consecutive business days and must be adequately publicized in advance of the vote.

E: All constitutional amendments passed through referendum will go into effect one calendar week after the date the referendum concludes.

F: The SSWSA may make procedural additions to this document in the form of by-laws given a 2/3 majority vote of all SSWSA officers.

G: A by-law must be proposed in written form by at least one SSWSA officer, and be voted on by the remaining SSWSA officers within ten (10) days of the representation of the proposal.

H: All adopted by-laws must be publicized to affiliate members within fourteen (14) days of their approval by the SSWSA.

XIII - Ratification of Constitution

A: To take effect, this constitution must be ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of student constituents voting in the SSWSA main election, to be held on a yet to be determined date.

B: This constitutional document shall be called "Proposal A" on said ballot.

C: Should this constitution be ratified, it shall take effect immediately.

D: Credit for the parts of this document shall be given to the SSWSU of the University of Michigan, the Graduate School of Social Work Student Association of the University of Houston, the Columbia University School of Social Work Student Government Constitution and members of the Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work Student Association Development Committee.