

LSSA Constitution

Constitution of the La Follette School Student Association

Amended

Article I – Name and Definitions.

Section 1. Name.

The name of this organization is the La Follette School Student Association.

Section 2. Definitions.

1. “Association” means the La Follette School Student Association.
2. “Executive Board” means all of the officers of the association.
3. “Member” or “student” means a student enrolled in any of the degree programs of the La Follette School.
4. “Officer” means the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Coordinator, Community Service Coordinators, Social Coordinators, Belonging, Identity, and Culture Coordinators, International Student Coordinator, and Graduation Coordinators.

Article II – Purpose.

The purpose of the association is to maintain and improve the academic, social, and professional qualities of life for students of the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs.

Article III –Membership.

The association may not require payment of dues as a condition of membership.

Article IV – Officers.

Section 1. The officers of the association are the President (representing all students), Vice President (representing first-year students), Secretary (representing continuing students), Treasurer (representing continuing students), two Belonging, Identity, and Culture Coordinators (one representing first-year students and one representing continuing students), one Fundraising Coordinators (representing first-years), two Community Service Coordinators (one representing first-year students and one representing continuing students), two Social Coordinators (one representing first-year students and one representing continuing students), and two Graduation Coordinators (one representing first-year students and one representing continuing students), and an International Student Coordinator (representing all international students).

Section 2. Except for the first-year officers, officers shall be members who have completed at least nine credits of La Follette School coursework. The first-year officers shall be members in their first year of study of La Follette School coursework.

Section 3. All officers shall attend full membership and Executive Board meetings; inform the President of planned absence from an Executive Board meeting at least one day in advance; prepare a transition document outlining responsibilities, records, and key contacts; and meet with their successors to discuss their responsibilities and transfer records, no later than fourteen days after the graduation ceremony.

Section 4. The President shall preside over meetings and chair the Executive Board; attend La Follette School faculty and staff meetings; gauge and communicate the opinions of students, representing their interests to faculty and staff; communicate the perspectives, initiatives, and priorities of faculty and staff to students; coordinate the association's participation in the La Follette School Welcome Day and Visit Day; develop the budget for the following school year with the Treasurer; excuse the absence of officers, register LSSA as a Registered Student Organization annually and complete RSO training, and disseminate LSSA communication. The President will be responsible to coordinate LSSA involvement to support the LSSA ABCD Standing Committee Rep successfully implement initiatives.

Section 5. The Vice President shall gauge and communicate the opinions of first-year students, represent their interests before the Executive Board and, in collaboration with the President, represent their interests before the La Follette School administration; maintain event tracking in the shared calendar and monitor planning efforts; lead Executive Board initiatives not included in officer duties; and support the activities of other officers.

Section 6. The Secretary shall conduct association elections, track and organize student feedback (i.e., through monitoring suggestion box), create agendas for full membership and Executive Board meetings, schedule Executive Board meetings at least 14 days in advance, reserve meeting spaces, record and distribute meeting minutes, maintain the association's mailbox and email account, maintain the LSSA shared drive and LSSA documents, finalize changes to the LSSA Constitution, support Board transitions, and assist officers with other events or initiatives as needed. The Secretary shall preside over meetings or chair the Executive Board in the absence of the President and temporarily assume the duties of the President, if the President is unable to do so.

Section 7. The Treasurer shall oversee all financial operations including maintaining the association's records, providing monthly financial reports at Executive Board meetings, developing and maintaining the annual budget with the President, filing annual taxation reports to maintain LSSA's nonprofit status, and making expenditures as directed by the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall also support all revenue-generating activities for the association, including coordinating at least one merchandise sale during the academic year, and overseeing the activities of the Fundraising Coordinator including the establishment of fundraising goals and the strategic allocation of revenue to support specified goals.

Section 8. The Fundraising Coordinator shall serve under the Treasurer and raise funds in support of association activities. These funds will be raised through various means at the discretion of the Fundraising Coordinator. The Fundraising Coordinator shall work in coordination with the Treasurer, including assisting with merchandise sales, to ensure all fundraising efforts strategically align with the association's goals and support efforts outlined in the association's budget.

Section 9. The Graduation Coordinators shall plan the La Follette School graduation ceremony and reception, including selection of a venue, conducting speaker elections, and distributing tickets. The Graduation Coordinators shall also solicit input from graduating students regarding the graduation ceremony and how to best make sure the ceremony reflects each unique class. Graduation Coordinators must attend graduation.

Section 10. The Community Service Coordinators shall connect members with a minimum of two service opportunities on the UW-Madison campus and throughout the Madison area each semester.

Section 11. The Social Coordinators shall organize extracurricular activities to promote the development of personal and professional relationships among members and maintain community communication channels and contact sheet. Such activities will be identified at the discretion of the Social Coordinators. The Social Coordinators may also collaborate with La Follette School staff members to promote social media content and assist other officers with event coordination as it is necessary. The Social Coordinators also have the power to create social media accounts on behalf of LSSA. They shall manage the LSSA official social media accounts through the posting of photography, video capture, graphic creation, and other forms of content to promote LSSA events with current and prospective students

Section 12. The Belonging, Identity, and Culture Coordinators are LSSA Officer positions that implement Belonging, Identity, and Culture (BIC) initiatives as prioritized by LFS alumni, current students, the La Follette School Student Association (LSSA), and the La Follette School (LFS). They will serve as the LSSA representatives in the ABCD Standing Committee and implement the LFS DEI Strategic Plan. This includes initiating, co-hosting, and supporting events in partnership with LSSA that foster an inclusive environment and promote equity within the student body.

The Belonging, Identity, and Culture Coordinators must be consulted prior to any initiative, policy change, or response to complaints made by students, staff, or other members of the La Follette School community related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This consultation must take place before such matters are brought to the ABCD Committee or the Board. For any issues pertaining specifically to students, no vote or decision shall be made within the ABCD Committee without the involvement of the BIC Coordinators. It is the duty of the ABCD Committee members to inform the BIC Coordinators of any pertinent information or agenda items in advance to ensure meaningful and informed participation.

The BIC Coordinators are also responsible for working collaboratively with both the LSSA and ABCD Committee to plan and implement DEI-related events and programming that support a more inclusive and equitable environment at the La Follette School.

While the BIC Coordinators and the LSSA ABCD Committee representatives serve distinct roles within the governance structure, the expectation is that both positions maintain a strong and collaborative relationship. This collaboration is essential to ensuring transparency, shared responsibility, and alignment on student-centered BIC efforts across the La Follette School community.

Section 14. The International Student Coordinator shall plan and organize events focused on improving the international student experience and promoting the cultural identities of international students; may serve on the ABCD Committee; bring student concerns to the ABCD Committee or to LSSA Officers serving as Representatives on the ABCD Committee; collaborate with international student services; and provide recommendations to the board and the La Follette School regarding international student resources.

Article V – Officer Transitions.

Section 1. Election of Officers.

1. An election shall be held for all officers except the first-year officers during the spring semester, with nominations beginning no earlier than two calendar months before the date of the graduation ceremony and the voting concluding no later than fourteen days before the date of the graduation ceremony.

Nominations shall be open for at least three days and no more than seven, at the discretion of the Secretary. Voting shall be open for at least three days and no more than seven, at the discretion of the Secretary.

2. An election for the first-year officers shall be held during the fall semester. The nomination process for first-year officers shall begin no later than fourteen days after the first day of the semester. Voting shall conclude no more than twenty-eight days after the first day of the semester. Nominations shall be open for at least three days and no more than seven, at the discretion of the Secretary. Voting shall be open for at least three days and no more than seven, at the discretion of the Secretary.

3. If no student accepts a nomination for an open position before the nomination deadline, any current officer may nominate a student for said open position. Any students that accept a nomination after the deadline will be voted on by members during the subsequent Executive Board meeting and elected by plurality vote.

4. Candidates for first-year officers may be nominated and voted upon only by first-year members. Other officers may be nominated and voted upon only by members continuing the following year. Nominees who have received a plurality of votes at the conclusion of the voting period are elected to office.

5. For an office with one holder, members may cast one vote, and only one person may be elected. For an office with multiple holders, members may cast as many votes as there are individuals to be elected.

6. Unopposed candidates shall be automatically elected.

7. In the event that an election ends in a tie, a debate will be held between the tied candidates in the Sterling Hall conference room no later than one week after the announcement of the tie. A current LSSA Officer shall serve as a moderator. A revote shall occur immediately after the debate, ending within 24 hours.

8. Individuals running for multiple Board positions must indicate their position preference via numerical rankings with 1 being the top choice, before voting begins. If a single individual is elected for multiple positions they will assume the role corresponding to their highest-ranked preference only. Individuals may not hold more than one position on the Board. Any remaining position(s) will be offered to the runner-up who earned the second highest number of votes for each respective role.

Section 2. Term of Office.

1. The term of all officers except the first-year officers begins with the conclusion of the previous term and concludes at noon on the seventh calendar day after spring commencement for graduate students; notwithstanding the definition of “member” provided in article I, officers remain members until that date.

2. The term of the first-year officers begins with their election.

Section 3. No member may hold more than one office at a time.

Section 4. Vacancy of Office.

1. Offices are vacated by removal or resignation.

2. If the office of President is vacated, the Secretary shall temporarily assume the office of the President until a new President is elected by the continuing students from among the continuing students.

3. A vacated office shall be filled on a temporary basis until the next regular election. The Executive Board shall select a student to fill the office.

Section 5. Removal.

1. Excessive absence from Executive Board meetings, ineligibility to hold an office, or loss of membership shall result in automatic removal from office. "Excessive absence" means five or more excused absences, two or more unexcused absences, or three consecutive absences.

2. Officers may be removed with cause under the procedure described below.

3. Any member may petition for removal of an officer. Petitions shall be in writing and shall include justification for removal. Petitions shall be submitted to the President, except that petitions for removal of the President shall be submitted to the Secretary.

4. Within three days, the President or Secretary shall accept the petition, or deny it for insufficient cause. A denial shall be presented to the petitioner in writing within three days. A majority of the Executive Board, not including the officer who is the subject of the petition, may override a denial by agreeing in writing to accept the petition.

5. Accepted petitions shall be presented to the officer who is the subject of the petition within three days and considered by the Executive Board at its following meeting. The President or Secretary may not preside over a meeting which is to consider a petition for his or her removal.

6. Petitions shall be considered in executive session with only the Executive Board and petitioner present. Both the petitioner and officer who is the subject of the petition may present their case. Petitions may not be acted upon in executive session.

7. The Executive Board shall vote on adopting the petition immediately following the executive session in which it is considered. An officer who is the subject of the petition may not vote on the petition. A two-thirds vote of the Executive Board is required to adopt the petition, which results in removal of the petitioned officer.

Section 6. Resignation.

1. An officer wishing to resign shall submit his or her resignation in writing to the President, except the President shall submit his or her resignation to the Vice President and the Secretary.
2. The President or Secretary shall inform the Executive Board of the resignation within three days.
3. The resigning officer shall continue to serve until a replacement is elected under Section 4, Subsection 3 or selected under Section 4, Subsection 4, or for no more than fourteen days, whichever is later.

Article VI – Executive Board Meetings.

Section 1. The Executive Board shall meet at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters, or no less than nine times during the academic year. Members shall be informed of any Executive Board meetings at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled meeting time.

Section 2. A special meeting may be called by the President. Officers may request the President to call a special meeting. Notice of the special meeting shall be distributed to members at least one day in advance of the meeting.

Section 3. Quorum for meetings held under this article is two-thirds of the Executive Board.

Section 4. The Executive Board may adopt policies further governing the association. Except as provided in Article X, policies adopted by the Executive Board may not conflict with this constitution.

Article VII – Email Voting Procedures.

Section 1. Should the need for an Executive Board vote arise between Executive Board meetings, the LSSA President may authorize an email vote.

Section 2. An online vote must include an announcement of the motion with 24 hours of email discussion, followed by a 24 hour voting period. LSSA members may choose to vote aye, nay, or abstain and shall reply all when casting their vote. Members may request a closed ballot vote prior to the start of the voting period. After the end of the 24 hour voting period, the President will send an email to LSSA members announcing the result of the vote.

Section 3. If the vote is related to an expenditure, the original email announcing the vote shall include a financial statement from the Treasurer.

Article VIII – Committees.

Section 1. Any officer may create a committee on an ad hoc basis.

Section 2. There are no restrictions on members' participation on committees.

Article IX - Spending Procedures.

Section 1. While the Executive Board is encouraged to follow the approved annual budget, it is understood that unanticipated expenditures may arise. If there is need for an unanticipated expenditure, the Executive Board shall vote on the matter at its next meeting.

Section 2. Prior to discussion, the board member requesting the additional funding shall provide a detailed request of the funds needed and the treasurer shall provide an updated financial statement.

Section 3. The expenditure will be approved by a majority vote of members present.

Article X – Parliamentary Authority.

The current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised governs this association to the extent it is applicable and consistent with this constitution and other rules or policies adopted by the association.

Article XI – Amendment.

This constitution may be amended at an Executive Board meeting. The constitution shall be amended if at least three fourths of present officers vote for an amendment.

Article XII – UW System Board of Regents Non-Discrimination Policy 30-06

Student organizations that select their members or officers on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership, officer positions, or participation in the organization to students who affirm that they support the organization’s goals and agree with its beliefs, so long as no student is excluded from membership, officer positions, or participation on the basis of his or her race, color, creed other than commitment to the beliefs of the organization, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, or, unless exempt under Title IX, sex.