**University of Washington**

**School of Social Work**

**Student Advisory Council By-Laws**

# Article I – Mission and Purpose

**Section 1**. **Mission**

The Student Advisory Council (SAC) of the School of Social Work (SSW) consists of elected student leaders who strive to create and build an ongoing relationship with the SSW Administration in order to uphold the School of Social Work’s stated mission and values of promoting social and economic justice, both within the school and within the community. The SAC does this by facilitating communication between the student body and the SSW Faculty and Administration through advocacy, active engagement, and support.

**Section 2**. **Purpose**

SAC’s purpose is to communicate the hopes, concerns, needs, and suggestions of the Social Work Student Body to Faculty and Administration and help to bridge communication gaps among these groups. Many of the SAC’s goals work toward surfacing and addressing the needs and voices of marginalized and oppressed communities within and outside the SSW.

# Article II – Membership

**Section 1. Composition**

The membership of the SSW SAC shall be made up of students from each program. People from marginalized communities and their allies are encouraged to nominate themselves for membership in order to ensure adequate representation of these groups and preserve this strength of the SAC

BASW program: 2 members

MSW day program 1st year: 2 members

MSW day program 2nd year: 2 members

MSW extended degree program: 2 members per year, effort being made to have both weekend and evening schedules represented.

MSW advanced standing program: 2 members

PhD program: 2 members

In addition, usually BASW and MSW Program Committee members as well as GPSS representatives are also members of the SAC, but in the years where this is not the case, these students serve on SAC as ex-officio members, not having a vote.

**Section 2.** **Elections**

1. Recruitment
2. Students in each program will vote for the SAC members for their program. Each SAC cohort is responsible for seeking nominations and administering voting, unless the cohort requests assistance from the Director of Student Services. This shall be done in such a way as to have constituted each new academic year’s SAC by the beginning of November. An information session will be held prior to SAC nominations, put on by current SAC members and administrators so that interested members can have a firmer understanding of what the positions will entail.
3. Though not a requirement, all efforts should be made to elect representatives from all cohorts in each program to ensure continuity within SAC.
4. Election Process
   1. **BASW –** OSSW elects the SAC representatives out of their membership. Typically at least 1 of the 2 SAC representatives are officers of OSSW. OSSW officers provides names of SAC representatives to the Director of Student Services.
   2. **MSW Students –** All MSW representatives are elected through a process administered by a second year SAC Representative. MSW Program Committee and GPSS representatives, when elected, are given a SAC position and are counted as part of the numbers above. Ideally, these elections are done concurrently with the general SAC positions.
   3. **PhD –** The doctoral program students elect their own representatives in Spring Quarter the preceding year and provide the names to the Director of Student Services.
5. Special Elections

If a SAC member resigns less than one year after being elected, the runner-up will serve in that member’s place. If a SAC member resigns before the end of their term, but more than a year after being elected, a new nomination and election shall be held as early as reasonable. In both cases, the departing member is responsible for communicating their resignation to the full SAC and requesting a replacement.

**Section 3.** **Member Expectations and Responsibilities**

1. Term Lengths

Members will be elected to terms of 2 academic years, with the exceptions of advanced standing members, whose terms will be 1 year, and EDP members, whose terms will be 3 academic years.

1. Attendance and Voting

If a member of the SAC misses 2 meetings, that individual is eligible for removal from the SAC. The member will be given the opportunity to explain any extenuating circumstances before a decision is made. To replace that member, a special election will be held at the SAC’s earliest convenience. Attendance is necessary because there is a quorum requirement for all votes and lack of attendance is likely to lead to not having a quorum in a voting situation.

1. Representation and Communication
   1. Receiving and responding – members are responsible to communicate student feedback to SAC and any appropriate administrators. Members may request that issues be added to SAC meeting agendas or have issues addressed in Comments, Concerns, and Acknowledgments section of meetings.
   2. Outreach for input – members will be expected to reach out to students to solicit feedback at the request of SAC or the SSW administration. Members are also expected to attend formal and informal cohort feedback meetings such as cohort or program gatherings. SAC members are required to provide additional opportunities for direct student feedback such as lunch-time meetings, classroom announcements, and drop-in office hours.
   3. SAC, as a whole, is responsible for sharing meeting minutes and other important information to all students and other community members via classroom announcements, blog updates, emails, and other strategies as defined by the group.
2. Other Committee Membership
   1. SAC representatives are expected to serve on SAC standing committees and task forces for specific issues or events as needed.
   2. Often, SAC are solicited for membership or participation with SSW-wide committees, such as the Program, Practicum, and Health and Safety Committees.

# Article III – SAC Sub-Committees

**Section 1: Sub-Committees/”Pods”**

In order to ensure the fulfillment of the SAC mission, SAC shall form sub-committees, or “pods”, with specific areas of focus. Pods are sub-groups of SAC that work on particular issues outside of regular SAC meeting times, keeping the rest of the group regularly updated on its activities and seeking support and involvement from the entire SAC as needed. Yearly pods are formed at the first SAC meeting of the school year. Some suggested yearly pods include: Social Justice, Field Education, and Social Events/SSW Community-Building. Temporary pods can also be formed during the school year for issues requiring short-term attention.

**Section 2: Sub-Committee Appointments**

Every SAC member is also a member of one of the PODS for a given year. Members with other committee responsibilities would likely be in a more support role in the pods and others should take a leadership position.

**Article IV – Decision Making**

**Section 1. Items Requiring Voting**

1. Approval of meeting minutes and agendas
2. By-law revisions. By-laws, including mission statement, shall be reviewed and voted upon at least every three years.
3. Funding Requests over $150 or perceived as controversial, out of the norm.
4. Official group declarations or recommendations to outside bodies
5. Any member of the SAC may call for an item of discussion to be made into an action item for voting.

**Section 2. Quorum**

In order for voting to take place, a minimum of 60% of SAC members must be in attendance.

**Section 3.** **Voting** **Process**

1. SAC is run by consensus when at all possible.
2. If consensus is not achieved after considerable discussion of a proposal, the Council will assume a talking circle-style format in order to allow each member to share her or his perspective. The guidelines for the talking circle format are as follows:
   1. Only one person may speak at a time. That person may talk until finished, always remembering to be respectful of time. Upon completing their turn, the member passes the opportunity to speak to the next person in the circle.
   2. Everyone listens to the person speaking, without interrupting.
   3. Everyone retains an opportunity to speak, though members may choose to pass.
   4. If there is agreement, then the decision is made, as long as there is a quorum at the meeting.
3. After the talking circle, if consensus is still not achieved, the council will use the democratic voting system and the proposal needs to receive a simple majority. There needs to be a quorum and all votes must include “yea,” “nay” and “abstain” options.
4. If there is not a quorum of voting members at a meeting, no decision may be made either by consensus or voting at that time. In this case voting may be postponed until the next meeting or an online survey may be created and sent to the members. The survey should be sent out with the minutes of the previous meeting and the members should be given two weeks to vote. The decision is determined again by simple majority, there needs to be a quorum and all votes must include a “yea,” “nay” and “abstain” options.
5. Any SAC member may request that a consensus discussion or vote be postponed to have time to receive feedback from his/her constituents. In this case, the vote would be pushed to the next meeting unless it was time sensitive. In that case, the option of an email vote will be considered.

**Article V – Meetings**

**Section 1. Schedule**

* 1. The first full SAC meeting of the year may be set by the office of the Director of Student Services. All subsequent meetings will be decided upon by active SAC members, with an expectation that either monthly standing or quarterly meetings are appropriate for the SAC to effectively carry out its mission. All students are encouraged to attend meetings.
  2. All regular SAC meetings will be scheduled at the beginning of the academic year to the extent possible.
  3. The individual responsible to facilitate any regularly scheduled or special meetings shall announce the meeting schedule to the student body at least one week in advance. Announcement should include the current agenda and most recently approved meeting minutes.

**Section 2. Cohort Specific Outreach**

SAC members commit to reaching out to the students in their cohorts in a meaningful way at least twice/quarter – this can be done in person or virtually. SAC members should be sure the students know who they are, share what SAC is doing, and gather feedback from the students in their cohort.

**Section 3. Meeting Leadership**

1. All meetings will be facilitated by two SAC members and facilitation rotates amongst the members. The facilitators are responsible for setting and distributing the agenda at least one week before the meeting to the SAC representatives and the student body of SSW. The facilitator is also responsible for leading the meeting and making sure that tasks are assigned for specific activities.
2. Volunteers for each meeting will be a rotation of members from each program/cohort represented. Facilitator and note-taker roles for next month’s meeting will be determined at the end of each meeting.

**Section 4. Documentation**

1. Note-taker will email or otherwise distribute meeting minutes to all SAC members and advisors within one week of meeting date for review.
2. Note-taker will incorporate any approved corrections agreed upon and redistribute asking for a vote of approval.
3. Once approval vote reaches quorum, SAC members may distribute them to their cohorts. To ensure communication and transparency to the student body, the Director of Student Services will post approved meeting minutes on School of Social Work SAC website within one week of receiving the final, approved minutes.

**Section 5. Standing Agenda Items**

1. Reports

Brief reports to share the most important information for SAC members to know about current committee activities; items requiring action or extended discussion should be addressed in other section of the agenda; brief questions or points of clarification welcomed. Includes reports on subcommittees, affiliate committees, ad-hoc committees, and cohorts.

1. Updates and Announcements

Brief informal updates and announcements on old business items or other matters important to SAC members that will not already be included in business items, discussion items, or reports; guest presentation may be moved to this section for respect of presenter’s time; brief questions or points of clarification welcomed.

1. Comments, Concerns, and Acknowledgments

Presentation of discussion items requested prior to meeting or called for from other agenda items; items brought for discussion should have a clear purpose such as a request for referral information, inviting member participation or feedback related to SAC activities, extended vetting of business items, or to honor individuals or groups; presentations from guests or students welcomed by request; time limits should be defined for each item to ensure all items receive attention.

1. Meeting Review

A review of important details from this meeting including member commitments to action, parking lot items, future agenda items, upcoming meetings and events; evaluation of meeting should also be undertaken; call for adjournment.

# Article VI – Advisors

**Section 1: Primary Advisors**

1. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Student Services shall be the advisors from the administration. They shall be ex officio members with no voting privileges.
2. SAC may request consultation from other faculty and staff as deemed necessary.

**Section 3**: **Duties and Responsibilities**

1. The administrators/ advisors shall assist with logistical coordinating of meetings and retreats, providing necessary materials and administrative support for adequate conduction of meetings, and any other needs set by the current SAC members.
2. SAC members understand that advisors will share information as openly as possible and within the confines of required confidentiality.