

# CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

## Preamble

*There are times when a body must come together, with common ideals and dilemmas, but also with differences of opinion and identity, to establish for themselves a union of strength and purpose. Though our student body has existed, represented by student association, for many decades, our power and meaningfulness has withered.*

*We hereby renew our vow to become one body, organized and united in the following shared purposes: to protect the rights of students on the campus of Southern Oregon University, to defend and promote quality of education, to maintain affordability and thus opportunity, to cultivate an atmosphere of camaraderie, and to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.*

*Let this body be a place for those with differing thoughts to speak openly, to hear and be heard, to learn and to discover. Let this body of students be the finest protector of those who would call it their association, as well as those who would ignore its works, equally and without prejudice. Let this body be a temple, dedicated to the twin causes of justice and equality, that they will flourish in our hearts and minds.*

*May all students and student organizations on this campus come to know our association as a guiding light in the darkness of the bureaucracy, stress, heartache and oppression that can come with daring to better oneself at a place of higher education.*

*We come together, not to build a fortress of rules and a pageant of officers, but to exalt in the joy of union. Though we are not of one mind, we can be of one student body, and we claim that right here and now.*

## 1. Bill of Rights

- 1.1 Students shall have the right of free expression. This right shall include but not be limited to the freedoms of speech, religion, press, peaceful assembly, petition and choice of personal appearance.
- 1.2 Students shall have the right to pursue an education to the best of their abilities for reasonable expense, and shall not be withheld this right without legal justification and due process.
- 1.3 Students shall have the right to exist as members of the SOU campus community free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, disability status, and veteran status.
- 1.4 Students shall have the right to inquire about all university policies, budgets, and practices and of their origins.
- 1.5 Students shall have the right to be informed of new or revised university policies and be given an opportunity to provide input, criticism, or rejection.
- 1.6 Students shall retain the right to read, rest, and study free from undue interference.
- 1.7 Students shall have the right to information about their classes and faculty, including but not limited to, accurate and updated syllabi for their classes, and information regarding the evaluation of SOU faculty and courses.
- 1.8 Students shall have the right to form groups and organizations within the guidelines of the university and ASSOU.
- 1.9 Students shall have the right to legal redress free from retaliation if their rights are infringed upon in any way.
- 1.10 The student body shall have the right to form a government to preserve and protect the rights guaranteed in this constitution.

## 2. Overview of the Association

- 2.1 The organized government of the student body of Southern Oregon University shall hereby be named the Associated Students of Southern Oregon University (ASSOU).
- 2.2 A member of ASSOU shall be any student enrolled in one or more classes at Southern Oregon University. A member need not enroll in classes over the summer term in order to maintain membership. Enrollment at SOU is the only requirement for membership and no student may be denied entry into ASSOU for any reason other than enrollment status.
- 2.3 An officer of ASSOU shall be any student within ASSOU who is granted or delegated powers through election or appointment. No member of ASSOU may be denied office within ASSOU on the basis of

- race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, disability status, or veteran status.
- 2.4 ASSOU shall be divided into three branches of government, with an advisory council serving as a guide for the vision and direction of the organized student body.
  - 2.5 Each branch of government shall be separate, with no student serving as an officer in more than one branch of ASSOU.
  - 2.6 Each branch of government shall have rules that together, along with this document, those pieces of legislation passed by the ASSOU Senate, and those measures passed through initiative petition or referendum, shall comprise the body of law within ASSOU.
  - 2.7 The advisory council, which shall not be considered a branch of government, shall hold emergency powers and the right to speak for the student government.
  - 2.8 ASSOU formally recognizes and claims the right to monitor and administrate the following student organizations: the Residence Hall Association of SOU, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee of SOU, and the Inter-Club Council of SOU.

### 3. Legislative Branch

- 3.1 There shall be a legislative branch of ASSOU, dedicated to providing guidance and instruction as to the policies and stances of ASSOU through representation.
- 3.2 Composition of the Legislature
  - 3.2.1 The legislative branch shall be a representative body, called the ASSOU Senate.
  - 3.2.2 The Senate shall be comprised of Senators, who shall be paid officers of ASSOU, serving specific Senate seats.
  - 3.2.3 Senators shall be elected to their applied Senate seats by a simple plurality vote in a general election.
  - 3.2.4 A senatorial election shall be held once per year in the spring term.
  - 3.2.5 A Senator shall serve until the next duly elected Senator has been certified to have been elected to their Senate seat.
  - 3.2.6 In the event that a Senator may not continue to serve out the duration of their term the Senate shall appoint a new Senator to serve until the next general election of the Senate seat in question.
- 3.3 Duties of the Legislature
  - 3.3.1 The legislative branch shall review and comment on the state of the university, the student body, and the world.

- 3.3.2 The legislative branch shall reach out to and communicate with the students it represents.
- 3.3.3 The legislative branch shall ensure the representation of students who are traditionally underrepresented among the membership of the Senate.
- 3.3.4 Senators shall participate in the allocation of the student incidental fee.
- 3.3.5 The Senate shall elect a Senator to be known as the Speaker of the Senate, who shall serve as the leader and coordinator of the Senate.
- 3.3.6 The Speaker of the Senate shall serve as chair at meetings of the Senate, except when that duty is delegated by the Speaker of the Senate to other members of the Senate.
- 3.3.7 The legislative branch shall archive all legislation, rules and meeting minutes of the legislature, working with the executive branch to ensure that those documents are made publicly available.
- 3.3.8 The legislative branch shall endeavor for relevancy, changing its policies, rules, and composition with the times.
- 3.3.9 The legislative branch shall have regular meetings.
- 3.3.10 The legislative branch shall dismiss or censure ASSOU officers who fail to uphold their assigned duties.
- 3.3.11 The legislative branch shall be comprised of at least ten and no more than thirty Senate seats.
- 3.3.12 The legislative branch shall maintain a code of ethics within its legislative rules, which shall apply to members of the legislature.
- 3.3.13 The legislative branch shall create and maintain rules governing the use of all student created fees, including but not limited to the student incidental fee.

#### 3.4 Powers of the Legislature

- 3.4.1 The legislative branch shall have the power to pass binding legislation by a majority vote of the Senate.
- 3.4.2 The legislative branch shall have the power to make and amend legislative rules by a vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Senate.
- 3.4.3 The legislative branch shall have the power to approve or deny proposals for the ASSOU budget.
- 3.4.4 The legislative branch shall have the power to censure ASSOU officers.
- 3.4.5 The legislative branch shall have the power to fully carry out the dismissal of ASSOU officers. Doing so requires a simple majority

vote of the Senate to initiate debate, unless debate is initiated by a majority vote of the judicial branch. Confirmation of the decision to dismiss an officer must be made by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

- 3.4.6 The legislative branch shall have the power to appropriate the student fee.
- 3.4.7 The legislative branch shall have the power to override a presidential veto of legislation by a vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Senate.
- 3.4.8 The legislative branch shall have the power to refer any subject to a decision of the student body, by a majority vote of the Senate. Decision shall be made in a general election and shall pass by a majority vote, unless the decision is to amend this constitution, in which case two-thirds of the votes cast must be in support of the amendment in order for it to pass. This process shall be known as referendum.
- 3.4.9 The legislative branch shall have the power to create committees and task-forces for the purpose of executing its assigned duties and legislated policies.
- 3.4.10 The legislative branch shall have its own reserve of funds, called the senate reserve, which only it may choose to spend.

#### 4. Executive Branch

- 4.1 There shall be an executive branch of ASSOU, dedicated to the administration of ASSOU and the execution of its policies.
- 4.2 The Presidency
  - 4.2.1 The executive branch shall be led by the Student Body President who shall be a paid officer of ASSOU.
  - 4.2.2 The Student Body President shall be assisted by the Student Body Vice President who shall be a paid officer of ASSOU.
  - 4.2.3 The Student Body President and Vice President shall be elected to office on a single ticket of candidacy by a majority vote in a general election.
  - 4.2.4 A presidential election shall be held once per year in the Spring Term.
  - 4.2.5 In the event that the Student Body President may not continue to serve out the duration of their term the order of succession shall be in this order: the Student Body Vice President, the Speaker of the Senate, the Chief Justice of the Judiciary.
  - 4.2.6 The Student Body President and Student Body Vice President shall serve until new officers have been duly elected to replace them.
  - 4.2.7 In the event that the position of Student Body Vice President

is vacant, the executive branch shall appoint a new Student Body Vice President.

4.3 Duties of the Executive

4.3.1 The executive branch shall administrate general elections.

4.3.2 The executive branch shall appoint the membership of the judicial branch, and determine whom among their membership shall serve as Chief Justice.

4.3.3 The executive branch shall maintain a code of conduct within its executive rules to apply to members of the executive branch.

4.3.4 Academic Affairs

4.3.4.1 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the quality of academics.

4.3.4.2 The executive branch shall appoint an officer to serve as the student liaison to the SOU Faculty Senate.

4.3.4.3 The executive branch shall administrate a process for the assessment of faculty members at SOU.

4.3.5 Communications

4.3.5.1 The executive branch shall administrate the use of publicity to advertise the events, projects, actions and official stances of all three branches of ASSOU.

4.3.5.2 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the governmental transparency of ASSOU, making all official documents and rules of ASSOU open and available to the student body.

4.3.5.3 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the visibility of ASSOU.

4.3.6 Financial Affairs

4.3.6.1 The executive branch shall administrate the finances of ASSOU.

4.3.6.2 The executive branch shall propose the yearly budget of ASSOU.

4.3.6.3 The executive branch shall administrate the process of allocating the student incidental fee.

4.3.7 Governmental Affairs

4.3.7.1 The executive branch shall act as liaison to the local, state and federal government with the goal of improving the availability and quality of education at SOU.

4.3.7.2 The Student Body President shall serve as a voting member and representative of ASSOU to the Oregon Student Association.

4.3.7.3 The executive branch shall appoint voting members of the Oregon Student Association boards, committees and councils as needed.

- 4.3.7.4 The executive branch shall work to ensure the student voice in politics through voter registration and education drives.
- 4.3.8 Student Advocacy
  - 4.3.8.1 The executive branch shall provide representation and guidance for those students who need personal advocacy.
  - 4.3.8.2 The executive branch shall ensure student power on campus, working to ensure a student voice is heard in the making of all policies affecting them.
  - 4.3.8.3 The executive branch shall ensure that the freshman class is involved in student government.
  - 4.3.8.4 The executive branch shall endeavor to celebrate and improve diversity within all aspects of the university, including but not limited to ASSOU, student clubs, organizations and resource centers.
- 4.3.9 Student Life
  - 4.3.9.1 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the quality of student involvement in athletics.
  - 4.3.9.2 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the quality of student clubs, organizations and resource centers.
  - 4.3.9.3 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the quality of programs and policies in the residence halls and student housing.
  - 4.3.9.4 The executive branch shall maintain and improve the quality of extra-curricular and co-curricular programs and events.
- 4.4 Powers of the Executive
  - 4.4.1 The executive branch shall have the power to delegate duties and powers to executive officers, employees, committees and task-forces.
  - 4.4.2 The Student Body President shall have the power to make and amend executive rules regarding those duties assigned to the executive branch and those legislated policies it must execute.
  - 4.4.3 The executive branch shall have the power to create committees and task-forces for the purpose of executing its assigned duties and legislated policies.
  - 4.4.4 The executive branch shall have the power to fire officers, employees and appointees within the executive branch.
  - 4.4.5 The Student Body President and Student Body Vice President shall have the power to speak for the student body.
  - 4.4.6 The Student Body President shall have the power to approve or veto legislation created by the legislative branch. Should five days

go by without presidential veto the legislation shall become law. Once legislation is approved by the Student Body President it becomes law.

4.4.7 The Student Body President shall have the power to veto parliamentary motions of the Senate, so long as the veto is made within five days of the motion's passage.

4.4.8 The executive branch shall have the power to propose changes to the budget of the ASSOU.

#### 4.5 Confirmation of Executive Decisions

4.5.1 Executive appointments to positions, committees and task-forces which carry delegated duties and powers of the executive branch are subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

4.5.2 Executive appointments of the membership and Chief Justice of the judicial branch are subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

4.5.3 The yearly budget of ASSOU and changes to the budget are subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

4.5.4 Executive appointments to the position of Student Body Vice President are subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

## 5. Judicial Branch

5.1 There shall be a judicial branch of ASSOU, dedicated to the interpretation and enforcement of the rules and legislation of ASSOU.

### 5.2 Composition of the Judiciary

5.2.1 The judicial branch shall be comprised of five members, called Justices.

5.2.2 The judicial branch shall be led by one of their members, called the Chief Justice, who shall call and chair meetings of the judicial branch.

5.2.3 The position of Justice shall be a paid position.

5.2.4 The membership of the judicial branch shall be appointed in the spring term by the executive branch, though appointments to fill vacant seats may be made throughout the school year.

### 5.3 Duties of the Judiciary

5.3.1 Members of the judicial branch shall all apply for positions on the SOU student conduct boards.

5.3.2 The judicial branch shall monitor and advise on the ethics and adherence to the codes of conduct of all branches of ASSOU.

5.3.3 The judicial branch shall review pending or recently passed legislation and comment when legislation is in violation of existing rules.

5.3.4 The judicial branch shall work with the executive branch to make all public documents of the judiciary available to the student body.

5.3.5 The judicial branch shall document all proceedings and

decisions in an orderly manner.

- 5.3.6 The judicial branch shall arbitrate disputes between the executive and legislative branches.
- 5.3.7 The judicial branch shall hear appeals and grievances pertaining to violations of the rules and legislation of ASSOU.
- 5.3.8 The judicial branch shall make the final decision as to the certification of the legitimacy of general elections.
- 5.3.9 The judicial branch shall censure or impeach those officers of ASSOU who are in breach of their proscribed code of conduct.
- 5.3.10 The judicial branch shall maintain a code of ethics within its judicial rules to apply to members of the judiciary.

#### 5.4 Powers of the Judiciary

- 5.4.1 The judicial branch shall have power to submit opinions on rules and legislation concerning rules conflicts to be read by the executive and legislative branches.
- 5.4.2 The judicial branch shall have the power to make final and binding interpretations of those laws and rules applicable to ASSOU.
- 5.4.3 The judicial branch shall have the power to order an officer to carry out a particular duty that officer has neglected.
- 5.4.4 The judicial branch shall have the power to begin dismissal proceedings for ASSOU officers, to be conducted by the legislative branch.
- 5.4.5 The judicial branch shall have the power to censure ASSOU officers.
- 5.4.6 The judicial branch shall have the power to make and amend judicial rules concerning the operations of the judicial branch by a majority vote.

### 6. Advisory Council of ASSOU

- 6.1 There shall be an advisory council of ASSOU.
- 6.2 The advisory council shall be comprised of the Student Body President, the Speaker of the Senate, the Chief Justice, the President of the Residence Hall Association of SOU, and the chair of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee of SOU.
- 6.3 The advisory council shall work to ensure that all student activities follow a shared vision, to be determined by the advisory council.
- 6.4 The advisory council shall have the power to speak for the student government and other student organizations on campus.
- 6.5 The advisory council shall be led and chaired by the Student Body President.
- 6.6 Emergency Powers
  - 6.6.1 In the case of emergency or otherwise unexpected student body related events when the three branches of ASSOU are not in session, the Advisory Council shall have the power to act as the

student government, so long as those actions are warranted by the situation.

- 6.6.2 Actions taken through the emergency powers of the advisory council may be overturned by a vote of the judicial branch.
- 6.6.3 Actions taken through the emergency powers of the advisory council must be communicated to the three branches of ASSOU upon regular session of those bodies.
- 6.6.4 Advisory council emergency powers may not be used to amend the ASSOU constitution.

## 7. Initiative and Recall

- 7.1 The student body shall have the power to make binding decisions by vote in a general election, through the process of petitioned initiative.
- 7.2 Among the possible actions an initiative petition may take is the recall of an appointed or elected officer of ASSOU. Passage of such an initiative shall be sufficient to immediately remove the officer from office upon certification of the election.
- 7.3 In order for an initiative to qualify for placement on a ballot in a general election a number of signatures must be collected for that purpose equaling or exceeding ten percent of the membership of ASSOU.
- 7.4 Should an initiative, voted upon in a general election, receive a majority of those votes cast on the initiative it shall be considered binding upon certification of the election, with the exception of constitutional amendments, which shall require two-thirds of those votes cast in order to qualify for passage into law.

## 8. Amendment

- 8.1 This constitution may be amended by an initiative petition or legislative referendum.
- 8.2 In order for an amendment to take effect at least two-thirds of those votes cast on the issue in the general election must be in support of the amendment.