

**The University of Minnesota**  
**School of Public Health Student Senate Constitution**

Revised on March 1, 2021

*Adopted from the Constitution of the Law School Student Council at the University of Minnesota.*

**Ratified on April 1, 2019 by the SPH Student Body**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health Student Senate (SPHSS) is to serve as a liaison between the students, faculty, and staff and to assist student organizations in hosting school-wide events. The SPHSS will:

1. Work to create a positive and cohesive environment for students to learn, work and socialize.
2. Facilitate communication and cooperation among the students, faculty, staff, and administration of the School of Public Health and in connection with the greater University.
3. Promote professional development and advocate for student research by linking students with academic and financial opportunities.
4. Promote an appreciation of diversity and an exchange of ideas within the School of Public Health and across the Academic Health Center.
5. Encourage opportunities for student engagement in local, national, and global communities.

### **Article I: Name and Purpose**

1. The Student Governing Body of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health shall be known as the University of Minnesota School of Public Health Student Senate (SPHSS).
2. SPHSS is the collective elected and appointed representative organization of the student body at the School of Public Health. Its purpose is to improve the School of Public Health by providing a robust voice and ample resources to support student interests. Along with student groups, faculty, and administration, the Senate will shape the current and future state of educational, professional, and social experiences at the School of Public Health. SPHSS is empowered to pass bylaws to govern normal operation of the SPHSS and to further these purposes.
3. SPHSS shall operate as a non-profit organization.
4. SPHSS shall abide by the applicable rules and policies of the University of Minnesota as well as all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

### **Article II: Authority**

1. Legislative
  - a. SPHSS shall have the following authority:
    - i. To request funding from the Dean's office, as well as other governing organizations dealing with professional students.
    - ii. To consult and advise faculty, staff, and outside organizations on the opinions of public health students on various issues.
    - iii. To appoint student Senators to various external committees.
    - iv. To create all bylaws, which are necessary for execution of the authority given by this constitution.

### **Article III: Membership**

1. Membership in SPHSS is open to all SPH students without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, creed, marital status, public assistance status or sexual orientation.

2. All representatives and officers must be a student services fee paying student at the University of Minnesota and enrolled in at least six credits. Any degree or certificate seeking student in good standing at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health may seek election for any office for which they are eligible. No student shall be elected President of the Senate who will not have completed at least one full academic year at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health by the end of the Spring Semester.
3. Appointed Student Senators will hold a position for term as defined:
  - a. A Senator's term takes place for two academic years after being appointed by the Executive Board in the fall, with the following exceptions:
    - i. A Senator is elected to an Executive Board office.
    - ii. A Senator violates the voluntary contract as described in the SPHSS bylaws.
    - iii. A Senator chooses to resign from their position as specified in *Article III*, Section
4. SPHSS Demographics
  - a. The general Senate will be composed of members from each division to best represent the collective student body of the School of Public Health.
  - b. Each of the following divisions will have appointed Senators:
    - i. Biostatistics
    - ii. Epidemiology and Community Health
    - iii. Health Policy & Management
    - iv. Environmental Health Services
    - v. School wide
  - c. The number of chairs for each of the specified divisions are distinguished in the bylaws. These numbers will be reviewed and updated every four years to better reflect the student body and emerging programs.
  - d. There shall be an Executive Board of Officers elected by the SPH Student body each spring term which will be comprised of: President, Vice President, Director of Finance, Director of Communications, & Secretary;
  - e. Senators shall be appointed by the Executive Board and sitting Senators during the beginning weeks of each academic year, according to procedures in the bylaws regarding appointment of program representatives;
  - f. Vacancies in the general Senate shall be appointed by the incoming Executive Board;
  - g. Vacancies in the President of the Senate office shall be filled by the Vice President for the remainder of that term;
  - h. As available and necessary, other Senators shall be appointed and serve according to duties outlined in the voluntary contract;
5. Non-Senate Members
  - a. Students who are currently enrolled in the University of Minnesota School of Public Health can attend full Senate meetings and actively suggest inaugural events or improvements for SPHSS advancement. Non-Senate members cannot vote on Senate decisions.
  - b. To be recognized as an official SPH student group and for eligibility to receive funding from SPHSS, student groups/organizations must send one representative to all SPHSS

general meetings. These organization representatives shall be non-voting members of the Senate. Refer to **Article VI** for more funding details;

6. Voting Body

- a. Voting members of SPHSS must be degree-seeking students in the School of Public Health. Voting Senate members must be either elected by the SPH student body or appointed to their position by the Executive Board.
- b. The voting member of the of SPHSS shall include: Executive Board and general appointed SPHSS members, known as “Senators.”
- c. No member shall have more than one vote, regardless of the number of positions served.
- d. The Senate president will cast a vote only in the event of a tie.
- e. Voting members are required to attend all regular Senate meetings.
- f. The SPH student body and outside representatives are not eligible to vote.
- g. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members of Senate;
- h. Any issue requiring a vote may not be resolved without a quorum present.

7. Appointment Protocol

- a. Senators will be appointed to a term tantamount to their degree program.
- b. Senator appointments will be made in the first three weeks of classes in the fall semester.
  - i. If a Senator resigns, vacant positions will be added to the next fall election.
  - ii. If a second year student fills a vacant position, they will be appointed to finish out the previous Senator’s two-year term.
- c. Executive Board members will be elected in the Spring for the upcoming academic year.

8. Resignation

- a. For general Senate members, resignations must be sent in writing to the Executive Board. Vacancies may be filled by appointment or call from SPH student body.
- b. For Executive Board positions, resignations may come in the form of writing or, if necessary, a majority vote of the Executive Board and approval from the Faculty Adviser.

**Article IV: Duties**

1. SPHSS Members Shall:

- a. Honor the University of Minnesota Board of Regents Student Conduct Code;
- b. Adhere to the duties and expectations outlined in the voluntary contract;
  - c. Contribute to raising money and managing expenses for School of Public Health related events as well as student professional development and research presentation grants;
- d. SPHSS solely appoints student representatives to any official committee at the School of Public Health;
- e. Serve as a liaison between the student body and official committees (i.e.the School of Public Health Alumni Society Board, PSG, CHIP, AHCSCC, EPC);
- f. Serve as the unified voice of the School of Public Health student body;
- g. Conduct, manage, supervise, and direct all programs, activities, and projects in which SPHSS deems in the best interest of the School of Public Health student body; Refer to

*Article VI* for Budget guidelines.

2. Executive Board Members:

a. **President**

- i. Shall be the official representative and spokesperson of the Senate.
- ii. Shall preside at all meetings and be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.
- iii. Shall, in the event of a tie, cast the final vote during regular Senate meetings.
- iv. Shall be the chairperson of the Executive Board.
- v. Shall appoint a representative of the Senate if needed.
- vi. Shall serve or appoint a representative for the SPH Policy Council which includes the following duties:
  1. Represent the interests of the students in regards to educational policies and issues.
  2. Study and make recommendations to the Policy Council and the Dean regarding modification of or additions to the School of Public Health Educational policies and issues of school-wide importance.
- vii. Shall be responsible for announcing all upcoming meetings and for preparing the first draft of an agenda for each regular meeting and forwarding it to the Director of Communications prior to the session.
- viii. Shall appoint committees as needed for the Senate.

b. **Vice President**

- i. Shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President and may act as the official representative/spokesperson for the Senate at the request of the President.
  1. Attend meetings with the President and the Associate Dean for Student Life.
  2. Meet with the President for planning purposes or to discuss how the President's duties may be supported by the Vice President (upon request).
- ii. Shall assume the office of President in the event that that office is vacated.
- iii. Shall serve as an advisor to the Senate concerning Parliamentary Procedures and shall ensure that all business is conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- iv. Shall be responsible for overseeing the activities of and serving as an advisor to the Committee Chairs and Major Representatives; shall oversee the Special Events Committee.
- v. Shall oversee the Special Events Committee and shall be responsible for managing and tracking the success of such special events, including measurements of attendance, student feedback, and more.

c. **Director of Finance**

- i. Shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- ii. Shall maintain the Senate account including disbursement of Senate funding and verification that all receipts or paperwork for reimbursement meet the Senate

and School of Public Health rules.

1. Work with President to establish budget for the fiscal year (done prior to the start of the fall semester).
  2. Keep track of budget spending.
  3. Manage disbursement of Senate-funded grants and scholarships.
- iii. Shall be responsible for advising the Senate as to the current status of the budget and serves as an advisor on Senate spending, assuring the Senate does not spend in excess of its budget.
1. Oversee spending on Senate related matters.
  2. Oversee the Grants committee.
- iv. Shall meet on a regular basis with the Chief Financial Officer of the School of Public Health along with his/her staff to ensure that the Senate accounts are audited and properly balanced.

**d. Director of Communications**

- i. Shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President, and Director of Finance.
- ii. Shall be responsible for the listserv of student emails and SPHSS Newsletter.
- iii. Shall be responsible for updating Senate's social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, UMN SPH website, evites, etc. with decisions, actions and upcoming events.
- iv. Shall be the liaison between the Academic Health Centers Office of Communications and the Senate.
- v. Shall be responsible for managing the Senate Bulletin Board in the SPHere.
- vi. Shall be responsible for assisting SPHSS with advertising events.

**e. Secretary**

- i. Shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President, the Vice President, Director of Finance, and Director of Communications listed before.
- ii. Shall produce and conserve historical documents of all Senate-related events/ activities in an archive for future Senates. This may include, event summary and commentary, photos, financial information, student issues & solutions, Dean meeting notes, etc.
- iii. Shall be responsible for maintaining the Gopher Tip Line.
- iv. Shall be responsible for announcing all upcoming meetings and forwarding finalized agenda to all members of the Senate prior to the meeting.
  1. Shall be responsible for taking meeting minutes and sending it out to the Senate members.
- v. Shall post all SPHSS Meeting Minutes to the UMN SPH website for public consumption in a timely manner.
- vi. Shall evaluate and monitor general and Executive Board elections in the fall and spring respectively.

**Article V: Procedures**

1. This Constitution shall include bylaws.

2. Amendments to the bylaws shall be effective upon adoption by a two-thirds voting majority of SPHSS.
3. All bylaw proposals must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least one week in advance of a regularly scheduled meeting of SPHSS.
4. SPHSS shall meet at such times and places as may be designated by the President on the President's own motion or at the request of any two members of SPHSS.
5. Vacancies under this Constitution shall occur upon resignation, death, removal, or withdrawal from the School of Public Health.
6. All disputes under this Constitution shall be decided by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and all decisions of the Senate shall be final.
7. SPHSS shall administer all elections and appointments by methods outlined in the bylaws.
8. Any member may be removed for negligence or malfeasance by a majority vote of the Executive Board and approval from the faculty adviser.
9. The Senate shall not provide monetary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its directors or membership.  
This does not restrict the payment of wages, salaries, or incentives by the club for services rendered.

#### **Article VI: Finance**

1. Persons Eligible for Funding
  - a. Only School of Public Health students and groups may receive funding. An SPH group must be registered with the Student Union and Activities to receive funding without being co-sponsored by SPHSS.
2. Senate Funding Sources
  - a. In general, SPHSS funds come from the UMN School of Public Health. Other sources of funding is available through other professional/graduate Senates as needed for events.
3. Grants Committee
  - a. The Grants Committee is chaired by the SPHSS Director of Finance.
  - b. The Director of Finance is in charge of appointing members to the committee.
  - c. The committee sets and approves all grants/funding amounts that are then voted on by the full Senate.
  - d. The Grants Committee is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of the following policies.
4. Budget Allocations Transparency
  - a. The yearly budget for SPHSS shall be accessible to students via the SPH website.
  - b. The budget shall contain proposed and actual allocations for the fall and spring semesters.
  - c. The budget shall include income, operational expenses, and programming expenses.
5. Student Funding Sources
  - a. Professional Development Grants for Students
    - i. SPH students can apply for funds up to the set amount made by the Grants Committee each year.

- ii. Students can apply for grants up to three months in advance and one month post-event.
- iii. All grant money will be in the form of reimbursement to the student.
- b. Activity Funding Grants for SPH student groups
  - i. In order for an SPH student group to receive activity funding, they must:
    - 1. Must be a registered group with the Student Union and Activities.
    - 2. Contact the Director of Finance to review requested activity funding.
  - ii. SPH student groups can apply for funds up to the set amount made by the Grants Committee each year.
    - 1. Student group funding is handled by the Grants Committee and does not need to be approved by the full Senate. However, if SPHSS is collaborating (*see cii*).
  - iii. The Grants Committee will handle funding priority as needed.
- c. SPHSS Events
  - i. The Grants Committee may allow additional funding for partnership events and hallmark events as needed.
  - ii. Events that are hosted by SPHSS must be presented to the full Senate with a budget breakdown with itemized costs, information on collaborating entities and involvement (if any), marketing strategies, and attendance/impact goals, etc.

#### **Article VII: Dissolution**

1. In the case of dissolution, SPHSS will distribute remaining funds equally between remaining registered student organizations at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

#### **Article VIII: Ratification and Amendments**

1. This Constitution shall be effective upon adoption by SPHSS and by a simple majority of the SPH student body voting in a referendum to ratify the Constitution.
2. Amendments to this Constitution shall be effective upon adoption by the SPHSS and by a simple majority of the SPH student body voting in a referendum to ratify Amendments to this Constitution.
3. The SPHSS has the authority to amend *Article X: Bylaws* without a vote of the SPH Student Body.
4. Each change will be documented at the end of the Constitution as an “amendment”.

#### **Article IX: Expectations of the SPHSS Faculty Adviser**

1. Adviser will meet with the President quarterly to discuss conduct and concerns of the SPHSS.
2. The adviser will inform the President if a Senator fails to maintain good academic standing.
3. Adviser has the final decision in removing a Senate member.

#### **Article X: Bylaws**

Bylaws are rules that the Senate considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to Senate members and require a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate for passage.



1. Election Procedures for Executive Board members:
  - a. Positions include: the President, Vice President, Director of Finance, Director of Communications, and Secretary. These positions are granted in the spring term previous to the following academic year of holding position. The current Executive Board will decide the date of elections and any student in the School of Public Health is encouraged to nominate a candidate anonymously.
  - b. Nominations should begin at least two months prior to the last day of classes. Nominations will be accepted at a SPHSS meeting and accepted via email from the general SPH student body.
  - c. Nominees will be contacted and allowed to accept or reject the nomination. If a nominee accepts, he/she will receive a position description for the position he /she has been nominated for and will then have one week to compose a candidacy statement for why he/she is qualified for the Executive Board position. This statement shall be a maximum of 500 words. The statements will be posted on the Senate Bulletin Board as well as online and through the School of Public Health email list by a date specified by the Executive Board. Current Executive Board will develop the electoral ballot through All Campus Election Commission at the Student Union Activities Office. All students who are enrolled in spring semester in the School of Public Health will be able to vote. Elections will be conducted for the duration of one calendar week, with new Executive Board being elected through popular vote.
  - d. If an Executive Board position does not have any accepted nominations, a second call for nominations will be made.
2. Appointment procedures for program representatives:
  - a. Program representatives will nominate him or herself at the start of the fall academic semester.
  - b. The Executive Board and sitting Senators will appoint, by simple majority vote, representatives from the pool of nominees.
  - c. These divisions and the number of Senate chairs are based on the proportion of students in each division to the total of SPH students. The breakdown is as follows:
    - i. Biostatistics Chairs (1)- PhD, MS, MPH
    - ii. Epidemiology and Community Health Chairs (5)-PhD, MS, MPH
    - iii. Health Policy & Management Chairs (5)-PhD, MS, MPH
    - iv. Environmental Health Services Chairs (2)-PhD, MS, MPH
    - v. School Wide Chairs (2)- any program that is not included in one of the above, formal divisions of the school. PhD, MS, MPH, Certificates, 4+1
  - d. The allocation of Senate chairs is to be reviewed every two years starting in the Fall of 2020 semester by the incoming Executive Board.
  - e. If a program seat is vacant, notifications will be sent to the larger student body to fill in the seat under the discretion of the current Executive Board.
  - f. If a seat remains vacant after all prior efforts have been conducted, the seat shall be filled, at the discretion of the current Executive Board, by an available candidate without regard to program.

3. Voluntary Contract

The voluntary contract is a fluid document outlining the expectations of all Senate members

- a. Every Senate member will read and sign the voluntary contract at the beginning of each academic year.
  - b. The voluntary contract is under the purview of the Executive Board and shall be reviewed and edited prior to the start of each academic year.
4. Asynchronous online voting via the [SPHSenate Slack](#)
- a. A public #debate channel and a private #voting channel will be added to the SPHSenate Slack.
    - i. The public #debate channel will be available to all members of the SPHSS, including ex officio members.
    - ii. The private #voting channel will only be available to voting members of the SPHSS.
  - b. Any member of the SPHSS may propose a motion in the #debate channel using the forms of Robert's Rules. A proposed motion must be seconded *within 24 hours*.
  - c. If a proposed motion is seconded *within 24 hours*, the Debate Period begins at the time of seconding. The Debate Period will last for *48 hours*, during which time all members of the SPHSS may argue in favor of or against the proposed motion in the #debate channel.
  - d. After the end of the Debate Period, the Voting Period will begin. All voting members of the SPHSS will have *48 hours* to vote in favor of or against the proposed motion via poll in the #voting channel.
    - i. *Procedural Note:* (1) the #voting channel is open to all Senators and (2) Senators are expected to keep up-to-date with the SPHSenate Slack, the requirements of a voting quorum will always be met on the #voting channel during the academic year.
  - e. The poll will close at the end of the Voting Period, at which point the results are final.
  - f. In the interest of transparency, the following will be posted to the [SPHSS website](#) in a timely manner:
    - i. The language of the motion.
    - ii. The person(s) who proposed the motion.
    - iii. The person(s) who seconded the motion.
    - iv. The results of the vote on the motion.
    - v. The date of the ratification or rejection of the motion.
5. Admission of new SPHSS voting members from parallel student leadership bodies, specifically the Council of Graduate Students (COGS), the Professional Student Government (PSG), and the University Senate.
- a. The position holder of each of the following positions can become, in their official capacity, a voting member of SPHSS:
    - i. Any member of the Executive Committee of COGS
    - ii. Any member of the Executive Branch of PSG
    - iii. Environmental Health Program Representative to COGS
    - iv. Biostatistics Program Representative to COGS

- v. Epidemiology Program Representative to COGS
  - vi. Health Services Research, Policy & Administration Representative to COGS
  - vii. Clinical Research Program Representative to COGS
  - viii. SPH Representative (1) to PSG
  - ix. SPH Representative (2) to PSG
  - x. University Senator from SPH
- b. Following their respective elections and/or appointments, the above position holders will receive written invitations from the SPHSS Executive Board to join the SPHSS as voting members. To be formally admitted, the above officers must accept this invitation in writing and sign the current SPHSS senator contract.
  - c. If the position holder of any of the above positions is already a voting member of SPHSS, they will not receive an additional vote.
6. Members of the Executive Board will be eligible for a stipend.
- a. The stipend is to be paid by the School of Public Health with approval from the Advisor and the Chief Finance Officer of the School of Public Health (CFO).
  - b. The stipend is to be set in consultation with the Advisor, the CFO, and the sitting Senators.
    - i. Any increase in the stipend over the year before must be approved, in writing, by the Advisor, the CFO, and a majority vote of the Senate.
    - ii. The stipend is to be paid out in two installments:
      1. The first installment will be at the end of the Fall semester before the end of the calendar year.
      2. The second installment will be at the end of the Spring semester no later than the date of commencement.
  - c. To be eligible for the stipend, each Executive Board member is required to sign an contract that outlines the basic rules and responsibilities of the board
    - i. A draft contract should be presented to the Senate at the beginning of the Fall Semester and approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate
  - d. Before each of the installments is to be paid out to the executive board members, they are each to be subject to a vote of no confidence.
    - i. The vote of no confidence is to be a mechanism utilized by the sitting Senators to indicate that an Executive Board member has fallen short or failed in their duties.
    - ii. This vote can be called by a motion and can be passed with a simple majority.
      1. Executive Board members cannot cast votes in the vote of no confidence.
    - iii. An affirmative vote of no confidence restricts the stipend from being paid out, and:
      1. Can be overturned by a two-thirds majority
      2. Does not immediate trigger a removal vote

**School of Public Health Student Senate Constitution**  
*2020-2021 Academic Year*

**Officers' Signatures**

2020-2021 Academic Year:

Name: Ian Passe	Signature: <i>Ian Passe</i>	Date: 2020-09-12
Name: Keelia Silvis	Signature: <i>Keelia Silvis</i>	Date: 2020-09-12
Name: Susana Carlos	Signature: <i>Susana Carlos</i>	Date: 2020-10-08
Name: Sarah Steffen	Signature: <i>Sarah Steffen</i>	Date: 2021-03-11
Name: Sophia Ibrahim Ali	Signature: <i>Sophia Ibrahim Ali</i>	Date: 2020-09-13

2019-2020 Academic Year:

Name: Allison Fischbach	Signature: <i>Allison Fischbach</i>	Date: 06/28/2019
Name: Zachary Maino	Signature: <i>Zachary Maino</i>	Date: 07/10/2019
Name: Teale Greylord	Signature: <i>Teale Greylord</i>	Date: 06/28/2019
Name: Puleng Moshele	Signature: <i>Puleng Moshelle</i>	Date: 07/09/2019
Name: Diksha Srishyla	Signature: <i>Diksha Srishyla</i>	Date: 11/20/2019