

**University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point  
College of Fine Arts and Communication**

Creating a System of Sustainable Position Transitions  
in the  
Student Government Association

By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Background Information | 3**

Problem  
Objective  
Significance

## **Supporting Literature | 4**

Working Assumptions | 5  
The Structures of Organizational Memory | 5  
Socialization Processes | 8

## **Project Process | 11**

## **Project Reflection | 13**

Response Summary | 13  
What Went Well | 13  
What Was Challenging | 14  
Feedback from SGA Members | 15  
Final Thoughts | 16

## **Bibliography | 17**

## **Appendix | 18**

Student Government Association Organizational Chart | 19  
Student Government Association Bylaws: Position Descriptions | 19

1. President of the Student Body
2. Vice President of the Student Body
3. Chief of Staff
4. Budget Director
5. Communication and Public Relations Director
6. Environmental and Sustainability Director
7. Graphic Designer & Web Weaver
8. Health Services Student Director
9. Inclusivity Director
10. Legislative Affairs Director
11. Student Life and Academic Affairs Director
12. University Centers Student Director
13. Sergeant-at-Arms
17. Speaker of the Senate (*Head of Legislative Branch*)

Student Government Association Judicial Bylaws: Membership | 29

1. Chief Justice (*Head of Judicial Branch*)

Position Information and Accomplishments Form | 29  
Resolution to Amend SGA Bylaws, to Constitution Review on April 2, 2018 | 30

## Background Information

### **Problem:**

Membership in the Student Government Association at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point is entirely made up of students, so there is high turnover as students graduate or leave the university for other reasons. This leads to organizational memory loss with every person who leaves. While every officer has a job description written out in the Student Government Association bylaws, the word “transition” is not mentioned even once. Furthermore, creating transition materials is an expectation but not a written requirement, so there is little accountability in the transition process.

### **Objective:**

The objective of this project is to create an inclusive and unified system of documenting and updating essential information for each position within the Student Government Association's Executive Branch. These materials will be preserved and passed to the next person in the role, and serve as both a quick-reference guide as well as provide connections to any practical, historical, legal, or contextual information for position responsibilities. Clarifying the documentation and transition processes will not only preserve institutional memory, but it will also minimize the learning curve for these positions so executives can spend less time learning their roles, and more time participating in the governance of the university, representing student interests, and creating policies concerning student life, services, and interests.

### **Significance:**

The significance of this project includes the immediate applicability to my current position as the Vice President of the Student Government Association, as well as my goal to work with University-level student groups in the future. While this high-turnover group keeps the organization dynamic and more reflective of the current student body, as well as encourages the group to keep up-to-date with societal and cultural knowledge, the high turnover also makes both documenting and preserving institutional memory difficult. Since the turnover of student employees is anticipated, it is something for which an organization can plan.

## Supporting Literature

The term “organizational memory” is used as both something that sustains knowledge, as well as something that can be lost. By one definition, organizational memory is the phenomenon which allows knowledge preservation, even as members leave (Weick & Gilfillan, 1971). It is also common sense that at least some organizational memory is lost whenever a member leaves. Existing research surrounding organizational memory structures, and the socialization of organizational newcomers, can help leaders and members take actions to sustain organizational capacity through any turnover. While a bulk of research focuses on how to avoid turnover by implementing socialization tactics or making favorable improvements, some organizations have unavoidable anticipated recurring turnover. Anticipated recurring turnover can be due to contracts, expected workforce fluctuations, expected product or service demand fluctuations, or other seasonal work.

Specific to my experience is anticipated recurring turnover due to positions being tied to university student status and contracted based on the academic year. While turnover is superficially seen as a negative situation, our specific organization actually does want student members to turnover via graduation, which allows other students to take on leadership positions, and also allows changes to match the organization's makeup to be representative of the student body as a whole. We have a responsibility to our student body to represent them and their interests, even as we have yearly recurring turnover in our organizational leadership and decision-making body.

Anticipated recurring turnover necessitates a concerted effort to quickly socialize and educate newcomers, identify which information is crucial to organizational success, and encourage multiple communication forms which sustain the most essential organizational information. Socialization is the process in which individuals join in on the constitutive behaviors and communication that make up an organization (Anderson, Riddle & Martin, 1999). Using what communication theorists have discovered about structures of organizational memory and processes of socialization, what strategies can be used to

speedily welcome, inform, and train newcomers in order to sustain memory for an organization with anticipated recurring turnover?

To explore possible strategies, the following sections examine the theoretical structures of organizational memory and the common socialization theories, processes, and outcomes. The author then hypothesizes that organizational members can intentionally identify and control portions of organizational memory structures and socialization processes to sustain organizational memory amid anticipated recurring turnover.

### **Working Assumptions**

When researching and discussing organizations it is important to lay out our working assumptions about the nature, composition, and objectives of organizations (Daft & Weick, 1984). For the purpose of this paper, we will assume several things. First, that organizations are communicatively constituted social systems. Second, while organizations are made up of individuals, they operate concertedly to observe and process information from an equivocal environment in which the organization exists. Third, problem solving and decision making, and resulting the outcomes, help create new information within the organization. Fourth, new information is open to interpretation by organizational members. Finally, shared meaning of organizational memory is created through communication processes.

### **The Structure of Organizational Memory**

It is helpful to acknowledge that members of the Student Government Association are all students, and therefore there will be a high turnover of all positions. This anticipated high turnover creates a risky scenario where a significant amount of organizational memory will be lost. But knowing this also means that organizational leaders can take steps to purposefully create systems and materials that can sustain organizational memory. To better understand how to purposefully sustain organizational memory, it is helpful to first understand how organizational memory is created and maintained. Once understood, the

creation and maintenance processes can intentionally used to store organizational memory in more permanent structures. By definition, organizational memory is information stored within an organization's history that can be retrieved and used to affect current organizational decisions (Walsh & Ungson, 1991). Put differently, an organization's memory is made up of the interpretations of organizational decisions and outcomes. The structure of organizational memory is communicatively constituted through three identified steps: information acquisition, information retention, and information retrieval.

### **Information Acquisition**

Per researchers Walsh and Ungson (1991), two things need to occur for an organization to acquire information. First thing is a stimulus requiring a decision. No matter if we refer to this stimulus as a "problem" (Kiesler & Sproull, 1982) or an "ecological change" (Weick, 1979), an identifiable event requiring some sort of decision needs to occur. The second step of an organization acquiring information is observing how the organization responds to the stimulus, as well as the outcomes of that stimulus response. While requiring just two things seems rather simple, the following information shows that organizational memory creation can be a complex and flawed process.

While it is the identification and analysis of the organization's decision and outcomes which create organizational memory, Walsh and Ungson also note that some information is difficult to capture accurately due to either individual or organizational factors. These factors include ambiguity and uncertainty, the finite ability of the human brain, and that organizational information filtering may "block, obscure, simplify, or misrepresent some of the attributes of the decision stimuli and organizational responses" (Walsh & Unson, 62-63), but "it is theoretically possible for some, if not all, information relating to a decision stimulus and response to be part of an organization's memory." Therefore, organizational memory is created by organizational members as they individually and collectively respond to situations, discuss the situations, observe and retain outcome information, and retroactively make sense of circumstances that lead to the "problem" or "stimulus," and the meaning of the results.

## Information Retention

Just as organizational information is formed in complex ways, it is also captured and retained in complex ways. Walsh and Ungson explain that organizational memory is not stored in one unified location, but instead within five internal retention facilities: individuals, culture, transformations, structures, and ecology; and one external retention facility: external archives. Shared next is the basic nature of each of these retention facilities.

*Individuals* have varied interpretations of organizational situations. Individual discrepancies are caused by a number of circumstances including their varying previous experiences, distinct communication styles, belief structures, values, and assumptions. Individuals store independent organizational memories through both their mental processes as well as in their own documented records.

*Organizational culture* is a learned way of interpreting various situations through a shared language or set of jargon, symbols, and stories that are transferred to organizational members (Schein, 1984). It takes repeated sensemaking episodes within the organization to create the shared understanding of the events and what the events mean. This shared understanding of information, and continual conversation about meaning, constitutes memory storage within the organizational culture retention facility.

*Transformations* refers to the logic and established processes that guide conversion of an organizational input into an output. Examples would include raw material transformed into finished product or a work order transformed into a completed task. Information stored in the "transformation" retention facility may be found in the systems of work, administrative tasks, and standard operating procedures.

*Structures* refers to social roles and organizational structures in relation to the environment. Information stored within structures includes our labeling of positions and the expected social behavior, the organization's need for differentiation, and how it prioritizes control as well as assumptions about the environment. The structures within organizations encode behavioral expectations based on established roles. Established roles serve as the connecting link between individual and organizational memory.

*Ecology* describes the physical structures where the organization does most of its work and the differences in physicality based on hierarchy. The physical setting is both a consequence of the hierarchy, but also shapes and reinforces how individuals are expected to behave. We can detect organizational and membership information based on how offices are set up, as well as where people sit in meetings or in break rooms.

*External Archives* refers to the organizational memory that is accessible outside the organizational context through what authors Walsh and Ungson call "external archives" including credible information held by former employees, external researchers, media, competitors, business partners, and governmental entities.

### **Information Retrieval**

Information acquired and retained is not useful unless it can also be retrieved and processed by the people who need organizational information to make additional decisions. Information can be retrieved in a variety of ways along a continuum ranging from automatic to a controlled retrieval. Automatic retrieval is effortlessly retrieved about present or recent decisions, while controlled retrieval takes effort as information is more hidden among the retention facilities by circumstance or by design.

Organizational memory is communicatively constituted, stored, and recovered through these three aforementioned steps. For organizations with high turnover, it is also critically important that organizational memory is communicated to newcomers in an efficient way. Discussed next is information regarding how newcomers become acclimated to organizations through socialization processes, and how newcomers learn why that organization matters, and what is most important to know for the sustained success of that organization.

### **Socialization Processes**

There are many research traditions and theoretical understandings of organizational socialization. One traditional way to consider socialization is using Jablin's (1987) simplified model of assimilation made up of these four phases: 1) anticipatory socialization, which

represents what individuals know and experience before joining an organization, 2) encounter, which represents what newcomers experience in the beginning of their organizational membership, 3) metamorphosis, the time when people no longer feel like newcomers but instead like settled organizational members, and 4) exit, which represents the process individuals go through when leaving an organization.

Another significantly helpful way to frame socialization processes is through Van Maanen and Schein's "six major tactical dimensions" (1979). These dimensions describe some of the ways organizational incumbents add to a newcomer's knowledge base. Current organization members can either intentionally or unintentionally choose among these different dimensions in order to assist newcomers socialize into the organization. These tactical dimensions includes: collective vs. individual, formal vs. informal, sequential vs. variable, fixed vs. variable, serial vs. disjunctive, and investiture vs. divestiture. These paired tactics are not exclusive to one another, however. Newcomers will actually experience a combination of the tactic simultaneously or in a sequence. These socialization tactics help newcomers learn the ropes and know their role within the larger organization. Depending on the function the organization serves, it could be helpful for newcomers to understand their end roles in a static fixed way, or in a dynamic and innovative way.

Other models also exist to understand socialization and assimilation. Researchers Myers and Oetzel argue that assimilation is more than just unidirectional acquisition of information, but instead it is an interactive communicative process of mutual acceptance (2003). To demonstrate the complex process, they researched a variety of organizational members and found the following six dimensions: 1) developing familiarity with organizational members, 2) learning, accepting, and integrating into the organization's culture, 3) becoming involved and recognizing one's value to the organization, 4) becoming involved and active within organization, 5) developing and demonstrating job skills and competency, and 6) negotiating their role.

These socialization tactics reveal that socialization is more than just newcomers seeking information and incumbents providing it. Instead, socialization is an interactive

communicative process with multiple avenues for which newcomers can be transformed into insiders. Knowing how socialization occurs is helpful for those who wish to target socialization techniques to provide useful transition material during turnover.

### **Strategies for Sustaining Organizational Memory**

Using what we know about the importance of maintaining organizational memory through turnover, how and where organizational memory is stored, how newcomers learn about organizations through communication processes, as well as some of the common socialization practices, it should be feasible to identify which memory and socialization elements are being used and open to documentation as well as some calculated management.

The author suggests creating a document that allows organizational leaders to identify the current organizational memory information retention facilities and all the ways in which newcomers are socialized. Then, questioning current organizational members to discuss what information is currently interpreted as critical to organizational success, how current members believe that information should be transmitted, and what various developments mean to organizational newcomers and veterans.

This information should be documented, shared with concerned organizational members, and retained for future review. Future leaders should be encouraged to review this transitional information and invited to continue the reviewal process on regular intervals in order to capture and sustain critical organizational information through the anticipated recurring turnover.

## Project Process

### **March 3:**

Met with the Student Government Association (SGA) President and Chief of Staff to discuss SGA's organizational needs. I shared the list of questions and had their approval to request this information from executives.

### **March 5:**

Due to a high-profile situation at the university, this project was only quickly mentioned at the executive branch weekly meeting. Executives were asked to keep an eye in their email accounts for the list of questions.

### **March 7:**

I emailed the list of questions to all executives, plus the SGA Administrative Assistant, Chief Justice, Speaker of the Senate, and Advisor.

- 1) How did you find out about this position?
- 2) What did you know about it before in the role? How did you learn that?
- 3) What transitional materials were your provided?
- 4) What sort of information in the transition information was helpful?
- 5) What was missing from the transition information?
- 6) Since being in the role, how else have you found out information about this position?
- 7) Does the position description in the bylaws accurately match your tasks and expectations of your position?
- 8) Is there any other information you'd like to provide related to transition materials or the transition process?

### **March 12:**

I sent a follow-up email thanking those who responded and encouraging additional responses.

**March 14:**

By my request, the Chief of Staff sent a follow-up email to get a few more responses.

**March 12-18:**

I gathered and reviewed answers from the questionnaire. Of the 15 people who were emailed the list of questions, 10 responded with answers. Using the collected responses, I created a set of bylaw amendments to the job descriptions, as well as a draft of a fillable form that would fulfill the amended job description.

**March 19:**

During this weekly meeting I brought along a draft of the bylaw amendments and a draft of the transition template for the team's feedback. Then emailed a copy for people to review.

**March 22:**

Discussed with Chief of Staff, President, and Advisor the responses heard at Monday's executive meeting, as well as answers shared by respondents.

**April 2:**

Presented bylaw amendments to Constitutional Review Meeting for first reading. Complete current resolution is in the Appendix. Excerpt of the resolution is here:

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.1.M be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Vice President to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the President, Vice President, and Student Government Association's email accounts, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**April 9:**

Bylaw amendments were brought back as actionable business and were passed by this committee. The amendments go Senate for first reading next week, and will hopefully pass the next.

## Project Reflection

### **Response Summary**

Questionnaire responses revealed a variety of conditions of transitional information, as well as a variety of transition processes. Quantities ranged from “none” to “several binders and flash drive of electronic documents.” Qualities ranged from “none” and “incomplete” to “thorough information cross-referenced to previous years.”

Not surprisingly, respondents also shared that they learned about their positions from multiple sources (structures of information) and in multiple ways (socialization). Organizational structures and socialization included: reading the position description in the bylaws, by previously observing people in the positions, asking alumni questions, hanging out in the office, listening to others talk about the positions, attending meetings, reading through material passed down, reading through SGA archives, and asking other people for help. There were several respondents who wished for more prescribed socialization including in-person transition meetings and training, as well as more structured information including documentation of recent events, recurring tasks, and an updated list of contacts.

### **What Went Well**

I had a lot of support from fellow student government leaders. Early in the project, when I met with the President and Chief of Staff, we discussed many directions this project could go. One of the most constructive discussions was us brainstorming different ways the information, once gathered, could be stored. One option was to continue as-is, which is having individual members store information on a flash drive and binder and request that they pass that information to the next person in the role. We saw this option as problematic for multiple reasons. First, is that the transition period often is near finals when students typically prioritize other work. Second, sometimes the next person has not been hired for the role until the summer, so the previous person is not available to transition. Third, since the new person in the role does not get paid until the fall, the transitions are not paid and are difficult to mandate. Fourth, there is not any accountability for creating materials or actually meeting with the new hire.

Another option would be to have a share drive accessible by all organization members. Each position could have its own folder within the share drive to drop off information, and then it could be viewed by future people in the role. Our concern was

without having a timeline or meeting, people would not actually use this drive and it would be seen as something keeping people from doing other required work.

We also brainstormed the idea of filling out a form to facilitate a meeting, printed for the transition binder or stored on the current flash drive, then create a PDF of the transition materials to be emailed and stored in at least one of the organization's email address. The President, Vice President, and Chief of Staff each have an email account that gets passed down from year to year. Storing the information in a specific folder within the email account would ensure that even if a binder or a flash drive was lost, the information would still remain in the email accounts. Additionally, it would be accessible off-site, and could be forwarded to members as needed. The questionnaire respondents also shared they supported that combination of in-person and written transitional information, so I proceeded with that hybrid solution.

In a later conversation, we again discussed different ways the information can be preserved and accessible in multiple ways, and how we can create a system of accountability that will be easy to use, helpful, and not too restrictive for future team members. We also discussed frequency in which information should be updated. While monthly a monthly update was preferred, once near the end of each semester was selected as a minimum.

### **What Was Challenging**

The three most challenging situations were related to existing gaps in SGA's organizational memory systems, UW System policy, and extenuating circumstances,

First off, we currently have structural deficiencies in organizational memory processes. In past years, the Student Government Association attempted to retain this information by having a full-time non-student staff member who was responsible for archiving information and being a mostly constant presence in the office. Unfortunately, the organization cannot afford to attract, hire, and retain someone with that skill set, so new systems need to be instituted to capture and retain this information in a retrievable way. Also complicating institutional memory for this organization is the previous advisor left the university over this summer, and our full-time accountant also left the university over winter break. Both of these positions had worked with the organization for years.

The second challenge was despite the buy-in from the executives that this project was good for the organization, some members refused to fill out the questionnaire stating their concern it was for a class. I had permission from both the SGA President and Chief of

Staff (who executives people report to) to permit people to use their office hours to fill out the questions. Since executives are paid by segregated university fees, some did not think it was appropriate to assist a “credit-bearing” activity. This has been an ongoing discussion within our group since the fall semester. This year’s leadership has consulted with both our advisor and UW-Stevens Point’s Budget Director who agree that this type of academic activity, or earning credit for “reflecting” on an internship paid by segregated fees, was not what UW System Policy 820 was actually concerned about. Still, a couple said they did want to help with the project since it might violate this policy.

The third challenging situation was extenuating circumstances affecting the student body. This year has included many changes for everyone at UW-Stevens Point. A significant university announcement was shared near the launch of this project which made this project less of a priority for most executives. Student Government Association members had additional work to make sure we were responding to student concerns, supporting student initiatives, and doing everything we can to represent students. While I deeply value this project and what it will do for the organization, I had to be careful to not turn people completely off by distracting them too frequently. Also, presentations about this announcement interrupted the regular meeting schedule which pushed back when I was able to present bylaw amendments.

### **Feedback from SGA Members**

Besides what was mentioned in the “challenges” section, most SGA members were very receptive to this process and the intentions. Whenever I would check in with the President, Chief of Staff, or Advisor, they would agree that this was going to help the organization.

I also received positive feedback whenever I presented a draft of the bylaws or position information form. I heard that executives were thankful to be asked for their opinion for how the bylaws could be improved. One executive stated they were glad to see it become a requirement because it would be upsetting if they put in a lot of work in their transition while others can get away with doing nothing. Others shared that they were surprised that it was not already a written position requirement. No one expressed an opposition to this plan. Speaker of the Senate and Chief Justice also said they might also like the same added to their position descriptions, and possibly a modified version for Associate Justices, Senators and/or Caucus Chairs.

When I shared the bylaws and draft form at the Constitutional Review meeting, which included people outside the executive branch, there was some confusion why the

“Position Information and Accomplishments Form” did not more closely match what was stated in the bylaws. I shared the reasoning that the form is designed to allow people to add and change what they want to document, based on what that year’s leaders expect. The bylaws are more difficult to change and represent a base minimum of expectations. Those questioning the difference then understood how that difference offered flexibility to gather additional information.

### **Final Thoughts**

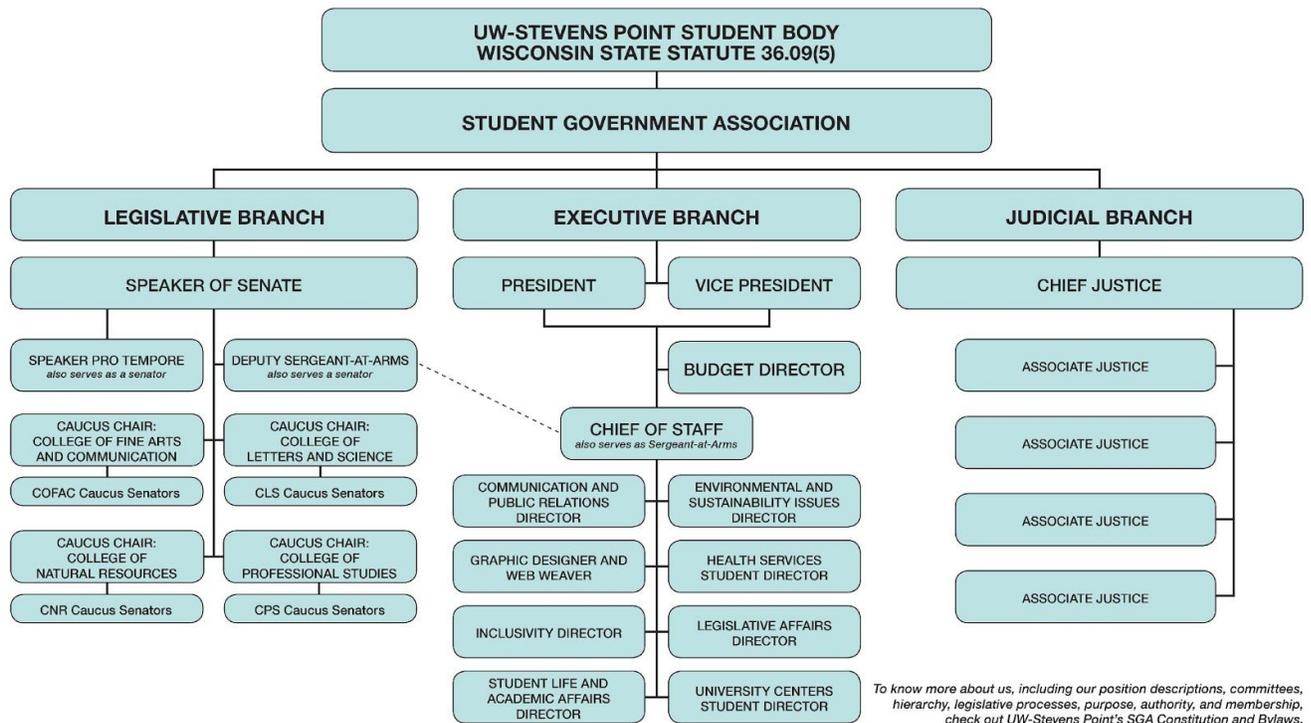
Overall, this project was gratifying for both professionally and personal reasons. When I started narrowing in on what I wanted to research or complete for a Communication Master of the Arts Project, I was leaning towards something practical. Improving Student Government Association by improving transitions has been on my list since I started in the role as Vice President last spring, and I am pleased to see formal procedures begin to change. For myself personally, I enjoy helping others, improving processes, and take pride knowing this organization will be better prepared through this new system of sustainable position transitions.

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## Appendix

### Student Government Association Organizational Chart



### Student Government Association Bylaws, Article XXV – Position Descriptions

#### 1. President of the Student Body

- A. Reports to the Student Body
- B. Hire, train, and supervise all Executive Staff
  - i. Chair Executive Staff meetings and set the agenda
- C. Serve as the Student Body representative, and speak for the students, on local, state, and national issues
- D. Provide Administrative direction and guidance for the Student Governance Association
- E. Actively attend and represent the students at University events and meetings
- F. Create and refine student life policies to ensure the best possible experience for students
- G. Actively communicate and build partnerships with students, faculty, staff, administration, legislators (local, state, national), and the media

- H. Sign or veto all legislative actions by the Student Governance Association Senate
  - I. Appoint all Justices of the Judicial Branch
  - J. Make all shared governance decisions for the organization, and be the contact person for internal University shared governance groups.
  - K. Present a State of the University address within the first three weeks of the Spring Semester
  - L. Organize the internal Student Government Association awards at the end of each year with the Vice President, Speaker of the Senate, Chief of Staff, and the Advisor
2. Vice President of the Student Body
- A. Reports to the Student Body
  - B. Serve as the interim president in the President's absence
  - C. Assist the President in the hiring, training, and supervising of all Executive Staff
  - D. Appoint students to all University committees, work groups, and task forces
    - i. Manage a list of all University committees, work groups, and task forces
    - ii. Inform the Rules Committee of any Senator's unexcused absences at their assigned University committee, work group, or task force.
  - E. Chair all the Student Governance Association Senate meetings
  - F. Actively attend and represent the student at University events and meetings
  - G. Actively communicate and build partnerships with students, faculty, staff, administration, legislators (local, state, national), and the media
  - H. Maintain correspondence with, and organize any materials for, the UW System, other UW Student Governments, any state-wide student organization, and/or any nation-wide student organization
  - I. Serve as a voting member on the Segregated University Fee Allocation Committee
  - J. Serve as a voting member of the Non-allocable University Fee Allocation Subcommittee.
  - K. Serve on other high-level University Committees that have a strategic role in the University or are pertinent to large Student Governance Association initiatives.
  - L. Attend all Executive Staff meetings
  - M. Organize the internal Student Government Association awards at the end of each year with the President, Speaker of the Senate, Chief of Staff, and the Advisor
3. Chief of Staff
- A. Reports to the President and Vice President

B. Facilitates the Student Government Association operations by managing and arranging: executive staff workload, reservations for rooms and tables for all events, transportation arrangements, lodging arrangements, office supplies, scheduling (including office hours of the staff), and any other logistical matters

C. Serve as the Student Government Association treasurer by managing the Student Government Association internal budget and SFO account, payroll, and to write and submit to the Segregated University Fee Allocation Committee each fiscal year's budget

D. Chair the Constitution Review Committee, and update the Student Government Association Constitution and Bylaws as directed by that committee and the Student Government Association Senate.

E. Serve as a member of the SGA Elections Committee.

F. Serve as a member of the SGA Marketing Team

G. Serve as a resource to all Executives in the fulfillment of their respective job duties and responsibilities.

H. Ensure that tasks and projects assigned to the Executive Staff are completed efficiently and in a manner that best represents the SGA.

I. Conduct Executive Staff performance evaluations with assistance from the President

J. Meet regularly one-on-one with the Executive Staff to address any needs.

K. Manage the SGA Office

i. Greet and assist students who enter the SGA Office

ii. Order and maintain office supplies

L. Attend Rules Committee, the SGA General Assembly, and the Executive Staff meetings

M. Serve a minimum of 12 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 4. Budget Director

A. Reports to the President and Vice President, with additional duties assigned by the SGA Accountant

B. Chair the Segregated University Fee Allocation Committee

i. Recruit and train the Segregated University Fee Allocation Committee members

C. Chair the Non-allocable University Fee Allocation Committee

- i. Recruit and train the Non-allocable University Fee Allocation Committee members
  - D. Co-Chair the Pointer Partnership Advisory Board along with the SGA University Centers Student Director
  - E. Implement and enforce Student Governance Association fiscal policy
  - F. Responsible for overseeing all Student Governance Association funded accounts
  - G. Train and assist student organization treasurers on the budget process
    - i. Provide any further educational sessions on segregated fees as requested
  - H. Serve, in conjunction with the Student Governance Association Accountant as the comptroller for segregated fees.
  - I. Serve as the interpreter of financial decisions made by the Student Governance Association Senate and President
  - J. Form a working relationship with the Division of Business Affairs
  - K. Manage the budget office, including making sure any financial forms and information are readily available
  - L. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings
  - M. Serve a minimum of 12 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.
5. Communication and Public Relations Director
- A. Reports to the Chief of Staff
  - B. Leads the Communication and Public Relations Marketing Team
  - C. Actively promote student understanding of, and participation in the Student Governance Association
  - D. Serve as the Student Governance Association's media relations coordinator
    - i. Inform campus and local media concerning the Student Governance Association events, news, decisions, and policy
  - E. Plan and run the Student Governance Association radio show
  - F. Facilitate the Directors' programming and outreach
  - G. Coordinate, develop, and maintain the Student Governance Association's social media presence
  - I. Form a working relationship with the Office of University Relations and Communications

J. Be a part of a communications team with the Graphic Designer & Web Weaver and Chief of Staff

- i. Develop an annual marketing plan
- ii. Manage the Student Governance Association brand

K. Produce a regular newsletter

L. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings

M. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 6. Environmental and Sustainability Director

A. Reports to the Chief of Staff

B. Chair the Environmental and Sustainability Affairs Committee and the Green Fund Steering Committee

C. Proactively address environmental and sustainability concerns and policy issues

D. Develop relationships with and meet regularly with leaders from all the environmental and sustainability related student organizations

E. Develop a working relationship with the Campus Sustainability Coordinator, and other related environmental and sustainability offices

F. Outreach to and recruit students to participate in environmental and sustainability issues and the Green Fund process

G. Manage the Green Fund, as outlined in the Green Fund bylaws

H. Attend, as often as possible, environmental and sustainability student organization's events, meetings, and programs

I. Manage the Student Governance Association bike rental program

J. When delegated, serve as the Vice President's appointee on University environmental and sustainability committees, task forces, or work groups

K. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.

L. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 7. Graphic Designer & Web Weaver

A. Reports to the Chief of Staff

B. Be a part of the Communication and Public Relations Marketing Team with the Communication and Public Relations Director and intern

- i. Develop an annual marketing plan
- C. Manage and create all of the Student Governance Association's graphic designing, images, and promotional material
- D. Develop, update, and manage the Student Governance Association website
- E. Attend the Communication and Public Relations Marketing Team and the Executive Staff meeting
- F. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 8. Health Services Student Director

- A. Reports to the Chief of Staff
- B. Chair the Student Health Advisory Committee
- C. Develop relationships with and meet regularly with leaders from all the health and wellness related student organizations
- D. Develop a working relationship with the Director of Student Health Services, Director of Counseling Services, and other health and wellness professional staff.
- E. Actively promote a healthy lifestyle through the seven dimensions of wellness
- F. Proactively address health and wellness concerns and policy issues
- G. Work with the Director of Student Health Services and the Student Governance Association Budget Director in compiling the annual non allocable budget for Student Health Services
- H. Direct students to the proper outlets to obtain assistance with questions related to health, counseling, wellness, prevention, and safety
- I. Work on all Alcohol and Other Drug (AODA) projects and policy
- J. Work on projects and programming to address student health and wellness needs
- K. Attend, as often as possible, health and wellness student organization's events, meetings, and programs
- L. When delegated, serve as the Vice President's appointee on University health and wellness committees, task forces, and work groups
- M. Actively recruit students to get involved in the Student Health Advisory Committee
- N. Serve as a voting member on the Non-allocable University Fee Allocation Committee

O. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.

P. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 9. Inclusivity Director

A. Reports to the Chief of Staff

B. Chair the Inclusivity Committee

C. Proactively address inclusivity and diversity concerns, policy issues, or legal issues

D. Serve as a resource for students with civil rights concerns and incident reports

E. Develop relationships with and meet regularly with leaders from all the inclusivity and diversity related student organizations

F. Promote a broad definition of inclusivity and diversity, to include but limit to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, nontraditional students, veterans, and more

G. Develop a working relationship with the department of Diversity and College Access

H. Provide leadership to ensure an open and positive environment for all people to flourish in the University and community

I. Attend and develop inclusivity and diversity events, meetings, and programs as a representative of the Student Government Association

J. Coordinate, provide and promote inclusivity and diversity training for the Student Governance Association and students

K. When delegated, serve as the Vice President's appointee on University inclusivity and diversity committees, task forces, and work groups.

L. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.

M. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

#### 10. Legislative Affairs Director

A. Reports to the Chief of Staff

B. Chair the Legislative Affairs Committee

C. Serve as the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point delegation leader to all state-wide and national-wide student association conventions and conferences

- D. Actively promote student involvement in, and understanding of, campus, local, state, and federal legislation
- E. Advocate on behalf of students at the local, state, and federal level
- F. Form working relationships with local and state representatives (e.g. alder people, state assemblyperson, etc.) and stay in constant contact with them regarding issues that affect University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
- G. Form a working relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Legislative Liaison
- H. Manage and promote the Student Governance Association Lawyer services
- I. Organize and promote elections of any kind to the student body: Student Governance Association, local, state, and federal
- J. Monitor the news daily about legislative issues and brief the President
- K. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.
- L. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

11. Student Life and Academic Affairs Director

- A. Reports to the Chief of Staff
- B. Chairs the Student Life and Academic Affairs Committee and the Parking Advisory Board
- C. Work with students to address academic and student life concerns and direct them to appropriate resources
- D. Proactively address policy issues for academics
- E. Work with the Residence Hall Association and Dining Advisory Board
- F. Develop a working relationship with the Division of Academic Affairs leadership
- G. Monitor any differential tuition proposal
- H. Work with the Central Wisconsin Apartment Association, the Old Main Neighborhood Association, local landlords, city officials, and other parties to organize a tenant education campaign each fall semester
  - i. Organize "Off-Campus Housing Fair" in the Fall and Spring Semester
  - ii. Serve as a resource for students with off campus housing questions/concerns
- I. Proactively work on student life policies and concerns that do not necessarily fall into the categories of the other Executives

- J. Work collaboratively with all the Executives
  - K. Coordinate Faculty and Staff Appreciation Week each spring semester
  - L. Develop a working relationship with the Dean of Students Office, and other Division of Student Affairs leadership
  - M. When delegated, serve as the Vice President's appointee on University academic and student life related committees, task forces, and work groups
  - N. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.
  - O. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.
12. University Centers Student Director
- A. Reports to the Chief of Staff
  - B. Chair the University Centers Advisory and Policy Board, serve as a nonvoting ex-officio member of Text Rental Joint Committee, and CoChairs the Policy and Advisory Committee for Student Organizations
  - C. Develop a working relationship with University Centers leadership
  - D. Responsible for addressing concerns related to the University Centers policy and procedures
  - E. Work with the Director of the University Centers and the Student Governance Association Budget Director in compiling the annual non allocable budget for the University Centers
  - F. Serve as a voting member of the Non-allocable University Fee Allocation Committee
  - G. Work on all student organization policy and procedures
    - i. Serve as the main Student Governance Association contact person for student organizations' concerns and questions
    - ii. Actively recruit students to get involved in the University Centers Advisory and Policy Board and the Policy and Advisory Committee for Student Organizations
    - iii. Report on the actions of the University Centers Advisory and Policy Board and Policy and Advisory Committee for Student Organizations to the General Senate meetings
  - H. Attend the Student Governance Association Senate and the Executive Staff meetings.

I. Co-Chair and act as a non voting member for the Pointer Partnership Advisory Board with the SGA Budget Director

J. Serve a minimum of 10 hours per week in the SGA Office or related work meeting on campus, with the exception of Student Senate.

13. Sergeant-at-Arms

A. Position occupied by the Chief of Staff

B. Maintain order and decorum during each Senate meeting

C. Be responsible for ensuring the security and safety of Student Governance Association Senators, Executives, and Justices

D. Develop an annual Emergency Management Plan, in consult with the Campus Director of Risk Management

14. – 16. *Non-Executive Positions*

17. Speaker of the Senate (*Head of Legislative Branch*)

A. Reports to the General Assembly, and shall work office hours throughout the fall and spring Semesters.

B. Be available to Senators to provide resources and University Connection.

C. Act as the link between the Senate and the Executive Branch.

D. Develop a thorough understanding of, and train Senators in: University, System, and Finance policies; Shared Governance; and Robert's Rules of Order.

E. Chair Rules Committee and coordinate Senate Agendas and Minutes.

F. Post the agenda and make it available to the student body in accordance with Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws.

G. Create a welcoming environment at the weekly Senate meeting.

H. Serve as Parliamentarian for Student Governance Association.

I. Nominate a Speaker Pro Tempore and Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms to be approved through Senate by a simple majority vote during the Speaker's report.

J. Attend all Senate and Executive Board Meetings.

K. Meet regularly with the Student Governance Association Staffer for an update on reports.

L. Work with the staffer to develop a Student Senator Handbook.

M. Organize Bills passed the General Assembly through maintenance of a Bill Binder, and continue the Bill numbering system.

N. Help the President, Vice President, Chief of Staff and the Advisor to organize the internal Student Government Association awards at the end of the year.

## **Student Government Association Judicial Bylaws, Section 2 – Membership**

### 1. Chief Justice (*Head of Judicial Branch*)

1.1. The Chief Justice shall serve as the Chair for all meetings and functions of the Judicial Branch.

1.2. The Chief Justice shall be a voting member of the Judicial Branch except in cases involving student organization conduct.

1.3. The Chief Justice shall be responsible for writing the official decisions or assigning to another justice the writing of official decisions for any cases brought forward to the Court.

1.4. The Chief Justice shall be the spokesperson of the Judicial Branch.

1.5. The Chief Justice shall assign the duties of Clerk of the Court to an Associate Justice for each case on a rotating basis.

1.6. The Chief Justice shall be responsible for correspondence and notification for all actions of the Judicial Branch.

1.7. The Chief Justice shall work with the Dean of Students or their designee to organize and schedule all trainings necessary for the effective functioning of the Judicial Branch.

1.8. The Chief Justice shall sit on the Student Government Association Constitution Review Committee.

1.9. Once a month the Chief Justice shall attend a Student Government Association Senate meeting to report on the actions of the Judicial Branch.

## **Position Information and Accomplishments Form**

Name:

Supervised By:

Position:

Position Held Since:

Date:

Are you willing to be contacted about this position after this term?

If yes, please provide contact information:

*Please fill out this form prior to meeting with your supervisor. After meeting, update form if needed. Next: print a copy for your position binder, save a copy on the flashdrive (if your position has one), and email a PDF to [sga@uwsp.edu](mailto:sga@uwsp.edu) (President, Vice President, and Budget Director, and Chief of Staff should also email the President and Vice President email accounts). Outgoing executives are also expected to write a letter to the next person in the role. Whenever possible, also offer to meet with the incoming position hire to discuss the position description, expectations, review the position/committee accomplishments, and answer any questions.*

- 1) Recent accomplishments by position (and/or committee):
- 2) Recent lessons learned by position (and/or committee):
- 3) Advice or tips for next time:
- 4) Other comments:

*If this is your last semester, please also include an updated list of contacts*

## **Resolution to Amend SGA Bylaws, to Constitution Review on April 2, 2018**

### **Resolution to Amend the SGA Bylaws**

**Whereas:** Membership in the Student Government Association at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point is entirely made up of students;

**Whereas:** There is high turnover as students graduate or leave the university for other reasons;

**Whereas:** Organizational memory is lost with every person who leaves;

**Whereas:** Every officer has a job description written out in the Student Government Association bylaws, the word “transition” is not mentioned even once;

**Whereas:** Creating transition materials is a yearly expectation but not a written requirement;

**Whereas:** Quality transitions aid in sustaining a strong student government;

**Whereas:** A strong student government is one way we can serve our fellow students;

**Whereas:** Students leaders have many responsibilities and;

**Whereas:** Current executives report receiving transitional material in quantities ranging from "none" to "several binders and flash drive of electronic documents";

**Whereas:** Current executives report receiving transitional material in qualities ranging from "none" and "incomplete" to "thorough information cross-referenced to previous years";

**Whereas:** Current executives state helpful transitional information includes recent position/committee accomplishments, a list of current contacts, day-to-day duties explanation, helpful tips;

**Whereas:** Current executives state that a combination of in-person transition meetings and written reference materials is best for understanding their position and duties;

**Therefore be it Resolved:** That a transition requirement be added to each executive position within "Article XXV – Position Descriptions";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.1.M be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Vice President to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the President, Vice President, and Student Government Association's email accounts, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.2.N be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the President to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the President, Vice President, and Student Government Association's email accounts, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.3.N be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the President and/or Vice President to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the President, Vice President, and Student Government Association's email accounts, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.4.N be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the President and/or Vice President to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the President, Vice President, and Budget Director's email accounts, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.5.N be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.6.M be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the

next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.7.G be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.8.Q be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.9.N be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.10.M be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XXV.11.P be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it further Resolved:** That a new Article XX.12.K be added to read "Meet at a minimum of once near the end of each semester with the Chief of Staff to specifically discuss and document transitional material including semester accomplishments and helpful tips. Documentation must be typed, emailed, and stored in the Student Government Association email account, as well as handed over for the next person in the role. Transitional materials must also include an updated list of contacts at the last meeting of the executive's term.";

**Therefore be it finally Resolved:** That upon approval from Senate, these bylaws be given to the President for their signature. Upon approval from the President, the Chief of Staff or their designee update

the bylaws and post on the website “Governing Documents” page, post on mySGA, and distribute to every officer of the Student Government Association within a reasonable period of time.

**Authored By:** SGA Vice President Katrina Hansen

**Sponsored By:**

**Sponsoring Committee:**