

United States Student Association (USSA)

The **United States Student Association** (USSA), founded in 1947, bills itself as the oldest and largest student association in the United States. It has a historical and current commitment to diversity and breaking the barriers to educational access imposed by inequality and discrimination. It strives to build a movement that is representative of the diversity lacking in political institutions, and organize to alter the relations of power.

Vision

The student members of the United States Student Association work together with a vision for a just society in which generations of representative leaders understand their power and engage and empower diverse communities to create social change.

Mission

The United States Student Association, the country's oldest, largest, and most inclusive national student-led organization, develops current and future leaders and amplifies the student voice at the local, state, and national levels by mobilizing grassroots power to win concrete victories on student issues. The United States Student Association Foundation ensures the pipeline of effective student leadership by facilitating education, training and other development opportunities at national, state, and local levels in advocating for issues that affect students.

Core Belief Statement

USSA believes that education is a right and should be accessible for any student regardless of their socio-economic background and identity. We believe people who are affected directly by issues of access to higher education should be the ones identifying the solutions that make education accessible to them. Therefore, USSA is dedicated to training, organizing, and developing a base of student leaders who are utilizing those skills to engage in expanding access to higher education and advancing the broader movement for social justice.

Additional Information:

- [USSA Website](#)
- [USSA History](#)
- [USSA Constitution](#)
- [USSA Direct Membership](#)
- [Arguments For and Against WWU Direct Membership](#)

USSA Staff:

- Sophia Zaman (President): pres@usstudents.org
- Maxwell John Love (Vice President): vp@usstudents.org
- Kalwis Lo (Legislative Director): leg@usstudents.org
- National Field Associate
- Sesali Bowen (Trainings Director): training@usstudents.org
- Isaiah Toney (Student Labor Action Project Coordinator): isaiah@jwj.org
- Chirag Bhakta (West Coast National Field Organizer): chirag@usstudents.org
- John Aspray (Empire Gardens National Field Associate): John@usstudents.org
- Jessica Cendana (Operations Manager): manager@usstudents.org

USSA Board of Directors:

Statewide Student Associations

- University of California Student Association
- United Council of UW Students
- Oregon Student Association
- Washington Student Association
- Student Association of Michigan
- Associated Students of Colorado
- Great Lakes Chair
- Golden Pacific Chair
- Pacific Northwest Chair
- New England Chair
- Empire/Garden
- Atlantic Regional Chair
- South East Chair
- Rocky Mountain Chair

Affiliates

- National People of Color Student Coalition Chair
- National Women's Student Coalition Chair
- National Queer Student Coalition Chair

Caucuses & Coalitions

- Community College Chair
- Graduate/Professional Chair
- International Student Chair
- La Coalición Chair
- Multi/Bi Racial Chair
- National Asian Pacific American Student Coalition Chair
- National Coalition of Students with Disabilities Chair
- Non Traditional/First Generation Chair
- Students of the Jewish Community Chair
- National Queer Student Of Color Caucus Chair
- People Of African Decent Chair
- People Of Middle Eastern & South Asian Decent Chair
- First Peoples Chair
- Veterans Chair
- Women Of Color Chair
- Working Class Chair
- DREAM Caucus Chair
- Minority Serving Institution Chair
- Community & Labor Liaison
- Outreach Officer
- Grassroots Legislative Liaison
- Development & Finance Officer
- Corporate Secretary

USSA Conferences:

National Grassroots Legislative Conference and National Student Lobby Day (LegCon) 2013: March 14-18th, 2013

- **What is USSA's Legislative Conference?**
 - Each spring, the United States Student Association puts on the Grassroots Legislative Conference and National Student Lobby Day (LegCon). This three-day event provides students at every level of organizing and leadership the ability and opportunity to learn new skills in student advocacy, network, lobby their elected representatives on student issues, march through historic downtown Washington, DC, rally on Capitol Hill, and of course build lifelong friendships. LegCon 2013 will take place March 15-18.
- **Workshops**
 - A large part of LegCon consists of workshops led by student and professional experts in organizing and advocacy. Workshop topics consist of everything from the federal budget process to winning a student government election to the history of the student-labor movement. These sessions provide students with a unique chance to learn about and discuss issues critical to fighting for college access and affordability with a wide variety of student and professional organizers. Workshops are hands-on, engaging, and fun! Anyone interested in strengthening a student government association, building a Student Labor Action Project chapter, developing a grassroots campaign, or simply wanting to get involved cannot miss this incredible opportunity!
- **National Student Lobby Day**
 - The final day of the conference cultivates with a march, rally and lobby visits. Historically, we will march from the hotel to Capitol Hill. Along the way, we pass several Smithsonian museums and federal departments, including the Department of Education. Holding signs made the evening before and chanting phrases like *"No justice no peace, we want student debt relief"* conference attendees make their voices heard throughout the streets of DC as we march toward the Capitol. Once on Capitol Hill, students end the march at a USSA rally that brings together federal legislators, executive officials, student participants, media figures, and more in a dynamic and fun event that garners plenty of press attention to amplify the student voice. Past speakers have included the late Senator Ted Kennedy, Education and Labor Chairman Congressman George Miller, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee member Patty Murray, and Undersecretary of Education Martha Kanter. After the march, students meet with their members of Congress to advocate on student issues. During the conference, students attend lobby clinics and legislative briefings so that all attendees are up-to-date on the issues and adequately prepared to meet with their Representatives and Senators.
- **The Impact**
 - Students don't come to LegCon simply to meet and have a good time — we make a difference! In past year's LegCon occurred while Congress passed historic student aid reform legislation that invested more federal into higher education than any other policy since the GI Bill. Students were at the signing with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, attended press conferences with Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Chair Tom Harkin and Banking Chair Chris Dodd, and even the signing of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act by President Obama. Media coverage included reports from the Washington Post, NPR, CNN, Fox News, the Nation, USA Today, and more!
- [LegCon 2013 Notes](#)

Annual National Student Congress (NSC)

- What is USSA's NSC?
 - Every year student leaders from across the country attend the United States Student Associations (USSA) National Student Congress (NSC). For six exciting and busy days students debate, envision and vote on USSA's priorities and leadership for the upcoming year. The NSC is founded upon the belief that students should take the lead in determining how the organization functions on every level. USSA also fundamentally believes that students should have a say within society as a whole. NSC 2013 was the 66th anniversary of students from across the country working tirelessly to set the national student agenda. During this monumental week, each participant will join a wonderful tradition in forming USSA's goals for the year. Each participant has the opportunity to set the vision and agenda on the national level. Students will participate in regional meetings, caucus and affiliate spaces, workshops, conference governing committees, plenary, and elections for a new board of directors and president and vice president! This is also the conference where changes can be made to the organization's operations and structure. Congress is a great opportunity for students across the country to get their voices heard and prioritize their issues in the national student movement!
- Regional Meetings
 - NSC provides an amazing space for students to meet, network, organize, and prioritize issues specifically affecting their communities. During the regional breakouts students elect representatives to the NSC committees and vote for a chair that will represent their region on the board of directors. The chair of the regional space is responsible for planning the goals and strategies for their caucus throughout the year. Only participants that attend the first regional space are allowed to vote for incoming chairs. Voting for regional chairs happens during the second regional meeting. Regional meetings are only open to participants from the states they represent.
- Caucuses and Affiliates
 - Because USSA is founded upon the belief that equity, justice and democracy are fundamental to any student movement. USSA ensures that participants have the opportunity to convene within their identity-based communities through what we call caucuses and affiliates. Affiliate and caucus spaces ensure that every constituency within USSA has institutionalized leadership and participation in the decision making process. During NSC students within each caucus and affiliate space elect a chair that will represent their caucus and affiliate on the board of directors. Chairs of these spaces are responsible for planning the goals and strategies for their space for the year. Remember caucus and affiliate meetings are open only to participants who self identify. You must attend the first meeting in order to vote at the second.
- Workshops
 - A mixture of skill and issue-based workshops provide conference participants with new information and tools to use on their campus. Issue-based workshops educate participants about problems currently affecting students and offer solutions that make concrete improvements in the campus community. Skills-based workshops teach useful skills, such as coalition building and planning actions.

- Congress Committees
 - There are three committees that are responsible for running Congress. Each region elects one representative for to sit on each committee: Congress Steering Committee (CSC), Administrative Plenary Committee (APC), and the Issues Plenary Committee (IPC).
 - Congress Steering Committee (CSC)
 - After the board of directors meets during the first day of NSC- the powers of the board of directors are dissolved. A new body of students organized into the Congress Steering Committee (CSC) takes responsibility for enforcing the Rules of Congress. The Rules of Congress are the NSC's governing documents. The CSC has the power to enforce and oversee elections, conflicts or any other controversies that occur during NSC. The results of all elections must be reported to the congress steering committee chair immediately after the voting period. CSC also facilitates elections upon request if a member of a region, affiliate, or caucus requests one for their space. Members of CSC are not eligible to run for president or vice president positions. Every regional space sends a student to sit on the CSC- if the CSC does not meet diversity guidelines participants from the affiliate and caucus spaces are asked to also sit on the CSC.
 - Administrative Plenary Committee (APC)
 - The administrative plenary committee reviews each administrative resolution submission and ensures the information is complete and meets all the criteria. APC also selects the order in which administrative resolutions are presented at plenary. If the submissions are not complete or do not meet proper criteria guidelines the APC returns the forms to the author via email and allows the authors to rewrite the submission form.
 - During the administrative plenary the body convenes to amend USSA's constitution and bylaws and to request small projects i.e. Voter ID Factsheet. Through this process the administrative plenary provides an administrative direction for the organization.
 - Administrative resolutions (AR's) are proposals that request projects and other administrative functions for the board of directors and/or staff to carry out. If passed an AR could also amend the constitution and bylaws.
 - Issues Plenary Committee (IPC)
 - The issues plenary committee (IPC) reviews each action agenda submission and ensures the information is complete and meets all the criteria. IPC also selects the order in which action agendas will be presented at plenary. If the submissions are not complete or do not meet the criteria, APC returns the forms to the author via email allow to allow them to rewrite the submission form.
 - During the issues plenary the body convenes to amend USSA's stance on issues and to decide the grassroots legislative campaigns for the following year.

- Action agendas (AA's) are USSA's grassroots legislative campaigns. Historically only two issue campaigns are voted to become USSA's priorities. Policy platform amendments change specific sections of the policy platform by adding, deleting or rewording USSA's position on issues impacting educational access and students.
- Officers and Board of Directors
 - Throughout the week candidates will be campaigning for the USSA president and vice president and board of director's positions. The president and vice president positions are the only ones voted on in a general election by the entire membership. In order to participate in the elections, you must be a credentialed voting delegate from a member school and have attended the first meeting. The board of directors are nominated in their first space and elected in their second space.
- [NSC 2013 Notes](#)
- Additional Information
 - [Rules of Congress](#)
 - [Diversity Requirements](#)