

UNITED STATES STUDENT ASSOCIATION



MEMBERSHIP

BENEFITS

SUMMARY

WWW.USSTUDENTS.ORG
@USSTUDENTS

WHAT IS USSA?

The United States Student Association (USSA) is the country's oldest and largest national student association, representing millions of students. Founded in 1947, USSA is the largest voice on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and in the Department of Education.

USSA is a coalition of student governments and statewide student associations from across the country that have united to ensure a permanent student voice in Washington, DC. USSA tracks and lobbies for federal legislation and policy, and organizes students from across the country to fully engage in the political process through grassroots mobilization geared towards building student power and amplifying the student voice, on a local, state, and national level.

USSA believes that education is a right and should be accessible for any student regardless of their socioeconomic background and identity. 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 a just society.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF USSA?

Student run and student led, USSA is composed of direct member campuses and SSA's from across the country. A democratic organization, member campuses and SSA's are delegated voting rights at our annual National Student Congress (NSC), where the membership directly elects the President, Vice President, our Board of Directors, and the National Action Agenda items for the ensuing year.

As the most inclusive student association in the nation, USSA provides identity caucus spaces at both of our conferences, allowing students to engage their peers from similar communities in an effort to increase dialogue and awareness across different affiliations as students working together under a common cause.

The student Board of Directors, the National President, and Vice President hire and oversee USSA's Organizing and Legislative Directors. These full-time positions in Washington, DC take the Action Agenda items and turn them into campaigns that include grassroots organizing and lobbying on the national level.

Our sister organization, the United States Student Association Foundation has its own Board of Directors, made up of alumni and current students. USSAF is completely supported by foundation grants and donations from supporters of students and works to support the education and training initiatives of the Association.

SSA/ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBERSHIP

SSAs can become members through a vote of their governing body and the payment of dues. The current dues for SSAs are 2.5% of their annual operating budget the first year, and 5% of their annual operating budget the second year.

Of course, USSA understands that not all SSAs have the ability or resources to support the collective work of the association. SSAs may petition the board of directors for membership at a reduced rate with documented inability to pay current membership costs.

When an SSA becomes a member all the campuses of that SSA become affiliate members of USSA. SSA development and strengthening is a core priority for USSA.



The United States Student Association plays a crucial role for the students on its membership campuses. Not only is USSA the recognized voice of students on Capitol Hill, at the White House and in the Department of Education, and various national coalitions, but also in the everyday lives of students. The trainings and educational resources provided by our organization are a vital tool for organizing around educational access, affordability, diversity and quality at our institutions of higher education.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

1. Contact the national office to notify them of your intent.
2. Obtain the support of your governing body through a resolution or motion; or have students on your campus vote through referenda, stating their intent to join.
3. Secure the resources necessary to pay dues. Membership dues for campuses are based on the population of that campus and are \$0.50/student. Membership dues for SSAs are 2.5% of their annual operating budget for the first year and 5% for the second year.

As members of USSA, student governments and student organizations have a unique opportunity to be engaged on a national level. Our mission is to elevate the amazing higher education work taking place throughout the state. Through our advocacy and organizing efforts, trainings and leadership development, we will work to strengthen your campus and to ensure that concrete victories are being won for students. membership benefits include, but are not limited to:

ADVOCACY & ORGANIZING

- * Work with student leaders to develop statewide campaigns
- * Assistance with year-long planning
- * Full time advocacy presence in Washington, DC
- * Be plugged into the National Student Movement through:
 - Voting on a national student agenda
 - Sign onto letters to Capitol Hill
 - National call-in days
 - Weeks and days of action
 - National planning conference calls
 - National network of coalition partners
 - Discounts on trainings and conferences
 - Access to online advocacy tools

TRAININGS

- * Grassroots Organizing Weekend (GROW)
 - Understand relations of power
 - Choosing an Issue
 - Strategy
 - Recruitment and Org. Building
 - Coalitions
 - Actions
 - Principles of Direct Action Organizing
 - * Electoral Action Training (EAT)
 - Voter outreach and registration
 - Vote coalitions
 - Vote messaging and tactics
 - Leadership Development
 - Get Out the Vote (GOTV)
 - Campaign Planning
 - Voter Access: Institutionalization On Campus
- Members receive a discount rate; & you get 1 free training per year

WORKSHOPS

- * Issue Organizing
 - Principles of Direct Action Organizing
 - Understanding Relations of Power
 - Choosing a Campaign Issue
 - Developing a Winning Strategy
 - Recruitment and Organization Building
 - Building and Maintaining a Coalition
 - Planning a Successful Action
 - Effective Accountability Sessions
- * Electoral Organizing
 - Building Power through Elections
 - Voter Outreach and Registration
 - Voter Access: Institutionalization on Campus
 - Developing Vote Coalitions
 - Messaging Guidelines
 - Grassroots Tactics for Action
 - Managing Volunteers, Developing Leaders
 - Get Out the Vote (GOTV)
 - How to Run for Student Government and Win
- * Leadership Skills
 - Developing a Campaign Plan
 - Grassroots Lobbying
 - Facilitation: the Secret to Productive Meetings
 - Fundraising: Getting the Green for your Grassroots Campaign
 - Building Worker-Student Relationships
 - Legislative Policy Briefs
 - Building Other Student Leaders,
 - Institutionalizing the Movement
- * Issues
 - Context of Our Organizing: Educational Access
 - Higher Education Act
 - Higher Education Federal Budget
 - Attacks on Equal Opportunity
 - Students of Color Organize to Stop Hate
 - Economic Justice and Worker's Rights
 - The Federal DREAM Act

MATERIALS

- * Lobbying Materials
- * Statewide Student Association (SSA) Development Manual
- * Media & Public Relations Manual
- * Fact Sheets & Legislative Analysis
- * Organizing Manuals

STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

- * Campaign consultations
- * Statewide coalition development and support
- * State budget and tuition fight strategy
- * How to start a SSA
- * Help hiring SSA staff
- * Monthly SSA updates
- * Annual Statewide Student leader training
- * Annual SSA Staff Training
- * Developing a strong Board of Directors

CONFERENCES

- * National Student Congress**
- * National Grassroots Legislative Conference (LegCon)**
- * National & Regional Coalition Partner Conferences
- * National & Regional Leadership Conferences

** Discounted membership rate to USSA's two large national conferences

SUMMARY OF USSA AND USSAF

64 Years of Involving Students in Social Change and the Political Process

The United States Student Association believes that higher education is a right. The organization promotes educational access, especially for those traditionally excluded from obtaining postsecondary education; opposing racism, sexism, and homophobia; and teaches students how to navigate the political system, including organizing voter registration, education and get-out-the-vote campaigns.



Since 1947, USSA has adapted to changing times, providing generations of student activists with a vehicle to become involved in social change movements and the political process. No group has ever educated and inspired so many students to take action. Many USSA leaders and members have continued to work to advance education and social change throughout their lives in the education, civil rights, labor, economic justice and environmental movements.

USSA is a student run, student led organization. Its membership is the sole decision maker in choosing the organization's leadership and action agenda items. In helping to ensure equal opportunity, campus delegations to USSA's annual conferences must include students of color, students with disabilities; women; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students. Half of the seats on the Board of Directors must be filled by representatives from these constituencies as well. The elected President and Vice President work full time for the organization and lead the staff in the national office located in Washington, DC. The USSA structure includes a wide range of coalitions and caucuses for underrepresented communities.

GIVING STUDENTS A VOICE IN THE NATION'S CAPITOL

USSA advocates for students on Capitol Hill and encourages them to have a voice in Washington by engaging them in the political process. USSA provides student activists with regular email updates, briefings on legislation and talking points for communicating with elected officials. USSA leaders also testify before Congress and have participated in the negotiated rulemaking process where decisions are made about how to implement new and revised provisions of the Higher Education Act. Each year USSA sponsors a Grassroots Legislative Conference in Washington DC, where hundreds of students attend issue and skills building workshops.



The students put their skills to work at National Student Lobby Day immediately following the conference. Recognizing the critical importance of coalition building in student organizing, USSA has participated in and offers the student perspective to national education, civil rights, labor and youth coalitions and organizations. These include the Committee on Education Funding, Alliance to Save Student Aid, Leadership Conference on Civil Human Rights, National Jobs with Justice, NAACP Youth & College Division, Choice USA, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Generational Alliance and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network to name a few.

CURRENT ISSUE PRIORITIES AND THE USSA FOUNDATION

USSA's current issue priorities include direct advocacy against privatization at public institutions, increases in grant aid for low-income and middle class students, educating the public and policymakers about the enormous burden of growing student loan debt, promoting educational access for DREAM students, and mobilizing students to register, educate, and vote. Our priority is to strategically demand what higher education should look like in the United States, expanding access, affordability, quality and diversity within our institutions of higher learning.

The work of USSA is complemented by its sister organization, the tax-exempt USSA Foundation. USSAF provides student activists with the weekend-long grassroots and electoral organizing trainings; technical assistance in developing diverse statewide student advocacy organizations and mobilizing students to register and vote; factsheets on a wide range of issues of interest to students such as equal opportunity, racial profiling, funding for prisons vs. higher education, college enrollment and faculty data by race, hate crimes, LGBT inclusive and nondiscrimination policies, barriers to higher education; and "how to" manuals on electoral access and organizing and expanding educational access through centers that aid students of color, LGBT students and women in attending and completing college.

VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

USSA's Vision:

The students 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.

USSA's 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.

Core Beliefs:

The vision and missions are predicated upon the following core belief:

USSA believes that education is a right and should be accessible for any student regardless of their socioeconomic 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.

VISION OF USSAF

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.

USSA PROGRAMS

The National Action Agenda



Each summer at USSA's National Student Congress, delegates from USSA's member campuses set the top priority issues on which USSA

will work on for the upcoming year. The National Action Items are the issues we prioritize, and have included the Federal DREAM Act, increases in federal funding for the Pell Grant and other federal financial aid programs, education, jobs and creating the GEAR UP early intervention and mentorship program, to name a few.

USSA Action Plans

The USSA action plans include all the information needed to run USSA's grassroots campaigns. USSA members receive priority consultation with supportive materials including how-to sample materials and additional factsheets.

National Student Congress

Congress is the membership conference where leadership for the association is elected and the national priorities for the student agenda are chosen by the membership.

Grassroots Legislative Conference (LegCon)

Held each spring, this conference is where USSA takes its grassroots power to the Hill! Hundreds of students come to Washington, DC for a weekend of workshops with national policy makers, skilled activists, and student leaders.



The National Student Lobby Day

The day following LegCon is where students apply what they have learned and lobby their Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill!

USSA Legislative Updates :

Members receive regular legislative updates and alerts on legislation and policy decisions affecting students' lives.

Caucuses and Affiliates :

Our members have organized caucuses and affiliates to address the needs of historically underrepresented students.

Campus News Service :

Upon request, campus newspapers on member campuses receive free, regular updates on issues and events of concern to students nationwide

Countless Resources :

Members are networked into the USSA National Office and Board of Directors who are comprised of experienced organizers and student leaders

USSA Foundation

The USSA Foundation is the educational wing of USSA. USSAF complements the work of USSA and seeks to build the capacity of the national student movement. Key priorities include conducting organizing trainings, policy research and analysis, provide organizing and technical assistance on student campaigns related to educational access and social and economic justice.

USSAF supports the following:

- Students Vote Project
- Student Labor Action Project (SLAP)
- State/System Student Association Development Project
- Trainings Department
 - Electoral Action Training (EAT)
 - Grassroots Organizaing Weekend (GROW)

WHO SITS ON THE BOARD?

REGIONS:

Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)
Southeast (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN)
Empire Garden (NY, NJ, PR, Virgin Islands)
Great Plains (IA, KS, MO, NE)
Golden Pacific (CA, HI, NV, Guam, Amer. Samoa.)
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
Pacific Northwest (AK, ID, OR, WA)
Rocky Mountain (AZ, CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, NM)
South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)

AFFILIATES

National People of Color Student Coalition (NPCSC)
National Women's Student Coalition (NWSC)
National Queer Student Coalition (NQSC)

CAUCUSES

Community College Caucus
Graduate and Professional Student Caucus
International Student Caucus
La Coalicion
Multi-Racial and Bi-Racial Caucus
National Asian Pacific American Student
Coalition (NAPASC)
National Coalition of Students with
Disabilities (NCSD)
Non Traditional/First Generation
Students of the Jewish Community
National Queer Students of Color Caucus
People of African Descent (POAD)
People of Middle Eastern and South Asian
Descent (POMESAD)
Minority Serving Institution Caucus
Veterans Caucus
Women of Color Caucus
Working Class Student Caucus
DREAM Caucus

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we teach in USSA's GrassRoots Organizing Weekend (GROW), any campaign strategy must take into account the resources the organization has to carry it out. These considerations include what the organization has, what it needs, and any internal problems that may affect the campaign. In that spirit, the following are the organizational considerations for the United States Student Association.

USSA HAS:

- 2 National Officers
- 2 Association Staff Members
- 7 Foundation Staff Members
- 40 Members on Board of Directors
- A Supportive Alumni Base
- Authentic Student Voice
- Office Space in Washington, DC
- 9 Computers
- A Website
- Connections to National and local, multi issue organizations
- Money to print materials

USSA NEEDS:

- To grow to represent the country and its diversity
- To recruit new members through our campaign work
- To build our power as an organization over our members of Congress and other decision-makers
- To build relationships with other grassroots organizations
- To expand the funding of the USSA Foundation projects
- To build media contacts and relationships

USSA Challenges:

- high turnover rate of students
- limited staff capacity

GRASSROOTS VICTORIES

USSA works on issues that result in real victories for students across the country.

Despite many of the challenges in higher education over the past several years including tuition and fee increases, draconian state budget cuts, billions of dollars in federal student aid cuts, students continue to fight to make education a right.

When they've said cut back, we have fought back. Students should be proud of the gains we have seen in higher education over past years despite the political climate. Our member's dedication to expand access to education for everyone has resulted in multiple legislative victories. Here are a few of the victories we have seen in the past.

Passage of the Student Aid Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) :

Higher Ed. saw its biggest investment to date with increases in Pell Funding, expansion of federally subsidized direct student loans, and increased funding for academic preparation programs, Minority Serving Institutions and Community Colleges. The Bill also eliminated wasteful subsidies for banks who gave out federal loans, cutting out middle men & saving \$80 billion.

DREAM Act Passes in Historic House Vote :

On Decemeber 18th, 2010, the House passed this youth immigration bill. The Bill gives gives young undocumented people a path to citizenship if they enroll in college or enlist in the military. Although the Senate failed to garner enough support for its final passage, the historic House vote brought the DREAM Act a step to one day becoming a realtiy.

\$17 billion for Pell Grants to maintain maximum award :

As part of the deal to raise the debt ceiling until 2013, Pell Grants received additional \$11 billion to help close the funding gap, which helps students maintain its \$5,550 maximum award level for eligible low income students. USSA worked with coalition partners in letter writing campaigns, lobby visits, days of action, and press conferences to ensure the Pell max is preserved. It's without a doubt that the victory is a result of student leadership.

Don't Double My Rate

On July 1st, 2012, interest rates on Subsidized Stafford Loans were scheduled to double from 3.4% to 6.8%. Students across the country mobilized to tell Congress to #DontDoubleMyRate. Students organized via call in days, letters to their legislators, letters to the editor and more, and pressured legislators to extend the interest rates on subsidized stafford loans at 3.4%, keeping college costs from increasing. .

Department of Education Strengthens Regulations :

Last year, the Department of Education published final regulations addressing a broad set of rules to strengthen program integrity and student aid programs at for-profit, nonprofit, & public institutions of higher education. The regulations protect students from aggressive or misleading recruitment practices. They also establish consumer protection by making certain that only eligible students can apply their financial aid toward eligible programs. The regulations were in response to the abuse and misuse of federal financial aid by some bad actors from for-profit industry.

USSA STAFF CONTACTS



TIFFANY LOFTIN
PRESIDENT
pres@usstudents.org



SOPHIA ZAMAN
VICE PRESIDENT
vp@usstudents.org



KALWIS LO
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
leg@usstudents.org



SESALI BOWEN
TRAINING DIRECTOR
training@usstudent.org



JESSICA CENDANA
OPERATIONS MANAGER
manager@usstudents.org



JOHN ASPRAY
EMPIRE GARDENS NATIONAL
FIELD ASSOCIATE
john@usstudents.org



CHIRAG BHAKTA
WEST COAST NATIONAL
FIELD ORGANIZER
chirag@usstudents.org

not pictured

ISAIAH TONEY
STUDENT LABOR
ACTION PROJECT COORDINATOR
isaiah@jwj.org



ANTHONY DELAROSA
NATIONAL FIELD ASSOCIATE
anthony@usstudents.org