

# Student Senate Caucus Policy

## Section 1: Mandate

The Student Senate Caucus (SSC) shall act as a forum for discussion and coordination between all students who are members of the Senate. This is to allow for the sharing of resources and information, to facilitate a broader understanding of student perspectives and concerns in relation to critical issues, and to offer support in lobbying on issues before the Senate.

## Section 2: Membership

Membership of the Caucus shall be categorized into three groups:

1. Members, defined as the voting student members of the Senate and who shall be privy to all matters of the Student Senate Caucus, confidential or otherwise.
2. Observers, defined as non-voting student members of the Senate, who may be privy to confidential matters of the Student Senate Caucus at the Chair's discretion not to be unreasonably withheld.
3. Guests, defined as any other student who is not a voting or non-voting member of Senate but who holds a student leadership position (e.g. Faculty Society President, AMS Commissioner) or is otherwise associated with Senate or relevant to its affairs (e.g. frequently interacts with its committees or subcommittees). It is incumbent upon the Chair to ensure that relevant guests are invited to the appropriate discussions at meetings of the Student Senate Caucus.

There shall be one Chair and one Vice-Chair of the Student Senate Caucus, elected in accordance with section 4 of this policy.

## Section 3: Duties and Responsibilities

**The chair of the Student Senate Caucus shall be responsible for:**

1. Acting as a point of contact between student senators and other key individuals or organizations within the University, including, but not limited to: individual members of the University administration, the Queen's University Faculty Association, the Alma Mater Society, and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students.
2. Facilitating communication and sharing of resources between all members and observers so that they possess a firm understanding of all pertinent issues in preparation for each Senate meeting. This includes ensuring that appropriate written resources are provided and relevant guests are present for discussions of the Caucus.
3. Identifying key strategic areas of focus for the year and any related strategic initiatives, in consultation with all members.
4. Ensuring and facilitating members' contribution to the advancement of key strategic initiatives for the year.
5. In conjunction with the Vice-Chair, encouraging participation among all student senators at Senate, in its committees/subcommittees, and at Student Senate Caucus.
6. In conjunction with the Vice-Chair, regularly meeting with the Rector, the Undergraduate Student Trustee, and the Graduate Student Trustee in order to enhance consistency and coordination in student advocacy across the Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the University Council.
7. Chairing all regular, bi-monthly meetings of the Student Senate Caucus, which involves:
  - a) Preparing an agenda with opportunity for collaborative input from all members.
  - b) Endeavouring to provide all members with an agenda and any associated materials at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
  - c) Endeavouring to provide notice of a Caucus meeting to all members at least 48 hours in advance
  - d) Endeavouring to develop consensus within the Caucus, particularly regarding Senate issues that are deemed likely to have distinct and significant impact on students.
  - e) Facilitating and directing discussion.
  - f) Ensuring that typed minutes are taken, and that they are included with the following meeting's agenda.

8. Creating a transition manual for the incoming Chair that elaborates on the roles and responsibilities of the position as outlined in this document.
9. In conjunction with the Vice-Chair, notifying the applicable constituent society if their elected senators are failing to perform as expected in accordance with the roles outlined in this policy or with in any other policy that applies to that member.
3. Attending AMS Assembly meetings, which involves:
  - a) Submitting a written report on Caucus and Senate activities.
  - b) Responding to Assembly members' questions.
  - c) Providing a verbal report on any Caucus or Senate activity that has transpired subsequent to the submission of the written report.
4. Attending the AMS Presidents' Caucus, which entails:
  - a) Reporting to the presidents of the AMS member societies all relevant information on the activities of the Senate. Where the Chair is an SGPS member, the AMS President shall have the discretion to request that an AMS member of the Caucus fill this reporting role.

**The vice-chair of the Student Senate Caucus shall be responsible for:**

1. Acting as the primary team-building member, exploring new opportunities for professional development and improving cohesion, organization, and communication among members of the Caucus.
2. Endeavouring to ensure that transitioning between outgoing and incoming senators occurs according to the following recommended guidelines:
  - a) Each constituent group of student senators shall communicate to their successors the relevant information surrounding their responsibilities and experiences on Senate, any committee or subcommittee of which they were members, and the Student Senate Caucus.
  - b) Encapsulating in a written report all major issues that occurred at Senate and its committees and subcommittees, and ensuring that this report is available to all continuing and incoming student senators. This shall be done with the opportunity for input from all continuing and outgoing student senators and members of committees and subcommittees who are students but are not senators. This is to ensure the incoming Caucus is informed on the broad array of issues facing Senate and its committees and subcommittees.
  - c) Conveying any other information as deemed appropriate, such as non-confidential meetings with members of the administration with regards to Senate or its committees and subcommittees.
3. Ensuring that training of members is completed prior to the second Senate meeting of the session, according to the following recommended guidelines:
  - a) Conveying the structure of Senate, including an overview of its composition and prominent committees and subcommittees.
  - b) Developing a firm understanding of the rules of order for Senate meetings, which may include the hosting of a mock session of Senate.
  - c) Giving an overview of continuing, recent and prominent issues before Senate or its committees and subcommittees.
  - d) Giving an overview of the role and impact of prominent positions or groups on Senate, which includes, but is not limited to:
    - Ex-officio members, such as the Principal, Provost, and Deans
    - Faculty, including the President of the Faculty Association
    - Students
    - Staff
  - e) Any other information that is deemed appropriate at the discretion of the Vice-Chair.
4. Endeavouring to consult with non-senator student members of committees and subcommittees in order to provide updates to the Caucus on the activities of those committees and subcommittees.
5. Organizing regular socials in order to build cohesion, organization, and communication among members.
6. Creating a transition manual for the incoming Vice-Chair that elaborates on the roles and responsibilities of the position as outlined in this document.
7. In conjunction with the Chair, encouraging participation among all student senators at Senate, in its

committees/subcommittees, and at Student Senate Caucus.

8. In conjunction with the Chair, regularly meeting with the Rector, the Undergraduate Student Trustee, and the Graduate Student Trustee. This is in order to enhance consistency and coordination, wherever possible, in student advocacy across the Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the University Council.
9. In conjunction with the Chair, notifying the applicable constituent society if their elected senators are failing to perform as expected in accordance with the roles outlined in this policy or with any other policy that applies to that member.
10. Assuming the duties of the Chair in their absence.

**All members of the Student Senate Caucus shall fulfill the following responsibilities:**

1. Attending and participating at all meetings of Senate.
2. Attending and participating at all meetings of Student Senate Caucus, and contributing to its key strategic initiatives.
3. Endeavouring to consult with student members of Senate committees and subcommittees who are not Senators.
4. Satisfying any other applicable responsibilities, including those found in the member's respective constituent society's guiding policies.

**All members of the Student Senate Caucus shall endeavour to fulfill the following responsibilities:**

1. Applying for at least one Senate committee.
2. If successfully nominated to a committee, attending and participating at all meetings and in all activities/initiatives of that committee.
3. At the end of the year, ensuring that there is transition material for successive student senators. If successfully nominated to a committee, this transition material shall also include an overview of the issues, key members, and mandate of that committee.

**Section 4: Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Student Senate Caucus shall be held at a special meeting called expressly for that purpose with outgoing, incoming, and continuing student senators. Both positions shall be elected to a term from June 1st to May 31<sup>st</sup> of the following calendar year. The following recommendations are provided to guide election procedure, and shall be deviated from only by consensus of the attendees:

1. The outgoing Chair shall facilitate the elections of the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair, in that order.
2. The outgoing Chair shall call for nominations. Eligible candidates shall be restricted to incoming or continuing student senators, and shall require one nomination and one seconding to that nomination.
3. Each successfully nominated candidate shall have the opportunity for an opening statement, the length and order of which shall be at the outgoing Chair's discretion.
4. After opening statements, the outgoing Chair shall facilitate a question period, where attendees may ask questions of any candidate. Questions shall not be candidate specific but rather shall be directed to all candidates. The length of question period shall be at the outgoing Chair's discretion.
5. Once question period is over, each candidate shall be allowed a closing statement, the length of which shall be at the outgoing Chair's discretion. The closing statements shall be delivered in the opposite order of the opening statements.
6. After closing statements, the outgoing Chair shall distribute voting ballots to eligible voters, defined as continuing or incoming senators. Candidates shall also be allowed one vote each. Outgoing senators shall not have a vote.
7. If there are only two candidates, voters shall simply list their choice for Chair or Vice-Chair and the majority vote (defined as 50% of the eligible voters plus one) shall be used to determine the winner. If there are more than two candidates, voters shall list, in ranked order, their preferences for the Chair or Vice-Chair. Instant run-off preferential voting shall be used to determine the winner.
8. Unsuccessful candidates for the position of Chair shall be eligible to run in the Vice-Chair election, with no nomination requirement.

**Section 5: Removal of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The process for removal of the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Student Senate Caucus may be initiated by a written request by any two or more members. Once official notification of this request has been made to all members, a special meeting shall be called for the express purpose of voting on the removal of the Chair or Vice-Chair. Removal shall require a two-thirds

majority vote of the total membership of the Caucus in favour. Additionally, should the Chair or Vice-Chair cease to hold their voting position on Senate, they shall also immediately cease to hold the position of Chair or Vice-Chair. A new election for that position shall be called immediately in accordance with section 4 of this policy.

**Section 6: How to amend this policy**

In recognition that the Student Senate Caucus is a body that is responsible to members of both the Alma Mater Society (AMS) and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS), amendments to this policy, initially approved by the Student Senate Caucus, shall also require independent confirmation by the AMS Assembly and by the SGPS Council.