

Health Studies Students' Union Constitution Updated 2020

Objectives

The Health Studies Students' Union at the University of Toronto organizes social activities and academic seminars, as well as provides resources and assists students with academic concerns. We are committed to building connections between students interested in health and enriching the experience of the students in our program. We hope to facilitate an open environment in which students can participate in an ongoing dialogue about the socioeconomic, political, cultural and biomedical determinants of health and healthcare systems. We encourage all students to get involved by joining the executive, coming to general meetings, and attending events.

Membership

Membership is automatically extended to all students registered within the Health Studies program (major or specialist) or taking a Health Studies course in University College with a HST designation.

Executive positions are filled through annual formal elections held in the spring. All Executive members, with the exception of the Member at Large, must be enrolled in a major or specialist program in Health Studies.

Governance Structure

There shall be eight core executive positions consisting of:

- (a) President
- (b) Vice President: Academic
- (c) Vice President: Social
- (d) Treasurer
- (e) Director of Marketing
- (f) Director of Communications
- (g) Secretary
- (h) Director of Health Equity

There shall be up to eight additional discretionary executive positions, consisting of:

- (h) Second Year Representative (2)
- (i) Third Year Representative (2)
- (j) Fourth Year Representative (2)
- (k) Member at Large (2)

In addition to their own responsibilities, the discretionary executive members shall take on the responsibilities of the core executive as needed to support the work of the Union as a whole. The discretionary roles shall be filled according to need and availability of interested candidates.

All members of the executive are responsible to and must report to the Union as needed. The Editor in Chief of *Health Perspectives*, the Undergraduate Health Studies Journal, is an appointed position and shall not be considered an executive member of the HSSU. The responsibilities of the Editor in Chief are outlined in detail in the Undergraduate Health Studies Journal constitution. Though their responsibilities as liaison to the HSSU include mandatory attendance at HSSU executive meetings, they do not have executive voting privileges. For the sake of clarity, selected responsibilities relevant to the HSSU are summarized at the end of this document.

No individual may fill more than one executive position on the HSSU at any given time. This restriction does not apply to executive positions on the Undergraduate Health Studies Journal, including Editor in Chief.

Meetings

Executive meetings will be held on a weekly schedule. A 60% attendance of the core and discretionary executive members will form a quorum. Members are expected to put the foremost effort into attending all meetings. Any member on the union can arrange for a meeting. A general meeting will be held at least twice a year (one per semester), which will be open to all members within the health studies program.

Use of Funds

No funds may be spent without majority consent. The President, Vice President: Academic, and Treasurer are the signing officers for the union.

Elections

All executive members must be elected by the membership at large. Core executive elections are held annually in the spring. Elected executives take office on the last day of the winter sessional academic calendar. If the President graduates or is no longer able to fulfill the position upon the summer break, the standing Vice President: Academic will assume the position until the following elections.

Discretionary executive members will be elected during a discretionary executive election held annually in the fall. Elected discretionary executives take office immediately following the confirmation of election results. Discretionary executive members leave office on the last day of the winter sessional academic calendar; thus the positions are vacant during the summer session, and responsibilities must be managed as necessary by the standing core executive.

In the event that a position is vacated during the executive term, a bi-election will be held to fill the position. This bi-election can occur at any time during the executive term with two weeks notice provided to Health Studies students.

Removal from Office

Any such member that engages in the following behaviours will result in their removal:

- Failure to perform their roles or fulfill the responsibilities outlined in this constitution
- Misuse of funds
- Any inappropriate behaviour or grievance identified by the student body

Any student who holds membership in the Health Studies Student Union may approach the executive to voice a concern regarding any member of the executive. 50% of all executive members must agree to open discussion on the removal of an executive member, and 80% of all executive members must vote in favour of removal for a member to be removed from office.

As previously stated, the Editor in Chief of *Health Perspectives* is not an executive member of the HSSU. However, because funding of the UHSJ is obtained, in full or in part, by the HSSU, the Editor in Chief may be removed from their position through the same voting process. The details of this removal from office process are outlined in the UHSJ constitution.

Constitutional Amendments

The constitution can be amended at any executive meeting provided general union members are given two weeks notice of the amendment, and given the opportunity to attend the meeting and vote on the proposed changes.

Student Grievances

Student grievances are to be reported to the appropriate year representatives. Upon such an event, year representatives are responsible to inform the President and Vice President: Academic in a timely manner and act as a representative for the student(s) if necessary. If the three aforementioned executives (President, Vice President: Academic & corresponding year representative) consider it appropriate to proceed, the President will present concerns to the acting Program Director.

Role of the Executives

The general role of the executive body is as follows:

- Shall hold decision-making power with respect to the events and services offered by the Health Studies Students' Union
- Shall oversee organizational decisions affecting the roles and membership of the Health Studies Students' Union

All members of the executive are responsible for the following:

- Shall be present in the HSSU office for office hours as assigned, such that the Health Studies Student Union as a whole provides three office hours total, over three separate days, each week. The executive shall assign office hours; it is

- expected that office hours are made accessible with a schedule that is accommodating to executive members' courses and employment.
- Shall attend a minimum of 75% of all meetings. Exceptions to this rule, based on exceptional circumstances, must be approved by a quorum of core executive members.
 - Shall assist with and attend HSSU held events
 - Shall respond to the HSSU emails regarding their specific roles and responsibilities
 - Shall assist in keeping students in the Health Studies program informed of relevant events and initiatives
 - Shall assist in keeping the faculty and staff informed and updated on HSSU events and initiatives
 - Shall maintain an open communication with faculty and staff and respond in a professional manner
 - Shall all times should feel comfortable with their position and their duties
 - Shall be aware of their responsibilities as outlined in this constitution
 - Shall fulfill responsibilities outside of their individual role as necessary to support the work of the Union as a whole

Individual Roles and Responsibilities

President

- Shall chair all meetings
- Shall uphold the mandate of HSSU
- Shall act as a liaison between ASSU and the union by attending all necessary ASSU meetings and communicating information between the two executives
- Shall be responsible to ASSU for all funds allocated to the union by ASSU
- Shall act as a liaison between HSSU and the Health Studies Program Director
- Shall provide reference letters to union members when requested
- Shall provide an atmosphere that encourages all members of the HSSU to share and learn throughout the year
- Shall follow up with executive members regarding failure to fulfill responsibilities and duties as outlined in this constitution
- Shall act as a signing officer for the HSSU chequing account

Vice President: Academic

- Shall assume or delegate all President's duties in the President's absence
- Shall act as liaison between the HSSU and campus groups, university officials and staff, and guests of the Health Studies program and its events
- Shall attend ASSU meetings in the absence of the President
- Shall coordinate with the Vice President: Social before the start of the academic year regarding the division of academic and social events
- Shall chair the organization of accessible academic events for Union members of all ages and all years

- Shall organize one academic event per semester, which may include the annual Health Studies symposium (HealthX) held annually in the spring
- Responsible for organizing initiatives to recruit first year students into the Health Studies program
- Shall provide an atmosphere that encourages all members of the HSSU to share and learn throughout the year
- Shall follow up with executive members regarding specific tasks, and in cases where there is a failure to fulfill responsibilities and duties as outlined in this constitution
- Shall act as a signing officer for the HSSU chequing account

Vice President: Social

- Shall coordinate with the Vice President: Academic before the start of the academic year regarding the division of academic and social events
- Shall chair the organization of accessible social events for Union members of all ages and all years
- Shall ensure events held comply with funding guidelines imposed by ASSU, the UCLit and other funding bodies and maintain event budgets as necessary
- Shall organize one social event per semester, which may include social events held as part of the annual Health Studies symposium (HealthX) held annually in the spring
- Shall manage the planning of one HSSU general meeting per semester, and as necessary in response to student concerns
- Shall coordinate with the Editor in Chief of Health Perspectives for the organization and planning of the journal launch
- Shall keep a list of all relevant contacts for use by future executives

Treasurer

- Shall be responsible to the Union for all funds, including those granted by ASSU, the UCLit, and other bodies
- Shall attend annual ASSU budget training and communicate necessary information to members of the Union regarding funding guidelines and restrictions
- Shall create and submit detailed budgets as required for funding from ASSU, the UCLit and other bodies
- Shall collect and file all HSSU receipts to ASSU and any other funding bodies
- Shall keep a record of all account balances and collect all financial records
- Shall act as a signing officer for the HSSU chequing account

Director of Marketing

- Shall maintain or delegate the responsibility for maintaining the HSSU Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages as well as any other social media accounts
- Shall respond to student inquiries received as messages on the Facebook page or

direct those inquiries to the appropriate member of the executive

- Shall oversee the design and distribution of promotional materials (e.g. posters) for all HSSU events
- Shall book rooms with the Office of Space Management for all HSSU events and meetings, or coordinate room booking through the Academic Services office as necessary

Director of Communications

- Shall coordinate with the University College program staff to maintain and update the website pages for the HSSU and Health Perspectives
- Shall collect Union executive biographies each fall and submit them for publication on the HSSU website
- Shall manage the HSSU email and respond to students' inquiries or direct those inquiries to the appropriate member of the executive
- Shall share event information with faculty, staff, and students via the Health Studies' listserv
- Shall inform all HSSU executive and general members of events times and locations

Secretary

- Shall take minutes of all executive and general meetings and distribute them to promptly to executive members, and to general members upon request
- Shall keep records of all information necessary to facilitate Union turnover each year and pass on this information to future executives
- Shall collect executive members' fall and spring timetables and coordinate meeting times and office hours
- Shall update and distribute executive member contact information lists to the executive and pass it along for posting on the HSSU website
- Shall be available to support any member regarding written documentation
- Shall inform executives of the office hours and meetings schedule

Director of Health Equity

- Shall promote health equity in the Health Studies program, meaning they advocate for an inclusive, accessible, and equitable environment within the student union, the Health Studies Department, and the university as a whole.
- Shall coordinate with the President and UofT Student Life to organize equity training for the HSSU exec, the general Health Studies student body, and encourage Health Studies professors and admin to partake in equity training
- Shall be the point of contact for health studies students experiencing accessibility or equity issues in their courses or health studies environment
- Shall ensure equity, representation and accessibility of all HSSU events and programming
- Shall lead the HSSU and health studies students in engaging in health advocacy at

UofT and in the broader community by planning or collaborating with student or community advocacy groups on a minimum of 2 events/campaigns per academic year

Second Year Representatives (2)

- Must be in their second academic year and enrolled in the Health Studies Major or Specialist Program, and must be enrolled in at least one 200-series Health Studies course
- Shall act as a liaison with the second year class and incoming Health Studies students via class announcements and email
- Shall direct any concerns from second year students to relevant core executive members as necessary
- Shall give general assistance to other members of the executive as required
- Shall make significant contributions to the planning of at least one of the major events of the year (i.e. HealthX symposium, social events, grad night etc.)

Third Year Representatives (2)

- Must be in their third academic year and enrolled in the Health Studies Major or Specialist Program, and must be enrolled in at least one 300-series Health Studies course
- Shall act as a liaison with the third year class via class announcements and email
- Shall direct any concerns from third year students to relevant core executive members as necessary
- Shall give general assistance to other members of the executive as required
- Shall make significant contributions to the planning of at least one of the major events of the year (i.e. HealthX symposium, social events, grad night etc.)

Fourth Year Representatives (2)

- Must be in their fourth academic year and enrolled in the Health Studies Major or Specialist Program, and must be enrolled in at least one 400-series Health Studies course
- Shall act as a liaison with the fourth year class via class announcements and email
- Shall direct any concerns from fourth year students to relevant core executive members as necessary
- Shall give general assistance to other members of the executive as required
- Shall make significant contributions to the planning of at least one of the major events of the year (i.e. HealthX symposium, social events, grad night etc.)

Members at Large (2)

- Must be enrolled in at least 0.5 FCE of Health Studies courses
- Shall give general assistance to other members of the executive as required
- Shall make significant contributions to the planning of at least one of the major events of the year (i.e. HealthX symposium, social events, grad night etc.)

Editor in Chief of the Undergraduate Health Studies Journal (UHSJ)

Note: The Editor in Chief of Health Perspectives is not an executive position on the HSSU, and is appointed rather than elected through a process outlined in the UHSJ constitution. The UHSJ constitution also outlines in detail the responsibilities of the Editor in Chief. The responsibilities which pertain to their role as liaison between the UHSJ and the HSSU are specified below:

- Shall attend all executive HSSU meetings as required to provide regular updates on the progress of the UHSJ
- Shall coordinate with Directors of Marketing and Communications to carry out recruitment in the fall for the purposes of staffing the UHSJ
- Shall communicate changes in UHSJ staff to the HSSU to ensure contact information is up to date
- Shall coordinate with the Treasurer of the HSSU to ensure the UHSJ is following the appropriate guidelines to ensure adequate funding, and to obtain said funding from the HSSU as necessary
- Shall communicate any necessary information from the HSSU to the UHSJ staff
- Shall ensure that the UHSJ is upholding the mandate of the HSSU to serve the needs and interests of Health Studies students
- Shall act as a liaison between the UHSJ and the Program Director, involving relevant HSSU executive members as necessary
- Shall follow up with UHSJ staff regarding their failure to fulfill responsibilities and duties as outlined in the publication constitution, and inform the HSSU executive of any issues