



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Article I: Purpose

The purpose of this Doctoral Student Organization (DSO) is to support and enhance the academic achievement of social work doctoral students throughout their tenure at the University of Pittsburgh by providing a forum for collegial support, free exchange of ideas, discussion of critical issues related to the social work doctoral program, and initiation of appropriate action as needed. The DSO will serve the collective interests of the doctoral students in the social work program by representing their interests to the faculty, administration, and staff of the University, providing a vehicle for and promoting cooperation with other university and community organizations, and providing various services to the social work doctoral students in order to support academic and professional development and success.

Article II: Membership

- All doctoral students enrolled in the PhD and joint MSW/PhD programs, full time or part time, within the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh shall be full members of the DSO.
- As per the University of Pittsburgh, the DSO will not engage in discrimination of membership on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran.
- There are no financial obligations of current DSO members, nor are there any financial requirements for joining DSO.
- Social work faculty and alumni of the University of Pittsburgh may participate in the meetings and activities of this organization but may not vote, hold office, or serve in formal leadership positions. No more than two (2) faculty at the School of Social Work may serve as associate members during any given academic year. Associate members are required to be present during at least one (1) membership meeting throughout the course of the academic year.
- New social work doctoral students will participate in DSO orientation as part of their larger orientation to the School of Social Work. New students will be informed of DSO activities, meetings, and election opportunities during student orientation, prior to the beginning of the fall semester.
- Membership privileges will cease upon the following conditions: (1) graduation or termination of the social work doctoral program, or (2) violation of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Article III: Activities, Meetings, and Voting

- DSO will consist primarily of monthly meetings, where students will have the opportunity to discuss programmatic issues with the social work doctoral program, recent advances in scholarly work produced by the membership, and current obstacles and problems the membership is facing in contributing to the social work scientific knowledge base.
- Meetings will also include various workshops devoted to professional development and career planning.



- Incoming DSO officers will conduct a poll at the beginning of the fall semester to determine the best day/time for DSO meetings (i.e., when most members are available to meet). Meetings will take place monthly (at a minimum) while classes are in session at the University of Pittsburgh.
- All DSO members are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings
- Quorum for conducting a formal vote during a meeting will require that all officers be present as well as at least 2/3 of all DSO members (including officers). o In the event that all officers and/or 2/3 of DSO members are not present, an e-vote may be conducted
- Special meetings may be called by the president, provided that at least one (1) week notice has been issued to the membership.
- The president will act as chairperson for the meetings. In the absence of the president, the vice president will resume the responsibilities of chairperson.
- No formal rules of order will be adopted for DSO meetings.
- Each DSO member present at a given meeting shall have one vote to cast for any issue that comes before DSO.
- Only full members will have voting privileges.
- All DSO officers will have the same voting privileges as full members. However, any ties during voting procedures will be resolved by the president's vote.

Article IV: Officers

- The DSO leadership team will consist of the president, vice president, doctoral committee representative, Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator, International Student Representative, and secretary.
- The president of DSO will be responsible for directing the activities of DSO based on feedback and input from other officers and the membership. The president is also responsible for desk assignments each year, for maintaining and managing funding from the university and budgeting those funds for DSO activities and overseeing all DSO equipment rentals (see: DSO Rental Protocol).
- The vice president of DSO will be responsible for assisting the president in directing the activities of DSO and obtaining input from the membership about the activities of DSO. During the absence of the president, the vice president will assume full presidential authority over the organization. The vice president will be responsible for creating and distributing a poll to all members in the first week of February for changes to the bylaws, coordinating all DSO election activities, including calls for nominations, notifications of nominations, and general elections.
- The Doctoral Committee Representative will be responsible for attending doctoral committee meetings and relaying student concerns to the committee.
 - Concerns should be raised formally through email to the Committee Representative or at DSO meetings. Either the person with the concern or the Committee Representative who received notice will raise the concern and students will vote on whether or not the concern is one held by the whole DSO as evidenced by reaching a majority vote with quorum present. Concerns will then be formally written by the Doctoral Committee Representative, approved by DSO officers and shared at the next Doctoral Committee meeting. The Doctoral Committee Representative will share minutes from the Committee Meetings with DSO members in a reasonable time period following each meeting.
- The Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator will serve as liaison between the DSO and



other University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work student organizations. The ORC will also respond to all inquiries from prospective PhD program applicants and will coordinate with the PhD program Director, any recruitment events.

- The International Student Representative will work towards increasing participation of international students within the DSO, actively promote the academic and professional interests of international students within DSO and SSW administration and organize at least one activity per academic year for international students.
- The Secretary will be responsible for compiling the DSO membership list serve at the outset of each semester, polling members for best meeting times, taking detailed meeting minutes and emailing them to all DSO members, and compiling semester calendars with School of Social Work/CRSP presentations, DSO meetings, and other important events.
- The Justice & Belonging Liaison will serve as student voice for all activities initiated by the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. The DEI Liaison will relay student concerns to the DEI office as well as provide feedback and consultation to the Associate Dean per the consensus of DSO members.
- The Pitt Graduate Workers Union Liaison is the Social Work PhD program's official representative to the union organizing efforts. The Union Liaison is responsible for attending all relevant union meetings/activities and serving as a source of institutional knowledge between the union and program.

Article V: Officer Terms and Elections

- Officer terms run from May through April
- Officers will be elected at the end of each spring term. Polls will open the first Monday in March and close the first Monday of April.
- Current DSO officers will solicit nominations from DSO membership for future term officers at the beginning of March. Students will have one week to provide officer nominations for either themselves or other members. Members may be nominated for more than one position. Once nominations have been received, nominees will be notified and given one week to accept or deny nomination(s). Nominees may choose to stand for any, all, or none of their nominations
- Each student member will have only one vote.
- Members will not be required to vote. Simple majority will determine the outcome of the election. In the case of a tie, the president will make the final decision for the election.
- Only full DSO members will have voting privileges.
- Only full members will be eligible to run for office.
- No officer may hold more than one DSO position in a given academic year (May through April).
- Officers may be removed either by majority of the membership (excluding officers), or by majority of the current officers. In the event of disagreement between the membership and the current officers, the vote of the membership will be favored.
- Vacant officer positions will be filled by ad hoc elections following the same election process described above. Officers who are elected mid-term will be allowed to compete for future officer positions for the following term.

Article VI: Committees

- Ad hoc committees will be created as needed and will consist of members interested in the purpose and function of the committee.



- When DSO members are needed to sit on School of Social Work committees on an ongoing basis, nominations and elections will take place as needed during DSO meetings.
- Each member will have only one vote.
- Members will not be required to vote. Simple majority will determine the outcome of the election. In the case of a tie, the president will make the final decision for the election.
- The outcome of the election will be announced via email in April.
- Only full DSO members will have voting privileges.
- Only full members will be eligible to represent DSO on committees.
- Committee representative terms will run from May through April.
- Committee representatives may be elected for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms for the same committee representative position. In order to serve two terms, incumbent representatives must go through the election process again after their first term.
- Vacant committee representative positions will be filled by ad hoc elections following the same election process described above. Committee representatives who are elected mid-term will be allowed to compete for future committee representative positions for the following term.
- If a committee representative position is not able to be filled through a general election process, the DSO president will consider acting as committee representative.

Article VII: Finances

- The president helps to oversee over the finances of DSO. Only the president may make purchases on behalf of the DSO.
- DSO funds may only be appropriated for activities facilitating the purposes of the organization, including, but not limited to, equipment purchases, training, and meeting costs. DSO funds may not be used for personal expenses or for receptions.

Article VIII: Advisor

- DSO will have two advisors, who will serve as associate members and facilitate the direction and activities of DSO.
- The first advisory position will be filled by the head of the School of Social Work Doctoral Program and be responsible for advising DSO on structural and programmatic issues related to the doctoral program.
- The second advisory will be elected by consensus of the membership and will be responsible for advising DSO on professional and academic issues.

Article IX: Amendments

- Amendments to this document may be made by 2/3 consensus of the membership, including officers.
- Amendments to this document must be written and shared with the DSO via email at least one week before a vote. Votes on amendment changes should take place at a DSO meeting by the members present OR votes should take place using an online survey and requiring a 2/3 majority.