

Public Health Students' Association: Constitution & Bylaws

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Public Health Students' Association (PHSA) at the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH).

Article II. Mission

The PHSA seeks to promote and advance students' professional and academic development by advocating for students, liaising with the Faculty, and creating a sense of community within the DLSPH.

Article III. Values

- **Accountability:** the PHSA strives to assume responsibility, as well uphold the responsibility of partners, with respect to decisions, commitments, and policies impacting the DLSPH student body.
- **Equity:** the PHSA strives to create equitable and accessible opportunities for all students to participate in leadership within the DLSPH community and professional development.
- **Inclusivity & Community:** the PHSA strives to connect students across degree programs and streams to foster a sense of community within the DLSPH.
- **Social Justice:** the PHSA strives to advocate for issues of equity and justice, especially in realms of public health within the University of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area.
- **Transparency:** the PHSA strives to maintain open channels of communication between the Faculty, the PHSA, and the student body.

Article IV. Membership

- All full-time and part-time graduate students registered at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (herein "PHSA members") shall automatically be members of PHSA.
- An individual's membership in the PHSA shall be valid for as long as the individual is registered at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.
- An individual's membership in the PHSA is automatically terminated at the end of the term in which the individual ceases to be registered as a student at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.
- All PHSA members will have equal voting rights within all activities of the PHSA.

Article V. Objectives

The objectives of the PHSA shall be:

- To represent PHSA members on all matters of student interest.
- To promote and maintain communication between the members of PHSA, the Administration of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and the University of Toronto.
- To initiate, sponsor, coordinate, and promote social, academic, cultural, and athletic events in which PHSA members may be interested, and in general to promote the welfare and interests of the individuals registered at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.
- To facilitate opportunities for students to provide feedback to the Faculty and Administration of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health on issues including but not limited to: academics, funding, student engagement, and student support; and to facilitate opportunities for students to provide feedback and input to the PHSA on its activities.

Article VI. General Council

The General Council members consist of a maximum of two (2) stream or field representatives from each of the following fields, years and programs at DLSPH:

- MPH Epidemiology Year 1
- MPH Epidemiology Year 2
- MPH Nutrition and Dietetics Year 1
- MPH Nutrition and Dietetics Year 2
- MPH Occupational and Environmental Health Year 1
- MPH Occupational and Environmental Health Year 2
- MPH Social and Behavioural Health Sciences (Health Promotion) Year 1
- MPH Social and Behavioural Health Sciences (Health Promotion) Year 2
- MPH/MScCH Family and Community Medicine
- MSc Biostatistics
- MSc Bioethics
- MScCH Addictions and Mental Health
- MScCH Health Practitioner Teacher Education
- MScCH Occupational Health Care
- MScCH Wound Prevention and Care
- PhD Biostatistics
- PhD Epidemiology
- PhD Occupational and Environmental Health
- PhD Social and Behavioural Health Sciences
- Public Health and Preventive Medicine Residency

The General Council shall also consist of approximately:

- Two (2) representatives to the Public Health Alumni Association (PHAA), consisting of one (1) PhD representative and one (1) Masters representative (or as requested by the PHAA)
- Three (3) representatives to the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union
- Six (6) representatives to the school council, consisting of four (4) Masters representatives and two (2) PhD representatives
- One (1) representative from IHPME
- At least four (4) Social Committee members
- At least three (3) Communications Committee members
- At least (3) Advocacy Committee members
- One (1) International Student representative
- At least three (3) PhD Subcommittee members
- All student representatives of other Dalla Lana of School of Public Health Committees

These positions may be filled by existing PHSA members (of the General Council or the Executive), or by newly elected members as necessary (See Section 1.2 of Article X. By-Laws). Individuals may hold multiple positions on the PHSA.

Meetings of the General Council shall be held as necessary, but not less frequently than once per month during the Fall and Winter terms. All executives and members of the General Council shall attend each General Council meeting, as outlined in their respective Memorandum of Understanding. General Council meetings are open to all registered students at DLSPH. A quorum for General Council meetings shall be five (5) members: three (3) executives and two (2) General Council members. The duty of the General Council shall be to carry out the normal business of the PHSA

Article VII. The Executive

The executive shall consist of a minimum of five (5) officers. The executive shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Chair, and Communications Chair.

Each of the executive positions may be co-shared between two (2) people. The duties of the officers shall be:

- **The President:** shall act as the official representative of PHSA and undertake all duties assigned by the PHSA. The President(s) are the signing officers of the executive, along with the Treasurer(s). When there are enough candidates for two Presidents, one President shall be a Masters student and the other shall be a PhD student. If all candidates represent the same degree level, two Masters or two PhD students can be elected as Presidents. In the event that only one President is elected, signing officer authority is given to the Vice-President or Social Chair.
- **The Vice-President:** shall assist the President in duties assigned by the PHSA in manners deemed appropriate by the President or the PHSA executive. The Vice-President(s) shall assume the responsibilities of the President in the President's absence or in the event that the President's position is vacated without replacement. When there are enough candidates for two Vice-Presidents, one Vice-President shall be a Masters student and the other shall be a PhD student. If all candidates represent the same degree level, two Masters or two PhD students can be elected as Vice-Presidents.
- **The Treasurer:** shall be responsible for the procurement and disbursement of funds of PHSA. A year-end financial statement shall be submitted to the incoming Treasurer, and an interim financial statement shall be submitted to the General Council during the Fall term. The Treasurer along with another executive will have signing authority.
- **Communications Chair:** to maintain and update the PHSA page on the DLSPH website, and correspond with the DLSPH Director of Communications to upload documents to this page. The Communications Chair(s) shall maintain and update social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and promote PHSA activities via these platforms. The Communications Chair(s) will also be responsible for leading the communications committee. One Communications Chair shall be elected in the winter term elections and one shall be elected in the fall term, intended for an incoming student.
- **Social Chair:** shall plan activities and events, both social and academic, to foster a sense of community among PHSA members. The Social Chair(s) will also be responsible for leading the social committee and work closely with the Treasurer to create budget proposals for event planning. One Social Chair shall be elected in the winter term elections and one shall be elected in the fall term, intended for an incoming student.

Article IX. Amendments

The constitution may be amended by the consent of a simple majority of members at a General Council meeting. Written notice of constitutional motions must be made and shared with students one (1) week prior to its consideration at a General Council meeting.

Article X. Bylaws

All decisions of a General and Executive Council that are intended to stand as official policy of PHSA, rather than expressing an opinion of the PHSA, shall be recorded as Bylaws.

A motion to enact or amend a Bylaw shall require one (1) week's written notice prior to its consideration at a General Council meeting and a simple majority vote for passage.

Bylaws of the Public Health Students' Association

Section 1. Elections

1.1 Executive Election

The executive shall be elected from and by the membership of the Public Health Students' Association. The date of the elections shall be determined by a majority decision made by the General Council, and held no later than April 15th of any given academic year. Notice of elections and request for nominations must be given no later than April 1st of any given academic year to allow for an adequate voting period and transition period for incoming executives.

Nominations are open to all eligible students as defined in Article IV, and will be accepted at any point until the voting period for that specific position commences. Candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by a PHSA member. In the event that no candidate for an executive position has been nominated by the end of the general election, the position will be considered vacant.

In the event that a position is vacant after an election, the decision to hold another election at the beginning of the next academic term or to recruit interested members without election will be at the discretion of the elected executive.

1.2 General Council Election

The first-year students for each of the MPH, MSc, and MHSc programs will be given the opportunity to sign up for their respective stream representative position in the Fall term through an online application process. The online applications will open at a predefined time and students will be given advanced notice of the positions available prior to the opening of the application system. Representative positions will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis.

Any vacant second year or Doctoral (PhD) program representatives in the fall term will follow the same procedure as outlined above. A General Council term is equivalent to one academic year.

In the event that a member of the General Council vacates their position before the end of their term (following appropriate procedure set forth in Section 1.3.2), notice of the empty position and request for nominations shall be given to registered students at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. A by-election shall be held at the next General Council meeting to fill the position.

1.3 Reprimand & Disciplinary Action

1.3.1 Reasons for Impeachment. PHSA members may impeach or hold in non-confidence any person holding Executive or General membership. Reasons for impeachment may include the following:

- Consistently not fulfilling elected/appointed duties or responsibilities.
- Misappropriation of funds.
- Unwillingness to follow constitution and bylaws.
- Inappropriate conduct that reflects poorly on the PHSA.

1.3.2 Vacancy of Position. Vacancy of a position shall be deemed to have occurred in the event of:

- Resignation, inability or demise of a general council member or executive for undermining the successful functioning of the PHSA and other areas that fall within the purviews.
- Declaration of the executive of the exclusion of such representative for continued neglect of duties or any other action that violates the principle herein.
- Continuous absence at the scheduled meetings (See Appendix for MOU).

1.3.3 Process for Disciplinary Action. Before any motion of exclusion, non-confidence or impeachment can be passed by the executive or general council, the individual involved in said motion must:

- Be informed by a formal letter/email approved by the consensus of the executive (if individual is an executive, the consensus excludes said individual).
- Have the right to respond to the complaint (in letter/email format) within 48 hours of the distributed letter/email. Once a response has been made and approved by the consensus of the executive (if individual is an executive, the consensus excludes said individual), both impeachment letter/email and response will be distributed to PHSA members by the Secretary (if individual fills role of Secretary, then Communications Chair(s) or President(s) will distribute material).
- Be given the opportunity to request a formal general assembly meeting to respond to the complaint. Such a request may be made any time in conjunction with the response letter/email or after the complaint is approved by consensus of the executive and received.
- A motion of non-confidence/impeachment may then be passed by simple majority with a quorum of 80% of the general council and 50% of the executive present at a monthly general meeting or scheduled appointment outside regularly scheduled meetings.

Section 2. Finances

2.1 General Financial Guidelines

2.1.1 Treasurer Responsibilities. The treasurer is responsible for updating the general council of the PHSA financial status at the first general meeting in the fall and maintaining the bank account and records of receipts throughout the academic year. The treasurer notifies each stream representative of the money they have allocated to their stream and the type of activities it can be spent on (e.g. social events). The treasurer, along with the president or vice-president has cheque signing authorization and banking privileges; cheques must be signed by two executive members with signing authority.

2.1.2 Events and Reimbursements. General Council members are responsible for financial activities at the time of payment. All receipts are to be submitted to the treasurer and reimbursement cheques will be issued in a timely manner. Money can be spent on social activities, food etc. (funds cannot be spent on alcoholic beverages).

2.2 Allocation Process

UTGSU funding is allocated as follows:

- 50% of funds allocated to the PHSA General Funds account
- 50% of funds allocated to the Field Specific accounts

Field-Specific funds are allocated on a weighted system of full-time and part-time students enrolled at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. September). The weighted value is a ratio of the sum of all full-time students (FT) and half of all part-time students (PT) in the specific field to the sum of all DLSPH FT students and half of all DLSPH PT students. The product of the weighted value and 50% of total funding (as indicated above) is the total budget for that specific field.

All remaining field funds that are not used by the end of the academic year will be allocated to the PHSA General Funds account. The PHSA year-end date is set at August 31st of each year.

2.3 Proposal for Funds

PHSA members who will require funds of \$50 or more at one time shall submit a proposal for funds to the Treasurer(s) one (1) week prior to the date the funds will be spent. The proposal will be accepted if the Treasurer(s) and President(s) agree that the budget allows said funds to be spent.

Section 3. Endorsements

The PHSA may endorse student-led or community activities and initiatives that align with the Association's Missions and Values (see Article II and III). This includes but is not limited to:

1. Organizations addressing issues of public health, social justice, environment, income inequality, race, conflict;
2. Marches, parades, rallies addressing or promoting issues outlined in 1;
3. Conferences, lectures, presentations related to issues outlined in 1.

Endorsement may involve a letter of support, recruitment of volunteers, advertising through PHSA platforms (**excludes email listserv**), allowing use of the logo, or other forms of endorsement as requested.

All requests for endorsements will be formally documented through the 'Request for PHSA Endorsement Form' publicly available from the DLSPH-PHSA website and processed by the Advocacy Committee. Endorsements will be considered throughout the academic year (September 1st to April 30th) and summer recession (May 1st to August 31st). Endorsement requests submitted during the academic year (September 1st to April 30th) will be processed by the Advocacy Committee and endorsement requests submitted during the summer recession (May 1st to August 31st) will be processed by the incoming Vice-Presidents.

Student(s) bringing forth a request for endorsement are encouraged to do so two (2) weeks prior to the event requiring endorsement. Requests received less than two (2) weeks prior to the event will still be considered, but at the discretion of the Advocacy Committee or the Vice-Presidents, dependent on the date of request.

The PHSA Advocacy Committee will anonymously vote within 48 hours of the request submission, acting as representatives of the PHSA to approve or object to the endorsement request based on its feasibility, practicality, and appropriateness. To be successful, approval of the request must be **unanimous**. If an objection is raised by one (1) or more of the advocacy committee members, the endorsement will then require a vote of approval by any and all PHSA members in attendance at the *next* scheduled General Meeting.

3.1 Voting

Any item(s) up for endorsements will require a quorum and majority vote by any and all PHSA members in attendance at General Meetings, or by proxy. All votes are anonymous.

3.1.1 Quorum. A minimum of ten (10) General Council members must be present (physically or electronically) at any PHSA meeting requiring endorsement. This excludes any PHSA Executive Members.

3.1.2 Majority. PHSA members have the right to vote 'for', 'against', or 'abstain'. An endorsement will proceed only if greater than 50% of the casted votes indicate 'for'. Results will be based on a minimum of ten (10) total responses consisting of negative and/or affirmative votes only. Votes to abstain will not count towards the considered vote total.

- In the event of failure to reach a conclusion (e.g. same number of 'for' and 'against' votes, or all have abstained) endorsement applicants can re-submit their request for endorsement in the following PHSA General Meeting. If a definitive decision (in the affirmative or negative) is not reached during the 2nd vote on the same topic, said applicants and their cause will not be considered again until the following academic year (September 1st).

3.1.3 Proxy Voting. PHSA members are welcome to vote by proxy and their vote will be treated as any other vote submitted physically or electronically during a PHSA General Meeting. Proxy votes are to be emailed to the PHSA email account (dallalana.phsa@utoronto.ca) and are to be kept confidential. Proxy votes will be accepted until the start of the next PHSA General Council Meeting.

3.2 Representatives

Endorsement applicants wishing to represent their own cause may do so in person at a General Council meeting. If opposition arises from any individual and/or group represented by the PHSA, said individual and/or group has the right to present a counter-narrative in person, or nominate a student or civil society group to speak on their [confidential] behalf at the General Council Meeting.

3.3 Duration

All successful PHSA endorsements will be valid from the time they are granted until the beginning of the following academic year (September 1st). At the time of expiry, we ask applicants to withdraw PHSA support from any public and/or private platforms (e.g. PHSA logo on website, promotional material, etc.), and if interested submit a new endorsement request form.

3.4 Dissemination to the Student Body

All PHSA members will be provided details of all successful PHSA endorsements via the listserv no later than one week after the request is approved.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Endorsement Form

Form located here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfyYSgOaRjYg2nBUOpgpuUzIU8zjnTya6qI0LNzeFVpmBt_xg/viewform?usp=sf_link

PHSA Request for Endorsement

Thank you for requesting endorsement from the Public Health Students' Association.

The PHSA may endorse student-led or community activities and initiatives that align with the Association's Missions and Values. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Organizations addressing issues of public health, social justice, environment, income inequality, race, conflict;
2. Marches, parades, rallies addressing or promoting issues outlined in 1;
3. Conferences, lectures, presentations related to issues outlined in 1.

Endorsement may involve a letter of support, recruitment of volunteers, advertising through PHSA platforms, allowing use of the logo, or other forms of endorsement as requested.

To ensure that you/your organization's request for endorsement aligns with the PHSA's mission and values, we would kindly ask you to fill in this application. A copy of PHSA's mission and values can be found here (Article II and III): <https://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/students/current-students/phsa/phsa-constitution/>. The process for endorsement is also outlined in this document (Section 3).

Please be advised that at this time, the PHSA cannot offer financial support to individuals or organizations.


*** Required**

Email address *

Organization/Student Group

Date

Date

yyyy-mm-dd 

Applicant Name *

Applicant Name *

Program and Year (if applicable)

Your answer

Description of Organization *

Your answer

Description of Issue/Event *

Your answer

How does this issue/event align with PHSA's values? *

A copy of PHSA's mission and values can be found here (Article III): <http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PHSA-Constitution-Feb-2016-1.pdf>.

Your answer

What sort of endorsement are you seeking? (I.e., advertising, use of PHSA logo, recruitment of volunteers). Please be specific.

Your answer

Do you have any conflicts of interest to declare? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify

Your answer

Please feel free share any links or articles, or comments that provide further background on your issue, cause, or organization

Your answer

Appendix 2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for General Council Members**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

[Name of general council member & position], hereinafter referred to as "MEMBER"

and

Dalla Lana School of Public Health Students' Association hereinafter referred to as "PHSA"

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between MEMBER and PHSA.

Purpose

This MOU will outline the responsibilities and expectations of MEMBER as a representative of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health student body.

The above purpose will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

- MEMBER is expected to attend all monthly General Meetings. If MEMBER is unable to attend, it is their responsibility to notify the Secretary of the PHSA at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance and provide any relevant updates to their position in the appropriate format (e.g. added to meeting agenda, via email, etc.). For positions with more than one member (e.g. stream representatives), it is expected that at least one member attends each General Meeting.
- If MEMBER is absent from one (1) meeting throughout the academic year without 24-hour notice or relevant position updates, a PHSA executive will contact them. If MEMBER does not respond to PHSA executive within two (2) weeks or continues to be absent from meetings, the General Council may reprimand MEMBER following the process laid out in Article X, Section 1.3 of the PHSA Constitution.
- By signing below, MEMBER agrees to the mission, values and all terms/conditions laid out in the PHSA Constitution.

Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from PHSA executive and member. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by member and one executive member of PHSA and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by mutual consent between member and PHSA executive, or by reprimand process mentioned above. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from PHSA executive and member this MOU shall end on May 1st of the academic year in which member was elected.

Media Release

☐ I understand that photo and video recordings may be taken at various PHSA events and by checking this box I agree that PHSA may use such photographs and/or videos of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as event and/or student life promotion and social media content.

Member Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____ (MEMBER signature)

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

PHSA Executive Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____ (PHSA Executive signature)