



# CODE OF ETHICS

## University of Southern California Undergraduate Student Government Code of Ethics

### Section 1: Preamble

Our Code of Ethics, in the simplest of terms, is that all members should act with integrity. This stretches beyond USC's distinct campus borders, because anyone affiliated with our organization is held to the highest of standards. The goal of this code is not aimed at trying to bolster the importance of USG through word, but it is to re-emphasize the faith that the student body has put in us as their leaders. A failure to be held to the highest of standards is not only letting the other members of the student government down, but also the core group we represent, the undergraduate students.

### Section 2: Purpose

As a governmental body we are judged and judge ourselves by our ability to serve our constituents. Our Code of Ethics is set up in such a way to ensure that USG creates an environment that fosters free speech and the exchange of ideas, while at the same time guarantees that all individuals and/or group are heard and treated both fairly and equally. This document further ensures that we as members of USG will never let our personal biases interfere with the work that the students have trusted us to do.

### Section 3: Definitions

- A. **Officer:** Any candidate for office, elected representative of a constituency as defined by Article 2, Section 1 of the USG Bylaws, any person appointed to serve in the USC Undergraduate Student Government, or other individual affiliated with the USC Undergraduate Student Government in such a way as to have official or unofficial duties as part of the normal and ordinary course of business.
- B. **USC Undergraduate Student Government:** The branches and affiliated agencies, which make up the official government of the undergraduate students at USC. These include: the Executive, Legislative, Judicial, and Programming Branches and all assemblies, funding boards, and other organizations, which are affiliated with any of the four branches.

### Section 4: Unethical Influence

- A. **Preamble:** We believe that students seeking public office should expect to undertake the responsibility of making decisions for the general good of all students and to serve their constituencies to the utmost of their abilities. We believe that this focus on public service is the clearest and most responsible way that we show our commitment to the students of USC.
- B. **Perks:** No Officer shall knowingly use their position in the USC Undergraduate Student Government to solicit any gift or normally unattainable advantage from any individual.
- C. **Bribes:** Nor shall any Officer receive anything with the intention or perception that said advantage would influence that or any Official to use their vote, legislative efforts, programming, actions, or any of their elected or appointed capacities in ways which they would not normally or routinely be used.
- D. **Extortion/Blackmail:** No Officer shall use their situational or constitutionally provided power or influence to force or coerce other Officers to act against their will, conscience, or the regulations of the USG Undergraduate Student Government Constitution.

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### Section 5: Conflict of Interest

- A. Preamble: It is understood that most of the students who are involved with the USG Undergraduate Student Government are also involved with other student organizations at USC and may be employees by other USC departments or outside companies. This is a practice, which we intend to continually encourage in the future. However, as elected and appointed officials and students affiliated with the USC Undergraduate Student Government, we must realize our roles as policy-makers, programmers, and advocates for the entire undergraduate student body at USC. As the only undergraduate student-run policy-making organization at USC, we must strive to be as fair and impartial as possible. In this context, we are bound to behave responsibly within our roles as Officers, and to maintain, to the best of our abilities, the practice and appearance of fairness and impartiality when operating in our capacities as members, officers of other student organizations, and employees of other USC departments and outside companies.
- B. Misuse of Property: No Officer shall use or order subordinates to use USC Undergraduate Student Government assets, including but not limited to office supplies, equipment, the office, products of the USC USG name, or any other resources of the USC Undergraduate Student Government for excess personal gain. These items and premises are furnished and intended only for authorized activities and purposes involving the public affairs of the students of USC. Exceptions will be granted, in writing, at the discretion of the Student Body President or Vice President and will be limited to activities which do not interfere with any other activities of the USC Undergraduate Student Government or the assets in question.
- C. Ethical Representation: No Officer shall represent another student group, an outside company, or any other entity to the USC Undergraduate Student Government or any of its affiliated bodies in such a way as to gain funding, preference, or any other advantage which are not guaranteed by the normal and ordinary course of business of the USC Undergraduate Student Government or any of its affiliated bodies.

### Section 6: Elections and other Political Activity

- A. Preamble: The election is the most fragile, yet politically heated time of the year for USG. It is important that, during this time of transition, the candidates and Officers refrain from activity which will reflect poorly on the legitimacy of the USC Undergraduate Student Government. In our efforts to continue to build upon student trust in the USG, we must hold ourselves to a high level of professionalism in realizing that every individual's actions are seen and understood as the actions of the USC Undergraduate Student Government. As we honor ourselves, we honor the USC Undergraduate Student Government. As we disgrace ourselves, we disgrace the USC Undergraduate Student Government. Every Official must strive earnestly to be worthy of the trust reposed in him/her for the betterment of the reputation and effectiveness of the USC Undergraduate Student Government.
- B. Unethical Voter Influence: No Officer shall improperly solicit or be a party to any unauthorized solicitation of votes, unauthorized coalitions, unauthorized donations, or other political manipulations during the elections or affecting the outcome thereof. This includes, but is not limited to, any distribution of excessive positions or other advantages upon being elected, any excess activity from positions or other advantages upon being elected, and any other activity that encourages potential votes, campaign workers, or other officials to behave differently than they had intended or based on factors not directly relating to the merits of the candidate and his/her ability to effectively serve the students of the USC.