



Nevada Student Alliance
Nevada System of Higher Education

APRIL 7, 2022

A Resolution in Support of a Voting Student Member on the NSHE Board of Regents

Whereas, the collection of higher education institutions in the state of Nevada is known as the Nevada System of Higher Education, or NSHE, which is governed by the Nevada Board of Regents;

Whereas, the Nevada Student Alliance (“NSA”) is comprised of the ten (10) student governments (undergraduate and graduate) within NSHE, each of which has a voting representative on the NSA, and is vested with providing NSHE students with a unified voice that promotes, fosters, advances, represents and protects their interests and welfare before all system and legislative bodies¹;

Whereas, the NSA strongly supports the inclusion of a voting student member to serve on the NSHE Board of Regents;

Whereas, Sections 4 and 7 of Article 11 of the Nevada Constitution² establish NSHE to be governed by an elected Board of Regents, and the Nevada Legislature has enacted NRS 396.040³, which establishes that the Board of Regents shall be comprised of 13 elected representatives serving six-year terms; ⁴

¹ https://nshe.nevada.edu/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Affairs/Student-Govt/NSA-Constitution_Apprvd_by_Chancellor-5-11-18.pdf

² <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Const/NVConst.html>

³ <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-396.html#NRS396Sec040>

⁴ <https://nshe.nevada.edu/leadership-policy/board-of-regents/overview/>

Whereas, Regents are often Nevada institution alumni and/or higher education professionals, but there is currently no designated student member on the Board of Regents;

Whereas, thirty-nine (39) public state university Regent Boards have at least one student member, with twenty-nine (29) states granting voting privilege to the student Regents; ⁵

Whereas, the California State University (CSU) System is governed by its fully appointed 30-person Board of Trustees that provides oversight to 23 college campuses and over 485,000 students;

Whereas, over 85% (25 members) of the CSU Board of Trustees are voting members, and the other five (5) members are ex-officio;

Whereas, the CSU Board contains two (2) student Trustees appointed by the Governor and proposed by the California State Student Association (CSSA) to serve staggered two-year terms; ⁶

Whereas, the CSSA conducts a search process every academic year for 2-5 new trustee candidates to recommend to the Governor's Office; ⁷

Whereas, CSSA candidates submit letters of recommendation, essays, and resumes and must have at least sophomore status and maintain good academic standing;

Whereas, the Arizona Board of Regents also includes two (2) student members, who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for two (2) year terms, each serving the first year as a non-voting member followed by the second year with voting privileges; ⁸

Whereas, the NSA is eager to support the necessary process to ensure a student regent serves on the Board of Regents through an appointment process to be outlined by the Nevada Legislature with input from each of the NSHE Student Governments.

Whereas, in the interest of shared governance and balancing out student body officer responsibilities, the NSA supports the service of any student Regent simultaneously serving as an ex-officio member of the Nevada Student Alliance;

⁵ <https://www.texastribune.org/2010/05/12/student-regents-have-a-voice-but-no-vote/>

⁶ <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/Pages/about-the-bot.aspxc>

⁷ <https://calstatestudents.org/student-trustee-search-info-session-2/>

⁸ <https://www.azregents.edu/about/student-regents>

Whereas, the Board of Regents’ objectives include promoting affordable access to higher education and a “continued quest for excellence, economy and the balancing of basic goals that the public interest requires;”⁹

Whereas, students are directly affected by the pursuance of these objectives, as well as NSHE’s rules, policies, and procedures;

Whereas, including students in the governing process is equitable and advances the public interest as students are currently experiencing higher education without representation;

Whereas, the general public has recently considered an amendment to the Nevada Constitution via Ballot Question 1 in the 2020 Election to revamp the representation of the Board of Regents¹⁰;

Whereas, although Question 1 did not pass during the 2020 election, the 2021 Nevada Legislature again initiated the process to amend the Nevada Constitution to revamp the membership of the Board of Regents through Senate Joint Resolution 7;

Whereas, the inclusion of a student representative on the Board of Regents with voting power would establish better communication and accountability among Nevada institutions;

Whereas, Regents who have not recently been students in NSHE may not truly appreciate or comprehend the modern student experience;

Whereas, a student member would diversify the perspectives of the Board of Regents by providing firsthand representation of current student experiences in NSHE;

Whereas, a student Regent would provide for “an educated citizenry for public service” and cultivate the “general welfare,” bringing NSHE closer to meeting its mission of “[providing] higher education to the citizens of the state at an excellent level of quality consistent with the state's resources;”¹¹

⁹ <https://nshe.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Agendas/2016/jan-mtgs/bor-refs/BOR-3b.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/indy-explains-question-1-a-measure-that-would-strike-the-board-of-regents-from-the-constitution>

¹¹ <https://nshe.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Agendas/2016/jan-mtgs/bor-refs/BOR-3b.pdf>

Whereas, a common argument against student Regents questions whether students have conflicts of interest and could remain impartial to certain issues, including, without limitation, costs of registration, tuition and fees, personnel matters, or other decisions directly affecting the student's private interests

Whereas, public service often calls for a balance and negotiation between a delegate and trustee role, and a representative position on the Board of Regents would provide students with a tangible opportunity to learn and exercise appropriate disclosures and recusal requirements for conflicts of interest, depending on the scope of topics presented before the Regents;

Whereas, not all Regents vote from the student perspective as that is not their purview, therefore it is worthwhile to have an actual student member present on the Board of Regents with a different set of constituents interests;

Whereas, student Regents should recuse themselves on issues to avoid conflicts of interest;

Whereas, another common argument against student regents is the opinion that students lack the maturity necessary to serve as full voting members, which includes but is not limited to understanding budgets, listening to long periods of public comment, and learning “buzzwords” directly related to educational governance; ¹²

Whereas, students eighteen (18) years of age and older juggle a plethora of financial, legal, and personal responsibilities as a legal adult such as living alone, paying for education and utilities, working a job, voting and more;

Whereas, successful Regents are those who balance their time with other obligations of their adult life;

Whereas, most NSHE student government bodies manage their own budgets, practice parliamentary procedure, and develop bylaws that promote professional and intellectual discussion and deliberation;

¹² <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/few-student-board-members-can-vote-should-that-change/2019/06>

Whereas, studies show that internal political efficacy increases civic participation, meaning if students clearly see their interests represented, they will be more inclined to participate in NSHE's governing process;¹³

Whereas, students have the opportunity to make public comment and the NSA meets regularly with the Regents and the Chancellor to voice its concerns and those of the represented institutions, and a vote at the table is another way for holistic representation of the student voice;

Whereas, NSHE's student governing bodies have a larger responsibility to substantiate student voices in the System;

Whereas, the necessary legal path to achieve student Regent representation will require an amendment to the Nevada Constitution, as detailed in the process below:

1. Ideally, the NSA will contact a Nevada legislator(s) before the 2023 legislative session to sponsor draft legislation and garner support for a majority vote in both houses for a legislatively referred constitutional amendment¹⁴;
2. If the measure passes during the 2023 Legislative session, it must be referred to and passed by the next regular or special legislative session before being approved and ratified by a majority of the electors qualified to vote in the next general or special election (Section 1 of Article 16, Nevada Constitution and NRS 218D.800);
3. If the NSA wishes to begin the amendment process prior to the next legislative session or is unable to find a legislator(s) to sponsor its request, the NSA may file an initiative petition with the Secretary of State's Office,¹⁵;
4. The initiative petition process to amend the Nevada Constitution will require approval by the qualified voters during the next two (2) general election cycles (Section 2 of Article 19, Nevada Constitution and NRS Chapter 295);

¹³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4894288/>

¹⁴ https://ballotpedia.org/Legislatively_referred_constitutional_amendment

¹⁵ <https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/initiatives-referenda/filing-a-constitutional-initiative>

5. The NSA will encourage all NSA members to coordinate these efforts within their respective student body governments;

Therefore, Be it resolved that, the NSA supports the inclusion of a voting student member on the Board of Regents;

Be it further resolved that, the NSA urges its institutions to pass resolutions or pursue advocacy related to this Resolution;

Be it further resolved that, the NSA supports continued communication with Nevada legislators and public officials into the 2023 legislative session, as well as outreach to constituents and prospective voters to promote the amendment of the Nevada Constitution necessary to include a voting student Regent;

Be it further resolved that, a copy of this resolution be sent to the following, one copy before November 2022, and one copy after November 2022:

- The NSHE Chancellor
- The NSHE Board of Regents
- The NSHE Council of Presidents
- Nevada Office of the Secretary of State
- Nevada Office of the Governor
- The Nevada Legislature

ADOPTED by the Nevada Student Alliance on 7 day of April 2022.

Attest:



Matthew Hawn

Matthew Hawn

NSA Chair & University of Nevada Reno, - Graduate Student Association (GSA) President

Caren Yap

Caren Yap

NSA Vice Chair & University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Consolidated Student of the University of Nevada (CSUN) President

Austin Brown

Austin Brown

NSA Secretary & University of Nevada, Reno -- Associated Students of the University of Nevada (ASUN) President

Zachary Stamp

Zachary Stamp

NSA Member & Great Basin College – Student Government Association (SGA) President

Zachary Johnigan

Zachary Johnigan

NSA Member & College of Southern Nevada – Associated Students of the College of Southern Nevada (ASCSN) President

Lauren Porter

Lauren Porter

NSA Member & Nevada State College – Nevada State Student Alliance (NSSA) President

Darian Richards

Darian Richards

NSA Member & Truckee Meadows Community College – Student Government Association (SGA) President

Andrea Sanchez De Loza

Andrea-Sanchez De Loza

NSA Member & Western Nevada College – Associated Students of Western Nevada (ASWN) President

Nicole Thomas

Nicole Thomas

NSA Member & University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) President