

Frequently Asked Questions

What is OSGA?

The Oklahoma Student Government Association, commonly referred to as OSGA, is Oklahoma's state student association (SSA). Designed by students, staffed by students, and funded by students, OSGA is a non-partisan, student advocacy association.

How old is OSGA?

Strictly speaking, OSGA was chartered in 1981. However, the origins of OSGA date to sometime during the late 1960s. Because of missing records, no one knows which year in the 60s student body presidents first began meeting to discuss issues common to all students. The first meetings started as informal gatherings. As time progressed, formal and structured meetings and procedures were introduced, and the group adopted the name *Council of Student Government Presidents* in the early 1970s (a variation of this body still exists within the OSGA structure and meets with the OSGA President regularly). Significant restructuring occurred during the early 1980s. The Council expanded to involve additional student government leaders from every institution in the state, and in 1981, the name *Oklahoma Student Government Association* was officially adopted along with a new structure and new rules.

Who makes up OSGA?

Individuals - Every student enrolled at a degree-granting institution within Oklahoma has the opportunity to be a member of OSGA.

Associations - Each student association/student government association of degree-granting institutions within Oklahoma recognized by the institution's administration, respectively, as the official representative of the student body has the opportunity to be an affiliated member of OSGA.

Is OSGA a state agency?

No, OSGA is an independent student association. OSGA is recognized by and works closely with the Oklahoma State regents for Higher Education and is delegated responsibilities by Ok. Stat. Title 70 § 3205.5, however, OSGA is neither sponsored by nor receives funding from the state regents and is not a state statutory entity.

How is OSGA funded?

Student bodies of degree-granting institutions fund OSGA by paying membership dues.

What is the organizational structure of OSGA?

OSGA is and has always been a “bottom-up” association; that is, an association where the collective voice and will of students drives the direction and policy of OSGA. To ensure this, students have developed a structure similar to student associations/student government associations found at most institutions. It consists of legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

The Legislative – Congress is the legislative body of OSGA. This body consists of OSGA affiliated members, officially sanctioned and recognized student associations/student government associations from degree-granting institutions within Oklahoma. Affiliated members participate in Congressional Conferences, held at least once an academic year, by sending delegations that represent the interests of their student body.

The Executive - A board of directors oversees the day-to-day activities of OSGA. This board contains a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, public relations director, and five regional directors (northwest, northeast, southeast, southwest, and central). Students are elected to these positions each spring during a Congressional Conference and serve one-year terms (May to May).

The Judicial – This is the most recent addition to OSGA. Currently awaiting ratification from affiliated members, the judiciary is a five member Student Supreme Court. The Court consists of one member, chosen by the Council of Student Presidents, from each region of OSGA. The judiciary’s sole function is to interpret the constitution, as well as acts of Congress.

What does OSGA do?

What OSGA does depends on what the majority of students enrolled in degree-granting institutions within Oklahoma desires. Certain mandates have proven they require ongoing attention and have become annual OSGA activities. Some of these are:

- speaking to state legislators about policies that affect students and/or higher education
- co-sponsoring the Oklahoma Student Leadership Retreat (OSGA Board members serve on the planning committee and serve as facilitators and workers during the retreat)
- contributing to Higher Education Day at the state capitol by; attending the event, representing Oklahoma students and voicing the stances they have taken on issues, and encouraging all students to attend the event
- working with other higher education stakeholders to lobby the state legislature for sufficient appropriations for higher education
- representing Oklahoma students at state and national events
- researching state, national, and international issues relevant to students and/or higher education in Oklahoma
- serving as a resource for local student associations/student government associations

What has OSGA accomplished in the past?

Here is a list of the most recent short-term initiatives successfully completed by OSGA.

■ **Protected Student Identity** - In 2002, OSGA worked to prevent identity theft among Oklahoma students by asking colleges and universities to stop inappropriately using student social security numbers (e.g., used by faculty when posting grades, on the face of student ID cards). As a result, the Council of Presidents (all OK college/university presidents) unanimously passed a resolution asking all campuses to offer students an alternative student ID number by the completion of the 2003-2004 academic year.

■ **Fought Credit Card Debt** - In 2003, OSGA assisted the Council on Student Affairs in conducting the first ever statewide survey of college student credit card debt. Following the survey, OSGA provided opportunities for students to weigh in on the survey results. These results were presented to the Council on Student Affairs and were used to determine appropriate strategies to reduce credit card debt among Oklahoma students.

■ **Petitioned for Funding** - In 2005, OSGA, in cooperation with the SAB, passed a joint resolution in support of the Higher Education Bond Issue of 2005. Then, working with the Council of Presidents and a coalition of other organizations, all groups successfully pushed for passing the \$475 million-dollar bond.

■ **Represented Students** -Every year, OSGA has provided a crucial, continuous student presence at the state capitol and at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education office.

What is OSGA's purpose?

From the OSGA Constitution:

We the students of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education in order to provide a stable, uniform network of communication among the institutions of higher education in the State of Oklahoma, support dialogue between the institutions, recommend change that will benefit all students of higher education, and promote civic engagement, do ordain and hereby establish this Constitution for the Oklahoma Student Government Association.