SMSS ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY AND PROTOCOL

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SMSS ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY & PROTOCOL

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I: Purpose

As outlined in the SMSS Constitution, the SMSS officers are held to a certain standard due to their position. This policy outlines 1) the expected standard as well as consequences for officers who fail to uphold that standard. 2) To provide guidance on how the SMSS will manage situations where an officer is unable to attend a conference due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, death of a loved one, or other emergencies, and where accommodations (flight, hotel, conference registration) are non-refundable. Lastly, to ensure site equity by promoting equal representation and participation opportunities from both the Regina and Saskatoon campuses at local/provincial/national conferences.

II: Policy

2.1 All Officers will uphold the terms laid out in the SMSS Constitution, Policy Package, and Working Documents (the "SMSS Governing Documents").

2.1.1 In accordance with the Governing Documents, any SMSS member may bring formal (written) charges against an Officer they allege are not in accordance with the terms of their position. All such charges shall be addressed by email to the VP Internals (or SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer) who shall bring it before the SMSS Executive Council.

2.2 The types of allegations that may be made against Officers are as follows:

2.2.1 Failure to meet the duties/responsibilities assigned to them by virtue of their SMSS position.

2.2.2 Failure to follow the governance rules outlined in the SMSS Governing Documents.

2.2.3 Allegations of Professional Misconduct.

2.2.4 Failure to engage in a formal turnover meeting or to finalize succession planning.

2.2.5 Failure to Provide Turnover Documentation.

2.2.6 Failure to attend required meetings

2.2.7 These allegations may be made against Officers at any time before the beginning of the subsequent academic year (i.e. an allegation must be received by the VP Internals [or

SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer] prior to date of class resumption in August of the following school year).

2.3 Turnover & Succession Planning:

2.3.1 All outgoing Officers shall produce turnover documents that detail how they undertook their role in their respective years (events, successes, shortcomings, troubleshooting, tips, etc.). These documents will be presented to the VP Communications by email no later than two (2) weeks after the election of an incoming Officer. The VP Communications shall upload a copy of those documents to the SMSS Google Drive and then will ensure each respective incoming Officer is in possession of the outgoing officer's turnover documents no more than three (3) weeks after the election of the respective incoming Officer.

2.3.2 In addition to turnover documentation, all outgoing Officers must conduct a formal handover meeting (in-person or virtual) with their incoming counterpart(s). This meeting must review the responsibilities of the position, key contacts, upcoming deadlines, relevant finances, and any other details necessary for successful turnover.

2.3.3 The outgoing Officer is responsible for ensuring that any Working Documents related to their position are updated during or immediately after the handover meeting, capturing all pertinent changes, insights, or new tasks.

2.4 Handover Confirmation

Within one (1) week of completing the handover meeting, the outgoing Officer shall submit a brief written confirmation to the SMSS President (and copy the incoming Officer) confirming that the meeting occurred, the Working Documents were updated, and the incoming Officer is adequately oriented to the role.

2.5 Deviation in Meeting Procedure

Deviation in Meeting procedure (i.e. non-strict adherence to Robert's Rules) shall be met with consequences only in an instance when a voting member of the respective meeting makes a formal (written) complaint. Such a complaint shall be addressed to the VP Internals (or SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer) who shall bring it before the SMSS Executive Council. The Executive shall decide on the consequences by resolution of a simple majority vote. Actions to take regarding the decision shall be carried out by the VP Internals (or SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer) on behalf of the Executive.

2.5.1 Recurrent deviations from meeting protocol that are not met with consequences are recommended to be discussed at a General Meeting to better inform the ongoing good governance of the SMSS. In other words, they should be discussed as possible governance amendments.

2.6 Overruling Executive/Division Level Decisions

The SMSS Executive and SMSS Division level decisions may be overruled by a two-thirds majority vote of the council. This ensures the accountability of the Executive and Divisions to the SMSS Council.

2.7 SMSS Representation

In accordance with the Working Documents, the SMSS President (or SMSS Vice-Presidents External in specific instances) shall speak for the SMSS to all external organizations and be accountable for that representation. The exceptions to this are as follows:

2.7.1 When a representative is to pass a resolution on behalf of the student body onto their external organization (e.g. bringing forward a resolution at SMA) it will be required that they present the resolution for majority approval of the SMSS Council beforehand.

2.7.1.1 Should time not permit, the resolution will be presented to both their division and the executive for majority approval.

2.7.2 A representative is permitted to speak on behalf of the SMSS with external organizations (e.g. thanking external entities on behalf of the SMSS) provided the opinion be presented to both their division chair and president for approval beforehand.

2.7.3 An officer who speaks out of turn on behalf of the SMSS may face consequences under this policy (see above points II.2.1 and II.2.2)

2.8 Conferences

This policy applies to all SMSS officers who have been approved to attend conferences on behalf of the organization and covers situations where the officer is unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

2.8.1 In the event that an SMSS officer is unable to attend a conference due to unforeseen circumstances, they must notify the SMSS Executive Committee as soon as possible. The notification should include the reason for their inability to attend.

2.8.2 The SMSS Executive Committee will assess the situation on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate course of action. Factors considered will include the nature of the unforeseen circumstance, the timing of the notification, and the financial implications.

2.8.3 Where possible, SMSS will attempt to transfer the conference registration, flight, and/or hotel booking to another eligible SMSS officer who can attend the conference in place of the original attendee. This will be subject to the terms and conditions of the service providers (e.g., airlines, hotels, conference organizers).

2.8.4 If the costs are non-refundable and cannot be transferred or recovered through insurance, SMSS will absorb the cost, provided that the officer's inability to attend was due to a legitimate and unavoidable circumstance as determined by the SMSS Executive Committee. In situations where the unforeseen circumstance does not meet the criteria for a legitimate and unavoidable situation, the officer may be required to reimburse SMSS for the non-refundable expenses.

2.8.5 The officer may be asked to provide documentation to support their claim (e.g., a doctor's note, obituary, etc.) in order to substantiate the unforeseen circumstance and to aid in the assessment process.

2.8.6 Officers who are unable to attend a conference due to unforeseen circumstances will not be penalized in future travel considerations, provided that they followed this policy in a timely and transparent manner.

2.8.7 This policy may be reviewed and amended by the SMSS Executive Committee as needed to ensure it remains relevant and effective in addressing the needs of the organization and its officers.

2.8.8 The SMSS is committed to ensuring equitable representation from both the Regina and Saskatoon campuses in all conference attendances. When selecting officers to attend conferences, the SMSS Executive Committee will prioritize site equity to promote balanced participation from both campuses.

2.9 Academic Difficulty and Transition Support

This policy applies to all SMSS officers

2.9.1 SMSS Officers experiencing academic difficulty (e.g. remediation of a term due to failure of multiple course components or rotations) may confidentially notify SMSS

2.9.1.1 In the event that it is the President, they must inform VP internal Saskatoon.

2.9.1.2 In the event that it is the executive, they must inform the President.

2.9.1.3 In the event that it is a division member, they must inform their respective executive.

2.9.2 Upon notification, the Officer may request a temporary modification of responsibilities. The VP Internals, in consultation with the SMSS President and Division Chair (if applicable), may approve temporary redistribution of responsibilities

2.9.3 2.9.3 All academic disclosures shall remain confidential and documented only with the Officer's consent.

2.9.4 Officers on modified duties shall continue to uphold professional conduct and meet minimum expectations as determined by their Division, including responding to emails in a timely manner, attending required meetings, and maintaining clear communication with their teams.

2.9.5 Repeated requests for modifications in responsibilities, especially those lacking adequate communication, planning, or justification, may result in review under Section 2.2 or 2.5 of this policy. Officers must continue to meet baseline expectations unless explicitly excused.

2.9.6 In the event that a Junior Officer, including those in Med 1, fails to advance academically (e.g., fails a year or is at risk of being held back), they must inform the VP Internals and SMSS President within five (5) days of receiving the official academic decision. The continuation of their transition into a Senior Officer role will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, factoring in their anticipated academic workload, performance, and availability.

2.9.7 If the Officer is subject to a modified academic schedule that compromises their ability to fulfill SMSS duties or if they are held back, the SMSS Executive may initiate a by-election to fill the Senior Officer role in accordance with the SMSS Elections Policy.

2.9.8 Failure to communicate an academic hold or to complete the transition within the allotted timeframe may result in consequences under the Accountability Policy, including but not limited to ineligibility to list the role on one's Resume/CV as outlined in Section 3.4.1.1.

2.10 Timely Communication

2.10.1 All Officers are expected to maintain regular and professional communication with members of the SMSS Executive, Council, and general membership. Officers shall respond to official SMSS emails, messages, and requests within three (3) business days unless otherwise specified in another SMSS policy or protocol.

2.10.2 Timely communication is defined as acknowledging receipt of correspondence within three (3) business days, providing requested information or documentation by the stated deadline or by a mutually agreed upon timeline, and proactively informing the relevant Executive member or Division Chair if additional time is required to respond.

2.10.3 Officers must provide advance notice when they are unable to meet deadlines, attend meetings, or respond within the expected timeframe. Advance notice should be provided at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to any known period of unavailability whenever possible, unless otherwise stated in a different SMSS policy or protocol.

2.10.4 If an Officer anticipates being unavailable for an extended period (e.g. clerkship rotations, exams, travel, illness, or personal matters) that will limit communication, they must notify the appropriate leadership as follows:

2.10.4.1 Executive Officers shall inform the SMSS President and Vice Presidents Internal as soon as the period of limited availability is known.

2.10.4.2 Council Members shall inform their Division Chair (Sr. or Co-Chair) in writing and include the estimated duration of unavailability and, if possible, a plan to maintain minimal contact.

2.10.4.3 If unforeseen circumstances prevent advance notice, Officers must notify their respective Executive or Division Chair as soon as reasonably possible once aware of the issue.

2.10.5 Repeated failure to acknowledge or respond to communication from the Executive, Division Chairs, or peers may be considered a pattern of neglect. Normally, after two (2) documented instances of non-response within a term, a formal discussion shall occur to determine the cause and set expectations for improvement.

2.10.5.1 If the issue involves a Council Member, the respective Division Chair or Vice President overseeing that portfolio shall initiate the discussion.

2.10.5.2 If the issue involves a member of the Executive, the SMSS President shall initiate the discussion in consultation with the Vice Presidents Internal.

2.10.5.3 If the issue involves the SMSS President, the Vice Presidents Internal shall jointly initiate the discussion on behalf of the Executive Council.

2.10.5.4 In all cases, if the pattern of non-responsiveness is prolonged, disruptive, or demonstrates disregard for SMSS responsibilities, the responsible Executive or President may proceed directly under the Accountability process outlined in Section 3.1 without waiting for two (2) documented instances and formal discussion.

2.10.6 Timely communication reflects accountability, professionalism, and respect for colleagues' time. Failure to uphold this standard may be interpreted as a failure to meet responsibilities under Section 2.2.1 of this policy and may result in the corrective actions described in Section 3.1.

III: Governance/Protocol

The allegations of impropriety shall be carried out as follows.

3.1 Failure to meet the duties/responsibilities assigned to them by virtue of their SMSS position.

3.1.1 The VP Internals (or SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer) shall receive an email alleging an Officer is failing to meet their duties/responsibilities. This may include failure to complete actionable items assigned to the Officer at any SMSS meeting.

3.1.2 The VP Internals (or SMSS President should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the offending Officer) shall contact the person making the allegation(s) and request the following details. The VP Internals shall ensure the alleger knows they have one week (7 days) to provide answers in writing or their allegation shall not proceed. Details include:

3.1.2.1 Which officer the complaint is being made against (if not already known).

3.1.2.2 Details of the alleged charges.

3.1.2.3 Contacts who can provide supportive evidence of the allegation(s).

3.1.2.4 Any documentation relevant to the allegation(s).

3.1.3 Once the VP Internals have received written answers from the alleger, they shall contact the Officer in question and request the following information:

3.1.3.1 The Officer's perspective on the alleged charges.

3.1.3.2 Contacts who can provide supportive evidence for the Officer's claims.

3.1.3.3 Any documentation relevant to the allegation(s).

3.1.3.4 NOTE: The VP Internals shall not release the name of the alleger or their support contacts to the Officer in question at this time.

3.1.4 The VP Internals shall ensure the Officer knows they have one week (7 days) to provide answers in writing, or they will forfeit their chance to defend themselves against the allegation(s).

3.1.5 The VP Internals shall bring all the collected evidence before the SMSS Executive. The Executive shall do one or more of the following actions (the "consequences"). This will be decided by simple majority resolution in an un-minuted, closed session (in the case that either the Officer in question or the alleger is a member of the Executive, they shall not be allowed to vote or observe the discussions regarding the vote). Potential actions include:

3.1.5.1 There is insufficient evidence to indicate the Officer failed to carry out their duties/responsibilities. The Officer shall continue in their role.

3.1.5.2 There is not enough evidence presented, and more is requested from the allegation or Officer. The party asked to provide more evidence is given a week (7 days) to provide it and, regardless of whether the evidence requested is provided, the Executive shall re-consider the allegation at that time.

3.1.5.3 Evidence is given to suggest the Officer has not fulfilled their assigned duties and is required to create a written action plan that will be reviewed by the Officer, their Division Chair, the VP Internals (Saskatoon Sr. and Jr.; Regina Sr. and Jr.), and the SMSS President. Should the Officer fail to meet the objectives of the action plan, they shall be terminated and barred from holding another SMSS position.

3.1.5.4 There is evidence to warrant the immediate termination of the officer and bar them from holding another SMSS position. NOTE: This decision can only be passed by a successful two-thirds majority vote.

3.1.6 Following a resolution, the VP Internals shall write to both the alleger and the Officer regarding the decision. NOTE: The VP Internals are still not required to give the name of the alleger at this time.

3.2 Failure to follow the governance rules outlined in the SMSS Governing Documents.

3.2.1 These allegations shall be handled in the same way as allegations of failure to meet responsibilities/duties allegations (see directly above).

3.3 Allegations of Professional Misconduct.

3.3.1 Allegations of this type may be made when the alleger believes an Officer has exhibited unprofessional behavior according to the specifications of professional conduct (as defined by the University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine's Professionalism Policy.

3.3.2 These allegations shall be handled in the same way as allegations of failure to meet responsibilities/duties allegations (see directly above) with the following addition to the types of resolutions that the Executive can decide:

3.3.2.1 If the unprofessional behaviour is deemed to be an issue beyond the SMSS, an Informal or Formal Breach of Professionalism will be submitted to the College of Medicine by the SMSS President. Further actions will be carried out outside of the control of the SMSS, following the Professionalism Policy of the College of Medicine. This can occur at any point during the process and may be carried out at the same time the issue is being dealt with by the SMSS.

3.4 Failure to Provide Turnover Documentation.

3.4.1 This type of allegation is brought forward by the VP Internals or VP Communications to the SMSS Executive when an outgoing SMSS Officer has failed to provide their Turnover Documents (in whole or part) by the time limit outlined above. or has failed to conduct or properly document a formal handover meeting, as required under Section II.3. The Executive shall do one or more of the following actions (the "consequences"). This will be decided by simple majority resolution in an un-minuted, closed session (in the case that the Officer in question is a member of the Executive, they shall not be allowed to vote or observe the discussions regarding the vote):

3.4.1.1 The outgoing Officer cannot claim themselves to have been a holder of the position they are vacating, nor present it on their Resume/CV.

3.4.1.2 The outgoing Officer will not be eligible to run for any position in future SMSS elections.

3.4.2 Any decision may be rescinded by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive should the Officer in question provide the Turnover Documents past after the deadline outlined above and complete the required formal handover meeting.

3.4.2.1 An outgoing Officer may challenge the decision of the Executive at only the very next Council meeting. The decision of the Executive may be overturned by a simple majority vote.

3.5 Failure to Attend Required Meetings.

3.5.1 Should any SMSS Officer be labeled as "Absent" (i.e. absence without prior documentation or regrets; "unexcused" absences) at any two (2) meetings outlined as within the scope of their role (in the "Working Documents") they shall receive an email from the VP Internals (or SMSS President, should the VP Internal Saskatoon or VP Internal Regina be the subject of this disciplinary action). The email shall outline that, should the Officer be "Absent" again, they will be terminated from their position, unable to claim they held the position on their Resume/CV, and are barred from holding another SMSS position. All Officers are subject to this disciplinary action excluding third and fourth year Class Representatives, the Past SMSS President, Past VP Internal Regina, and Past VP Internal Saskatoon.

3.6 Policy Renewal

This Policy shall be reviewed by the SMSS Executive Council every three years and may be amended by a majority resolution of the SMSS Council. The last review occurred in 2025.

IV: Contact Information

Primary Contact:

SMSS VP Internals smss.vpinternal@gmail.com vpregina.smss@gmail.com

Secondary Contact:

SMSS President smss.president@usask.ca

Secondary Contact:

SMSS VP Communications smss.vpcommunications@gmail.com

APPENDIX

https://medicine.usask.ca/policies/professionalism-standard-operating-procedure.php