



Maryland Student Legislature, Inc.

2010-2015 Five Year Plan

The creation of the fourth Maryland Student Legislature, Inc. Five-Year Plan was initiated in the spring of 2009 by the Maryland Student Legislature Board of Directors. These policy concepts and positions are based on the discussions, meetings, and work-sessions of the MSL, Inc. Board of Directors during the fall of 2009.

This fourth Five Year Plan is a rededication to the process initiated by the original Maryland Student Legislature Five-Year Plan, first developed by William Troy Simmons and Charles Henry Gavins, Jr. dated September 1987, the second Five-Year plan developed by Ronald Abramson, William Troy Simmons and Bartolomeo Lancellotti dated 1992, and the third Five-Year Plan developed by Douglas Testerman and Brian Griffiths dated 2005. While this policy paper outlines the concepts, goals and mechanisms we believe the Maryland Student Legislature should develop as it evolves, each specific must not always be taken literally. Rather, our policy paper should be viewed as an open-ended blueprint for future directions for the future of our organization.

MARYLAND STUDENT LEGISLATURE, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OVERVIEW

Since the publication of the second Five-Year Plan, the Maryland Student Legislature has gone through a period of readjustment. However, the organizational concept of the Maryland Student Legislature continues to strengthen its roots across our state.

The Maryland Student Legislature program continues to enjoy a great deal of success. The program remains incorporated, and retains its non-profit status. We have slowly developed a fundraising apparatus that has included fundraising dinners. We continue to alert the business, political, religious and social leaders of Maryland about our program and our continuing commitment to helping our state find solutions to complex policy programs. We have maintained longstanding relations with the academic community in Maryland while continuing to foster new relationships. We have furthered our standing as the “Voice of College Students Across Maryland” by continuing to develop relationships with the leadership of the Maryland General Assembly. We have also developed a strong and active Alumni Association that continues to foster relationships with those who have meant so much to the past of our organization. Furthermore, we have maintained an open dialogue with our peers in other states, student legislatures in Illinois, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee in an effort to share knowledge on common problems, and collaborate on our common goals and visions.

Despite all our progress, we have encountered unexpected difficulties. Much as in our previous five year plan, membership initiatives are still not as successful as they need to be for us to reach the levels of success and growth we must achieve for our long-term success.

College and university support, particularly in financial matters, still does not come easy. Our fundraising apparatus remains relatively nonexistent, and Annual Fundraising Dinners have generally been unable to be profitable. Financial support from the alumni, business and academic community remains minimal, increasing in difficulty with the recent downturn in the national economy. Programmatically, institutions such as the Judicial Branch have remained dormant for a number of years. Delegations flounder in strength from year to year, with some strong delegations from the past dwindling in size and influence, or being lost over time.

Despite these difficulties and challenges, our commitment to our organizational goals and the ideals that are the Maryland Student Legislature remains steadfast. This commitment dominates our thinking as we begin to push our organizational frontiers further in this document. All in all, the Maryland Student Legislature remains committed to educating “Tomorrow’s Leaders, Today” through the continued expansion of our educational programs.

Corporate Development

In the next five years, the Board of Directors must continue to become more expansive in its mission and structure. The Board must continue to expand upon development in scope that it has seen over the past five years. As the Program continues to develop, the Board of Directors will need to continue to increase its public and private role. Over the past five years, the Board of Directors has been successful in this, particularly as it relates to its public role; relationships between the students and the Board of Directors remain as strong and collegial as ever. However, work must be done to continue to ensure, both for the good of the students, the simulation, and the corporation, that such a collegial working environment continues to be nurtured.

The Board continues to advocate the creation of a support staff. Initially, the support staff will be limited to one staff member who will help ensure that the day-to-day operations of the Corporation are executed. The staff member will work closely with both the Board of Directors and the Programmatic Leadership to ensure that the work of the organization is being completed, and to provide support wherever it is needed. The primary mission of the support staff will be to ensure that all of the Maryland Student Legislature's corporate and programmatic events and programs are successfully executed. The size of the support staff would expand as the scope of the organization expands.

The Board also continues to advocate the establishment of a corporate headquarters. We advocate locating and obtaining permanent organizational and programmatic office space. Preferably, this space will be located in Annapolis, with easy access to major highways as well as be conveniently located near our state capitol. The Board of Directors, in light of the recent economic downturn and the availability of office space, should work with the local business community to investigate the possibility of obtaining such an organization space on a pro bono basis. The office would house all of the organizational and programmatic records. The space would provide small office space for organizational personnel and programmatic officers. The office would be equipped to hold small conferences and Board of Directors meetings, and would be used as the official MSL Archive. We anticipate that the staff member will be housed in this office and will assume responsibility for maintaining the office space.

We also anticipate that the Board of Directors should expand its membership beyond the traditional pool of alumni who are willing to serve. While Alumni may continue to be those individuals who feel the largest connection to the organization, the Board must continue to expand its ranks and continue to bring other individuals with no formal ties to the organization into the fold to use their expertise and skills in order to continue to build the corporation.

Financial

The Corporation must continue to refine the way that it undertakes its financial capabilities. While the introduction of budgets starting with Fiscal Year 2008 has gone a long way towards the Board's understanding of Corporate finances and MSL's financial position, we must continue to find better ways of ensuring that we are working from reasonable and realistic economic models, while continue to ensure that MSL is running in the black on a year-to-year basis.

Fundraising is an issue of concern that the Board of Directors has not adequately addressed over the years. The Corporation continues to struggle with obtaining the necessary financial support to adequately expand our programs and provide a long-term solution to the Corporation's finances. A long-term approach must be realized.

Endowment

We continue to advocate further enhancing and financing of the endowment fund as theorized in our initial Five-Year Plan. We anticipate resuming our efforts to write and submit foundation grant proposals to fund our endowment and our organization, with a concentration on Maryland foundations. We will continue to reach out to local businesses, corporate, political, and academic leaders in an effort to raise our organizational profile and to raise awareness about the need for fundraising for our organization.

Annual Fundraising Dinner

The continuation of the Annual Fundraising Dinner is an idea that requires additional study by the Board of Directors. Surely, there is a social and a potential economic benefit to holding such fundraising dinners and maximizing the interaction between political leaders, Directors, faculty members, students, alumni, and other supporters of MSL. However, as we have noted above, the Board of Directors has been unable to create an economically sustainable model for hosting such a fundraising dinner. Until such an economically sustainable model is implemented, it is only prudent for the Board to consider such fundraising dinners (and other fundraising events) on a year-to-year and a case-by-case basis.

Professional Fundraising

The Board of Directors must take appropriate measures to obtain a professional fundraising counsel. Such a fundraising advisor would allow the Board of directors to bring in a professional involved in the fundraising community, and will be able to provide the Corporation with a larger and more sustainable revenue stream that will allow for a reduction in costs. Additionally, a professional fundraiser will allow the Board of Directors to maintain more of its focus on the continued development, growth, and evolution of the MSL program.

Sustaining Membership Drive

The Board of Directors should organize under its purview a sustaining membership drive. Such a sustaining membership drive will provide MSL with a reasonable, relatively guaranteed inflow

of financial resources on a year-to-year basis while providing donors with the altruistic satisfaction of knowing that their donations are going to the maintenance of the Maryland Student Legislature and its programs.

Such a sustaining member drive will be focused on a number of interested populations, including MSL alumni, faculty members, collegiate leadership, and local legislative and community leaders.

Foundation

Study should be given to the creation of an “MSL Foundation” that will provide for financial management of any endowment funds brought in by the corporation. Such a foundation has been established by the Tennessee Intercollegiate Student Legislature and provides TISL with funds management. Such structure should be investigated to determine if such a program would be a worthy model for expansion of MSL’s endowment.

Establishing financial goals

To date, the only fundraising goals established by the Board of Directors have been the projection of donations included in the yearly budget. Clearly, this has not been an appropriate model for ensuring that the Board of Directors seeks new avenues of fundraising. The Board of Directors vows to study our fundraising capability and will establish three-year fundraising goals at each Annual Meeting.

State Funding

By developing our relationship with State Officials, the Board hopes to obtain partial funding from the State of Maryland. Such funding will be limited in scope, and should not be so much as to fully fund MSL’s operations. However, even a modest amount of state funding would greatly reduce MSL’s financial burden and potentially allow MSL to offset some student-borne costs for MSL participation.

Grants

The Board of Directors must take more immediate and appropriate steps to obtain grants for MSL funding. Such grants will, necessarily, not be open grants but will need to be written as proposals to cover some important need for MSL operations. The Board of Directors should cultivate knowledge from the grant community to determine what grants MSL might be available to, and what projects or costs could be appropriately borne by obtaining such grants.

Advisory Board

In the next five-years, we project the expansion of the recently reinstated and reconstituted Board of Advisors. We see the Board of Advisors assisting the Board of Directors in representing MSL, Inc. across the state and helping to raise the organizational profile of our organization.

We believe that the Board of Advisors projects should focus on two areas. First, the Advisors will conduct a public relations campaign to inform other organizational and civic leaders about MSL, and our organizational mission. Through this, we will solicit their financial and institutional support.

Second, a campaign should be initiated to inform educational and non-profit organizations in Maryland and surrounding Mid-Atlantic area about our organization and our mission. These Advisors, as leaders in their community, have a substantial advantage in tapping these key community leaders and providing MSL with potential inroads into these communities, which will substantially raise awareness of MSL and our mission.

It will also be expected that Advisory Board Members shall be encouraged to participate in any campaigns undertaken by the Corporation. The Board of Directors expects to establish the membership of the Board of Advisors no later than the 2011 Annual Meeting.

Faculty Panel

In the next five years, we project the nurturing and development of the State Faculty Panel. The State Faculty Panel will be comprised of the Delegation Advisors from every MSL member institution. The Faculty Panel will by necessity need to become more formalized, more active, and more involved in our continued development. Unfortunately, faculty participation in the faculty panel and faculty interaction with MSL leadership has been strained at best. The Board of Directors has attempted to reach out to Faculty Panel members, and rarely has received any response to such requests for information, assistance, or a faculty panel meeting. More care needs to be taken on the Board of Directors part to culture these relationships and provide incentives for Faculty Panel members to become more active and increasingly involved with MSL

We anticipate that the Faculty Panel will provide needed and necessary input on the MSL academic class. We advocate the creation of prototype class during the next five years, and the introduction of the class at selected MSL Member Institutions as we work towards a long-term plan for a full rollout of the MSL for Credit program.

The Faculty Panel will also help the organization continue to expand throughout Maryland. Faculty Panel advisors will be enlisted to promote MSL and the MSL Organizational Mission to other faculty members across the state. Faculty Panel members will be able to use their existing personal and professional relationships to allow MSL to gain a foothold in institutions that has no MSL organizational experience.

In the area of the simulation, we believe that we must continue to cultivate the support of our Faculty Panel and faculty advisors. We must continue to utilize these resources, especially Political Science faculty. We can draw on their expertise of these advisors, and their support can help further legitimize the program. As the simulation design expands and evolves, its educational value must continually evolve, and Political Scientists are best equipped to explain and help develop this experience.

Alumni Association

In the next five years, we project the continued development and expansion of the Alumni Association mission. We anticipate that the Alumni Association will be able to assist the Board of Directors, Board of Advisors, and State Faculty Panel in completing a number of diverse projects. The Alumni Association will encourage alumni to attend more MSL sponsored functions, and to interact with current programmatic members on a more regular basis.

The Alumni Association will also take the lead in encouraging alumni in assisting the corporation in fulfilling its educational mission. Alumni will help educate current members of the programmatic component by assisting with workshops during the Summer Leadership Retreat, as well as by assisting with classes and participating in discussions during the Leadership Training Institutes.

The Alumni Association will also take the lead in cultivating the existing network of MSL supporters and alumni. The Alumni Association will take the lead in networking between the alumni and the students, allowing them to expand and cultivate their opportunities in landing internships and employment opportunities.

Most importantly, the Alumni Association will continually foster positive experiences through the state for alumni and programmatic members. The Alumni Association will continue its existing role in conducting the annual Alumni-Student Luncheon and Alumni-Student Debate, as well as continue its role in support of MSL Fundraising endeavors.

Marketing Plan

The Board of Directors must develop a sustainable plan for marketing the organization. We can no longer rely on word of mouth among college students and through existing MSL organizational contacts to spread information about MSL. The Board of Directors must take the lead in establishing this marketing plan, and provide for adequate information and messaging regarding MSL and our corporate mission.

Such a marketing plan will need to be designed to reach a wide audience throughout the state. The plan will need to take into account ways to advertise MSL to our audiences and our stakeholders, including political, legislative, and community leaders, college and university leadership, political science faculty members, parents, MSL alumni, current MSL students, and potential MSL students who meet the demographic criteria of the kind of student who participates in MSL. Special care will be given particularly as it relates to marketing to students, as marketing to grow the student membership is the most important marketing that needs to be undertaken.

Such marketing will need to encompass all potential technologies and solutions for marketing MSL to our target populations. MSL will continue to make use of social media, and to continue to expand upon their use in ways that will provide broadcasting and narrowcasting of our message. Additionally, we will continue to need to ensure that MSL.org is both technologically capable and relevant to today's modern web world. We must continue to provide more information about MSL on our website, including expansion of our organizational history, incorporation of video, and better recordkeeping as it relates to events and legislative histories, as well as a more robust section of pictures detailing MSL's organizational history.

Simulation Design

In the next five years we project an expansion and evolution of the design of our programmatic simulation. Our institutional structures will continue to develop as we introduce new structures and reintroduce older structures. This growth period will allow students to fully understand the current structure, which will lead to a great educational benefit to current students and will allow an institutional memory of procedures, customs, and mores to pass on to future student leaders. This is an area in which we have made tremendous strides over the past five years, but must continue to work towards in order to more accurately simulate the Maryland State Government.

We continue to advocate the development of three autonomous branches of government within the simulation to more accurately simulate the Maryland State Government. Other intercollegiate legislatures provide for a more robust simulation through autonomous branches; Maryland should emulate their success in this field. We project that the Secretary of State, Lieutenant Governor and Governor's Chief of Staff will be removed within the legislative aspect of the simulation. A President of the Senate will be created as the chief officer of the Senate. The election of the Speaker of the Assembly will be removed as a Council of State officer, and along with the President of the Senate will be elected only from the membership of their respective legislatures at the preceding Annual Session. Separate Committees for each chamber will be established to more accurately simulate the committee process.

We also advocate the recreation of an independent Judicial Branch. This will provide for additional avenues of instruction for MSL students, and again create a more accurate simulation.

We anticipate that the political caucuses currently in place will continue to develop. Caucus structures have become more organized and more formal only in the most recent of legislative events, with ideologically like-minded students debating over and strategizing over legislation introduced in the Assembly. These parties will encompass more elaborate platforms and Caucus structures, including the involvement of Caucuses in our electoral processes

The Board also advocates for the creation of a more elaborate procedure for electing members of the Council of State. The election process should better mirror that of the Maryland State Government. We also advocate for the creation of "day-long" elections, which require candidates for Council of State offices to better organize and better campaign for these offices above and beyond a single speech and loyalty to one's delegation. Such a system will provide for more interesting campaigns, a more accurate simulation, and Council of State leaders who are more accountable to the student membership.

Membership

In the next five years, we project a continued emphasis on membership expansion and membership retention. The current methods of external membership recruitment should be continued in earnest, as well as expanded. The “Membership Kit” should continue to be refined by the cooperation of the Board of Directors and Programmatic leadership, and sent to non-member institutions and those who submit inquiries via the MSL Website. This “Membership Kit” will also be distributed to Political Science Department Chairs, Activities Coordinators, Student Government leaders, and Campus Political Leaders at these non-member institutions on an annual basis

In the area of retention, we continue to see a dire and pressing need to maintain the delegations and students with that are currently participating in the organization. Retention of students must remain a priority to allow the program to develop and maintain an intellectual cadre of students that will prevent wide scale leadership turnover, and will allow the maintenance of strong delegations. Student leaders will need to maintain constant contact with Delegation and campus leaders at each of our member institutions. We anticipate the creation of an effective display kit template to be used by our member institutions at activities fairs and other appropriate events to advertise MSL to their fellow students and encourage increases in membership at existing institutions.

We also anticipate the establishment of a program that will allow MSL to recruit target members into our program. Organizational and programmatic leaders will search for young potential leaders. These potential members will be drawn from known state student organizations and “recruited” into MSL. We advocate the targeting of younger first and second year college students, established campus leaders, as well as current members of college political organizations (i.e. College Republicans, College Democrats, etc). This will necessarily also be addressed as part of the MSL Marketing Plan.

We also anticipate an increase in membership from institutions offering MSL for Credit programs. We believe that the proper ratio of credit-versus-noncredit students should be 30-70. As the MSL for Credit program becomes more firmly established, those numbers may continue to rise. However, emphasis must be placed on the notion that walk-in students and MSL for Credit students will compete on an even intellectual playing field.

We hope that within five-years, the organization will maintain an average membership of 125 students per year. We also anticipate that the organization will finally achieve the necessary 3 delegate-to-1 senator ratio utilized in the real Maryland General Assembly. However, the corporation should not and cannot be satisfied with its membership and recruiting efforts until such a time as all 188 seats in the House of Delegates and Senate Chambers are filled with MSL students.

Events

In regards to Annual Session, the Board of Directors eagerly looks forward to the first Four-Day Annual Session, scheduled for our 25th Anniversary in 2014. We also look towards the establishment of a permanent Annual Session hotel to host our delegations and Gala on a yearly basis.

Additionally, we look towards the continued evolution of the Summer Leadership Retreat.

We look forward to the long-term continuation school-hosted events that have been fully funded by the host institution. Delegations will complete proposals for hosting such events and submit them to the programmatic leadership. Delegations will then present their proposals to the program, and the program will select the hosting institutions for the upcoming academic year at each Annual Session.

MSL for Credit

We anticipate that the MSL for Credit program will continue to develop. While some institutions currently offer credit for participating in the organization, it has been a long-standing goal that MSL become part of the school curriculum. This long-term goal has been buffeted through the establishment of a basic class structure at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, as well as the establishment of a robust independent study program at Salisbury University. While even the short term impact of these programs is unknown, this is a good harbinger of institutional support for a larger MSL for Credit program.

SCHOOLS CURRENTLY OFFERING CREDIT FOR MSL PARTICIPATION

School	Format	Credit Hours
McDaniel College	Independent Study	1 Credit Hour
Salisbury University	Independent Study	1 Credit Hour
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	Class	1 Credit Hour

Institutional Relations

In the next five years we project a continued increase in our relationships with the institutions of higher education in Maryland. We continue to realize that this aspect will be vital to the continued success of MSL in a variety of areas

In the area of support, we advocate enlisting and recruiting more Political Science and Communications department personnel to become active in our program. Their support, verbal or written, through the academic community of their respective institutions will continue to enhance the credibility of our program. We advocate an increase in our relationships with student activities and administrative personnel at all Maryland institutions within both the Programmatic and Organizational Divisions. A positive relationship with student activities directors and staff will promote MSL through the active student population, and will assist us in receiving mention in various student-oriented publications. It will also assist the Programmatic Division in easing transitions in gaining recognition and funding for individual delegations, as well as hopefully easing tensions between individual delegations and student government organizations. A positive relationship with collegiate administrators will promote MSL as an educational program beneficial to the entire academic community while providing for future potential services such as financial donations and other institutional support.

We also anticipate making inroads with other college officials. It is important for the Organizational Division to make attempts to establish working relationships with collegiate presidents, trustees, and the University System Board of Regents. Making collegiate presidents aware of our program and the benefits of our program to their institutions may make available to the program additional avenues of opportunities in the realm of institutional support, funding, and event planning. Trustees often have ties to the political, business, and civic community that may assist us in promoting the organization, as well as establishing potential sources of revenue and membership support. Members of the University System Board of Regents will also make avenues available to the organization across distinct university lines within the entire USM. Relationships with the Board of Regents will also potentially create an opportunity to establish a uniform MSL for Credit curriculum across all state institutions and ensure the potential of transferable MSL credit hours across all state institutions.

We also anticipate the establishment and blossoming of relationships with collegiate and academic oriented professional organizations. Organizations such as the Maryland Independent College and University Association, the American Political Science Association, and the *Pi Sigma Alpha* political science honor society will also provide opportunities to enhance our financial and educational profile.

Maryland State Government

In the next five years we project a continued positive increase in our relationship with the Executive and Legislative branches of the Maryland State Government. We envision the establishment of year-round communication with key figures of the government within both the Programmatic and Organizational Divisions. This communication will derive from letters, visits, and additional receptions. We hope and anticipate that the cultivation of this relationship will assist our efforts in securing state funding for MSL programs.

Maryland Student Legislature, Inc.

222 Main Street, # 140

Annapolis, MD 21401-2005

410-431-8888 ♦ www.MSL.org