
LDS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The LDS Student Association (LDSSA) is an organization which sponsors social, religious, and recreational activities for LDS college students and their friends. The organization provides a framework wherein students have access to all phases of the Church that affect their lives during the week.

The purposes of LDSSA are to help college and university students stay closely affiliated with the Church, succeed in their studies, and achieve a balanced educational-social life while on campus; to motivate LDS students to become a powerful influence for good on the campus; to provide meaningful activities that are consistent with Church standards; and to coordinate Church-related activities for college students. These purposes are accomplished under the direction of the priesthood and in cooperation with the institutes of the CHURCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. These student associations create a sense of belonging, an opportunity for leadership, and an expanded circle of friends who share similar values. For some students, LDSSA is the center of their school experience.

LDSSA was established in 1960, and has expanded to every college campus where there is an LDS institute of religion. In 1990, some 290 LDSSA organizations existed within the United States and Canada in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges, universities, and trade and technical schools. Each campus organization operates under the direction of an assigned local stake president who is also the priesthood leader for all LDS affairs on campus. He presides over an executive committee consisting of a student president, vice president(s), a secretary, and an education adviser, who is usually the director of the institute associated with the campus. The student leaders are called, set apart, and serve under the direction of the priesthood leader. The executive committee is the policymaking body for the local student association.

A student president presides over the chapter LDSSA council. The membership includes representatives of all LDS organizations that function on, or are influenced by, the school. These may include LAMBDA DELTA SIGMA sorority and SIGMA GAMMA CHI fraternity, young single adults, married students, campus stakes or wards, and other

interest groups. While each of these groups operates as an independent agency, their activities are correlated through the LDSSA council, which strives to meet needs without undue overlap. The type of institution, geographic location, number of LDS students, and the social, cultural, and academic traditions influence how LDSSA is organized and how it functions to meet local and individual student needs.

At the general level of the Church, a governing board is made up of an executive director, presidents of Sigma Gamma Chi and Lambda Delta Sigma, and representatives of the General Authorities, seminaries, and institutes.

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The local and general leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are lay members; they have not received professional training for the ministry (*see* LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP). Instead, Church members prepare to fulfill their callings by personal scripture study, prayer, inspiration, and righteous living; observing other leaders; assuming informal apprenticeships; studying Church-produced handbooks and manuals; participating in leadership training (“in-service”) lessons; and accepting counsel and guidance from their presiding officers and from the General Authorities.

The expectation is that all faithful Latter-day Saints are entitled to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and personal revelation to aid them in meeting the needs of those they teach, counsel, and serve. Reliance on divine guidance makes personal worthiness and Christlike attributes the most important qualifications for all callings in the Church. Attributes qualifying one for the work are “faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, . . . virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence” (D&C 4:5–6).

There are Church handbooks that outline the duties and activities of every leadership position and state the general principles that should apply. These handbooks are prepared by and revised periodically by appointed committees and reviewed by the Correlation Committee.