

# Constitution of the Graduate Student Association

Member of the University of Louisville Student Government Association

## PREAMBLE

The Graduate Student Association (GSA), governed by the Graduate Student Council (GSC), is a member of the Student Government Association (SGA). The GSA shall provide official channels for the administration of graduate student affairs and of the budget allotted by the SGA. The GSA shall provide the following through council meetings:

- A forum of communication between graduate student populations.
- An opportunity to participate in the formation and revision of budgetary and administrative policies.
- Open communication with the Officers of the GSC who represent the GSA at SGA Student Senate Meetings.
- A means to educate graduate students of their rights, responsibilities, and privileges.
- A reservoir of interested students for appointment to University committees.

## ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) shall consist of all nonprofessional graduate students under the purview of the Graduate School.
2. The GSA shall not discriminate against Members based on age, sex, race, religious affiliation, nationality, or sexual orientation.
3. The membership of the GSC shall consist of one Representative from each academic department.
4. No one person may serve as the Representative for more than one academic department.
5. The duties of the Representatives shall be as follows:
  - a. To accurately represent the constituents of their respective departments.
  - b. To attend all GSC meetings in person or via proxy.
  - c. To communicate regularly with the GSC in such a manner as the Secretary shall direct.
  - d. To disseminate information to their respective departments.

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## ARTICLE II: AUTHORITY

1. The authority of the GSA and the GSC to act on behalf of graduate students is granted under Article V of the Constitution of the SGA.
2. The GSC shall have no authority to direct the internal affairs of the departments from which the Members come, other than such affairs as relate to this constitution and its by-laws.

## ARTICLE III: ORGANIZATION

1. The Graduate Student Council (GSC) shall govern and be elected by the GSC.
2. The GSC Executive Council shall consist of six officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Senators-at-Large. All officers shall serve as Senators of

the SGA Student Senate and shall attend, in person or via proxy, all SGA Senate meetings.

- a. The duties of the President shall be as follows:
  - i. To serve as the official spokesperson of the GSC.
  - ii. To schedule, preside, or appoint someone to preside over all GSC meetings.
  - iii. To act as liaison between the GSC and the University Administration.
  - iv. To act as Controller of the Budget and as Signatory.
  - v. To appoint Senators and their proxies when needed.
  - vi. To prepare the annual budget in conjunction with and for review by the Executive Council no more than two weeks prior to the budget deadline of the SGA.
  - vii. To serve as the GSC's representative on the Graduate Council.
- b. If the President is unable to fulfill his or her duties, the Vice-President shall act as President until such time as the President can resume his or her duties, or a new election may be held to replace the President.
- c. The duties of the Vice President shall be as follows:
  - i. To assume the duties of the President when necessary.
  - ii. To assist with the planning of the meeting agendas of the GSC.
  - iii. To assist with the preparation of the annual budget.
  - iv. To ensure that all current committees, both internal and external, have any needed resources.
  - v. To ensure that all current committees, both internal and external, are properly staffed.
- d. The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:
  - i. To establish a means of communication with the representatives on the GSC.
  - ii. To keep the agendas, minutes, and attendance records of all official GSC meetings.
  - iii. To deliver a report on the activity of the GSC to the SGA when directed to do so.
  - iv. To serve as the primary means of contact for the GSC.
  - v. To serve as the Webmaster of the GSC.
- e. The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:
  - i. To serve as chief accountant of the GSC budget, to prepare monthly reports, and to keep records of all expenditures.
  - ii. To administer all aspects of the budget and to serve as a representative of the President as signatory on T-forms, purchase order forms, etc.
  - iii. To assist with the preparation of the annual GSC budget.
  - iv. To administer the GSC student travel award program.
- f. The Senators at Large shall assume duties as needed by the GSC.
- g. Removal of Officers
  - i. An officer may be removed from office if he or she fails to uphold his or her responsibilities. This may include, but is not limited to, failure to attend meetings of the GSC and the SGA Student Senate or failure to fulfill the duties of his or her office as defined in this Constitution.

- ii. In order to remove an officer, a written letter must be submitted to the Executive Council. The officer in question shall be notified by the Executive Council within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the letter submitted to the Executive Council. A hearing shall be held at the next regular GSC meeting held at least two weeks subsequent to the receipt of the letter by the Executive Council, at which time the officer shall present his/her defense. The officer shall be removed from office by a three-fourths majority vote of the Representatives present after a quorum has been established. Quorum status will be reaffirmed before the vote occurs.
3. The GSC shall maintain the following standing committees, which shall perform such duties as the By-Laws shall prescribe: Constitution and Elections Committee, Event Committee, and Information Committee.
4. Ad-hoc committees shall be created at the discretion of the Executive Council.
5. Representatives to such external committees, councils, or other organizations as require representatives from the GSC, shall be elected by the GSC. When necessary the Executive Council may appoint committee members who will then be affirmed by the GSC at the next meeting.

#### **ARTICLE IV: ELECTIONS**

1. Eligibility
  - a. All candidates for positions on the Executive Council shall be Members of the GSA for at least one academic semester.
  - b. The candidates for President and Vice President shall have been active GSC representatives for at least one academic semester.
  - c. All committee chairs shall be Representatives on the GSC.
2. Nominations for the Executive Council, committee chairs, and external representatives may be accepted at the March meeting of the GSC; nominations may also be accepted at the April meeting. Annual elections shall be held at the April GSC meeting.
3. All elected officials shall serve until the end of the spring semester.
4. In case of a vacancy in any elected position, an election to fill the position shall be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the GSC.
5. Elected officials shall be re-elected no more than one time to the same position. In case no one is eligible to serve according to the requirements set forth in this Constitution or no one who is eligible desires to serve, the requirements may be waived upon a two-thirds vote of those GSC members present once a quorum has been established. Any GSA member may then run for the office for which the requirements were suspended. If an officer is elected under these circumstances, the said officer shall have full authority as described in Article III.
6. All members of the Executive Council, with the exception of the President, may serve as representatives of their respective departments.

#### **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

1. No general membership meeting of the GSA shall be required.
2. GSC Meetings
  - a. Regular meetings of the GSC shall be held once a month during the fall and spring academic semesters.

- b. The President shall call a special meeting upon receipt of a petition signed by at least one fourth of the Representatives to the GSC or one twentieth of the Members of the GSA.
  - c. Any and all meetings of the GSC and GSC Committees, with or without a quorum present, shall be open. Any part of a meeting that involves the discussion of the appointment, discipline, or dismissal of an individual member may be closed to the public. Only representatives of the GSC shall be entitled to vote.
  - d. The Secretary shall notify Representatives of meetings at least one week in advance.
3. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the GSC in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the GSC may adopt.

**ARTICLE VI: VOTING**

- 1. Each Representative shall have one vote, but the President shall only vote in case of a tie.
- 2. A quorum shall consist of the presence of fifteen Representatives.
- 3. A simple majority vote of those present shall prevail in all matters unless otherwise stated herein.

**ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

- 1. Any Representative may submit in writing to the Executive Council an amendment to this Constitution and By-Laws. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary at least seven (7) days before a scheduled GSC meeting.
- 2. The proposed amendment shall be debated and a vote held at the next regular GSC meeting. The amendment shall be approved by a three-fourths majority of the Representatives present after a quorum has been established.

**ARTICLE VIII: BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL**

**1. Inactive Departments:**

- a. A department that lacks representation at more than two meetings in one academic year shall be deemed inactive and shall lose the right to vote or access the budget or travel funds in any way. The GSC Executive Council shall send notification of such status to the Representative of the inactive department and to its Chair.
- b. A department shall be restored to active status upon the attendance of its Representative at a regular meeting of the GSC.
- c. A reinstated department shall have the right to vote immediately upon reinstatement, but access to the budget or travel funds shall not be restored until its Representative has attended two consecutive meetings.

**2. Allocation of Funds**

- a. At the beginning of each fiscal year the GSC shall approve by a majority vote the administrative Guide for the Disbursal of Research/Travel Awards (the Guide) and post the approved Guide to the GSC website.**
- b. The Guide may be amended at any time with vote of the Council but changes shall not result in the revocation of any award granted up to the date of the vote.**

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**Deleted:** Research-travel awards shall be granted to the Members of the GSA on a first-come-first-serve basis. At the discretion of the Executive Council, the number of awards granted in the fall semester, for travel during the fall semester, may be limited in order to reserve funds for the spring semester.¶  
 <#>The Treasurer shall conduct training workshops, as necessary, on the Research-travel award process.¶  
 <#>The maximum amount of money for a single award may be adjusted from the \$200.00/\$250.00 current award by a three-fourths majority vote of the GSC. Students who travel to the NAGPS Regional or National meetings shall also be permitted to access the "NAGPS Travel" and "Discretionary" line items of the budget at the discretion of the President or apply to the SGA Finance Committee for SGA funding.¶  
 <#>If fifteen or more students from the same department travel to the same meeting, no more than fifteen times the maximum individual award shall be awarded to the group as a whole. Furthermore, if the department was in inactive status at the end of the previous academic year, the maximum group award shall be limited to ten times the maximum individual award.¶  
 <#>Research-travel award requests shall be submitted to the Treasurer at least four weeks prior to the anticipated date of travel. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be made in writing to the Treasurer at least five business days before the anticipated date of travel, and shall be granted only on the approval of a majority vote of the Executive Council.¶  
 <#>A properly completed reimbursement form and all original receipts shall be submitted to the designated university official in charge of reimbursements within six weeks of returning from travel. Requests for extensions due to extenuating circumstances shall be made in writing to the treasurer within the six-week period and shall be subject to approval by the Executive Council.¶  
 <#>No awards shall be made to a Member whose department is in inactive status when the request is made. The Treasurer shall make it known to Members who were thus denied funds when their department regains active status and that they may then reapply.¶  
 <#>No department shall be allowed to access more than twenty percent of the total "Travel/Research" line-item budget of the GSC in a single fiscal year. The Treasurer shall notify the department Representative when 15% of the said budget has been allocated to that department.¶  
 If the treasurer is not notified by the departure date of the cancellation (... [1])

### **3. Duties of the Standing Committees of the GSC**

- a. The duties of the Constitution and Elections Committee are as follows:
  - i. To ensure that the GSC remains in compliance with this Constitution.
  - ii. To accept nominations, as necessary, for all elected positions and verify the eligibility of the nominees.
  - iii. To establish procedures for conducting elections that are affirmed by the GSC.
- b. The duties of the Event Committee shall be as follows:
  - i. To plan such events as the GSC may conduct.
- c. The duties of the Information Committee shall be as follows:
  - i. To assist the GSC Webmaster in maintaining the content of the GSC website.
  - ii. To maintain an e-mail list for the GSC.
  - iii. To publish the GSC newsletter.
- d. The President shall be an *ex-officio* member of all committees with the exception of those times/meetings when election issues may be discussed on the Constitution and Elections Committee.

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If the treasurer is not notified by the departure date of the cancellation of a Member's travel plans, that Member shall be ineligible to receive Research-travel funds for the remainder of that academic year