

# Constitution of the Graduate Student Council

University of Louisville

Last Revised by Council: February 10, 2022

Approved by SGA Student Senate: March 22, 2022

## Article I: Name

Section I. The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Council (GSC).

## Article II: Purpose

Section I. The purpose of this organization shall be to:

- A. Act as the official organization of graduate students represented in the Graduate School.
- B. Create a forum of communication and collaboration among graduate students of different departments and degrees.
- C. Create open communication with the SGA Senators who represent them at Student Senate meetings.
- D. Connect graduate students to opportunities to serve within the Student Government Association (SGA) and the University at-large.
- E. Provide an opportunity to participate in the formation and revision of budgetary and administrative policies in student government.
- F. Act as a means of education and engagement regarding graduate student rights, privileges, and responsibilities.
- G. Promote and assist graduate research and creative activities by awarding Research Grants and Travel Grants.

## Article III: Membership

Section I. The membership of this organization shall not discriminate on race, color, creed, gender or gender expression, religion, age, nationality, political affiliation, sexual orientation or affectation, military status, or physical, mental or emotional disability, except as provided by federal law.

Section II. Membership shall consist of one representative from each academic department as established in the University of Louisville's Graduate Catalog.

- A. No single member may serve as the representative for more than one academic department.
- B. Members are responsible for attending GSC meetings and sending out email correspondence to their respective departments at least once per month.

Section III. This organization will not participate in any activities which could be regarded as hazing. "Hazing" refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full

status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

## Article IV: Officers

- Section I. Council officers shall consist of the following titles: President, Vice President, Director of Outreach, Director of Professional Development, Director of Finance, Director of Graduate Travel, and two Senators Proxy, which shall be referred to collectively as the Executive Council. Council officers will work with each other to resolve any issues that can impact GSC's ability to sufficiently perform duties.
- A. The term of office shall follow that of SGA Senators.
- Section II. The duties of the President shall be as follows:
- A. To serve as the chief executive officer of the GSC.
  - B. To serve as the official spokesperson and primary point of contact for the GSC.
  - C. To schedule and preside (or appoint someone to preside) over GSC meetings.
  - D. To serve as a signatory and final authority on GSC financial matters.
  - E. To oversee the preparation of the GSC annual budget and submit it to the SGA Appropriations Committee by the deadline set forth.
  - F. To serve as the primary liaison between GSC and University administration.
  - G. To ensure that all SGA and University committees requiring a graduate student representative are properly staffed with respect to their requirements for graduate student representation.
  - H. To deliver reports on GSC activities when requested to do so (i.e. DGS meetings, Graduate Council meetings, SGA Senate).
  - I. To serve as a Student Representative on the Graduate Council.
  - J. To serve as a Student Senator on SGA representing the GSC.
  - K. To serve on the SGA Senate Executive Board Committee.
- Section III. The duties of the Vice President shall be as follows:
- A. To serve as the primary proxy for the President with respect to responsibilities listed in Article IV, Section II.
  - B. Assist the President with constructing the agenda for all GSC meetings.
  - C. Record and maintain the minutes and attendance records from all GSC meetings.
  - D. Formulate and send out meeting email templates to the departmental representatives.
  - E. To maintain accurate records of departments in "active", "probation", and "inactive" status, and keep this information updated on the GSC website.
  - F. To serve as the chair of the GSC Rules and Election committee.
  - G. To preside as authority over GSC officer elections, or to nominate someone else to serve in this capacity if doing so would present a conflict of interest.
  - H. To serve as a Student Senator on SGA representing the GSC.
  - I. To serve on an SGA Senate Committee.
- Section IV. The duties of the Director of Outreach shall be as follows:
- A. To organize, plan, and advertise social events for graduate students, including the annual GSC Halloween Event at a minimum.

- B. To serve as the chair of the GSC Outreach Committee.
- C. To serve as the SGA Graduate Student Liaison to the Student Activities Board (SAB).
- D. To serve as a Student Senator on SGA representing the GSC.
- E. To serve on an SGA Senate Committee.
- F. To coordinate with the Director of Professional Development as needed.
- G. To maintain GSC social media accounts.

- Section V. The duties of the Director of Professional Development shall be as follows:
- A. Organize, plan, and advertise academic events for graduate students, including the annual Graduate Student Regional Research Conference (GSRRC) at a minimum.
  - B. Coordinate with the Graduate School to promote PLAN events for graduate students.
  - C. To serve as the chair of the GSC Professional Development Committee.
  - D. To serve as a Student Senator on SGA representing the GSC.
  - E. To serve on an SGA Senate Committee.
  - F. To develop and maintain internal and external relationships to advance GSC professional development objectives.
  - G. To coordinate with the Director of Outreach as needed.

- Section VI. The duties of the Director of Finance shall be as follows:
- A. To preside as chief administrator of the GSC budget, insofar as this does not conflict with Article IV, Section II, line D.
  - B. To assist the President with the preparation of the annual budget.
  - C. To serve as the chair of the GSC Research Grant Review Committee.
  - D. To serve as a Student Senator on SGA representing the GSC.
  - E. To serve on the SGA Senate Appropriations Committee.

- Section VII. The duties of the Director of Graduate Travel shall be as follows:
- A. To serve as the chief administrator of and primary contact for the Graduate Student Council Travel Grant program.
  - B. To report on the status of the GSC Travel Grants funds, when requested.

- Section VIII. The duties of the Senators Proxy shall be as follows:
- A. To serve as designated proxies to the SGA Student Senate, attending meetings on behalf of officers serving as Student Senators.
  - B. To serve on a GSC committee.

## **Article V: Elections and Nominations**

- Section I. The offices of the President, Vice President, Director of Outreach, Director of Professional Development, Director of Finance, and Senator Proxy (2) shall be elected via one of the following processes, as determined annually by a majority vote of the GSC no later than the November meeting preceding the election cycle. The GSC can opt to either:
- A. Participate in the SGA General Election using SGA General Election rules and regulations; or

- B. Hold private elections that abide by the rules of the University of Louisville Supreme Court, mainly:
  - i. All graduate students must be given the opportunity to run for office regardless of their experience with the GSC.
  - ii. All graduate students must be given the opportunity to vote in the election.
  - iii. The election must be conducted via a secure server.

- Section II. Nominations for candidacy must be made via the procedure voted on by the GSC following Section I.
- A. If the GSC chooses to partake in the SGA Elections, nominations should be made following the SGA General Election Rules.
  - B. If the GSC chooses to host private elections, nominations must be made via a means that allows all graduate students to express interest in candidacy, and nominations must be collected in time for candidates to attend the GSC meeting prior to ballots being distributed.
- Section III. Candidates for committee chairs (if required) must be GSC representatives of departments in good standing.
- Section IV. The Director of Graduate Travel shall be chosen by popular vote of the GSC members at the meeting following candidate nominations. In the event of a tie, the faculty advisor shall cast the deciding vote.
- Section V. No person may hold more than one office, except on a temporary basis as an interim replacement for a vacant office, and only until a special election can be held.
- Section VI. Except for the President, all officers of the GSC shall also serve as representatives of their respective departments.

#### **Article VI: Removal of Officers**

- Section I. An officer may be removed from office if he/she fails to uphold the responsibilities listed in this document.
- Section II. To remove an officer, a written letter must be submitted to the Executive Council and the officer in question shall be notified by the Executive Council within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of this letter. A hearing shall be held at the next regular GSC meeting, which will be held at least fourteen (14) days from the receipt of the letter by the Executive Council. The officer in question shall present his/her defense during the hearing. Removal of the officer may only occur following a three-fourths majority vote of GSC representatives present after a quorum has been established. Quorum must be reaffirmed immediately prior to this vote and maintained throughout the voting process.
- Section III. Removed officers must immediately forfeit any positions within the Student Government Association in which they serve as a representative of the GSC.

- Section IV. Officers removed from the position must forfeit their positions as representatives on the GSC and will not be eligible to serve as representatives for one (1) calendar year from the date of removal.
- Section V. The President shall notify the SGA Executive Vice President of the removal of any GSC officer within twenty-four (24) hours of the removal.
- Section VI. Special elections shall be convened by the Vice President and must be held at the GSC meeting immediately following the removal.

### **Article VII: Replacement Procedures**

- Section I. If the position of President becomes vacant, the duties of that office shall be taken over by the Vice President.
- Section II. If any office aside from that of the President becomes vacant, the President shall appoint an interim replacement from the executive board, whose tenure shall last until a special election can be held and resolved.
- Section III. Special elections shall be held through a majority vote of the GSC and:
- A. The special election must be held in either a regular meeting or a special meeting convened only for a special election and during which no other business shall take place, aside from the establishment of quorum.
  - B. The special election must be held no later than the following meeting after the office becomes vacant.
  - C. Candidates for office in the special election must submit in writing their names for candidacy to the Vice President no sooner than twenty-four (24) hours after the vacancy is declared and no later than 24 hours before.

### **Article VIII: Meetings**

- Section I. Meetings shall be held no less than once each month during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- A. At least one regular meeting in each of the Fall and Spring semesters must be held on the HSC campus.
  - B. The first regular meeting date of the Fall semester shall be submitted for approval of the GSC by the President as new business during the final regular meeting of the Spring Semester.
  - C. Special meetings not mandated by this document may be called by a three-fourths majority vote of the Executive Board or by a two-thirds majority vote of the GSC representatives.
- Section II. Regular meeting attendance shall be required for a department to remain in "active" status.

- A. If a department's representative (or designated proxy) is not recorded as present for a GSC meeting, then the department shall be placed on "probation".
- B. If a department's representative (or designated proxy) is not recorded as present for two (2) consecutive meetings during the same academic year or three (3) meetings during the same academic year (regardless of whether they are consecutive), then the department shall be placed on "inactive" status.
- C. Meeting attendance shall be voted on and approved at the end of each meeting to ensure accuracy of recorded attendance.

Section III. Meetings will be run using Robert's Rules of Order, current edition.

- A. Departmental representatives (or designated proxy) shall begin their statements with their names and/or department and conduct themselves in a professional manner when addressing the council.

### **Article IX: Departmental Status**

Section I. Departmental status definitions shall be as follows: "active", "probation", and "inactive".

- A. "Active" status means that the department is in full accordance with the GSC and its students are eligible for funding through GSC programs and initiatives.
- B. "Probation" status means that the department has recently been "inactive" or that the department is at risk of becoming "inactive". Students in these departments are still eligible to receive funding through GSC programs and initiatives.
- C. "Inactive" status means that the department's representative has not fulfilled their responsibilities to the GSC. Students in an "inactive" department are ineligible to receive funding through GSC programs and initiatives.

Section II. All departments shall begin the GSC travel year and thus, the academic year, in "active" status.

Section III. Representatives of departments in "inactive" status may have their respective departments returned to "probation" status by attending two consecutive meetings of the GSC or through active participation on a GSC committee for an amount of time equal to two (2) average GSC meetings.

Section IV. Representatives of departments in "probation" status may have their respective departments returned to "active" status by attending the next regular meeting of the GSC, as well as either:

- A. Subsequently attend the next consecutive GSC meeting; or
- B. Actively participate in a GSC committee or event for an amount of time equal to one (1) average GSC meeting.

Section V. Representatives attempting to improve the status of their respective departments must do so in a timely manner and while in the process of improving their status, must be present (or send a designated proxy) to all regular GSC meetings.

## **Article X: Finances**

- Section I. This organization shall not collect dues. Funds shall be obtained from the SGA Student Senate in accordance with SGA policies.
- Section II. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for maintaining monthly financial statements, which shall be available on request no more than ten (10) business days after the final business day of each month.

## **Article XI: Research Grants**

- Section I. This organization shall create a certain number of grants to fund research activities for graduate students, as defined by the By-Laws. These shall be known as "Research Grants".
- A. The maximum amount allowed to be requested for each grant shall be determined by the President and Director of Finance.
  - B. The maximum amount able to be requested shall not be lower than \$500.00 per grant, unless approved by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority having obtained quorum.
  - C. The total research grant allocation shall not be less than 30% of the total GSC budget.

## **Article XII: Travel Grants**

- Section I. The Director of Graduate Travel is responsible for awarding a certain number of grants to fund activities related to the dissemination of graduate student research/creative activities, as defined by the By-Laws. These shall be known as "Travel Grants".
- A. The maximum amount allowed to be requested for each grant shall be \$350 for students presenting or \$200 for students not presenting.
  - B. Each student is required to submit documentation after they travel to receive their travel reimbursement. Thirty (30) days from the expected date of return, if no documentation has been submitted, the Director of Graduate Travel may revoke the student's Travel Grant due to noncompliance.
  - C. Each student is eligible to receive one Travel Grant per funding year. However, if the budget allows, the Director of Graduate Travel can make the decision to increase the number of awards per student. Changes in the possible number of Travel Grants awarded per student need to be published on the GSC website and communicated to students in advance.

## **Article XIII: RSO Support Grants**

- Section I. This organization shall provide grants to fund recognized student organizations (RSOs) for graduate students, as defined by the By-Laws. These shall be known as "RSO Support Grants".
- A. The maximum amount allowed to be requested for each grant shall be \$500.00 for RSOs with more than 50% of their members in the graduate school and \$250.00 for RSOs with less than 50% of their members in the graduate school.

- B. RSOs will be required to provide documentation pertaining to their graduate student membership before the grant can be dispersed.

#### **Article XIV: Student Eligibility for GSC Funding**

- Section I. Students who meet any of the following criteria will be ineligible for GSC Travel Grants and GSC Research Grants.
  - A. Whose department is inactive, as defined in Article IX: Departmental Status, Section I.
  - B. Who received a GSC Research Grant but failed to present at the GSC Research Conference when indicated. Ineligibility will be maintained from the date of the research conference through the end of next full funding year.
  - C. Who received a GSC Travel Grant but failed to claim the award with no notice of cancellation. Ineligibility will be maintained from the funding year where the travel award was granted to the end of the next full funding year.

#### **Article XV: Amendments**

- Section I. Amendments to the Constitution fall into two categories: major and minor.
  - A. Minor revisions consist of grammatical changes that do not affect the substance of this document and must be approved by a simple majority vote of the GSC.
  - B. Major revisions consist of changes that do affect the substance of this document and must be approved by the GSC then forwarded to the SGA Executive Board and approved in accordance with SGA policies regarding amendments to the SGA Constitution.
  - C. Any student represented by the GSC may submit written proposals to change this document using the submission protocol for new business, as described in Robert's Rules of Order, current edition.
    - i. Students will begin their proposed changes by stating their name and department.

- Section II. Amendments to the By-Laws must be approved in accordance with SGA policies regarding amendments to the SGA By-Laws.
  - A. Any student represented by the GSC may submit written proposals to change the By-Laws, using the submission protocol for new business, as described in Robert's Rules of Order, current edition.

#### **Article XVI: Advisor**

- Section I. The advisor to the GSC shall be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, who may appoint themselves.
  - A. The advisor shall have the power to cast deciding votes in the event of ties regarding election of GSC officers, as well as tie votes within the GSC Executive Council.



## **Article XVII: Compliance Policy**

Section I. The Graduate Student Council agrees to abide by all relevant SGA policies, University policies, and the Student Code of Conduct.