

# **Constitution of the Graduate Student Council**

University of Louisville

Last Revised by Council: March 18, 2024

Approved by SGA Student Senate: April 2, 2024

## **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 the 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 and Travel Grants.
- H. To develop and maintain internal and external relationships that promote the advancement of graduate student development objectives.

## **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 that is a part of the University of Louisville's Graduate School.

- A. No single member may serve as the representative for more than one academic department.
- B. The duties of the members shall be as follows:
  - i. To serve as a voice for their peers in their academic program.
  - ii. To attend all GSC Representative meetings.
  - iii. To serve on a GSC committee.

- iv. To distribute monthly communications to their academic program when such communication is provided by the Vice-President.

Section III. The 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. 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 serves as the official spokesperson and primary point of contact of 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 the 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, maintain, and distribute 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 Party 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 other Executive Board members as needed for the promotion and advertisement of GSC events and initiatives.
- 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 maintain records of attendance and presentation at the GSRRC.

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.
- F. To maintain monthly financial statements, which shall be available on request no more than ten (10) business days after the final business day of each month.
- G. To make monthly financial statements public to graduate students in a manner agreed upon by the first Graduate Student Council meeting.

- 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.
  - C. To maintain records of recipients of the GSC Travel Grants and future eligibility.

- 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, and Director of Finance, shall be elected via one of the following process, 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 the 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, nomination should be made following the SGA General Election Rules.
- B. If the GSC chooses to host private elections, nomination 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. In the event of a executive board position being vacant, a GSC Representative may be elected to chair the committee assigned to the vacant position.

Section IV. The Director of Graduate Travel and Senator Proxy (2) shall be chosen by popular vote of the GSC members at the meeting following candidate nominations. In the event of a tie, the faculty advisory 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 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 with 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 withing 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 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 a 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 by the incoming President for approval of the GSC as new business during the final regular meeting of the Spring Semester.
- C. Special meetings not mandated by this document may be called by the three-fourths majority vote of the Executive Board or by a two-thirds majority vote of the GSC representatives.
- D. The agenda for meetings shall be provided to all Representatives with at least 12 hours notice.

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, or fails to send the required monthly communications to the students in their program then the department shall be placed on "probation".
- B. If a department's representative (or designated proxy) is not recorded as present or fails to send the required monthly communications 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 in "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. 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: Department 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 with an appointed representative shall begin the GSC travel year and thus, the academic year, in "active" status.

- A. If a representative is appointed after the first regular meeting, that program will have their status moved to "probation" pending their attendance at the next scheduled meeting.
- B. If the newly appointed representative does not attend the next scheduled meeting, the department will be placed back in inactive status and be subject to the rules in Sections III and IV.

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 GSC budget for the following academic year shall be presented and voted on by the members in the meeting prior to the deadline for budget submissions set by the SGA.

#### **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 the Director of Finance with approval of the Executive Board.
- B. This amount shall not be lower than \$500.00 per grant, unless approved by a three-quarter majority having obtained quorum.
- C. The total research grant allocation shall not be less than 15% of the total GSC budget.
- D. Recipients of GSC Research Grants are required to present either a poster or oral talk at the Graduate Student Regional Research Conference either in the same academic year or the following academic year.

#### **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 determined by the President and the Director of Travel at the beginning of the academic year with approval of the Executive Board.
- B. Grants will be divided into Travel Funding and Presenter Funding each with a maximum amount. Presenters will be eligible for both funding options.

- C. 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.
- D. 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 the 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 as indicated in Article XI, Section III, line D. Ineligibility will be maintained from the date of the research conference through the end of the 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 when the travel grant was awarded 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 Roberts' Rule of Order, current edition. Students will begin their proposed changes by stating their name and department.



- D. Proposed Constitutional amendments shall be submitted to the Rules and Election Committee for review then returned to GSC for approval before being sent to the SGA for final passage.

Section II. Amendments to the By-Laws must be approved in accordance with SGA policies regarding amendments to the SGA By-Laws. 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 the the GSC shall be appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, who may appoint themselves. 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.