

CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

of

University at Buffalo, *The State University of New York*

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PREAMBLE

We, the graduate students of the University at Buffalo, *the State University of New York* in order to:

- promote the scholarly atmosphere of the University at Buffalo, *the State University of New York*, work closely with the faculty in our mutual endeavor to make the University a truly great Graduate Center,
- promote the general welfare of the graduate student body, without discrimination (e.g. age, race, sex, religion, disability, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.) and to
- initiate and maintain all those activities which promote the interests of the graduate student body and exercise the fundamental responsibilities and rights of a democratic society, do hereby create the Graduate Student Association of the University at Buffalo, *the State University of New York*, and enact this constitution for its government.

Article I Purpose and Power

Section 1 Purposes

A. To act, through its Graduate Student Senate, as the agency of the graduate student body in matters affecting graduate student life and affairs.

B. To promote the interests of the University Community.

Section 2 Powers

A. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association shall be authorized to initiate, enact, and administer on matters within its powers, which concern the graduate student body as a whole and the relationship of student organizations to the welfare of the graduate student body.

B. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association may make recommendations to the proper University authorities on all matters of policy affecting graduate students, and shall have final student authority in all matters affecting the graduate student welfare under this Constitution. A referendum on any questions falling within the scope of GSA activities as described in this Constitution may be mandated by a petition of at least 10% of the members of the Graduate Student Association. Such a referendum must be held as soon as practicable and in no event later than one month after the presentation of the petition. The results of any referendum must be considered binding unless overturned by a vote of the Senate of the Graduate Student Association. Such a vote must have the support of at least 2/3 of the active members present (quorum vote).

C. The President of the Graduate Student Association shall appoint the chairman of all standing and temporary committees, with the exception of the Finance Committee.

D. Committees of the Senate shall act, with the authority of the Senate, in their designated areas of responsibility between regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate.

E. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association shall, after hearing the recommendations of its Finance Committee, administer all funds appropriated to the Graduate Student Association.

F. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association shall have all powers necessary to implement the foregoing purposes and powers, as well as those additional responsibilities delegated to it by the proper authority.

Article II Membership

Section 1 Graduate Students

All presently enrolled students in graduate studies or students presenting a statement by their department(s) certifying them to be graduate students shall automatically be active members of the Graduate Student Association.

Section 2 Honorary

Conferral and definition of honorary membership is as given by the by-laws.

Article III the Senate and Its Officers

Section 1 the Senate

A. The members of the Senate and their alternates (hereafter known as Senators) shall be elected by and from the active members of the Graduate Student Association as set forth in the by-laws. The annual election is to be held by the first month of the Fall semester.

B. The term of office of members of the Senate shall be one year except that any member may be recalled during this time by his or her club in accordance with procedures set forth in the by-laws. Members may be eligible for re-election.

C. Representation in the Senate shall be as provided in the by-laws.

Section 2 the Officers

A. The officers of the Graduate Student Association shall be known as the Executive Committee. The officers shall be a President, Vice President, and Treasurer.

B. On their election these officers shall become Senators at Large, exercising full voting privileges, and shall remain in this capacity until the next general election of Senators following their replacement as officers of the Senate, unless they resign or are impeached.

C. All graduate students represented by GSA are eligible to hold office.

D. The officers shall be elected by a majority of the students voting in any election as set forth in the by-laws.

E. The election of officers shall be held in Spring semester in accordance with the procedure set forth in the by-laws.

Section 3 Duties and Powers

The duties and powers of the Executive Committee shall be as provided in the by-laws.

Article IV Meetings

Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held each month of the academic year and otherwise as provided in the by-laws. All regular meetings of the Senate shall be open. A meeting notice and agenda shall be sent out to all Senators at least seven calendar days prior to the day of the meeting.

Article V Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by either the Senate or the graduate student body.

Section 1 Procedures by the Senate

- A. Any Senator may propose an amendment.
- B. It must be read at the regular meeting previous to the meeting on which it is to be voted and published to the graduate student body in the interim.
- C. It must be approved at a regular meeting by either two-thirds of the elected active Senate membership or three-quarters of active Senate members present, whichever of the two is the smaller amount.

Section 2 Procedures by the Graduate Student Body

An amendment may be proposed by petition of at least 10% of active members of the Graduate Student Association to the Senate. Upon the receipt of such a petition before The March Senate Meeting, the Senate shall be mandated to hold a general referendum before the close of regular classes that academic year, not including the summer session. Upon receipt of such a petition after the March Senate Meeting, the Senate shall be mandated to hold a general referendum no less than four weeks or more than eight weeks in the immediately following Fall semester. A proposed amendment shall be adopted by affirmative vote of a majority of those voting in said general referendum. This affirmative vote must represent at least 10% of the active members of the Graduate Student Association.

Section 3 Amending the by-laws

The by-laws may be amended by a vote of the active elected Senate membership. Such a vote must have the support of at least 2/3 of active members present (quorum vote). The proposed amendment must be listed in the agenda circulated to the full Senate membership seven calendar days prior to the meeting at which it is to be acted.

Article VI Acceptance

This Constitution and attached by-laws shall be the procedure of government for the Graduate Student Association and shall supersede all previous Constitutions and by-laws. It shall go into effect on completing the procedures provided in the previous Constitutions for Constitutional Amendment, which it shall then supersede.

THE BY-LAWS

Article I Membership

Section 1 Representation

A. All presently enrolled students in graduate studies, or students presenting a statement by their department certifying them to be graduate students, shall automatically be active members of the Graduate Student Association. Active members shall elect to and be represented in the Senate.

B. Honorary membership shall be conferred only by a majority vote of the Senate of the Graduate Student Association and shall be limited to non-voting status.

1. Time Limitation: Honorary members, if voted favorably by the Senate, shall serve concurrently with the term of the current Executive Board.

2. Funds: Honorary members are not eligible for any funding.

3. Privileges: Honorary members will be allowed to serve as a non-voting volunteer to the GSA where appropriate, and in consultation with the Executive Board, so long as the volunteer does not replace a position already filled by a currently registered graduate student.

4. Eligibility: Anyone who is a UB Alumni or has served as a graduate student representative, and is not a currently registered graduate student at the University at Buffalo.

C. The officers of the Senate serve and represent the entire graduate student body. Consequently, they should be considered as Senators at Large. On the election of these officers, the vacated departmental Senate seats shall be filled by the corresponding alternates who shall be their departmental Senators.

D. Any GSA club may petition the Senate for voting privileges.

E. The Senate shall determine whether the petitioning group faces distinct enough needs and issues as graduate students to legitimate the group's claim that they cannot be represented through the departmental clubs.

F. Petitions for voting privileges must be read at the regular Senate meeting previous to the meeting on which the petition is to be voted on.

G. Petitions must be approved at a regular meeting by either two-thirds of the active Senate membership or three-quarters of active Senate members present, whichever of the two is the smaller amount.

H. Voting privileges for non-departmental clubs shall be limited to one Senator and one Alternative Senator per club, no matter how many members the club has.

I. The sum total of department and club Senators shall constitute the Senate of the Graduate Student Association.

Section 2 Election of Senators

A. By Department

1. The members of each department shall elect from amongst themselves their Senators by the first month of the Fall semester as instructed in paragraph 2. In addition to elected Senators and their alternates any departmental club officer can serve as an alternate senator, but will only have voting privileges if listed as an Alternate on the Senate Election Verification Form.

2. A departmental having 75 or less presently enrolled graduate students will elect one Senator and two alternates, those with 76 to 175 presently enrolled graduate students will elect two Senators and four alternates, those with 176 to 350 presently enrolled graduate students will elect three Senators and six alternates, those with 351 to 500 presently enrolled graduate students will elect four Senators and eight alternates, and those with 501 or more presently enrolled graduate students will elect five Senators and ten alternates.

3. Two or more small departments in related fields may join together for the purpose of forming a GSA departmental club upon the approval of a 2/3 vote of active Senate members present (quorum vote).

B. By Club

1. Any club granted voting privileges (see Article I, Section 1, D) shall elect from amongst themselves one Senator and one alternate by the first month of the Fall semester.

C. Voting Privileges

1. Each Senator has one vote at Senate meetings. The alternate has voting privileges only when the corresponding Senator is not in attendance.

2. The alternate shall have the same duties and responsibilities at Senate meetings at which the corresponding Senator is not in attendance.

D. The annual election of Senators to the Senate shall be conducted by the first month of the Fall semester.

Section 3 Replacement of Senators

In the case of a Senate seat being unoccupied for two consecutive meetings, without just cause, as determined by the Executive Committee, occupiers of this seat Senator and alternate and their constituency will be notified of the absence of representation at Senate meetings and the resultant freezing of club funds. Club funds may be freed upon the resumption of attendance of Senate meetings by club representatives. Actual replacement of a Senator can only be done by his/her departmental graduate students. A petition by a majority of the voting membership of a department will cause a Senator to be unseated and a new election must be held in that department within two weeks. The unseated Senator is eligible to run in that election.

Section 4 Special Interest and International Clubs

A. The Graduate Student Association encourages, supports and sponsors the formation, growth, and activities of clubs that benefit the graduate student community with services not already being provided by the GSA, departmental clubs, or any other organization or group at the University.

B. GSA Special Interest and International Clubs allow groups of graduate students who share common interests to carry out activities as organized bodies for educational and recreational purposes.

C. The Graduate Student Association has the authority and responsibility to recognize special interest and international clubs, and to ensure that recognized clubs conform to the policies which it endorses and to university rules and regulations.

D. The GSA reserves the right to deny recognition to new clubs, and to review, sanction or revoke existing ones when it deems it appropriate.

Section 5 Recognition of Clubs

A. Recognition implies that the club has been incorporated into the Graduate Student Association.

B. Recognition allows the club to use university facilities, and services such as rental equipment, advisory services, publicity outlets, and to seek funding from the GSA for its activities.

C. Special interest and international clubs must be recognized by the GSA Senate every year.

D. It is the responsibility of previously recognized clubs to seek annual recognition.

E. Requirements for Recognition of Graduate Student Organizations can be found in the Special Interest & International Club Recognition Policy Guidelines.

Article II The Executive Committee

Section 1 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the three officers; each shall be presently enrolled in a graduate department at the University at Buffalo, *the State University of New York*.

Section 2 Duties of Officers

A. President:

1. Shall be the chief executive of the Graduate Student Association.
2. Shall be the chairperson at meetings of the Senate.
3. Shall be the primary Graduate Student Association delegate to all activities external to the Graduate Student Association, or shall appoint all delegates except as indicated in these by-laws.
4. Shall be one of the Graduate Student Association's two representatives on the Graduate School Executive Committee.
5. Shall represent the GSA or shall appoint a representative designee to Sub-Board One, Inc.
6. Shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
7. Shall be bonded.

B. Vice President

1. Shall assist the President in executive and administrative duties.
2. Shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
3. Shall be the Graduate Student Association representative in the absence of or at the request of the President.
4. Shall represent the Graduate Student Association or shall appoint a representative designee to Sub-Board One, Inc. or have the President appoint a representative in their place.
5. Shall supervise, but not chair, the annual election of the Executive Committee, so long as they are not running for office in said election.
6. Shall be responsible for the minutes of the Graduate Student Association and its Senate.
7. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
8. Shall assist the President in originating and developing activities with other student associations.

9. Shall assist organizations recognized by the Graduate Student Association in developing and coordinating their activities and implementing their goals.

10. Shall be bonded.

C. Treasurer

1. Shall act as Chief Fiduciary Agent of the Graduate Student Association.

2. Shall be Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

3. Shall present to the Senate a complete income statement and balance sheet for the previous month.

4. Shall present the budget for the following budgetary year at the penultimate Senate meeting of each budgetary year.

5. Shall be bonded.

Section 3 Election of Officers

A. Any student enrolled in a department that is currently represented by GSA and has attended two Senate meetings prior to becoming a candidate shall be eligible to run for office.

B. All students represented by GSA shall be eligible to vote in any election of officers.

C. The election of officers shall be conducted according to an election code. The election code must be approved by the senate before its implementation. Such approval must take place by the first Senate Meeting of the Spring semester.

D. The election code shall be in effect for one year or until it is amended or replaced, whichever comes sooner.

E. An election committee, made up of graduate students, with the responsibility of organizing and promoting the Executive Officer elections shall be approved no later than the November GSA Senate meeting. The election committee chair shall be elected from and by the members of the election committee, and approved by the Senate. After confirmation the Election Committee Chair will give a briefing at each Senate meeting. No incumbent Executive Officer may serve on the Election Committee. No Election Committee member may run for an Executive office without first formally resigning from the committee, and must have Senate approval.

F. The election of officers shall be overseen by the election committee.

G. All voting shall be done by secret ballot. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, a vote of the Senate shall determine the successful candidate.

H. The officers-elect shall assume their respective positions on June 1st.

Section 4 Impeachment, Removal, and Replacement

A. Impeachment

1. Impeachment may be initiated by a 2/3 vote of active Senate members present (quorum vote) at a meeting.

2. When impeachment has been initiated, and while final action is pending, the officer or officers mentioned in these proceedings shall lose the right to exercise any of the duties and powers

associated with the mentioned offices. If the officer mentioned in these proceedings is also serving as the Chairperson of the Senate at the time of impeachment, the Senate shall elect from the willing Senators in attendance a temporary Chairperson whose sole duties will be to chair the meeting during the impeachment and removal proceedings and to conduct the election of Interim Officers should the Senate desire or require such temporary replacements.

3. When an Officer has been impeached, regardless of whether the motion for removal has succeeded or been tabled, the Senate has the option to elect by majority vote Interim Officers who will hold all duties and powers normally associated with the office. These Interim Officers may only be appointed from amongst the willing members of the graduate student body in attendance who have attended and signed in at two Senate Meetings within the past twelve months. They will hold their office only until permanent officers can be elected according to the rules for replacement set forth in the By-Laws, or until their office has been returned to an Impeached Officer who has been cleared of the charges against them, or until they themselves have resigned, or until the Senate by a simple majority vote chooses to recall them.

4. Whenever impeachment and/or removal proceedings leave less than two Officers in power, including any offices which may be empty due to matters unrelated to the current impeachment proceedings, the Senate is required to appoint at least enough Interim Officers to assure that two offices are filled. At any meeting thereafter the Senate may reopen the appointment process, including to make appointments of Interim Officers to offices left open at previous meetings. No motion to adjourn may be made until a total of at least two offices are filled.

5. If the Senate chooses not to appoint Interim Officers to an open office, the remaining Executive Committee may either assume the duties and powers of the mentioned offices or appoint a Temporary Officer of their choosing according to rules set forth for Temporary Officers in the By-Laws.

6. Upon appointment, an Interim Officer is not required to resign their Senate position, but their voting in the Senate is limited to that of an Officer, not as any club's Senator. An alternate may take their place in the Senate if they were not an alternate themselves.

B. Removal

Any impeached officer can be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the elected Senate (quorum vote).

C. Replacement

1. Replacement of officers who resign during a Senate meeting at which they are being impeached and/or removed from office shall be handled according to the rules that apply to Impeached and Removed Officers.

2. In the case of removal or resignation of any officer, said officer shall be replaced by a vote of the Senate from any willing graduate students in attendance who have attended and signed in at two Senate Meetings within the past twelve months during the meeting at which the replacement election is held.

3. An election to replace a removed or resigned officer may be held at the next regular meeting of the Graduate Student Association Senate provided that a special notice of the vacancy and a call for nominations is included with the regular Senate mailing Section 2, (below). The actual notice, meanwhile, shall appear on a sheet of paper separate from any other Senate business and the news of the vacancy and the call for nominations shall be typewritten completely in capital letters.

4. The Executive Committee may appoint Temporary Officers who will serve with all rights and duties until the next scheduled Senate meeting when permanent replacements can be elected. If a permanent replacement cannot be elected at the next scheduled Senate meeting, the Senate has the option of appointing Interim Officers to all open or temporarily filled offices.

5. Upon election, said officer shall be considered resigned from any and all other GSA Executive Committee offices.

6. If, between Senate meetings, all three Executive Committee offices become simultaneously vacant, the Graduate Student Association's Office Manager shall have the authority to call an emergency Senate meeting and create an agenda for that meeting whose only purposes will be to elect a Senator to chair the meeting and to elect Interim Officers. If the agenda for a regularly scheduled meeting has already been sent, the Office Manager will instead send an updated agenda whose first orders of business will be to appoint a Senator to chair that meeting and to elect Interim Officers until a properly-announced election can be held. If the agenda has not already been sent out, the Office Manager will produce and send that agenda, including election announcements for permanent replacements. In cases where such an emergency Senate meeting cannot be held or cannot achieve quorum, the attending Senators may only appoint Temporary Officers who will serve with all rights and duties until Interim or Permanent Officers can be elected.

Section 5 Duties of the Executive Committee

- A. Shall prepare the agenda for Senate meetings.
- B. Shall approve all appointments made by GSA.
- C. Shall be responsible for the hiring and contractual relationship of Graduate Student Association permanent employees.
- D. Shall be responsible for the annual appointment of the Graduate Student Association directors to realize the goals of the GSA as stated in the preamble. Any director receiving a stipend must be held by a member of the Graduate Student Association.
- E. Shall receive an annual stipend as specified in the budget, in accordance with Sub-Board One, Inc. accounting procedures.
- F. Officers who in accordance with constitutional responsibility assume the duties of another Officer (e.g., Vice President acting on behalf of the President) shall not be entitled to an additional stipend payment.
- G. Shall be responsible for a smooth transition of duties to the new Executive Committee members.

Article III Meetings of the Senate

Section 1 Time of Meetings

The Senate shall meet at least once each month. Meetings may be called by the President and must be called by the President upon request of 25% of the active membership of the Senate.

Section 2 Announcements of Meetings and Agenda

- A. A meeting notice and agenda shall be sent to all Senators and alternates at least seven calendar days prior to the day of the meeting.
- B. The agenda shall be made by the Executive Committee.

Section 3 Quorum

- A. A quorum for the purpose of convening a meeting shall be 51% of the total active membership of the Senate.
- B. A quorum necessary to pass resolutions on the agenda consists of twenty-five Senators.

C. A quorum necessary to pass resolutions not on the agenda shall consist of the lesser of either 30 Senate members or 51% of the total active Senate membership

D. The active membership on which a quorum shall be based is calculated as follows: If a seat is vacant for two consecutive meetings, that seat will be considered on the inactive list and as such will not be counted in the quorum determination. The quorum determination will be made prior to each meeting. Attendance of a meeting by the delegate or alternate of that seat will result in removal of the seat from the inactive list.

E. A quorum shall under no circumstances be less than 25 Senators.

Section 4 Rules of Order

In its deliberations, the Senate shall be guided by Robert's Rules of Order Revised.

Article IV Committees

All committees of the Graduate Student Association must be chaired by a member of the Senate. The committee members may be drawn from the Graduate Student Association at large.

Section 1 Standing Committees

A. Finance Committee

1. The Treasurer of the Graduate Student Association shall be Chairperson of the Finance Committee. In addition to the Treasurer, the Finance Committee shall consist of 9 (nine) members, and 2 (two) alternates. The alternates shall vote only in the absence of a member. Both members and alternates shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and approved by a majority vote of the Senate.

2. Functions

a. Budget: The Finance Committee shall be responsible for the formulation of the budget of the Graduate Student Association and its Senate.

b. Financial Rules and Procedures governing the disbursement of funds.

1. The Finance Committee shall assist the Treasurer in developing and enforcing any and all fiscal regulations of the Graduate Student Association and its Senate. Those regulations shall be appended to these by-laws.

2. Funds are expended by the voucher or REP process. All vouchers must be signed by the Treasurer and the President or an official designee of the Graduate Student Association.

c. Special Activities Requests: The Finance Committee shall review all group funding requests in accordance with such guidelines that the Committee shall set for itself. The recommendation of the Finance Committee will be made to the Senate which will make the final decision on funding levels.

d. Capital Equipment

1. The Finance Committee will review and approve of all purchases of capital equipment. The amount is set by and corresponds to Sub Board I. regulations.

2. The GSA shall retain ownership of all capital equipment purchased with GSA funds, whether or not such equipment is purchased for the use of any GSA organization or project.

Section 2 Temporary Committees

Temporary Committees, and others deemed appropriate may be appointed by the President as the need arises.