

CONSTITUTION FOR THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION of the University of Missouri

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I. Purpose

A. The purpose of the Graduate Student Association is:

1. To represent graduate student interests to the graduate students, faculty, and administration through interdepartmental exchange and through projects and programs designed to facilitate research and learning on the part of graduate students.
2. To enhance the academic pursuits of graduate students by supporting and promoting cultural events of interest to graduate students.
3. To enhance the social lives of graduate students by supporting and promoting cultural events of interest to graduate students.
4. To support graduate students on a departmental level through allocating available funds and making funds for programming on a departmental or interdepartmental level available.
5. To support special projects and programs involving specific graduate populations throughout the years.

B. The Purpose of this Constitution is:

1. To provide a general philosophy and rationale for the Graduate Student Association.
2. To provide a general orientation for the membership.
3. To lend stability and continuity to the Graduate Student Association.

C. The Purpose of the Attached By-Laws is:

1. To provide an understanding of the operations, practices and procedures carried on within the various parts of the Graduate Student Association.

II. Membership

All students matriculating for degree programs or other programs under the supervision of the Graduate School are automatically members of the Graduate Student Association.

III. Structure

A. The General Council

This shall be a body open to representation from every graduate department or area on the UMC campus whose charge it shall be to approve major budget expenditures, amend this constitution and/or by-laws, make resolutions on key issues, elect officers, and act as the forum for graduate student interaction.

B. The Executive Board

This body shall be composed of the four elected officers. It shall serve as the overseer and coordinator of all ongoing activities. It shall have the power to approve some budget expenditures but must take major decisions to the General Council. Each officer shall have a vote in the General Council.

C. Standing Committees

Specific concerns and issues within the General Council and among graduate students in general are to be met through the employment of specific-task committees. These committees shall be charged with establishing and prioritizing goals, keeping the General Council and the Executive Board informed of the progress made in meeting these goals. Permanent standing committees shall include: 1) Academic Affairs; 2) General Council Membership and Orientation; 3) Publications; and 4) Teaching/Research Assistant Concerns. Other standing committees may be appointed by the president as the need is perceived or as directed by the General Council or Executive Board.

D. Temporary Committees

Concerns and issues which are perceived as short-term may be delegated to committees with a limited duration. Examples of such committees include: 1) constitution/by-law revision; 2) new officer nomination; and 3) needs assessment survey. All such appointments are to be made by the president as he/she sees the need, or as directed by General Council or Executive Board. Such appointment shall be for a specified but renewable period of time.

IV. Roles

A. Officers

1. The President

- a. Shall serve as the chief executive officer of the GSA and as such shall preside over all meetings of the General Council and the Executive Board.
 - b. Shall be the spokesperson for the GSA and may serve as the GSA representative to the Graduate Faculty Senate and its executive board or may appoint another graduate student, preferably a member of the GSA Executive Board.
 - c. Shall recommend graduate students for membership on GFS committees to the GFS president; and on committees within the Graduate School to the Dean of the Graduate School. These are all subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
 - d. Shall appoint GSA members to chair both standing and temporary committees subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
 - e. Shall act as the chair of the Academic Affairs committee.
 - f. Shall have the power to establish new committees.
 - g. May serve on and attend all GSA committees as an ex-officio member.
 - h. Shall have the power to call special meetings of the Executive Board and the General Council.
 - i. Shall call special elections to replace members of the Executive Board.
 - j. Shall be required, with the treasurer, to endorse all financial transactions authorized by the Executive board or the General Council.
 - k. Shall be required to hold regular office hours every week. The office hours shall be announced in an appropriate and timely manner.
 - l. Shall be responsible for preparing the members of the Executive Board to assume their respective positions, if possible, with the help of the previous members.
 - m. Shall be well informed in Robert's Rules of Order, this constitution and the attached by-laws.
 - n. Shall prepare the agenda and notification of upcoming meetings to the General Council and/or Executive Board members nor more than ten (10) and no less than five (5) days before the meeting.
 - o. Shall act as the GSA liaison to the Graduate Professional Council.
 - p. Shall serve as ex-officio to the forthcoming executive council for a period of one year.
2. The Vice President
 - a. Shall report directly to the president.

- b. Shall assume the duties of the president in his/her absence from the chair.
- c. Shall become the president upon the resignation or other loss of the president and shall be responsible for holding a special election for the new Vice President.
- d. Shall be responsible for monitoring the activity of graduate students serving on GFS, Student/Faculty and Graduate School committees, and shall report any resignations, outstanding contributions or below acceptable performances to the president.
- e. Shall serve as the parliamentarian at all General Council and Executive Board meetings.
- f. Shall act as chairone of the Social and Programs Committee.
- g. May serve on and attend all GSA committees as an ex-officio member.
- h. Shall be disposed to special projects delegated by the president.
- i. Shall coordinate the GSA standing and temporary committees, and shall meet with the committee chairones at least once monthly.
- j. Shall be the GSA liaison with other UMC Student Divisional Governments.
- k. Shall serve as ex-officio to the forthcoming executive council for a period of six months.

3. The Secretary

- a. Shall report directly to the president.
- b. Shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of each General Council and Executive Board meeting.
- c. Shall be responsible for the dissemination of these minutes to the appropriate recipients.
- d. Shall send out the agenda and notification of upcoming meetings to General Council and/or Executive Board members no more than ten (10) and no less than five (5) days before the meeting.
- e. Shall be responsible for maintaining the roll and keeping the General Council membership advised of any change.
- f. Shall act as chair of the Membership Committee.
- g. Shall record the votes of the General Council.
- h. Shall see that a copy of the minutes of the previous meetings is sent out with meeting notices.
- i. Shall be responsible for updating the GSA website.
- j. Shall serve as ex-officio to the forthcoming executive council for a period of six months.
- k. At the end of each academic year, the Secretary shall be responsible for depositing printed, typed copies of all the year's

agendas, minutes, and any other internal documentation deemed necessary into the University Archives. The Secretary is further responsible for ensuring that the incoming Secretary is aware of the University Archives location and the GSA file in order to carry out this duty the following year.

4. The Treasurer

- a. Shall report directly to the president.
- b. Shall account for all financial transactions of the GSA to such parties as the Graduate School.
- c. Shall be responsible for reporting the financial status of GSA at all General Council and Executive Board meetings.
- d. Shall assist the president in the preparation of the new budget.
- e. Shall be required to co-sign with the president all financial transactions within the GSA.
- f. Shall be responsible for maintaining a file of all departmental requests.
- g. Shall be responsible for notifying parties due to receive GSA funds of appropriate procedures to acquire these funds.
- h. Shall be responsible for reporting authorized departmental requests at the General Council or Executive Board meetings following its approval.
- i. Shall act as the chair of the Teaching/Research Assistant Concerns Committee.
- j. Shall serve as ex-officio to the forthcoming executive council for a period of six months.

B. Departmental/Area Representatives

1. Shall serve as liaison between the GSA General Council and the department or area represented.
2. Shall be expected to attend all GSA General Council meetings.
3. Shall be given first priority in GSA internal committee appointments.
4. Shall be given second priority (behind officers and sector representatives) in Graduate School, Graduate Faculty Senate, and Student/Faculty committee appointments.

C. Other

1. Public Relations Officer
 - a. Shall report directly to the president.

- b. Shall develop a working relationship with the free campus media.
 - c. Shall attend all General Council meetings and prepare press releases concerning key issues.
 - d. Shall issue releases at the direction of the president of the Executive Board.
2. Chairones of Committees
 - a. Shall report directly to the president.
 - b. Shall report on the progress of their committees at General Council and Executive Board meetings.
 - c. Standing committee chairones shall serve as members of the Executive Board.
 - d. Shall keep minutes of their committee meetings and forward a copy to the vice president.
 - e. Shall prepare a written report of the committee's progress semesterly (standing) or upon completion (temporary) to the vice president.
3. Members of Graduate Faculty Senate, Student/Faculty or Graduate School Committees.
 - a. Shall serve as the liaison between that body and the GSA.
 - b. Shall report directly to the president.
 - c. Shall prepare a final report of their activities by April 1 and shall make recommendations on future GSA involvement in that committee.
 - d. Shall be prepared to give a verbal report on their committee's activities relevant to the GSA at a General Council meeting.
4. Extra-Campus Liaison Officer (currently handled by GPC)
 - a. Shall serve as liaison between the UMC GSA and similar bodies at other institutions.
 - b. Shall be appointed by the president and confirmed by a majority of the Executive Board.
 - c. Shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Board.
 - d. Shall compile and maintain a current list of graduate student governments and/or associations at other institutions.
 - 1) The list shall include the names of officers and committees, and any other information deemed appropriate by the Executive Board.
 - 2) Missouri and its contiguous states shall be primary (but not exclusive) targets of the list.

- 3) The list shall be kept in the GSA office and shall be open to all graduate students.

V. Representation

A. On the General Council:

Each department or degree granting area (if autonomous from any department) shall be eligible for representation according to the following schedule:

- 1 to 100 full and/or part-time graduate students – 1 vote
- 101 to 200 full and/or part-time graduate students – 2 votes
- 201 to 300 full and/or part-time graduate students – 3 votes

GSA officers shall not serve as departmental representatives.

B. On the Executive Board:

All officers and the sector representatives shall constitute the voting members of the Executive Board. Ex-officio, non-voting members shall include the advisor and the immediate past president of the GSA.

C. In the Graduate Faculty Senate:

1. Senate: The president shall automatically assume this position.
2. Executive Committee: The president shall automatically assume this position.
3. Problem and Procedure, and Academic Affairs Committees:
Opportunities to serve as the GSA representatives shall be offered to the following in the order shown:
 - a. The officers (other than the president)
 - b. The remaining departmental representatives
 - c. Remaining graduate students

D. On Student/Faculty Committees:

Opportunities to serve as the GSA representative shall be offered in the order shown:

1. General Council members
2. Remaining graduate students

E. On Graduate School Committees:

Opportunities to serve as the GSA representative shall be offered to the following in the order shown after Graduate Faculty Senate and Student/Faculty committee representatives have been chosen.

1. General Council members
2. Remaining graduate students

VI. Meetings

A. General Council

1. Regular

- a. The Executive Board shall establish a schedule of meeting dates by mid-September and mid-January for those respective semesters and publish in the GSA website. The president shall be responsible for dissemination of this information to all GSA members and shall include it in a special mailing to members of the General Council.
- b. The president shall be responsible for reserving a meeting place and arranging for refreshments (if appropriate).
- c. A quorum shall be defined as representation of one-half of the departments/areas having representation.
- d. Parliamentary procedure shall be in accordance with Robert Rules of Order.
- e. Voting:
 - 1) Shall be restricted to General Council members or their substitutes.
 - 2) May be done by proxy if such votes do not represent more than 10% of the total voting and if it is the wish of the General Council.

2. Special Meetings

- a. May be call by:
 - 1) The president
 - 2) Any four voting members of the Executive Board
 - 3) Representatives from ten or more departments/areas
 - 4) Petition by 50 graduate students (not on the General Council)

B. Executive Board

1. Regular
 - a. A schedule of regular meetings shall be established in coordination with the General Council meetings. As a rule, the Executive Board shall meet twice as often as the General Council on a regular basis.
 - b. The president shall be responsible for reserving a location and dissemination of this information to the appropriate parties.
 - c. A quorum shall be defined as the presence of 50% of officers.
2. Special Meetings
 - a. May be called by:
 - 1) The president
 - 2) Four voting members of the Executive Board

VII. Elections

A. Of Officers:

1. The four officers – president, vice president, secretary and treasurer – shall be elected by the General Council at a special meeting held in the first half of April.
2. The Nominating Committee:
 - a. Shall submit no more than two and no less than one candidate for each office, beginning with the president and following with the vice president, secretary and treasurer.
 - b. Shall be appointed by the president by March 1.
 - c. Shall be charged with:
 - 1) Interviewing applicants for the offices.
 - 2) Seeking out candidates for officers where no suitable candidate has applied.
 - 3) Informing all potential candidates of the duties of the office they seek, including approximate time and skill requirements, resources at their disposal and other expectations of the office.
 - 4) Gaining a commitment to meet these requirements before recommending their candidacy.
3. Nominees may be presented from the floor.
4. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
5. A majority of General Council members present shall be required to elect.

B. Of Departmental Representatives:

1. Shall be conducted within each department or area.
2. If the department has an organized graduate student body:
 - a. Shall require a majority of departmental members voting at a meeting to elect.
 - b. Shall be conducted by secret ballot if contested.
3. If the department has no organized graduate student body:
 - a. Shall be selected by the graduate student of the department in an election monitored by the outgoing GSA representative; or
 - b. Shall be selected by the outgoing GSA representative; or
 - c. Shall be selected by the Director of Graduate Studies; or
 - d. Shall be self-appointed.

VIII. Services

The GSA shall seek out opportunities to enhance the life of graduate students in the following areas:

- A. Academic Development
- B. Cultural Enrichment
- C. Work Life (i.e. Teaching and Research Assistantships)
- D. Other

The GSA shall also seek out opportunities to better the campus community as a whole by engaging in and supporting projects which will improve the campus as a resource for all campus inhabitants.

IX. Relationships

The GSA especially through the person of the president shall have direct contact with the following:

- A. The Graduate Faculty Senate, especially the president.
- B. The Graduate School, especially the Dean of the Graduate School, the appointed GSA adviser, and the fiscal office.

- C. The presidents or chairs of departmental graduate student organizations.

Committee chairs shall be responsible for establishing appropriate relationships with the chair of committees or administrators whose interests are compatible with theirs. For example, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Graduate Faculty Senate, as well as the appropriate academic administrators.

X. Impeachment

The purpose of this section is to provide a vehicle for removing from office any officer whose constituents believe is negligent in performing his duty or has mishandled his responsibilities.

- A. Of GSA Officers:

1. Initiation of such action shall be by presentation of a petition to the GSA adviser stating the charge and requesting the removal of said officer from office.
2. The petition shall be signed by not less than one-third (1/3) of the General Council.
3. The secretary shall validate all signatures on the petition and direct the highest ranking officers not sought for impeachment to call a special meeting of the General Council in not less than fourteen (14), nor more than twenty-eight (28) days after the receipt of the petition. If the secretary is named on the petition, the membership chairone shall validate the names.
4. The highest ranking officer unnamed in the petition shall conduct the hearing, read the charge, allow discussion and conduct secret ballot vote. The officer subject to recall shall be advised of the outcome immediately, in closed quarters if he/she chooses, and be relieved of duty in the event of a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present.

XI. Referendum

- A. A referendum shall be called by petition of five percent (5%) of the GSA.
- B. If such a referendum is responded to by a minimum of five percent (5%) of the GSA, and it receives the approval of a majority of those responding, it shall be considered binding on the GSA.

XII. Budget Handling

A. Development of Regulations

1. The budget for each year will be handled in conjunction with the graduate school fiscal office in accordance with the “Handbook for Divisional Student Councils,” prepared each year by the Center for Student Life.
2. Questions during the course of the year should be addressed to the Auditor of Student Organizations.
3. All requests for interdepartmental or campus wide funds shall be on the appropriate form as specified in the by-laws and submitted to the president.

B. Expenditure Approvals

1. Major expenditures, defined as those constituting greater than four percent (4%) of the GSA’s total annual budget, shall require the approval of the General Council.
2. Other expenditures, less than four percent (4%) of the GSA’s total annual budget, may be approved by the Executive Board.
3. Departmental requests may be approved by the president in conjunction with the treasurer and GSA advisor. If this practice is adopted, the treasurer shall report the departments receiving such funds at the ensuing General Council or Executive Board meeting, whichever comes first.

XIII. Amendments

- A. This constitution may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) of the General Council membership at any two consecutive General Council meetings, provided that a notice of the proposed change was presented or sent to the membership at least ten (10) days before each meeting.
- B. The GSA by—laws may be change by a simple majority of General Council members present at a meeting , provided a notice of this change was presented or sent out to the membership at least ten (10) days in advance.
- C. The GSA Constitution shall be reviewed once per year. The Executive Board may form a Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee if necessary.

XIV. By-Law

Section 1: Representation and Attendance

- 1.1 Non-attendance in person or by proxy for three or more consecutive GSA general council meetings will result in a representative's termination. The Membership Committee chairperson of GSA shall notify the department of the expelled representative and request a new GSA departmental representative be appointed.