

CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 2, 1991

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Article I (Definitions)

1. The Graduate Student Association, hereinafter called the GSA, shall be the governing student organization of the graduate student body.
2. The Governance Body shall consist of the officers of the executive committee and the graduate senators.

Article II (Purposes)

1. To work for academic, social, and economic advancement of all graduate students and to serve as the protector of their rights and interests.
2. To promote better communication among graduate students and the entire University student body.
3. To ensure appropriate representation of the graduate students in the affairs of the University pertaining to or affecting graduate education.
4. To promote rapport among graduate students, faculty and administration.
5. To administer the use of all properties and funds under GSA control.
6. To coordinate the functions of those student organizations which pertain to the membership of the GSA.

Article III (Composition)

Composition: All graduate students who are in good standing with the University and the GSA are members of the GSA.

Article IV (Executive Committee, Term of Any Office, Vacating or Removal From Any Office)

1. The Officers of the GSA shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer and shall hereinafter be referred to as the Executive Committee or EXCOM.
2. Only GSA members in good standing shall be eligible to hold any GSA office.
3. All elected office terms are from June 1 of the year elected through May 31 of the following year.
4. The Executive Committee shall serve as a standing review board to present grievances to the appropriate University Offices or Graduate Student Organizations.
5. The Executive Committee will neither appropriate nor spend any funds not explicitly allowed for in this document or approved at a GSA Governance Body meeting. Any violation of this provision will result in personal culpability and liability for any or all EXCOM members. Violation of this provision will be considered an immediate vacation of office for any offending individual or individuals.
6. Any EXCOM officer may be removed if the individual is absent for two Governance Body meetings in any semester if so voted by a simple majority vote of the Governance Body.
7. In addition, an EXCOM officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Governance Body.
8. Dereliction of duty is just cause for removal from office.
9. Any vacant office may be filled by a simple majority vote of the Governance Body.

Article V (Duties of the Executive Committee)

1. President

1.1. To preside over all meetings and ensure parliamentary procedure is adhered to as set out in Robert's Rules of Order, except as amended in this document.

1.2. To prepare, post, and make available an agenda for all meetings.

1.3. To represent the GSA and the Graduate Student Body.

1.4. To call special meetings under the provisions outlined in Article VIII.

1.5. To convene the Executive Committee.

1.6. To appoint and dissolve committees of the GSA subject to Governance Body approval.

1.7. To be Ex Officio member of all committees.

1.8. To provide a written and oral report of the EXCOM's activities at the last Governance Body meeting of the year

2. Vice President

- 2.1. To assume the responsibilities of President when the latter is unable to do so.
- 2.2. To assume the office of President when the office is vacated by the President,
- 2.3. To be responsible for the planning and orchestration of all GSA sponsored functions,
- 2.4. To conduct a role call at all EXCOM and Governance Body Meetings.

3. Secretary

- 3.1. To record the minutes of all EXCOM and Governance Body meetings.
- 3.2. To present written copies of these minutes at every Governance Body meeting for review, possible corrections, and approval or disapproval.
- 3.3. To post these minutes at all locations specified by the Governance Body.
- 3.4. To receive and maintain all records of the GSA including minutes, committee reports, EXCOM member reports, correspondence, Graduate Student Organization (GSO) Constitutions and list of Officers with contact information, flyers, pamphlets, announcements, etc.
- 3.5. To maintain a roster of Governance Body members. This roster shall include, at a minimum, the individual's name, office, organization represented, and contact information.
- 3.6. To record the role call at all EXCOM and Governance Body Meetings. This information will be included in the minutes.
- 3.7. To be responsible for the written communication of the GSA.
- 3.8. To send and post notices of all Governance Body and Special meetings as outlined in Article VIII.
- 3.9. To maintain an accurate GSA constitution.
- 3.3.10 At the end of the school year to prepare a report listing (1) the number of years that each GSO has been in existence, and (2) the names of any GSOs and officers of those GSOs who are not in good standing with the GSA.

4. Treasurer

- 4.1. To be responsible for the financial transactions of the GSA.
- 4.2. To present a written financial report at all Governance Body meetings.
- 4.3. To maintain all of the financial records of the GSA with assistance from the Student Activities Bookkeeper..
- 4.4. To pay the usual operating expenses listed below:
 - a. Office supplies

b. Repairs to Equipment (Owned by the GSA)

c. Telephone Expenses

4.5. To produce all financial records for inspection, when requested in writing, by any member of the Governance Body.

4.6. To be bonded.

4.7. To allocate and disburse GSO funding under the guidelines listed in Article XI,

4.8. To allocate and disburse Professional Development Awards and Graduate Research Grant Awards according to their respective committee guidelines.

4.9. To allocate and disburse money for events or items approved by the Governance Body.

Article VI (Senate)

1. The Senate shall be composed of one Senator from each recognized GSO and shall be elected as prescribed in Article X.

2. Alternate Senators will also be elected and will serve in the absence of the Senator.

3. The President or the Vice President of a GSO may serve as a proxy for the Senator or Alternate Senator.

Article VII (Elections)

1. GSA Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer)

1.1. The Officers shall be elected from the membership of the GSA.

1.2. Election of officers shall be coordinated with the Office of Student Activities to coincide with the undergraduate elections and the election of the student trustee, in any case during the month of April. All members of the GSA may vote in the election. Elections are to be held on-line if possible using the Office of Student Activities secure system.

1.3. Not more than two persons from any one academic department may hold a position on the Executive Committee in any one year.

1.4. No person may hold two elected positions within the GSA in any one year.

1.5. Nominations

1.5.1. Any graduate student in good standing with the University and the GSA may nominate or second individuals for GSA office.

1.5.2. No individual may nominate or second themselves.

1.5.3. Nominations must be in writing on the form provided by the GSA. The nomination information will include the full name of the nominee, nominator, and seconder, as well as the academic department affiliation, GSO membership (if any), student identification number, personal contact information, and statement attesting to the good standing of these respective individuals. Additionally, the nominee must include a statement attesting to having read the GSA Constitution.

1.5.4. Nominations must be returned to the Office of Student Activities at least one week before elections are to be held.

1.6. If there is an incomplete slate of officers elected, any vacancies may be filled by a simple majority vote of the Governance Body.

1.7. No individual may be elected to consecutive terms for the same office unless there are no other candidates for the particular office.

1.8. The ballots shall only be counted by members of the Governance Body who are not candidates for these offices. Any member of the Governance Body may be present for ballot counting. The Graduate School may also have representation at the ballot counting.

1.9. Any member of the Governance Body, any candidate, or the appointed representative of the Graduate School may call for a recount of any or all of the ballots.

2. Senators shall be elected according to the terms outlined in Article X.

3 The chairpersons of the Professional Development Award and Graduate Research Grant Award committees shall be elected at the October meeting of the GSA.

3.1 Chairperson duties shall include:

3.1.1 The establishment of an appropriate review committee.

3.1.2 The management of timely meetings to review applications, monthly for PDAs and annually for GRGAs.

3.1.3 The preparation and publication of application materials to the student body.

3.1.4 The timely presentation of committee decisions to the EXCOM.

Article VIII (Meetings)

1. Governance Body Meetings

1.1. The Governance Body will meet at least once a month to conduct necessary business.

1.2. Meetings shall be conducted according to the parliamentary procedure described in Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise amended in this document.

1.3. Notices of agenda and meeting dates, times, and locations shall be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting on bulletin boards including electronic bulletin boards and other appropriate places, which will include, at a minimum, the Graduate School Office, and the offices of all departments and of all college Deans. This same information shall also be mailed to every GSO. The meeting location is determined and arranged for by the President.

1.4. Only members of the Governance Body, i.e., the Graduate Senate and EXCOM, may vote at Governance Body meetings unless a motion is made, seconded, and passed by a simple majority of the Governance Body to allow all members of the GSA to vote on an active item at that meeting. This voting privilege expires upon resolution of the particular item. Discussion on any item is always open to all. The President of the GSA shall only cast a vote in the event of a tie. The President must vote either YEA or NEA. The President may not make, nor second, nor amend any motion.

1.5. No GSA meetings shall be held without a quorum. A quorum shall consist of 1/3 of the Governance Body.

1.6. Every GSO must be represented by a Senator, Alternate Senator, or Proxy at Governance Body meetings. Any GSO that fails to have this representation shall for the first unexcused absence be mailed a written warning from the GSA Secretary. The second unexcused absence will result in a lock on all GSA funding pending written response from the GSO. Upon receipt of this written response EXCOM will determine further action regarding this matter. Upon a third unexcused absence, the GSO shall cease to be recognized by the GSA and any unexpended GSO funds will revert back to the GSA general fund. Written notification of this shall be sent to the GSO's Advisor. The offending GSO may seek redress at a Governance Body meeting.

2. Special Meetings

2.1. A special meeting of the Governance Body may be called by the President of the GSA or by a simple majority vote by the EXCOM.

2.2. Special meetings can only be held at reasonable times.

2.3. Special meetings can only be held on a routine day of classes during the fall or spring semester that is followed by a routine day of classes.

2.4. Notification of a special meeting shall be at least 2 routine class days in advance of the meeting.

2.5. Special meetings should only be held if the agenda for this meeting cannot wait for a regular meeting of the Governance Body.

2.6. All absenteeism penalties are waived for special meetings.

2.7. Notice of the special meeting location, date, time, and agenda shall be posted, at a minimum, at the Graduate School Office and the offices of all college Deans. Email notification will be attempted to all members of the EXCOM and GSO Senators, or their Alternate Senators or proxies. A written record of this email contact must be kept and presented at the beginning of the special meeting.

2.8. A special meeting may be adjourned by a simple majority vote.

2.9. No special meeting shall be held without a quorum. A quorum shall be 1/3 of the Governance Body.

Article IX (Advisor)

The Dean of the Graduate School, or the Dean's designee, or other appropriate University official (subject to disapproval by the Governance Body) will serve as advisor to the GSA.

Article X (GSO Recognition and Requirements)

1. In order to be recognized and funded by the GSA for the current academic year, the following must be submitted to the GSA office by the last Monday in September:

1.1. A list containing the students' full name, school I.D. number, and the signature of the student;

1.2. A completed form that states contact information of the GSO's officers;

1.3. The GSO's latest version of its Constitution; and

1.4. The "Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing" document signed by the GSO President.

1.5 GSOs that do not register by the deadline of the last Monday in September may register at any time during the school year by completing the documents listed above and submitting them to the Executive Committee. These clubs may apply for funds on a case by case basis.

2. All GSO constitutions must conform to the following format in order to be recognized by the GSA and/or be eligible for funding:

2.1. Name of organization.

2.2. The purpose of the GSO must be consistent with the Purposes of the GSA listed in Article II.

2.3. Membership in the organization.

2.3.1. Voting members: This must be open to all University graduate students in good standing with the University and the GSA.

2.3.2. Nonvoting members: If any, for example, faculty, staff, alumni, undergraduates, etc., consistent with Article II.

2.4. Election of officers: Elections of officers are to take place during the last full week in April. Only voting members may hold the offices required in these guidelines. The following are the required officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Senator, and Alternate Senator. The President or Vice President of a GSO may serve as a proxy for the Senator or Alternate Senator. No individual will hold more than one office at a time. Notification of elections must occur at least seven days in advance.

2.5. Executive board (powers and duties of each office): To be determined by the GSO.

2.6. Standing committees or sub-committees: An organization may form committees or additional offices consistent with the organization's purpose. These committees or non-required offices may include nonvoting members.

2.7. Meetings.

2.7.1 At least one per semester with notification at least seven days prior to the meeting date.

2.7.2 Copies of at least one meeting's minutes per semester must be submitted to the GSA secretary.

2.8. Advisor: An advisor will be chosen from the University Faculty or Staff.

2.9. Amendments: The GSO constitution may be amended by 2/3 of the voting members present. Any voting member may propose an amendment which will then be voted on at the following general meeting, after which an accepted amendment will be submitted to the GSA for approval and adoption.

2.10. By-Laws: Bylaws may be proposed by any member of the club and will be carried by a 2/3 vote of the voting membership present at the meeting.

2.11. Power of Restriction: The power to restrict a GSO's funds or representative event is to be held by the GSA.

2.12. No new GSO will be recognized by the GSA if its purpose is similar to that of a currently recognized GSO. GSOs founded in the same academic year with similar purposes may be required to merge by the GSA.

2.14. Recreational sports clubs should be recognized and funded through the Athletic Department and not the GSA.

2.15. The GSO will follow Chapter 269 of the General laws, Section 17, 18, 19-AN ACT PROHIBITING THE PRACTICE OF HAZING. No GSO will haze in any way.

Article XI (Funding)

1. Sources

1.1. There are two primary sources of funding for the GSA. There is an annual allocation from the University administration and rolled-over funds from the previous year.

1.2. The GSA account is a non-interest-bearing account which is administered by the university's business office. Twenty percent of the total amount of money in the GSA account shall be the prudent reserve of the GSA.

1.3. Ticket sales (such as for the GSA banquet) are a possible source of income.

1.4. Other fund raising activities may be conducted in accordance with the Purposes of the GSA (Constitution Article II).

1.5 Funds raised by GSOs, including event (party) ticket sales, should be deposited in a separate revolving account with the Student Activities Bookkeeper.

2. Expenditures

2.1 Professional Development and Graduate Research Grant Awards (PDAs and GRGAs). The disbursement of funds for PDAs and GRGAs is governed by the guidelines of their respective committees.

2.2 Activities such as senate and committee meetings

2.3 Regular operating expenses including the cost of a bookkeeper

2.4 GSA-sponsored special events such as guest speakers, banquets, conferences, social activities, etc.

2.5 Funding of GSOs:

2.5.1 The GSA shall allocate 35% of the annual University's allocation as funds to be distributed to clubs.

2.5.2 The GSOs will be grouped into four size categories according to sizes and awarded equivalent monetary units (EMUs). Small GSOs (9 to 24 members) receive 1 EMU. Medium GSOs (25 to 74 members) receive 2 EMUs. Large GSOs (75 to 149 members) receive 3 EMUs. The Largest GSOs (150 or more members) receive 4 EMUs.

2.5.3 GSOs that were registered with the GSA during the prior year or up to 4 continuous academic years will receive 1 additional EMUs. GSOs that have been registered with the GSA for five or more continuous academic years will receive 2 additional EMUs.

2.5.4 EXCOM members, the chairperson of the PDA committee and the chairperson of the GRGA committee shall receive 1 EMU each to be added to the GSO of their choosing for their service to the GSA. These EMUs will not be paid before February 1st of the academic year and can be frozen if the individual is determined to be derelict in duties.

2.5.5 To determine the value of an EMU, the Treasurer will total the number of EMUs for the clubs including size (2.5.2) and longevity (2.5.3) plus the EXCOM and committee chairperson EMUs (2.5.4). The total amount of funds available for clubs (2.2.5.1) will be divided by the total number of EMUs. The Treasurer will present a written report at the October meeting of the Senate indicating the calculations and total funding for each GSO.

2.5.6 GSOs may request additional funds from the GSA Senate at monthly meetings

2.5.7 Permissible club expenses are defined by the Office of Student Activities

2.6 Reimbursement for expenses

2.6.1 The EXCOM will approve forms to be used for GSA expenses

2.6.2 Club expenses require the signature of the club advisor

2.6.3 Reimbursement to EXCOM members require the signature of both the Treasurer and President

2.6.4 The Director of Student Activities (or designee) must sign all funding requests

2.6.5 Procard purchases or purchase orders must be arranged with the Student Activities Bookkeeper and are not recommended

2.6.6 On-campus catering requests must be made in cooperation with the Student Activities Bookkeeper

2.6.7 Receipts are required for all expenses

2.6.8 The GSA Treasurer, with the approval of the EXCOM, may disapprove requested purchases or reimbursements

Article XII (Amendments and Bylaws)

1. Amendments

The GSA constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the Governance Body. Any Governance Body member may propose an amendment which will then be voted on at the following Governance Body meeting.

2. By-Laws

Bylaws may be proposed by any member of the Governance Body and will be carried by a 2/3 vote.

University of Massachusetts Lowell Graduate Student Association
Constitution Revision Committee 2003

Patrick Drane (College of Engineering)

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