

# **CONSTITUTION**

**OF THE**

# **GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT**



**LAST AMMENDED: FEBURARY 10, 2015**

**CURRENT REVISION: APRIL 27, 2020**

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## **Preamble**

We, the graduate students of the University of Maryland, College Park, in order to secure and protect the welfare, rights, and interests of all graduate students at this institution, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the graduate student body, and, in so doing, outline a graduate student body organization charged with serving and representing all graduate students under a unified organization.

## **Article 1: Name, Purpose, Mission and Objectives**

### 1.1 Name

- 1.1.A The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Government of the University of Maryland, College Park (GSG).

### 1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.A It shall be the official graduate student governmental body for implementing the objectives set forth in the Preamble, subject only to the laws and mandates of our state and the nation.
- 1.2.B It shall advocate for policies and practices promoting and governing activities and welfare of graduate students of the University of Maryland, College Park, and it shall advise University of Maryland officials and any other relevant agency or organization on the graduate student viewpoint concerning all matters affecting graduate students.

### 1.3 Mission

- 1.3.A The mission of the GSG shall be to represent University of Maryland, College Park's graduate student interests, needs, and welfare within the University community, the University System of Maryland, the State of Maryland, and the nation, through shared governance, and efficient and effective communication with the University administration.

### 1.4 Objectives

- 1.4.A It shall act to improve the quality of education and enhance the quality of life of all graduate students.
- 1.4.B It shall be responsible for the allocation of the Student Activity Fee of graduate students and supervise and provide input regarding all other mandatory fees.
- 1.4.C It shall strive to support scholarly activities and professional development, leadership, social, and service opportunities for the graduate student body.
- 1.4.D It shall provide a forum for graduate student advocacy while acting as a conduit

between students, faculty, staff, University administration, and outside organizations.

### 1.5 Statement of Inclusion

1.5.A. The GSG believes diversity can enhance the overall experience of graduate students at the University of Maryland, College Park as students learn to interact effectively and appreciate the various perspectives, talents, and abilities of others.

## **Article 2: Membership**

2.1 All graduate students are members of the graduate student body and are eligible to become members of GSG.

2.2 The membership of GSG shall be comprised of the executive (Executive Committee) and legislative (Assembly) branches. The duties and responsibilities of these branches are set forth in this Constitution.

2.3 All members of the GSG are granted the rights and privileges of this Constitution.

2.4 All members of the graduate student body shall be entitled to vote in general and special-general elections of the GSG. Any graduate student has the right to call for a university-wide referendum/recall election, provided that a petition signed by at least one-twentieth of the GSG's total membership is submitted as specified by statute.

## **Article 3: The Executive Committee**

3.1 The Executive Committee shall consist of the following offices:

3.1.A President

3.1.B Vice President for Legislative Affairs and Speaker of the Assembly

3.1.C Vice President for Financial Affairs and Student Fee Matters

3.1.D Other offices may be created in any bylaws, as provided under Article 7.

3.2 Duties and Responsibilities of the President

The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the organization. The duties and responsibilities of the President shall be to:

3.2.A Appoint any non-elected executive officials with notice to the Assembly.

3.2.B Recommend graduate students for appointments to, or removals from, University-wide councils, committees, and boards through processes outlined in the Bylaws.

3.2.C Sign or veto, within ten University working days, all legislation passed by the Assembly. If legislation is neither signed nor vetoed within this period, it shall be deemed approved.

3.2.D Sit on all councils, committees, boards and task forces where the GSG President is specifically required to be the representative.

3.2.E Other responsibilities may be provided in the Bylaws, as provided under Article 7.

### 3.3 Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice President for Legislative Affairs and Speaker of the Assembly

The duties and responsibilities of the Vice President for Legislative Affairs and Speaker of the Assembly shall be to:

3.3.A Act as President, if for any reason, the office becomes vacant, or when requested to serve in the President's absence.

3.3.B Perform such duties as the President may assign him/her/them in the administration of the organization.

3.3.C Act as Speaker for the Assembly and chair for the Rules Committee.

3.3.D Act as primary contact for all matters related to graduate assistantships and employment, government relations at the local, state and federal levels

3.3.E Other duties and responsibilities may be provided in the bylaws, as provided under Article 7.

### 3.4 Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Student Fee Matters

The duties and responsibilities of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Student Fee Matters shall be to:

3.4.A Understand and educate the GSG about all student fees, the fee review process, and the Graduate Student Activity Fee.

3.4.B Oversee the financial affairs of GSG and be the primary contact between GSG and its financial partners.

3.4.C Chair the Budget and Finance Committee.

3.4.D Order the disbursement of the funds of GSG as authorized by the Bylaws or the Assembly.

3.4.E Perform such duties as the President may assign him/her/them in the administration of the organization.

3.4.F Other duties and responsibilities may be provided in the Bylaws, as provided under Article 7.

### 3.5 Election of Members of the Executive Committee

3.5.A The election of the Vice Presidents shall take place at the end of the spring term after the general election for the President and Assembly Representatives. All voting representatives from the term ending will be eligible to elect both Vice Presidents during a transition Assembly where outgoing, incoming and continuing representatives are present. Graduate students seeking the office of Vice President may self-nominate or be nominated by another member of the GSG. Following nominations, the candidates will be asked to provide materials as requested by the Elections Committee and to attend and present at the specified Assembly meeting as outlined in the Bylaws. A vote will take place for these roles during the Assembly, with the results subsequently verified and announced at the same Assembly.

3.5.B No person shall be elected to the same Executive Office more than four times, and no person who has held an Executive Office for more than one semester of a term to which some other person was elected shall be elected to that same office more than thrice.

## **Article 4: The Assembly**

4.1 The Assembly shall be composed of graduate students as outlined below:

4.1.A Elected representatives from every active graduate program (Program Representatives)

4.1.A.1 Program Representatives shall serve terms of one academic year.

4.1.A.2 Representatives may serve four terms in total, provided that they are selected by the graduate students in their programs as defined by the Bylaws. This limit will not include terms before the 40<sup>th</sup> assembly.

4.1.A.3 Each program shall be entitled to one representative for each one hundred of its graduate students or part thereof, with minimum representation of one representative per program. A single graduate student may only be counted as a member of a single program. Every effort shall be made to ensure that programs that want representation will receive representation, as defined by the Bylaws.

4.1.A.4 Program representatives shall have voting rights. When a Program Representative is not available for a meeting of the Assembly, the Program Representative is responsible for appointing a member of their own program to serve as a proxy. This proxy is an authorized and legitimate member of the GSG General Assembly and incurs all rights and privileges therein during the Assembly for which the proxy is present.

#### 4.2 Meetings of the Assembly

4.2.A The Assembly shall meet at least once per month from August to May.

4.2.B Special meetings may be called at the request of the President, or by a petition signed by a quorum (one-third plus one) of the voting members of Assembly.

4.2.C Meetings shall follow parliamentary procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. A Parliamentarian may be appointed provided by the Bylaws.

4.2.D A quorum of one-third plus one of the Assembly must be present in order to conduct official business.

#### 4.3 Duties and Responsibilities of the Assembly

4.3.A All legislative powers granted herein shall be vested in the Assembly.

4.3.B The Assembly shall consider and take appropriate action on all matters submitted by any graduate student.

4.3.C The Assembly may override a presidential veto on any action by two-thirds majority vote of its present and voting membership.

4.3.D The Assembly shall form and disband standing and ad hoc committees.

4.3.E The Assembly shall be charged with the investigatory duties of the GSG.

4.3.F The Assembly, by a majority vote of its present and voting membership, may initiate impeachment proceedings for just cause against appointed or elected members of GSG.

### **Article 5: Committees**

#### 5.1 Standing Committees

##### 5.1.A Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee shall oversee the disbursement of the Student Activity

Fee of graduate students.

#### 5.1.B Elections Committee

The Elections Committee shall organize and oversee the elections of members of the Executive Committee and Assembly Representatives.

#### 5.1.C Rules Committee

The Rules Committee shall review all proposed legislation before it is brought to the Assembly, as well as set the agendas of the Assembly meetings.

#### 5.1.D Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is formed pursuant to the Bylaws and shall hear all appeals of decisions made by the Executive Committee, the Assembly, or financial decisions, in the event that they are challenged on constitutional grounds. The committee shall be the final authority on all matters within its purview, and its decisions shall not be subject to appeal.

### 5.2 Committees

Additional committees may be established as deemed necessary by the Assembly.

## **Article 6: Faculty Advisor**

6.1 GSG shall select at least one faculty or staff advisor who meets the requirements for an advisor set by the University.

## **Article 7: Bylaws**

7.1 The Assembly may adopt Bylaws such as it deems necessary in keeping with this Constitution. The Bylaws shall be adopted, changed or amended by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly's present and voting membership. The Bylaws shall include the duties of all Executives and Assembly Members and the duties of standing committees.

## **Article 8: Amendments and Reviews**

8.1 Amendments to this Constitution must be approved by a majority of votes cast during a general election and shall be valid only in the event that at least one-twentieth of the graduate student body votes in said elections.

8.2 Any member of the graduate student body may propose amendments to this Constitution.

8.2.A Amendments shall be presented in writing to the Rules Committee, which shall transmit the text of an amendment to the members of the Assembly at least fourteen



days in advance of the Assembly meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.

8.2.B Amendments approved by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly's present and voting membership shall be placed on the ballot of the next general election.

8.2.B.1 Amendments that only correct typographical errors or revise changes in titles may be done by the Assembly without being subject to a general election.

8.2.C Should amendments not be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly's present and voting membership, any graduate student shall have the right to call for a graduate student body wide referendum on said amendments, provided that a petition calling for such a referendum is signed by at least one-twentieth of the members of the graduate student body and is submitted as specified by the Constitution or Bylaws.

8.2.C.1 If approved in referendum under the same conditions outlined in Article 8.1, the amendment shall be approved.

8.3 The current Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed every fifth year by a special committee appointed by the President. All recommended amendments from said committee shall be administered according to Article 8.2.

### **Article 9: Appeals**

9.1 Any member of the graduate student body may challenge the constitutionality of an action taken by the GSG by submitting an appeal, signed by at least one percent of the graduate student body or one-third of the voting members of the Assembly, as specified by the Constitution and Bylaws.

9.2 The Governance Committee shall consider all properly submitted appeals in a timely manner and shall render a decision as specified by the Bylaws. Decisions of the Governance Committee on issues of constitutionality shall be binding and effective immediately.