

Constitution of the Graduate Student Association of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – New Brunswick

Approved by the Council, 11 May 1977

As eleven (11) times amended by the Council: 26 January 1978; 5 April 1978; 2 March 1980; 5 October 1980; 7 December 1980; 7 February 1982; 13 October 1985; 4 May 1986; 7 February 1988; February 1992; and 10 October 1999

I: Name and Purpose

A: This society shall be known as the Graduate Student Association of Rutgers University (GSA).

B: The purpose of the GSA shall be to further graduate student interests; graduate student-University relations; and the social, culultural, and acedemic enrichment of graduate students.

II: Membership

A: All graduate students who contribute dues to the GSA as part of their University-collected student activity fee shall be members of the GSA (henceforth referred to as "constituents").

III: Council

A: The representative branch of the Association shall be known as the Council.

B: Only constituents of the GSA may be members of the Council.

C: The Council shall be composed of the following members:

1: One (1) representative for every forty (40) full-time students in each graduate program/department in: the Graduate School - New Brunswick (16); the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (18); the Graduate School of Education (15); the School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies (17); the Graduate School of Social Work (19); and the Mason Gross School of the Arts (8). Two (2) part-time students shall count as one (1) full-time student for the purpose of representation. (These representatives are henceforth referred to as "departmental representatives.");

2: Each elected officer of the GSA during her or his term of office (see Article VII, Section A for the list of elected officers);

3: Each chairperson of a standing committee during her or his term of office;

4: Each at-large member of the External Allocations Committee; and

5: Each graduate student University Senator from the schools enumerated in Section C, Paragraph 1 of this Article.

D: Each member of the Council shall have one and only one vote.

E: All policies and decisions pertaining to the GSA shall be decided by the Council.

IV: Meetings of the Council

A: At least one (1) regular meeting shall be held each month from September to May. Assuming there is to be only one regular meeting per month, these meetings should be scheduled to take place on the second Sundays in October, November, December, February, March, April, and May; on the third Sunday in September; and on the first Sunday after classes resume in January. Regular meetings of the GSA are customarily held at 7 p.m. in one of the campus graduate student lounges.

B: At the first regular meeting in September, the Council shall establish a schedule specifying the time, date, and place of all subsequent regular meetings for the remainder of the academic year.

C: Special meetings shall be called by the President:

1: Upon written demand of ten (10) Council members, or

2: At the request of the Executive Committee.

D: The Executive Committee shall send each Council member written notice of all regular and special meetings at least seven (7) days prior to such meetings. (Written notice may be sent via email, campus mail, and/or U.S. mail.)

E: All Council meetings shall be open to all constituents of the GSA. Although constituents of the GSA who are not Council members may not offer motions or vote on issues considered by the Council, they shall nonetheless be permitted to participate fully in the Council's deliberations.

F: A quorum for all regular and special meetings shall consist of ten (10) departmental representative members of the Council, as well as at least two elected officers.

G: Any situation not provided for in the Constitution or in binding resolutions of the GSA shall be decided according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

V: Voting

A: All substantive matters shall be decided by a simple majority of the legal votes cast, unless the matter is one that is explicitly specified either by this Constitution, by a binding resolution of the Council, or by *Roberts Rules of Order, Revised* as requiring more than a simple majority.

B: A procedural ruling made by the chair may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

C: The Council is limited in how it may allocate funds to graduate student organizations by the rules expressed in the document entitled "Funding Policies of the GSA" which was adopted by the Council on November 8, 1998.

D: All funding requests must be reviewed by the External Allocations Committee before they may come to the floor of the Council.

VI: Recognition of Graduate Student Organizations

A: A graduate student organization shall be considered officially recognized by the GSA when the following conditions are satisfied:

- 1: A minimum of eight (8) members of said organization are constituents of the GSA;
- 2: At least two (2) officers from said organization are constituents of the GSA;
- 3: The organization's Constitution and a list of the organization's current members have been provided to the Secretary of the GSA; and
- 4: A motion for approval of said organization is carried at a regular Council meeting.

B: The Council may not allocate funding to a graduate student organization until it has been officially recognized.

VII: Officers

A: The elected officers of the GSA shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

B: All officers shall serve without salary or other financial remuneration.

C: No one shall serve as an elected officer of the GSA for more than 4 years.

D: The President shall:

- 1: Preside at all meetings of the Council and report regularly to the Council on the state of the GSA;
- 2: Call special meetings under the provisions of Article IV, Section C.;
- 3: Submit, at the May regular meeting of the Council, a written annual report to include the accomplishments of her or his office and of the GSA as well as any suggestions that may be pertinent;

4. Supervise the day-to-day work and performance of the GSA's hired staff;
- 5: Cast the deciding vote when a particular vote of the Council results in a tie; and
- 6: Serve as a surrogate or temporary representative to any University board or committee in case the Council-appointed representative is unable to attend, or in case a representative is yet to be appointed by the Council.

E: The Vice-President shall:

- 1: Assume and perform, pro tempore, the duties of any absent elected officer;
- 2: Serve as a parliamentarian, i.e., explain and/or clarify rulings from the chair that are questioned by means of a point of order issued by a Council member during the course of any Council meeting; and
- 3: Assist the President and the Treasurer in the preparation of their annual reports.

F: The Treasurer shall:

- 1: Oversee the maintenance of the financial records of the GSA;
- 2: Oversee the receipt and deposit of all revenue of the GSA;
- 3: Monitor the status of all GSA bank accounts;
- 4: Oversee the payment of all authorized bills for the GSA;
- 5: Sign all checks issued by the GSA; (The Treasurer may, for convenience's sake, permit other elected officers to sign checks on behalf of the GSA as well.)
- 6: Render an account at each regular meeting, or more often if required, of all receipts, allocations, and expenditures; and
- 7: Submit, at the first regular meeting of the Council in May, a written, detailed annual report of the income and expenditures of the GSA to date, including any recommendations that may be pertinent.

G: The Secretary shall:

- 1: Keep the minutes of the proceedings of all Council meetings, and prepare those minutes for dissemination and approval at the next regular meeting of the Council;
- 2: Conduct the official correspondence of the GSA;

3: Receive and review organizations' Constitutions and lists of members for the purpose of recognition as described in Article VI above;

4: Report at the next regular meeting any requests for recognition that have been received in a timely fashion, and make recommendations to the Council regarding the suitability of such organizations for recognition;

5: Make copies of the GSA Constitution openly available to constituents and Council members at both the first regular meeting in September and the first regular meeting in October; and

6: Assist the President and the Treasurer in the preparation of their annual reports.

VIII: Committees

A: The Standing Committees shall be Executive, External Allocations, Elections, Publications, International Student Affairs, Graduate Student Issues, and Social/Cultural.

B: Each Committee Chairperson shall:

1: Be responsible for all activities of that committee;

2: Be responsible for all proper financial accounting of that committee, under the supervision of the Treasurer;

3: Submit a written report of the activities of that committee at the first regular meeting of the Council in May and be prepared to report orally at each regular meeting;

4: Carry out all directions of the Council; and

5: Serve without salary or financial remuneration.

C: Each Committee shall:

1: Submit an annual budget to the Executive Committee as early as possible in the fall;

2: Have its membership determined by the Council, unless stipulated otherwise elsewhere in this document;

3: Hold meetings which are closed to those who are not members of the committee, unless the committee invites specific individuals to attend or votes to hold an open meeting;

4: Execute relevant Council policies; and

5: Report at regular meetings of the Council regarding Committee activities and deliberations.

D: The Executive Committee shall:

1: Consist of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary;

2: Appoint, supervise, and pay out of GSA funds such employees as are necessary;

3: Meet at least once prior to every regular Council meeting and at the discretion of the President;

4: Recommend an agenda for each Council meeting;

5: Submit the annual GSA budget at a regular meeting during the fall, in consultation with the committee chairpersons; and

6: Be composed, for the summer, of the newly elected members of the External Allocations Committee (see Section E below).

E: The External Allocations Committee shall:

1: Consist of the elected officers of the GSA as well as three at-large members;

2: Be chaired by the Treasurer;

3: Ensure that the application forms for funding requests are up-to-date and publicly available;

4: Report all funding requests to the Council;

5: Recommend to the Council specific amounts of GSA funds to be allocated to specific graduate student organizations to offset the costs of specific events or series of events; (The recommendations of the External Allocations Committee must adhere strictly to the rules established for such recommendations in the document entitled "Funding Policies of the GSA" which was adopted by the GSA Council on November 8, 1998.)

6: Ensure that all organizations who request and receive funding supply required information; (The Committee may stipulate that its funding recommendation is conditional upon the receipt of required information that was not included in the original funding request. In such a case, the Treasurer is to withhold funding until the required information is provided.) and

7: Report to the Council any organizations that are in violation of GSA funding policy, and enforce any penalties against such organizations that are mandated by binding resolutions of the Council.

F: The Elections Committee shall:

- 1: Submit to the Council, by the last meeting of the Fall semester, rules for the coming GSA elections;
- 2: Submit to the Council a list of appropriate polling places as well as an appropriate schedule of dates and times during which those polling places will be open for voting;
- 3: Arrange for the availability of designated polling places;
- 4: Receive nominations for positions on the ballot;
- 5: Print ballots with the appropriate names and positions;
- 6: Oversee the operation of polling places during voting;
- 7: Help count ballots after all voting has been concluded;
- 8: Institute procedures which guarantee that ballots will be secret and voting will be secure; and
- 9: Establish and adhere to policies which reduce the risk of voter fraud.

G: The Publications Committee shall:

- 1: Coordinate editing and publication of new editions of the *Pauper's Guide to New Brunswick*;
- 2: Oversee and establish rules for the operation of the Stimpson Publication Office;
- 3: Maintain and update the office equipment belonging to the Stimpson Publication Office;
- 4: Supervise GSA employees working in the Stimpson Publication Office; and
- 5: Oversee the development of the GSA Web page as well as other GSA web services.

H: The International Student Affairs Committee shall:

- 1: Facilitate gatherings of international graduate students for social, cultural, or academic purposes; and
- 2: Maintain liaison with, and from time to time coordinate activities with, other University organs whose purpose is to serve the international graduate student community.

I: The Graduate Student Issues Committee shall:

- 1: Assume responsibility for planning and executing programs related to student rights;
- 2: Formulate, present, and execute programs affecting Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, Research Assistants, Part-Time Lecturers, and other graduate student employees of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey;
- 3: Maintain liaison with the Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters; and
- 4: Consult with the Executive Committee before taking or advocating any political action.

J: The Social/Cultural Committee shall:

- 1: Assume responsibility for the planning and execution of the social and cultural programs of the GSA, subject to the approval of the Council;
- 2: Be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the GSA property in the Graduate Student Lounge, excluding the GSA office and Stimpson Publication Office; and
- 3: Supervise the purchase and provision of refreshments served at Council meetings.

K: Special Committees may be established by a vote of the Council. Such special committees must be reauthorized by the Council in order to continue operating from year to year.

L: In the event that appropriate candidates cannot be found to serve on a given Standing Committee, that committee's duties will be performed by the Executive Committee and/or GSA employees.

IX: Elections

A: Departmental Representatives

- 1: Representatives to the GSA Council shall be elected by the students in their respective programs.
- 2: Those who present themselves to the Secretary as duly elected departmental representatives shall be admitted as members of the Council.
- 3: In the event that there arises a dispute regarding who legitimately holds a given seat on the Council as departmental representative, the Secretary shall request a letter from the Graduate Director of the department in question to settle the dispute.

B: Committee Members

1: Committee Chairpersons and at-large members of the External Allocations Committee shall be elected by the Council at the first regular meeting in May and shall take office on 1 June.

2: The Council may elect a Committee Chairperson or at-large member of the External Allocations Committee at a different time if there is not a quorum at the first regular meeting in May, if there are insufficient candidates at the first regular meeting in May, or if the position becomes vacant for any reason.

3: Committee members shall be appointed by the Council.

4: Committee Chairpersons and Committee members shall be constituents of the GSA at the time of appointment and throughout their term of service.

C: General Elections

1: Elected officers of the GSA (see Article VII, Section A) and graduate student University Senators (from the Schools listed in Article III, Section C, Paragraph 1) shall be elected by a plurality of the legal votes cast by the graduate student body. The term of these offices is one year. All elected officers shall assume office immediately after the last regular meeting in May. Senators shall assume office at the earliest time allowed by the rules of the University Senate.

2: Candidates for office shall become official nominees and their names shall be placed on the General Elections ballot if and only if:

a: either the candidate is nominated and the nomination is seconded by Council members at a regular meeting of the Council, or the Elections Committee Chairperson receives a written nomination signed by two (2) Council members; and

b: the candidate officially signifies her acceptance of the nomination.

3: The election shall be run by the Elections Committee, which may devise such rules and procedures as it deems necessary, subject to advance approval by the Council. Any such rules must be posted in a public place and be made available to those constituents who request a copy.

4: Aside from elected officer and Senate positions, the Elections Committee may place other positions or other issues on the General Elections ballot, subject to advance approval by the Council.

5: The Elections Committee shall designate a timely period for balloting of not less than three (3) consecutive days, for all of which the University is in session.

6: All constituents of the GSA shall be eligible to vote in GSA General Elections, and all constituents shall have one and only one vote.

7: General Elections shall be held by secret ballot.

8: General Elections shall be held in April.

X: Vacancies and Removal from Office

A: If any elected office position, Committee Chair, or University Senate seat shall become vacant, the Executive Council may appoint an interim officer until a substitute can be elected by the GSA Council. The election of such a substitute shall automatically appear on the agenda of every regular meeting of the Council until the vacant position is filled. Vacant positions shall be filled by any Council member who accepts the nomination and who receives a plurality of votes at a regular meeting of the Council. The member thus elected shall immediately enter upon her or his duties and shall remain in office until the next regular election.

B: Procedures for removing from office anyone elected or appointed by the Council

1: A written statement of the charges brought against the officer to be removed must be signed by five (5) Council members and must be submitted to the Secretary at least two (2) weeks prior to the regular Council meeting at which the vote of removal is to be taken.

2: The officer or Committee Chairperson so charged will be given the opportunity to publicly respond to charges at least at the regular Council meeting at which the vote of removal is to be taken.

3: In no case shall the person who is undergoing removal proceedings chair the meeting at which her or his removal is to be voted upon.

4: Removal of an officer requires that consenting votes be cast by two-thirds of the Council members present at that regular meeting of the GSA Council.

XI: Amendment of this Constitution

A: The proposed amendment must be submitted to the Secretary in writing signed by no fewer than five (5) Council members.

B: The Secretary shall publicly introduce any such proposed amendment at the first regular meeting of the GSA Council after her receipt of the proposed amendment.

C: All known Council members shall be sent copies of the proposed amendment.

D: The proposed amendment shall be discussed at the next regular Council meeting following the regular meeting at which it was introduced.

E: Proposed amendments may not be voted upon until there has been an opportunity for public review and discussion as specified in Sections B–D above.

F: Two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be required to pass the amendment.