

The Constitution  
*of the*  
Graduate Student Association  
*of*



William & Mary  
Graduate Arts & Sciences

*revised:*

March 26, 2019

## Article I. Mission Statement

The organization described herein shall be called the Graduate Student Association of Arts & Sciences of the College of William and Mary (hereafter GSA). Its purpose shall be:

- A. To advance the academic and social interests of graduate students of the college.
- B. To assist in governing matters of honor violations within the graduate school.
- C. To select eligible graduate students for college committees in which graduate representation is necessary.
- D. To advance the recognition and integration of graduate students at the college.
- E. To provide a forum for the dissemination of information and ideas to the college and the community.

## Article II. Membership

Membership in the GSA shall be open to any person enrolled as a graduate or unclassified (post-baccalaureate) student under the Faculty of Arts & Sciences (A&S). **As the primary governing body of the graduate students in Arts and Sciences, it is assumed that all graduate students in A&S are members by default.**

## Article III. Governance and Bylaws

- A. The GSA shall be governed by the Graduate Student Association General Council (GC).
  1. The General Council shall consist of one representative elected or appointed from each graduate department or program under the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, and the seven elected officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Senator, Parliamentarian, and Social Chair.
    - a. Each department or program shall elect a representative to the General Council within two weeks after the beginning of the Fall semester. This representative shall serve for the academic year. Subsequent vacancies will be filled by election or appointment by the chair of the department as necessary by the units involved during the academic year.
    - b. The General Council will meet no later than the fourth week of the Fall semester,
      - i. To organize standing committees.

- ii. To set meeting dates of council for the academic year just beginning, which shall include at least six meetings. The President may call additional meetings if deemed necessary as outlined in their powers.
  - c. GSA Council meetings are open to all GSA members, though only General Council members may vote, each having one vote with a two-thirds majority needed to carry any resolution except for Constitutional amendment, which are provided for under Article V.
  - d. To conduct business, a quorum of  $\frac{2}{3}$  the General Council must be present.
- B. The Executive Council shall comprise of the elected officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Senator, Parliamentarian, and Social Chair.
- 1. The Executive Council may meet in executive session, open to all members of the GSA, to propose resolutions for future meetings. Resolutions are not binding unless voted on during GSA General Council meetings.
  - 2. Executive Council Officer elections will be held in March in conjunction with the Student Assembly elections as described in Section IV of the Student Assembly constitution.
  - 3. Executive Council Officer terms begin on the last Monday of April of the year of the election.
  - 4. An Executive Council member cannot concurrently serve as Department Representative.
  - 5. No more than three officer positions may be filled by the same department or program.
  - 6. In the case of an Executive Council officer vacancy, the position will be filled from among the current GSA department representatives and approved by a vote of the General Council.
- C. The purposes of the GSA General Council shall be:
- 1. To act as a forum for discussion and organization of GSA activities, i.e. academic and social projects.
  - 2. To respond to concerns raised by the Student Assembly via the GSA Representative to the Student Senate.
  - 3. To assist in the preparation of the GSA budget for the coming academic year.
  - 4. To represent the interests and concerns of Arts & Sciences graduate students to the Administration, the Graduate Council, the Student Assembly, and other college-wide policy organization through the Executive Council Officers or their delegates, and through any appointed committee representatives.

## **Article IV. Duties of the Officers and Representatives**

- A. The duties of the President shall be:

1. To preside over all meetings of the GSA General and Executive Council.
2. To appoint a representative body of GSA students, to be confirmed by the General Council, that will serve as an honor council to investigate and try cases involving GSA students.
3. To call special meetings of the General Council as deemed necessary.
4. To serve as the first representative to the Graduate Council from the GSA.
  - i. The President may resign this duty if they choose, in which case the replacement Graduate Council representative will be appointed by the President and approved by the General Council.
5. To appear with the Treasurer before the budget hearings of the Finance Committee to submit and defend the budget of the GSA.
6. To appoint a Representative to the Student Senate, to be confirmed by the General Council, in the event that position is vacant (see Article IV, Section E)
7. To appoint representatives to college-wide committees where Arts & Sciences graduate students have a seat, to be confirmed by the General Council.
8. To appoint the Chief Justice and Associate Chief Justice of the Honor Council.
9. To appoint Graduate Council representatives to be approved by the General Council in the event that the President and/or Parliamentarian resign their place on the Graduate Council.

B. The duties of the Vice-President shall be:

1. To perform the duties of the President in the case of their absence.
2. To coordinate the services offered by the GSA to outside organizations.
3. To serve as Elections Coordinator on the election committee in early March in accordance with Section IV of the Student Assembly constitution (see Article VII Article VII. , Section C).
4. To oversee the Graduate Portfolio Project and encourage full participation amongst all departments and programs.

C. The duties of the Secretary shall be:

1. To maintain the GSA website and to handle necessary GSA correspondence.
2. To obtain a list of graduate students' names and contacts from the OGSR at the beginning of the year.
3. To keep minutes of the meetings of the GSA Council and to assure their publication on the website within 72 hours of the GSA Council meetings.
4. To publish an agenda the week before the regularly scheduled meetings and publish it on the website.

D. The duties of the Treasurer shall be:

1. To allocate funds for the GSA functions in accordance with the current college policies and to ensure that adequate funds are available to sponsor in part or whole the Graduate Research Symposium (GRS).
2. To provide a statement on finances to each meeting of the Council.
3. To prepare, in consultation with the Executive Council, the GSA budget for the upcoming academic year.
4. To submit receipts of charges to the Student Activities Accountant for payment or reimbursement.
5. To attend, with the President, the budget hearings of the Finance Committee to present and defend the GSA budget.

E. The duties of the Student Senate Representative(s) shall be:

1. To attend meetings of the Student Senate of the Student Assembly and represent GSA interests there.
2. To inform GSA members of procedures for applying for Student Assembly standing committees, especially finance and college-wide committees.

F. The duties of the Parliamentarian shall be:

1. To attend all meetings of the Graduate Council and to serve as the Second Representative to the Graduate Council from the GSA.
  - i. The Parliamentarian may resign this duty if they choose, in which case the replacement Graduate Council representative will be appointed by the President and approved by the General Council.
2. To report at General Council meetings on issues calling for graduate student involvement or movement.
3. To initiate procedures, debates, and motions; to carry resolutions; and responsible for collecting and tallying votes on all issues decided on in the GSA General Council and Executive Council meetings.
4. To draft all proposed constitutional amendments and disseminate copies to all members of the GSA Executive Council in a timely manner.
5. To update appendices as needed and to notify incoming members of their existence.

G. The duties of the Social Chair shall be:

1. To organize and direct social functions of the GSA, including convening the Social Committee, whose duties shall include publicizing, planning, maintaining, and supervising all GSA social functions.
2. To ensure that graduate students are informed of any GSA function or project.
3. To consult with the Treasurer on events that involve monetary transactions with the GSA.

H. The duties of the Department/Program Representative shall be:

1. To attend all meetings of the GSA Council and represent the interests of their respective department or program.
2. To inform and encourage participation of graduate students in college-wide events, especially those sponsored by the GSA.
3. To assist in the organization and execution of GSA events.
4. To represent the interests of their respective departments to the planning committee of the GRS and assist in its fruition.

## **Article V. Ammendments**

This constitution may be amended or revised by a two-thirds vote of the General Council. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the GSA and must be submitted in writing to the President, Secretary, and Parlimentarian at least 72 hours prior to the next GSA Council meeting.

## **Article VI. Distribution of Funds**

- A. Funds budgeted for the use of the several departments will not be appropriated if the Department Representative does not regularly attend the scheduled GSA meetings.
- B. The transfer of monies from one budget line to another, use of colloquia funds, and the distribution of the GSA Supplemental Conference Fund require a vote from the GSA General Council.

## **Article VII. Election Procedure**

- A. The Vice President shall serve as the Elections Coordinator. If the Vice President is a candidate for election, the President will appoint a new Elections Coordinator from the Graduate Student Association Council to perform these duties.
- B. An Associate Chief Justice of the Graduate Arts and Sciences Honor Council will serve as Deputy Elections Coordinator. The Deputy Elections Coordinator will observe the administration of the election to ensure fairness and impartiality.
- C. The election procedure shall be as follows:
  1. Nominations:

- a. A call for nominations will be distributed to all graduate students and departments within the College of Arts & Sciences by January 31st. Nominations announcements will be made in the Did You Know That? electronic newsletter of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research for at least two successive weeks before the close of nominations.
  - b. The deadline to submit nominations is the Thursday before spring break.
  - c. Any graduate student in the College of Arts & Sciences can nominate any graduate student in the College of Arts & Sciences, including self-nominations, for any position.
  - d. No more than three people from any given department may serve as Officers.
    - i. If more than three nominees from the same department are elected, then nominees must deliberate and select from amongst themselves to determine who will step down in order to comply with the above stipulation.
  - e. The President and Vice-President shall not be from the same department.
    - i. If the President and Vice-President are elected from the same department, nominees must deliberate and select from amongst themselves to determine who will step down in order to comply with the above stipulation.
  - f. If, after two weeks following an announcement of a Fall election, the applicant pool contains only students from an overrepresented school, the General Council may vote to allow an exception to the cap for one term before the ballots are opened to the Arts & Sciences graduate student body at large.
  - g. Dual degree students are encouraged to run for election, however they must choose to represent one and only one program during their entire tenure on the Council. If their chosen program is already overrepresented, the same procedure from Article VII, Section d. should be followed.
  - h. Any vacancies created by the above stipulations shall be filled by the candidate from a different department receiving the highest number of votes for the position which has been vacated. In the event that no other candidate ran for the position, it shall be treated as a vacancy and filled according to the provisions of Article VII, Section E, Subsection i and Section D, Subsection i above.
    - i. A nomination must be made in writing (either hardcopy or electronically via email) to the Elections Coordinator prior to the deadline.
2. Candidate presentations, questioning, and discussion:
- a. Candidates will be required to submit written statements no more than 750 words to be posted on the GSA elections website no later than February 20th.
  - b. Candidate presentations, questioning, and discussion may be held at the March GSA Council meeting preceding elections. Alternatively, the Executive Council may set a separate candidate presentation meeting no later than the March GSA meeting. All graduate students from the College of Arts & Sciences will be notified of this meeting at least one week prior to the chosen date.

- c. Presentations will begin with candidates for the office of President. Each presidential candidate will make their presentation in alphabetical order. Presentations will follow in a similar fashion for each of the other officers in the following order: Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Senate Representative, Parliamentarian, and Social Chair.
  - d. Each candidate will make a speech of no more than 3 minutes in length. If a candidate is unable to present during the election process, they shall submit a written statement to the Elections Coordinator to be read aloud during the meeting.
  - e. After speaking, the candidate shall answer questions relevant to their speech and qualifications posed by attending members for up to 3 minutes. The Election Coordinator reserves the right to determine whether or not a question is relevant and appropriate.
  - f. The presentations and question period shall continue until all candidates have presented and answered questions.
3. Voting Procedure:
- a. Every student enrolled as a graduate student in the College of Arts & Sciences may cast one electronic ballot in each race for which they are eligible to vote.
  - b. Elections will take place online using the College's online voting system approved to be fair and honest by the Dean of Graduate Arts & Sciences.
  - c. Voters have the choice of voting for any of the candidates or abstaining from voting.
  - d. In the event that only one candidate is running for a position, voters can either vote for the candidate or have the option of abstaining.
  - e. A simple majority of votes is needed to win an election. In the event that a simple majority is not reached because there are more than two candidates, there will be a run-off election between the two candidates with the most votes.
  - f. All graduate students in the College of Arts & Sciences will be notified of the date of the election at least one week prior to the opening of the electronic poll.
  - g. Elections will last 24 hours, from 12:01 am to 11:59 pm, and must take place on a weekday from Monday to Thursday in the month of March.
  - h. The Election Coordinator shall verify the election results, in accordance with the IT liaison and Deputy Elections Coordinator
4. Newly elected officers will be installed during the April meeting of the GSA and hold their office from April of the year in which they are elected until the day before the April meeting of the GSA the following year.
5. Appointment of Officers:
- a. Any vacancies not filled by the spring elections process will be subject to a similar elections process in the fall and will be approved by a majority vote of the incoming GSA Executive Council no later than the September meeting.

- b. Any vacancies that may arise during the term of an Officer will be filled from among the current GSA Department Representatives and confirmed by the General Council.

## **Article VIII. Graduate Studies Advisory Board Student Representative**

- A. The A&S graduate student body will elect two representatives, one from Arts and one from Sciences, to serve in the A&S Graduate Studies Advisory Board (GSAB) who will be full voting members of the board but will not be required to make any donations to the Board.
- B. The GSAB representatives will serve 2 year terms with one representative being elected every Fall to replace the departing representative from the respective department (Arts or Sciences).
- C. Nomination and Election Procedure:
  - 1. At the beginning of each Fall semester (in the 1st or 2nd week of classes), the GSA President will send an email to all enrolled A&S graduate students to solicit nominations for the student Graduate Studies Advisory Board member positions. This will ensure that there is enough time to hold the election and to train new student board members before the October Graduate Studies Advisory Board meetings (during Homecoming weekend).
  - 2. Nomination is open to all actively enrolled A&S graduate students, including GSA board members. Students can nominate others or themselves. Nomination is open until two days before the first GSA meeting. Nominated students must attend the first GSA meeting in order to learn about the position and to be included on the final ballot.
  - 3. All actively enrolled A&S graduate students are eligible to vote for the Graduate Studies Advisory Board student members.
  - 4. After the first GSA meeting of the Fall semester, an online ballot will be created with the supervision of the GSA president with all attending nominees and emailed to all actively enrolled A&S graduate students.
  - 5. In case of emergency vacancy of a student board member position, the GSA President will nominate a substitute, which must be approved by 2/3 vote of the GSA council.
- D. Duties and Representatives:
  - 1. The student Graduate Studies Advisory Board members are required to attend all Graduate Studies Advisory Board meetings. The Graduate Studies Advisory Board meets twice a year in Williamsburg, on the Sunday afternoon and evening

of and Monday morning following Homecoming weekend in October and the Saturday afternoon, evening, and Sunday morning of the Graduate Research Symposium in March. There are also two teleconferences via Skype: one in January and one in June.

2. The student board members will be responsible for reporting to and soliciting feedback from the GSA but are not given a vote on the GSA council.
3. The student board members will be required to attend all GSA meetings.
4. The student board members will be required to present a written report to the Graduate Studies Advisory Board meetings summarizing the needs and concerns of A&S graduate students.
5. The student board members will be required to present a written report to the GSA summarizing the topics discussed in the Graduate Studies Advisory Board meetings.
6. Halfway through a student board member's 2 year term, they will be required to train and brief the incoming student board member before the new member's first meeting with the Graduate Studies Advisory Board.

## **Article IX.     Alternate Representatives to Graduate Council**

If the president feels that he/she cannot adequately perform his/her duties while also maintaining his/her position on Graduate Council, the president may appoint an alternate representative from GSA to permanently serve in this role in his/her stead.

## **Article X.     Finance Committee**

- A. The Graduate Student Association will establish a Finance Committee in Spring 2016.
- B. The Finance Committee will disburse student activity fee funds among the graduate schools.
  1. The Finance Committee will follow all guidelines established in Appendix 2 to the Constitution.
    - i. Changes to Appendix 2 of the Constitution shall require a unanimous vote of approval by the members of the finance committee; OR
    - ii. A two-thirds vote of approval by the members of the Graduate Student Association Council.
- C. The Finance Committee shall comprise five members, no three of which attend the same program in William & Mary's school of Arts & Sciences.

1. The Graduate Student Association Council President shall appoint new Graduate Student Association members to the Finance Committee at the beginning of each Fall semester and as needed to fill vacancies.
  2. The Treasurer of the Graduate Student Association Council shall serve as the chair of the Finance Committee, or the President shall designate a member of the Finance Committee as the Chair as needed to fill vacancies.
- D. The Finance Committee will meet as necessary to consider funding applications.