

Constitution of the Graduate Studies Student Association of Tulane University of Louisiana

Preamble

We, the students of the Graduate Studies of Tulane University, in order to develop and further scholastic attainment; to promote understanding among the faculty, students, and alumni; to coordinate the student activities of Graduate Students; to further professional and social interests; and in recognition that the unification of the students into an effective group is necessary to these ends, do establish this constitution for the Graduate Studies Student Association.

Article I: Name

This association will be known as the Graduate Studies Student Association of Tulane University (GSSA), hereinafter referred to as the Association.

Article II: Membership

All persons registered in the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science and Engineering shall be considered members of this Association, as well as those students enrolled in MA, MS, MFA, and PhD programs who have petitioned for and been granted inclusion according to article V of this constitution.

Article III: GSSA Assembly

Section 1: Name

The GSSA Assembly, hereinafter called the Assembly, shall be constituted following Article V, Section I of the Graduate Faculty Constitution.

Section 2: Powers

- A. The Assembly shall be the governing body of the Association, and shall have the power to formulate policies, manage the affairs of the Association, create lesser committees, and have all other powers prescribed by and necessary for the proper execution of this Constitution.
- B. A two-thirds majority shall be necessary to pass, amend, or repeal a By-law consistent with this Constitution.

Section 3: Membership

- A. The Assembly shall have one representative for every fifteen students of each department/program, not to exceed three total. In addition, each recognized constituted subsidiary to GSSA shall have one representative on the assembly. A member cannot represent both a department and a GSSA subsidiary organization.
- B. Assembly members may send proxies with 24 hours prior notification to the GSSA Secretary, with exceptions in the case of emergency.

Section 4: Meetings

- A. All meetings are scheduled by the President and Executive officers of the Association.
- B. There shall be at least four business meetings per semester, and the first business meeting shall take place within four (4) weeks of the beginning of the semester.
- C. Emergency or non-scheduled meetings may also be called in the following manner:
 1. By majority vote of the executive officers of the Assembly.

2. By written request of the majority of the members of the assembly. Such requests are to be submitted to the President.
3. By request of the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts or the School of Science and Engineering. In response the meeting must occur within one week of the request.

Section 5: Voting/Quorum

- A. A simple majority of the Assembly members present at the meeting is required to pass any proposal not specified in other articles of the Constitution.
- B. A quorum shall consist of half (1/2) of the current representatives from programs in good standing.

Section 6: Right to Appear

Any member of the Association shall have the right to attend assembly meetings and shall be permitted to make motions at said meetings.

Section 7: Attendance at Meetings

- A. A member's absence from a meeting without proxy for two consecutive meetings in any one term shall result in a probationary warning. The President shall notify the department or organization that they are without representation.
- B. If a department or organization is unrepresented for three consecutive meetings, the president shall send notification to both the head of that department or organization and the current student representative(s), and that department or organization will no longer be eligible for funding by the Association until that department or organization establishes representation for two consecutive meetings. Eligibility for funds may also be restored to a department or organization by a simple majority of the Assembly.

Section 8: Participation

Each representative to the assembly shall participate in a standing committee or special committee, or represent the assembly at GAPSA or any other University governing body that requests graduate student representation.

Section 9: Vacancies

The assembly shall have the right to call a vote of confidence regarding an Assembly representative/officer or a GAPSA senator. The petitioned representative/officer or senator shall be given at least one week's notice in writing and shall be given the opportunity to speak in his/her defense prior to the vote. The assembly shall have the right to call a vote of this kind for the representatives or officers of this Assembly and senators elected to GAPSA only. A 2/3 vote of no confidence shall be sufficient for removal of the officer or representative. After a vote of no confidence has been accepted, a new election shall be held at the next meeting to fill the vacancy. Nominations will be accepted as per article V, section 2.

Article IV: Spending & Fiscal Powers

The GSSA Assembly shall have the following fiscal powers:

- A. It shall accept any funds appropriated for the use of GSSA by the University, GAPSA and ASB.
- B. It shall allocate appropriate funds for expenditures by GSSA, or by subsidiary organizations of GSSA, as initiated by a formal motion from an Assembly member and approved by a simple majority vote.
- C. At the final meeting of the spring semester, the newly elected Treasurer and the Budget committee shall craft a budget for the following fiscal year, for approval by the Assembly.
 - a. Such a budget will provide for the regular expenditures of the organization, including meeting expenses, travel funding, speaker travel funding and honoraria and event funding, no category of which should exceed fifty percent (50%) of the entire budget for the fiscal year.
 - b. Travel funding requests, absent any exceptional circumstances, shall be considered

- approved by the body up to the budgeted amount for the year, at a constant funding level set by the Assembly.
- D. At the end of each fiscal year, unused funds will be returned to the GSSA Reserve Fund, as allowed for by the GAPSA Constitution, Section 4, part D.
 - a. The purpose of this reserve is to underwrite activities deemed worthy by the Assembly, especially those not expressly budgeted such as capital improvements.
 - E. Any other fiscal powers and duties not reserved herein are granted to the GSSA Treasurer and Executive Committee. The Assembly may define or limit these powers and duties at any time through an amendment to this constitution.
 - F. All expenditures are subject to final approval by the Student Organizations Office and the University accounting office.

Article IV: Association Executive Officers

Section 1: The Officers of the Association

- A. President
- B. Vice-President
- C. Treasurer
- D. Secretary

Section 2: Nominations

Nominations for executive officers of the Association shall be made by any member of the Association only during the period for which nominations are open during the election meeting. A nominated candidate must be present at the election meeting in order to accept his/her nomination.

Section 3: Elections

Officers shall be elected by the Assembly during the penultimate business meeting of the spring semester. In order to be elected, a candidate must gain a simple majority of the votes cast. Only votes cast for a particular position shall be counted and used to determine a majority. There will be no absentee voting in any election.

Section 4: Runoffs

If no candidate receives a majority of the votes required for election, a run-off election shall be held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. If more than two candidates tie for the highest number of votes, all such candidates will enter the run-off.

Section 5: Term of Office

The term of office for the officers of the Association shall commence immediately following the election meeting and carry through until following next election.

Section 6: Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy in any office but that of president, the Assembly shall elect a successor according to the procedures in this article. Should the office of President fall vacant, the Vice-President shall become President, and a new Vice-President shall be elected from the Assembly by a majority vote.

Section 7: Duties of the Officers

- A. The officers of this Association shall carry out the provisions of this Constitution and any By-laws enacted in accordance therewith.
- B. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Assembly and shall appoint all committees and committee chairpersons, with the approval of the Assembly, as well as act as the parliamentarian. The President shall represent the Association at ceremonial functions. The President shall act as liaison to the University Administration, the Graduate School, GAPSA and to the Division of Student Affairs. The President shall chair the Awards, Legislative, and Executive committees.
- C. The Vice-President shall preside over Assembly meetings in the absence of the President. The

- Vice President shall chair the Social committee.
- D. The Treasurer shall administer and keep records of the financial activities of the Assembly. The Treasurer shall be responsible for formulating a budget to be submitted to the GAPSA Finance Board with the approval of the Assembly as part of the annual budget process. The Treasurer shall present and discuss the budget at the introductory meeting of the Assembly. The Treasurer shall chair the Budget committee.
 - E. The Secretary shall make public and keep a permanent record of the proceedings of the Assembly meetings, distributing within one (1) week the minutes of said meetings. The Secretary shall have the additional duty of distributing a copy of the Constitution and By-laws at the introductory meeting. The Secretary shall also be in charge of the website and listserv maintenance and maintain the upkeep of the GSSA graduate office.

Article V: Subsidiary Organizations

Section 1: Establishment

As an umbrella organization, the Assembly shall have the authority to adopt subsidiary organizations that meet the special needs of the graduate student population.

Section 2: Recognition

- A. In order to request recognition from GSSA, a potential subsidiary organization must submit the following:
 - 1. an organizational constitution
 - 2. the name of the representative who will regularly attend GSSA meetings
- B. Such subsidiary organizations may be recognized as one of the following two subsidiary types:
 - 1. Departmental Organizations - whose membership is limited to all graduate school students registered within the organization's academic department
 - 2. Non-departmental Organizations - including members of any non-departmental graduate program.
- C. A simple majority vote of the Assembly shall be required in order to adopt a potential subsidiary.

Section 3: Constitutions

- A. Such subsidiary organizations shall be required to submit a current constitution for approval by the Assembly both during initial recognition and following any constitutional changes made by the subsidiary organization.
- B. Subsidiary organization constitutions shall be subject to periodic examination by the Assembly.
- C. Subsidiary Organizational constitutions may not conflict with the constitution of GSSA.

Section 4: Duties

A representative of such subsidiary organizations shall be required to attend all Assembly meetings.

Article VI: Amendment and Revision

Section 1: Initiation

Amendments or revisions to this Constitution, or a new Constitution, may be initiated by any member through submission to the legislative committee.

Section 2: Proposal

Amendments or revisions to this Constitution, or a new Constitution, may be accepted as an official proposal by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly following a petition to the Legislative Committee or by a petition to the Assembly signed by not less than fifty members of the

Association. A revised constitution must be submitted to GAPSA for final approval and ratification. Publication of the proposed change shall be made by posting in the GSSA office, on the GSSA website and by written notification to each department/program for not less than ten (10) school days prior to ratification.

Section 3: Ratification of Amendments

A proposed amendment may be ratified at the next Assembly meeting by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly representatives.

Article VII: Enactment

The Constitution shall be effective when ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly representatives and after necessary approval practices by GAPSA.

Enactment Clause

We, an organized body of graduate students of Tulane University, do hereby enact the above Constitution. The Association officers at the time of the adoption of this Constitution shall continue in office until such time as they are replaced in the manner provided for in this Constitution.

REVISED and APPROVED (GSSA 12/2012, GAPSA 03/2013)