

CONSTITUTION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN GRADUATE ORGANIZATION

PREAMBLE

This organization will provide a structure for graduate students at the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies and other interested graduate students to seek fellowship, education and recreation pertaining to a shared interest in Latin America.

ARTICLE I

Name

Our organization is called the Latin American Graduate Organization (LAGO). (Note: this is the reformation of an organization that existed in the past with similar purposes and the same title.)

ARTICLE II

Purpose

LAGO seeks to educate its membership on social, political, cultural and economic issues in Latin America, as well as foster community among graduate students interested in Latin America. Examples of educational activities may include: guest speakers, brown bag lunches, film series, seminar discussions, language working groups, book clubs, a graduate student conference, and community outreach programs. Examples of social activities may include: dances, concerts, dinners and recreational activities such as sports. In addition, LAGO functions as the recognized body for the articulation of broad group interests of the membership with reference to the Stone Center Administration. LAGO encourages its membership to pursue individual interests individually and group interests through LAGO.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. Eligibility:

All graduate students of Tulane University enrolled in the Latin American Studies Program shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Active Membership:

Active members are those Stone Center graduate students who participate regularly and help promote the goals of the organization. All active members must pay dues of \$5.00 at the beginning of each academic year. These dues shall be deposited in the organization's nine ledger account. This amount should be reevaluated by each executive board. Active members are permitted to vote, chair committees, and hold office in the organization. Only graduate students at the Stone Center are permitted to be active members.

Section 3. Members at Large

Members at large may be Stone Center graduate students or graduate students from other departments. They are not required to pay dues, nor are they permitted to vote, chair committees, or hold office, although they are invited and encouraged to participate on committees.

Section 4. Other Coalitions:

LAGO will seek to invite undergraduate students, faculty, and staff of the Latin American Studies Program, graduates in other programs, Latin American community members and students and faculty from other universities, as well as any other relevant personalities to its events.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. Number and Method of Elections:

LAGO shall elect from its membership an executive board. This board may be constituted by as many positions as the current LAGO membership sees fit. It is suggested that each cohort elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Conference Chairperson.

Elections are to be held at the February general meeting each year. Candidates must declare intent to run no later than two days before the election by sending nominations to the organization's secretary via e-mail.

Members are permitted to nominate themselves or others. The secretary will confirm with each nominee his/her desire to run for office. Members will be nominated for specific positions which will be decided upon by the current membership.

Notice of vote will be given via email and LAGO's website one week before the election. Votes will be cast either at the meeting through written ballot or via email, addressed to the facilitator. In the event of e-mail votes, a ballot will be sent out the day before the election to all interested parties. Ballots must be signed and will be counted in the presence of the general membership during the meeting. Candidates must receive a majority of votes from collected ballots to win. Ties shall be open to revote.

Section 2. Suggested Executive Officers and Duties:

The LAGO membership is permitted and encouraged to design its own board structure according to the desires and preferences of the current voting members. The following is an example of a possible board structure. Additionally, board positions (such as President) may be shared between two people.

A. President

1. The President shall preside over all board and general meetings
2. The President shall serve as LAGO's representative on the Stone Center's Executive Committee and at the Faculty Luncheon
3. All committee chairpeople should report their activities and expenditures to the President
4. The President shall establish the agenda for all meetings

B. Vice-President

1. The Vice-President shall preside over all board and general meetings in the event that the President is absent
2. The Vice-President shall serve as LAGO's representative on the Stone Center's Executive Committee and at the Faculty Luncheon if the President cannot attend

C. Secretary

1. The secretary shall keep minutes at all board and general meetings, posting them to the website as well as saving them for the purpose of institutional memory
2. The secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the website, as well as LAGO's social media accounts
3. The secretary shall be the primary e-mail contact person for the organization, and shall be responsible for notifying the membership of upcoming meetings, events, votes, etc.

D. The treasurer shall:

1. Prepare the LAGO budget in consultation with the board for presentation to the Stone Center.
2. Maintain LAGO's general and conference budgets
3. Serve as LAGO's representative to GSSA.
4. Guard all funds raised at LAGO fundraisers until securely deposited into 9-ledger account.
5. Be solely responsible for maintaining 9-ledger account and reporting its balance at each general meeting.
6. Be solely responsible for withdrawing funds from 9-ledger account for direct deposit to LAGO-approved community partner.
7. Withdraw funds for 9-ledger only with LAGO executive board and general assembly majority approval.

E. The Conference chair shall:

1. Be the main contact person for all conference related concerns
2. Approve all conference related materials
3. Work with the board in coordinating the conference and delegating responsibilities
4. Work closely with the secretary to maintain the organization's website

Section 3. Other Administrative Positions

A. Social chair - It is strongly recommended that LAGO elect from its membership a social chair. This person shall be responsible for overseeing all social activities such as soccer tournaments, pachangas, and language parties. The social chair may also hold another position on the board.

B. GSSA representatives - So long as graduate programs at the Stone Center maintain an enrollment of 15-30 students, the organization will require 2 representatives to GSSA. It is strongly suggested that one of the representatives also serve as treasurer. The two representatives shall work together to request funding from GSSA, represent the organization's best interests, and maintain the membership informed about any and all changes to GSSA

policies.

Section 4. Terms of Office:

Officers can serve in any office for one year. Positions are held from March to February. Individuals can run for another office in the organization but cannot hold consecutive terms in any office. If a position is vacated, a special election will be held.

Section 5. Impeachment of Officers:

Not upholding the other above-listed duties satisfactorily as defined by the majority of the total organization can be grounds for impeachment. Impeachment will occur by written ballot with two thirds voting in agreement. Any member may begin the impeachment process. Any officer will be given full opportunity to defend him or herself before impeachment in a regular meeting or can call a special meeting.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Committees can be formed and dissolved upon the recommendation of the officers or three or more members, for a duration that is deemed needed. It shall be the responsibility of all committee chairpeople to submit a report on their activities to the officers at the conclusion of their duties.

ARTICLE VI

Faculty Advisor

LAGO shall have at least one official faculty advisor from the Latin American Studies Department at all times. LAGO may, with regard to specified areas, solicit advice from other faculty and staff of the university including those in other departments.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

LAGO shall meet at least every month throughout the school calendar, as deemed necessary.

Section 2. Special Meetings:

Special meetings may be called as needed by any officer or by three or more members of the membership, to discuss events, fundraising or any other official business that cannot be covered by the regular meeting schedule. These meetings will be announced by notices via e-mail, the website, and social media at least one week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Officer Meetings:

Officer Meetings shall be called as needed. It is suggested that the LAGO executive board meet once every two weeks in preparation for general meetings and events.

Section 4. Rules of Order:

All meetings of LAGO will be conducted with active facilitation and respect for all members and

their views. It is the role of the officers to remind members of these parameters. Consensus decision-making will be used to determine the activities and positions of the organizations. If no consensus is reached on any one topic after discussion, a vote may be taken based on a majority of those present unless any member feels that it is crucial to have a ballot vote by all members, both those present and absent. If a written ballot is needed it will be distributed at the meeting and via email, to be returned to the President. The written vote will be decided by a majority. Elections and budget appropriations of more than \$400 must be voted on by the membership via written ballot and email, addressed to the President.* This type of vote must be announced one week before the voting deadline.

*This restriction does not apply to LAGO's conference budget.

Section 5. Quorum:

If a quorum is not present to make decisions in the organization, the decision can be delayed if any member feels that it is necessary to have quorum for the vote. In this case a written vote of active members would be done via email, and a majority must agree. Quorum shall be defined as 1 more than 50% of the current active members.

ARTICLE VIII

Spending of LAGO Funds

DISCRETIONARY BUDGET - Any LAGO member may make a proposal for the allocation of LAGO funds. Petitions for funds shall be brought to a vote at the next meeting or before by email. In the event that a decision must be made before the next scheduled meeting, a special meeting may be called. Funding is approved by a simple majority of votes. Funding requests shall be made using the "Funding Request Form" available on LAGO's website. All funding requests must be made at least one week before the next general meeting and must contain a clear dollar amount.

CONFERENCE BUDGET - LAGO shall maintain a separate budget to be used exclusively for its annual graduate student conference. This budget is not subject to the same spending restrictions as the discretionary budget. It is the responsibility of the executive board to administer this budget in a responsible and beneficial manner.

NINE LEDGER - The nine ledger account is an internal Tulane bank account under the LAGO name with its own 6-digit reference number. This account allows LAGO to safely deposit funds raised from LAGO-approved fundraisers for the sole purpose of donation to community partners and/or maintenance of LAGO operation costs. All funds must be used for the purpose in which they were publicly raised. Any re-allocation of funds must be made with the majority approval of both the LAGO executive board and general assembly. The incumbent treasurer is responsible for instructing the following year's elected treasurer on the proper maintenance and use of the nine-ledger account.

It is strongly recommended that the nine ledger account maintain a minimum balance of \$150. In the event that the balance drops to \$150, it is the responsibility of the current executive board

and general membership to generate additional funds.

ARTICLE IX
Amendments

Section 1. Procedure for Amendment:

All amendments to the Constitution will be presented to the general membership at least one meeting before the vote is taken. Amendments will be posted on the website and via email for any absent members to see before the next meeting.

Section 2. Ratification:

Amendments are ratified by two thirds approval of the voters.

ARTICLE X
Review of Constitution

This constitution was originally ratified in 1997, reviewed in 2000, and again in 2014.

LAGO's executive board shall review this constitution on a yearly basis before the end of their term. All changes must be voted on by the general membership according to the procedure for amendments. The most current version of LAGO's constitution shall be available to the membership on the website.