

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

(last revised May 4, 2015)

Preamble

We, the graduate students of the University of Florida, hereby constitute ourselves to further the cause of graduate students and to act as a united voice to express graduate students' needs and concerns.

Article I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Council. This organization shall utilize the acronym GSC in all publicity materials and correspondence. Graduate Student should be defined as any student continuing on in school after receiving a Bachelor's degree. This includes, but not limited to professional students, master students, and Ph.D.

Article II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The objectives of GSC shall be:

- A. To provide an agency for the coordination of graduate student activities and programs toward common goals and interests.
- B. Promote and enrich the academic and educational objectives of the University of Florida by funding and sponsoring programs applicable to the intellectual, educational, and cultural interests of graduate students.
- C. Seek the improvement of graduate student education through active and permanent communication with governing bodies at the University of Florida such as the Graduate School, University Administration, Student Government, and Faculty Senate.
- D. Represent the interests of graduate students at the local, state, and national levels.

Article III. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Upon approval by the Center for Student Activities and Involvement, GSC shall be a registered student organization at the University of Florida. GSC shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as all University of Florida regulations, policies, and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University's regulations related to Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

Article IV. NON-DISCRIMINATION

In compliance with the University of Florida Non-Discrimination Policy (Regulation 6C1-1.006), GSC shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions of affiliations, and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act.

Section A. Non-Discrimination

Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political

opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

Section B. Sexual Harassment

Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile environment.

Section C. Hazing

Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization.

Section D. Responsibility to Report

If this organization becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, Graduate Student Council will report it immediately to Student Activities and Involvement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, or the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Article V. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the GSC is open to all enrolled students at the University of Florida. Non-enrolled students, spouses, faculty, and staff may be associate members; however, they may not vote or hold office. All members and associate members are free to leave and disassociate without fear of retribution, retaliation, or harassment.

Article VI. OFFICERS

A. Elected officers and their duties.

1) President

- a) Acts as primary representative of GSC; keeps organization information updated for Student Government and the Department for Student Activities and Involvement and responds appropriately to all of their requests such as organization renewal procedures and office requirements.
- b) Serves as chair of the Executive Board and an ex-officio member of all committees; provides guidance and direction to these committees.
- c) Determines the dates, times, and locations of General Body meetings and Executive Board meetings, as well as prepares agendas and presides over meetings
- d) Oversees activities of the Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Web Coordinator and ensures they are effectively executing their Constitutional duties.
- e) Appoints and invites positions as specified in Articles VI, and XI.
- f) Forms ad hoc committees and appoints chairs as specified; oversees activities of ad hoc committee chairs and ensures they are effectively executing their assigned duties.
- g) Supervises annual elections, provided he/she is not interested in re-nomination; actively recruits quality candidates to be nominated for elected officer positions to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

h) Coordinates the transition of elected officers as specified in Article VI.

i) Maintains positive relationships with University and the Student Government including meeting with University President semesterly, Faculty Senate President semesterly, Vice President of Student Affairs monthly, Vice Director of Student Affairs monthly, Student Body President monthly, Student Senate President semesterly, Director of Graduate School yearly, and Dean of International Center yearly. All meetings are subject to availability and willingness of stated positions to meet with the GSC official.

2) Vice President

a) Exercises authority of the President in his/her absence.

b) Oversees activities of the President, standing committee chairs, and all appointed and invited positions; ensures they are effectively executing their Constitutional duties.

3) Treasurer

a) Responsible for all financial workings of the organization in accordance with Student Government rules and regulations.

b) Responds appropriately to all requests from Student Government and the Department for Student Activities and Involvement.

c) Prepares and defends the annual budget, as well as any special request funding from Student Government.

d) Maintains positive relationships with staff and other affiliates of the Student Government Finance Office including the Student Body Treasurer and Chairman of the Student Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

e) Actively works with the Executive Board to secure funding from secondary sources.

f) Confirms the TARs (travel authorization request) match the grants that have been approved by the Grants committee

4) Secretary

a) Manages official GSC correspondence including email listserves for Department Representatives and the Executive Board.

b) Oversees activities of Department Representatives and ensures they are effectively executing their Constitutional duties.

c) Sends out notices about General Body meetings and other announcements.

d) Reviews announcements on the GSC website homepage at least weekly, and updates these announcements when necessary.

e) Takes minutes at all General Body and Executive Boards meetings; posts these minutes and other relevant materials on the GSC website archive within 48 hours of each meeting.

f) Records Department Representative attendance at General Body meetings and forwards grant ineligibility (as described in Article XII.D.2) to the Grants Committee Chair within 48 hours of each meeting.

g) Prepares voting cards for General Body meetings when formal voting occurs; distributes voting cards as specified in Article VII.G.

h) Actively collects updated contact information from elected officers, appointed/invited positions (and alternates), committee members, department representatives (and alternates), administrators, vendors, and other relevant people or agencies.

5) Website Coordinator

a) Actively works with the Executive Board to update and improve the GSC website, which shall contain at minimum: (1) organizational description, (2) recent announcements, (3) Constitution, (4) officer contact information, (5) travel grant and research grant information and application materials, (6) instructions for addressing graduate student issues, (7) archives of minutes and other relevant materials from General Body meetings, (8) posted research abstracts from conferences with pictures and videos when possible (9) search option for research - including Docutraq (Docutraq is the activity request system for UF Student Government-funded organizations) (10) Graduate Student Calendar, (11) links to other graduate organizations, (12) information for incoming graduate students.

b) Reviews the GSC website at least weekly, and ensures that all aspects of the website are updated and in working order.

c) Assists the Executive Board with other forms of electronic communication.

6) The Grants Committee Chair

a) Oversees the grants committee & any Grants that are awarded to students.

b) Verifies that every student only receives one Travel grant per year.

7) The Graduate Affairs Committee Chair

a) Oversees the Graduate Affairs Committee

8) The New Student Orientation Committee Chair

a) Oversees the New Student Orientation Committee

9) The Social Committee Chair

a) Oversees the Social Committee

10) International Affairs Chair

a) Oversees the International Affairs Committee

b) Co-ordinates with the International Center as needed

B. Elected officers shall report via email (1) any major organizational issues or concerns to the President, (2) any financial information regarding the costs/revenues associated with any recent or forthcoming activities to the Treasurer, (3) any announcements and other information for the General Body to the Secretary and Website Coordinator, and (4) any information associated with a standing committee's responsibilities (as specified in Article VI.R) to the respective committee chair and the Vice President.

C. Elected officers shall submit their contact information (and, if applicable, the contact information of their appointees, invitees, alternates, and committee members) to the Secretary, and update this contact information when necessary.

D. Term of Office

1) Newly elected officers shall assume office following the April GSC meeting.

2) The term of any elected officer expires at the end of the April GSC meeting, though re-election is possible.

E. Vacancies

1) In the event of an elected officer vacancy, the President shall appoint an interim officer within 14 days of the vacancy with the advice and consent of the Executive Board. The process of appointing an interim officer is identical to all other appointments, as specified in Article VI.

2) Upon the vacancy of the president, the vice-president immediately becomes the acting president.

a) The vice-president has the option to assume the presidency, or to return to the vice-presidency upon the election of a new president.

b) If the vice-president decides not to assume the presidency, he/she shall oversee the election of a new president. The procedure follow the procedure established in Article VII.

c) If the vice-president assumes the presidency, he/she shall follow the procedure established in Article VI section F.1.

3) The term of any replacement officer shall expire at the end of the April GSC meeting, though re-election is possible.

F. Impeachment

1) An elected officer may be removed for malfeasance, neglect of duty, or abuse of power through the submission of an impeachment resolution that is approved by a two thirds majority of voting members present at any quorum-established General Body meeting.

2) Impeachment resolutions must be introduced with the sponsorship of five Department Representatives.

3) Upon two unexcused absences of an elected officer from Executive and/or general body meetings, the President may open up the position. The general body and/or Executive board both may override the President's decision with a simple majority vote.

G. Appointed Officers- positions, which may be appointed on an as needed basis, and their duties.

1) Faculty Senate Liaison(s)

- a) Attends all respective meetings of the Faculty Senate and provides an update at GSC General Body meetings when necessary.
- b) Advocates on behalf of GSC at respective meetings.
- c) Appoints Alternate Faculty Senate Liaison, who exercises authority of the Faculty Senate Liaison in his/her absence.

2) Graduate Council Representative

- a) Attends all Graduate Council meetings and provides an update at GSC General Body meetings when necessary.
- b) Advocates on behalf of GSC at Graduate Council meetings.
- c) Appoints an Alternate Graduate Council Representative, who exercises authority of the Graduate Council Representative in his/her absence.

3) Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee Representative

- a) Attends all Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee meetings and provides an update at GSC General Body meetings when necessary.
- b) Advocates on behalf of GSC at Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee meetings.
- c) Appoints an Alternate Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee Representative, who exercises authority of the Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee Representative in his/her absence.

4) Student Senate Liaison

- a) Attends all Student Senate meetings and provides an update at GSC General Body meetings when necessary.
- b) Advocates on behalf of GSC at Student Senate meetings.
- c) Encourages Student Senators who hold graduate and related seats to attend GSC General Body meetings and to become involved with other GSC opportunities.
- d) Appoints an Alternate Student Senate Liaison, who exercises authority of the Graduate Student Senate Liaison in his/her absence.

5) Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms

- a) Ensures the smooth operation of General Body meetings; assists the Secretary with preparing and distributing Agendas and other handouts; assists the Social Committee Chair with preparing and distributing refreshments; ensures that meetings are governed by rules specified in this document, or by Standard Code when not specified.

b) Assists the President with running annual elections, provided the Parliamentarian/ Sergeant-at-Arms is not interested in nomination.

c) Appoints an Alternate Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms, who exercises authority of the Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms in his/her absence.

H. The President shall appoint positions with consent of the Executive Board.

I. All appointees are ex-officio members of the Executive Board.

J. Appointees must be selected and assume their positions upon appointment and approval of the Executive Board.

K. In the event of a vacancy of an appointed position, a replacement may be appointed.

L. The term of any appointed position shall expire after the April general GSC meeting.

M. Elected officers and officers appointed per Article IV section F comprise the voting members of the Executive Board.

N. Appointed and invited positions are ex-officio members of the Executive Board.

O. The Executive Board provides direction and sets goals for GSC, and confirms appointments of the President.

P. Executive Board meetings shall be held at least once per calendar month. The dates, times, and locations of these meetings shall be determined by the President and announced to the Executive Board email listserv at least 7 days in advance.

Q. When disputes arise in Executive Board meetings that must be resolved through formal voting, each voting officer described in Article VI section H has one vote. At least five elected officers (including the President and Treasurer) must be present to vote on any matter. A choice shall be determined by simple majority (>50%). If no simple majority is achieved, a second vote shall be held between the two choices that received the most votes. If there is a tie, the President may cast a second vote.

R. COMMITTEES

1) GSC shall have the five standing committees with elected officers as chairs:

a) The Grants Committee is responsible for managing and updating the application process and fair allocation of monetary awards including travel grants and research grants, in addition to actively working with the Executive Board to secure more funding for graduate students.

i. Steps for awarding research and travel grants

ii. Students may not get reimbursed with the same receipt twice.

iii. Students may only be awarded one Travel grant per fiscal year

iv. If the Student fills out the form incorrectly, the treasure and/or Grants Chair have the ability to award the grant to a different student

v. All University of Florida students are eligible for research and travel grants including undergraduates, master, Ph.D., and professional students.

b) The Graduate Affairs Committee is responsible for hearing and responding to all graduate student issues and concerns that confront GSC, in addition to planning and implementing action plans to resolve major issues and concerns.

c) The New Student Orientation Committee is responsible for assisting the Graduate School with planning and implementing the New Graduate Student Orientation at the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester.

d) The Social Committee is responsible for planning and implementing at least one graduate student social during each Fall and Spring semester, in addition to arranging food for General Body meetings.

e) The International Affairs Committee

2) The President shall form ad hoc committees as necessary and appoint committee chairs with the advisement and consent of the Executive Board. The term of service on an ad hoc committee shall be at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Article VII. ELECTIONS

A. Elections shall be held at the March General Body meeting of the spring semester. If quorum is not established, all Department Representatives (and alternates) in addition to all departments' graduate coordinators shall immediately receive a warning email that all students will be suspended from receiving GSC monetary awards until quorum is established at a special election meeting that will be held within 7 days of the previous meeting.

B. Nominations for elected officers can be made during the February General Body meeting. All candidates must expect to be enrolled full-time for the entire term of office. A person may only accept a nomination for one officer position, although he/she may slate down or up as specified in Article VII.C.

C. The order of elections for officer positions shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Web Coordinator, Grants Committee Chair, International Affairs Chair, Graduate Affairs Committee Chair, Social Committee Chair, and New Student Orientation Committee Chair.

D. Immediately prior to voting for an officer position, each candidate may address the General Body for up to three minutes followed by up to three minutes of questions and answers. During this question and answer session, the candidate may field questions from any member.

E. Election shall be determined by simple majority (>50%) of voting members present. If no simple majority is achieved, a new election shall be held between the two candidates who received the most votes. A losing candidate may slate down and run for a lower officer position (as defined in Article VII.C) or slate up if an officer position failed to acquire nominations.

G. Each academic department represents one vote of the GSC General Body, this one vote is determined by that department's representative. Upon sign-in at each General Body meeting in which a vote is scheduled, the Secretary provides a voting card to one eligible representative outlined in Article XII from each department. If two or more representatives from a single department attend the meeting, the representative who receives the voting card and casts the official vote for their department shall be determined by designated Department Representative (or alternate), then the first undesignated Department Representative to sign in at the meeting.

Article VIII. FACULTY ADVISOR

- A. The Faculty Advisor shall serve as a resource person and provide advisory support for the General Body and the Executive Board.
- B. The Faculty Advisor shall be appointed by the President with the advisement and consent of the Executive Board.
- C. The Faculty Advisor's term is at the discretion of the Executive Board. In the event of a vacancy, a new Faculty Advisor must be appointed within 14 days of the vacancy.

Article IX. FINANCE

- A. GSC shall apply for Student Government funding.
- B. Other sources of funding shall be acquired by appropriate means including, but not limited to, grants, sponsorship, donations, and other fundraising activities.
- C. GSC shall operate as a non-profit organization.
- D. There are no member dues.

Article X. DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

In the event this organization dissolves, all monies left in the treasury, after outstanding debts and claims have been paid, shall be returned to UF Student Government, except for OSRV funding, which will be donated to the University of Florida Office of Research Graduate Student Travel Grant Program.

Article XI. INVITATIONS

- A. The President may invite the following people to be ex-officio members of the Executive Board:
 - 1) Past GSC President.
 - 2) All Student Senators who hold graduate and related seats.
 - 3) An elected or appointed representative of the Graduate Assistants United (GAU).
 - 4) Director of the Graduate and Professional Student Affairs Cabinet.
 - 5) Family and Graduate Housing Representative
 - 6) Professional Schools Representative
 - 7) International Student Representative
- B. Invitees must be contacted between the last day of Spring commencement and October 1.
- C. In the event of a vacancy of an invited position after October 1, a replacement should be invited within 14 days of the vacancy.

D. Invited positions may be contacted when specific needs arise.

E. The term of any invited position shall expire on the last day of Spring commencement.

Article XII. DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

A. A Departmental Representative may either be appointed by the Graduate Coordinator in his/her department, or elected by members of his/her department's graduate student organization. The representative must be registered as a graduate, post baccalaureate, or professional student in good standing at the University of Florida. Departments are encouraged to create graduate student organizations through their respective college council (represented in the Board of College Councils) in order to establish election procedures.

B. The term of a Departmental Representative shall be from September 1 to the following August 31.

C. Duties of a Department Representative.

- 1) Submits his/her contact information to the Secretary, and updates this contact information as necessary.
- 2) Attends each General Body meeting and signs in for his/her department, or ensures that another representative of his/her department attends the meeting and signs in. Department eligibility for GSC monetary awards is dependent upon respective department representative attendance, as specified in Article XII.D.
- 3) Votes on behalf of their department at General Body meetings in which a vote is occurring.
- 4) Informs graduate students in their department (through email or other effective means of communication) about GSC services, events, and issues discussed at each General Body meeting.
- 5) Informs GSC (through email or at General Body meetings) about services, events, and issues in their department.
- 6) Reads and responds when requested to all official GSC correspondence.
- 7) Appoints an Alternate Department Representative, who exercises authority of the Department Representative in his/her absence; submits alternate contact information to the Secretary, and updates this contact information as necessary.
- 8) Prior to the completion of a term, graduation, or other vacancy, ensures the selection of a replacement Departmental Representative and provides he/she with a copy of the GSC Constitution.

D. Department Representative Attendance Policy, GSC grant eligibility and appeals

1) If a department fails to have a representative attend a General Body meeting, the Secretary will send a warning email to the Department Representative (and alternate) in addition to the department's graduate coordinator. If a department fails to have a representative attend two General Body meetings in a given year, students in that department will be suspended from receiving GSC monetary awards for the next semester until the department petitions to regain eligibility. In cases of extenuating circumstances, a graduate student of the ineligible department may file an appeal to the GSC executive board, as described in Article XII.D.2.

2) If a department loses GSC grant eligibility under Article XII section D. 1, then a graduate student from that department may file an appeal to the GSC executive board to address cases with extenuating

circumstances. The appeal must contain the student's name, contact information, department, reason for appeal, letter in support of the appeal from the appellant's faculty advisor and any other supporting documentation. The appeal shall be submitted electronically (this request is considered public information under Florida Law and appeal requests are made available when requested) to the GSC vice-president. The GSC vice-president is responsible for the preliminary determination as to whether or not the appeal should be presented to the Executive Committee or should be returned to the department for further appeals request information. An accepted appeal request will be forwarded to the entire Executive Committee for consideration and the appeal will be voted on as accepted or denied at the next Executive Committee meeting (this will be the first order of business at all Executive Committee meetings). After the executive board reaches a decision by consensus or by vote as specified in Article VII section Q, the GSC Secretary shall contact the Grants Committee Chair and appellant to inform them of the decision as soon as possible before the next GSC general body meeting or GSC Grants Committee meeting, whichever occurs first. If the appeal is granted and the appellant is present at the next GSC general body meeting, the GSC Vice President shall announce the appellant as a new department representative and eligibility for application to GSC awards for their particular department resumed immediately after the Previous Executive Committee meeting.

Article XIII. GENERAL BODY MEETINGS

- A. General Body meetings shall be held once a month during the fall and spring: The secretary shall book a meeting room (with a minimum capacity of 100) for all expected General Body meetings during his/her term in a timely manner after assuming office. A General Body meeting may be called at any other time of the year at the discretion of the President, although attendance by Department Representatives shall be optional (i.e., an absence would not affect a department's eligibility to receive GSC monetary awards).
- B. Quorum shall be established with no fewer than 33% of Department Representatives present (including the President and Treasurer).
- C. Meetings shall be governed by rules specified in this document, or by Standard Code when not specified.
- D. The dates, times, and locations of these meetings shall be determined by the President and announced on the GSC website, social media, and email listserves for Department Representatives and the Executive Board.
- E. The General Body meeting agenda will be determined by the President and posted on the GSC website and email listserves for Department Representatives and the Executive Board, preferably at least 48 hours in advance.

Article XIV. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

The Constitution may be amended at any quorum-established General Body meeting by a two thirds majority of voting members present, provided that notice of the proposed amendments was given at the previous General Body meeting and that the proposed amendments shall be subject to approval by the Department for Student Activities and Involvement. Provisional changes to the constitution in order to comply with UF and SAI requirements may be made as necessary by the Executive Board and approved at the next General Body meeting.

Officer

Print Name

Signature / Date

President

Vice President _____

Treasurer _____

Secretary _____

Web Coordinator _____

Grants Chair _____

International Affairs
Chair _____

Graduate Affairs
Chair _____

New Student Orientation
Committee Chair _____

Social Chair _____