

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

The primary purpose of the Graduate Student Association, GSA, is to provide a forum for graduate students to express graduate concerns on academic and non-academic issues, as well as to encourage collegiality and social wellness amongst graduate students through a variety of opportunities, in order to enhance the quality of graduate education at Mississippi State University. The mission of the GSA is to promote a quality graduate education for all students through excellence in the areas of research and academics, and through the promotion of quality of life for ourselves and our families, and through professionalism in our relations with others in our community, within the university, and as representatives of Mississippi State to the world.

ARTICLE I

101 *Name*

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of Mississippi State University.

102 *Jurisdiction*

All graduate and professional students who are registered at Mississippi State University and who have paid a university fee as prescribed by the registrar shall be members of the GSA and shall be considered equal and shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or handicap.

103 *Purpose*

The primary purpose of the Graduate Student Association, GSA, is to provide a forum for graduate students to express graduate concerns on academic and non-academic issues, as well as to encourage collegiality and social wellness amongst graduate students through a variety of opportunities, in order to enhance the quality of graduate education at Mississippi State University.

104 *Powers*

Since ultimate responsibility for all phases of the operations of the University rests with the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning and since the President of the University acts as their agent in all university matters, the Graduate Student Association shall have only those powers delegated to it by the Dean of the Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs. Policies adopted by officers and committees of the Graduate Student Association shall be subject to review by such officials as may be authorized to do so by the Constitution and Statutes of the Mississippi State University Graduate Student Association.

105 *Location*

The location of this organization shall be Mississippi State University Allen 617 in a space designated by the Office of the Graduate School expressly for use by GSA officers.

ARTICLE II

201 Officers

Graduate students should annually elect the following executive officers to the Executive Council: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Technology and Marketing Coordinator, and Service and Outreach Coordinator.

202 Other Offices

If applicable, once a person becomes an executive officer of the GSA, he/she shall not hold another executive position in the SA or serve concurrently as a GSA departmental representative or senator for SA. He/she shall resign any such position upon election of an executive position when the term of office begins.

203 Election Dates

The election of officers shall be held no later than March 20. Executive officers shall serve from May 1 to April 30.

204 Election Procedure

Elections will be held via an online voting system coordinated with ITS. All graduate and professional students are eligible to nominate a candidate, to run for office, and to vote. The currently serving Executive Board will coordinate nominations and elections and provide ITS with necessary materials. In the event that a single individual is interested in a position, that person can be appointed to said position, rather than elected.

205 Special Election Guidelines

In the event that an officer's position is to become vacant during his or her term as a result of graduation, resignation, or some other such unforeseen circumstance, a special election following the same guidelines as a regular election will occur to elect a new officer for this position. The exception to this rule will be with the President's office. If this office is to become vacant, the Vice President will become President with the approval of the GSA advisor and the remaining officers on the executive board. A new Vice President will then be elected through a special election, as outlined.

206 Removal from Office

If an officer is not fulfilling his/her duties, he or she may be removed from office ONLY through a unanimous vote by the remaining executive officers, the advisor, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate school. The officer will be notified of unsatisfactory behavior and placed under review prior to being removed from office. During this time, all communications with the officer under review will require the presence (or in the case of email, others cc'd) of the President, the GSA advisor, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School. In the case that the officer under review is the President, the Vice President will be copied/privileged to communications. If during the review period, the officer under review still does not fulfill requirements of his/her duties as an officer, the Executive Council, the advisor, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School will vote on removal from office. Official removal communication must be sent by the Dean of the Graduate School. In the case of a removal from office, the same special election process to replace said officer will be implemented.

207 GPA Requirement

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for all candidates and must be maintained by elected officers.

ARTICLE III

301 *Executive Council*

The President answers to the GSA advisor, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School and is considered the liaison between the graduate student body, the Student Association, and the Office of the Graduate School. The President is responsible for leading all meetings of the GSA Executive Council and the GSA General Body Meetings, among others as necessary. The President has the right to appoint a chair person from the Executive Council to lead the Graduate Student Council made up of Departmental Representatives (outlined in Article IV). The President also sits on various committees as requested by the Student Association, the Office of the Graduate School, and any other body on campus. The President reserves the right to appoint various members of the Executive Council to attend meetings on his/her behalf if he/she is unable to attend (both on a per-meeting or per-committee basis). For a full list of committees, please see Appendix A.

The Vice-President fulfills such duties as the President shall direct. In the absence of the President, he/she shall serve in a presidential capacity.

The Secretary is responsible for keeping and recording the minutes of the GSA, maintaining accurate records, and conducting any necessary correspondence for the organization.

The Treasurer handles all financial transactions of the GSA and keeps accurate record of its financial status at all times. Financial records of the GSA shall be open to all graduate students upon request.

The Technology and Marketing Coordinator is responsible for updating all social media avenues (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and keeping each current. Any marketing and outreach via advertising or other duties shall be the responsibility of the Technology and Marketing Coordinator. The Technology and Marketing Coordinator may also be asked to assist with other duties, including but not limited to assisting with the social media accounts for the Office of the Graduate School and assisting with updating OrgSync and anything related to this online forum.

The Service and Outreach Coordinator is responsible for organizing service events both on and off campus for the GSA, as well as for making graduate students aware of such possibilities in the community, regardless of GSA direct involvement in an activity. The Service and Outreach Coordinator is responsible for defining a point system in which GSA members can receive points for active engagement in GSA activities and service. Additionally, the Service and Outreach Coordinator assists with ordering promotional materials as necessary.

302 Executive officers and Departmental Representatives are to assume any duties deemed necessary by the President that are not explicitly prescribed by the Constitution.

Officer Checks and Balances

The members of the Executive Council will work together to accomplish the goals and duties set by the constitution and by each administration. The Marketing Manager and the Service and Outreach Coordinator will work closely with each other, as will the Secretary and Treasurer and the Vice President and President. In the event that any officer needs to take a brief leave of absence, the officer with whom they work most closely will assume their duties (with the assistance of the President and Vice President) until their return.

ARTICLE IV

401 *Graduate Student Council Appointment*

One representative from each department and program within the Graduate School, known as Departmental Representatives, shall form the Graduate Student Council (GSC). The GSA Executive Council shall request three nominations from Graduate Coordinators of each program. Each nominee who is interested in serving may submit an application form (designed by the GSA Executive Council), and the GSA Executive Council will choose representatives based on these applications. Alternate representatives shall be appointed and will assume the duties of the departmental representatives in their absence. At-large representatives may be added through an open application process if the need arises. Members serve as the official representative for each graduate department on campus, which entails being a liaison between one's department and the Executive Council. Departmental Representatives are responsible for relaying the events, activities, and pertinent information from the GSA to their respective departments in the hope that all graduate students will have access to knowledge of GSA business, even if they are unable to attend General Body Meetings. Additionally, Departmental Representatives are responsible for making the GSA Executive Council aware of any concerns facing their respective departments on campus (i.e. informing the GSA of new faculty recruitment, changes in degree requirements, issues with particular professors maintaining professional relationships with graduate students, etc.).

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Duties and Powers of the Graduate Student Council

1. Departmental Representatives are also responsible for assisting with all activities, General Body Meetings, and events that the GSA hosts or in which the GSA participates. They are considered to be an extension of the GSA Executive Council. Such activities, meetings, and events for which assistance by the Departmental Representatives is required may include, but are not limited to: the GSA Meet and Greet, the GSA Research Symposium, the GSA Awards Banquet/Reception, Graduate Student Appreciation Week, service events, Graduate Student "Munch and Mingle" events, etc.

2. Resolutions and amendments to the Constitution may be passed by a simple majority of sitting GSC members, prior to being submitted to the GSA advisor and the provost's office. The resolution/amendment must be signed by the President before being sent to the appropriate parties. The GSA President has the right to veto any resolution/amendment. If vetoed, the veto can be overridden by a two-third majority of sitting GSC members and then sent to the appropriate parties.

ARTICLE V

501 *Meetings*

The Executive Board shall meet every other week or as deemed appropriate by the President.

The GSC shall meet monthly or as deemed appropriate by the President and the GSC Chairman.

The President of the GSA reserves executive authority to call meetings whenever he/she deems it necessary.

Departmental representatives shall be notified by email and/or phone of all GSA General Body Meetings and GSC meetings.

ARTICLE VI

601 Authority and Powers

The authority for the establishment of the GSA is derived from the consensus of the graduate students enrolled in the Graduate School of Mississippi State University and the administration of Mississippi State University.

The GSA is recognized by Mississippi State University and the Graduate School as an organization representing all graduate and professional students enrolled in the Graduate School of Mississippi State University.

The GSA has the power to create, plan, develop and implement programs/activities in accordance with its purpose. It is the authority of the GSC to implement and execute all programs, policies, and procedures through the medium of the Executive Council.

602 Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rule of Order (Revised) shall serve as the parliamentary authority at all meetings of the GSA, GSC, and Executive Board.

603 Quorum

A GSC quorum shall consist of one-fourth of the representatives comprising the GSC. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of a simple majority.

No meeting can occur without a quorum

604 Committees

The President shall have ultimate authority over the selection of all committees, subcommittees, chairpersons, and members and reserves the discretionary authority to delegate this responsibility to an appropriate executive officer to carry-out. In addition, he/she shall have the authority to nominate graduate students to represent the GSA on university committees.

If deemed necessary by the GSA, the President shall form Ad Hoc committees to address specific problems or concerns, but they will have no authority beyond that which has been delegated to them by the President.

605 Advisor

The advisor to the GSA shall be an appointed member of the Graduate School Staff. He/she shall have the ultimate responsibility of authorizing and signing off on all financial transactions of the GSA unless instructed otherwise.

The GSA reserves the right to solicit any member(s) of the administration, faculty, and staff to assist in an advisory capacity in the GSA.

ARTICLE VII

701 *Constitutional Amendments*

The GSA may enact or amend the constitution and by-laws of the GSA by a two-thirds majority vote of departmental representatives at a regular GSC meeting. Any proposed amendment(s) must have been presented in writing at both the prior regularly scheduled GSC meeting and the prior regularly scheduled GSA meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment(s) must be disseminated to the GSC representatives at the meeting prior to the meeting in which the amendment(s) will be voted upon.