

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION at NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the University Graduate Student Association. It shall be hereinafter referred to as the UGSA.

## **ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP**

All graduate students of North Carolina State University shall be members of the UGSA.

## **ARTICLE III. THE UGSA COUNCIL**

### **Section 1 – Definition**

The UGSA Council shall be the governing body of the UGSA.

### **Section 2 – Objectives**

The objectives of this council shall be:

1. to be the school council for the Graduate School as provided for in the Student Body Constitution
2. to represent the graduate students of this university in any matter which may affect the welfare of the graduate students
3. to disseminate information of interest or of importance to the graduate students
4. to provide a forum for discussion of problems and other matter of importance to the graduate students and
5. to provide services to the graduate student body.

### **Section 3 – Council Composition**

A. The UGSA Council shall be composed of:

1. Representatives and Alternates from each chapter
2. Current Graduate School Senators of the Student Government and
3. A faculty advisor appointed by the graduate school and
4. Officers of the UGSA
5. Representatives and alternates from each Special Interest Group (SIG)

B. A chapter shall be an organization consisting of all the graduate students in one or more majors. A major is an area of study for which one may receive an advanced degree, as defined by the NC State University Graduate Catalog. A chapter in good standing with the UGSA shall:

1. Register their GSA chapter with the Student Organization Resource Center prior to October 1st of the current academic year or two months after the chapter has formed.
2. Submit a copy of their GSA constitution to the Vice President of Internal Affairs prior to October 1st of the current academic year or two months after the chapter has formed. The constitution must include the name(s) of the degree programs(s) incorporated in the chapter and be accepted by the UGSA in accordance with Article V, Section 3, paragraph E-2.

3. Submit a letter credentials, signed by the faculty administrator of their degree program, to the Vice President of Internal Affairs prior to October 1st of the current academic year.
  4. Have a Representative or Alternate actively participate in a UGSA Committee. Active participation is defined by missing no more than two meetings for the entire academic year and fulfilling committee duties as outlined by the Executive Committee and coordinated by the committee chair.
  5. Remain in good standing until such time that evaluations are complete the subsequent year.
- C. Representatives and Alternates shall be elected or appointed by each chapter annually as provided for in each chapter's constitution.
- D. Each Representative, Alternate, and Officer shall be currently enrolled in a North Carolina State University graduate degree program and be in good academic standing.
- E. Each Representative and Alternate shall be a member of the chapter represented.
- F. Any graduate student enrolled in a degree program that is interdepartmental by nature may, at his or her own discretion, become a member of the chapter graduate student organization in the department (or degree program) of his or her major professor. Those qualified departments (or majors) that are participating members of an interdepartmental program are outlined by the Graduate School.
- G. In addition, any graduate student enrolled in a major in which there is not an existing chapter may form a chapter or join an existing active chapter representing another major or group of majors. However, multiple students from the same major pursuing this option must join the same chapter and be represented solely by that chapter.

#### **Section 4 – Apportionment**

Each chapter shall have one Representative and one Alternate.

#### **Section 5 – Chapter Vacancies**

Representatives and Alternates shall be chosen by each chapter annually as provided for by each chapter's constitutions. At other times, vacancies shall be filled as follows:

- A. If a Representative resigns or is removed from office and if there is an Alternate, the Alternate shall assume the office of representative;
- B. If a Representative resigns or is removed from office and there is no Alternate, that chapter shall be responsible for filling the vacated position according to its constitution;
- C. If an Alternate resigns or is removed from office, the chapter shall be responsible for filling the vacated position according to its constitution.

## ARTICLE IV. AMMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution shall be passed by simple majority of the votes present at the second reading of the proposed amendment. The first and second readings shall occur at consecutive regular meetings at which a quorum is present.

## ARTICLE V. BYLAWS

### Section 1 – Election of Officers

#### A. General Election Rules

1. The following rules apply to all UGSA elections unless otherwise stated in the bylaws:
  - a. The annual opening of nominations for regular elections shall occur according to the schedule in Bylaw I.B.2. The opening of nominations for other elections must pass by a simple majority vote. All nominations must be closed by a two-thirds majority vote.
  - b. All nominations shall come from the council floor, and may be declined without repercussions. All nominations must be seconded.
  - c. The period between the opening and closing of nominations shall be at least three weeks, except in the case of temporary officers.
  - d. A description of the open officer positions shall be sent to the graduate student body within one week after nominations are opened for all elections except the election of temporary officers.
  - e. Before elections are held, all candidates for president and vice-president positions shall give speeches of ten minutes or less. For all other positions, a time limit of 15 minutes shall be allotted for each position, to be divided evenly among the candidates, to a minimum of two minutes and a maximum of five minutes per candidate. These time limits may be changed by a majority vote of the council at the meeting at which nominations are closed.
  - f. All elections shall be won by a simple majority of the votes present.
  - g. If there is only one nominee, voting shall be done by voice vote. In this case, the nominee shall decide if he or she wants to be present for the election. If it is the case that the non-present nominee's vote can make or break a tie, he or she shall be asked to cast a vote in the presence of the quorum.
  - h. For elections with two or more nominees, elections will be done by ballot.
  - i. If no person receives a majority of votes, the two candidates receiving the most votes shall have an immediate runoff. In the event of a tie, the presiding officer will vote to break the tie.

#### B. Regular Elections of Permanent Officers

1. The permanent offices shall be those of President, Vice-President for External Affairs, Vice President for Internal Affairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Electronic Communications Officer, and Travel & Thesis Fund Administrator.
2. Nominations for the regular elections shall be opened at the January council meeting, and closed at the February council meeting. Regular elections shall be held during the March meeting. Newly elected officers shall assume office at the conclusion of old business during the regular April meeting.
3. Candidates for regular positions must submit a written personal statement no later than two weeks after their nomination. Their personal statement shall be posted

immediately to the UGSA website. Unopposed candidates shall still write a personal statement.

### C. Temporary Officers and Special Elections

1. A temporary officer serves for the span between two regular council meetings. The temporary officer performs specified duties, which may include those of a vacant permanent position. In the case where a vacancy in a regular officer position arises during months when the council is not in session, the president may appoint a stand-in to serve until the next council meeting.
2. A description of the temporary post and a honorarium for the temporary officer will be set by the council before nominations are opened.
3. Nominations and elections for a temporary post occur at the same meeting. Nominations and elections for a special election occur at separate council meetings.
4. An officer elected at a special election is a full officer, and serves for a specified period not to extend past the council meeting at which the new regular officers assume their positions, as described in Section I.B.2. The officer serves as a member of the executive board. The officer elected by special election may be replacing a vacant regular officer post, or may perform other specified duties.
5. The description of duties, time of service, and stipend for a position in a special election must be set by the council before nominations may be opened. In the case of a special election to fill a vacant regular officer post, the honorarium is pro-rated from the regular officer's honorarium, and the description and time of service follow that of the regular officer's post.

## Section 2 – Removal of Officers

- A. An officer may resign by written or email notification of the Executive Board. Early notification of the intent to resign is strongly encouraged.
- B. An officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority of the votes present at the next meeting after the one at which the motion for removal is introduced.

## Section 3 – Duties of the Officers

- A. The President shall:
  1. Call and preside over UGSA Council meetings
  2. Call UGSA elections and special elections whenever necessary
  3. Represent the UGSA at University and Student Government functions
  4. Perform those duties imposed on this office by the Student Body constitution.
- B. The Vice-President for External Affairs shall:
  1. Preside over UGSA council meeting at the request of or in the absence of the President
  2. Act as proxy for the President at University or Student Government functions at the President's request and
  3. Appoint and oversee the operations of the following UGSA committees and serve as a liaison with those committee chairs: Political Action, Publicity, Social, and any other appointed external committees.
  4. Work with the Vice President for Internal Affairs, Treasurer, and Secretary, on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates

5. Appoint willing representatives who are in good standing to serve on University Standing Committees.
- C. The Vice President for Internal Affairs shall coordinate the operational aspects of the organization including the following:
1. Be responsible for obtaining a letter of credentials and constitution from each chapter, graduate degree program and SIG and verify each chapter's registration with the Student Organization Resource Center
  2. Appoint and oversee the operations of the following UGSA committees and serve as a liaison with those committee chairs: Academic Policy, Finance, Judicial/Legislative, and Teaching Effectiveness.
  3. Serve as a member of both but not the chair of the Judicial/Legislative and Finance Committees.
  4. Maintain parliamentary procedure at UGSA Council meetings and have a copy of Roberts' Rules of Order present at each meeting
  5. Work with the Vice President for External Affairs, Treasurer, and Secretary on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates.
- D. The Secretary shall:
1. Record and maintain minutes of the UGSA council meeting and circulate copies of the minutes to the council members
  2. Maintain a roll of council members and call the roll whenever a roll call vote is taken and
  3. Prepare and carry out UGSA correspondence.
  4. Work with the Vice-President for External Affairs, Vice President for Internal Affairs, and Treasurer on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates.
- E. The Treasurer shall:
1. Keep the financial records of the UGSA and
  2. Serve as a member and not chair of the Finance Committee.
  3. Work with the Vice-President for External Affairs, Vice President for Internal Affairs, and Secretary on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates
  4. Submit the annual budget, approved by the executive committee, to the UGSA council and
  5. Oversee block grant requests in accordance with the UGSA Block Grant Policy.
- F. The Electronic Communication Officer shall:
1. Maintain the UGSA Website
  2. Maintain the UGSA list serves and
  3. Work with the executive committee to provide and maintain a prompt and reliable flow of information from the UGSA and its constituent members.
- G. The Travel Fund Administrator shall:
1. Facilitate the requests and appropriations of the UGSA travel fund in accordance with the UGSA Travel Fund Policy
  2. Facilitate the requests and appropriations of the UGSA thesis fund in accordance with the UGSA Thesis Fund Policy
  3. Provide the Graduate School Bookkeeper with the names, amounts, and receipts to cover each reimbursement
  4. Provide the Treasurer with monthly accounts of the allocated funds.

#### **Section 4 – Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of one-half of all the Representatives or Alternates showing active membership, and no vote may be taken unless a quorum is present. An active member is a representative or and alternate who had been present at either of the two previous UGSA meetings. The Secretary shall take the roll at the beginning of each meeting, record the names of the representatives or alternates present, and announce whether or not a quorum is present.

#### **Section 5 – Voting**

- A. Only chapters in good standing with the UGSA in accordance with Article III, Section 2, paragraph B may vote.
- B. The Representative or Alternate from each Chapter shall have one vote, despite the number of majors represented by an individual Chapter.
- C. The presiding officer may not have a vote, unless it is needed to break a tie. Other officers shall only vote as a Representative or Alternate.
- D. Each SIG in good standing shall have one vote.

#### **Section 6 – Meetings**

Regular meetings shall be held at least once a month during the school year, except December. Meetings shall be open to all graduate students of North Carolina State University and to guests, but non-council members shall enter discussion only with permission of the presiding officer. Procedure shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. The date of the next meeting shall be announced at each meeting.

#### **Section 7 - Executive Committee**

- A. Composition.  
The executive committee shall be made up of the regular officers of the UGSA.
- B. Duties.  
The executive committee shall:
  1. Produce the agendas for general meetings of the UGSA council.
  2. Long-term planning.
  3. Committee charges for each committee.
- C. Executive Orders
  1. When an issue arises that normally requires a vote of the council and a council meeting is not possible before a decision is necessary, the executive committee shall have the power to issue an executive order regarding that decision.
  2. The order must be made known to the council representatives as soon as the order is issued via the UGSA website.

#### **Section 8 – Standing Committees**

- A. The standing committees shall be:
  1. the Academic Policy Committee
  2. the Finance Committee
  3. the Judicial Legislative Committee
  4. the Political Action Committee
  5. the Publicity Committee
  6. the Social Committee
  7. the Teaching Effectiveness Committee

- B. The members of these committees will be volunteers from the Representatives and Alternates. In the event that enough members cannot be obtained in this manner, the President will appoint members to these committees.
- C. Each committee chairperson shall, before the first of February, submit an annual budget to the UGSA finance committee for the following year.
- D. This annual budget submission shall take place at an annual budget meeting. This meeting shall be organized by the UGSA treasurer and consist of all UGSA officers and all UGSA chairpersons and the Finance committee.
- E. Committees shall meet at least once a month during months in which there is a council meeting. Each committee chair shall set a regularly monthly meeting time for the committee. Minutes for each meeting shall be submitted electronically to the Vice-President for Internal Affairs. The committee chair may appoint another committee member to take the minutes.

## **Section 9 – Duties of Standing Committees**

- A. Finance Committee shall:
  - 1. Prepare an annual budget proposal for submission to and approval by the UGSA council,
  - 2. Be responsible for any fund raising activities of the UGSA and
- B. Academic Policy Committee shall:
  - 1. Advise the President on academic issues and policies that affect graduate students
  - 2. Develop, plan and execute the University Graduate Student Research Symposium
  - 3. Work with the Graduate School to develop a comprehensive Research Ethics program for graduate students.
- C. Judicial - Legislative Committee shall:
  - 1. Enforce and review the constitution of the UGSA and shall make recommendations to the UGSA for improvements when necessary and
  - 2. Review the constitutions of the local GSA chapters and shall verify compliance with the UGSA constitution. The committee shall either accept the constitutions or make recommendations for their correction.
  - 3. Determine that the local GSA chapter has fulfilled the requirements to be legally recognized by the UGSA:
    - a. Each local GSA chapter shall have a duly elected President and Treasurer, or their equivalent, who shall be responsible for maintaining the financial records of that organization,
    - b. Each local GSA chapter shall have a constitutional procedure for choosing Representatives and Alternates to the UGSA council.
    - c. The local GSA chapter shall have a written constitution accepted by the Judicial-Legislative Committee and
    - d. Each SIG shall satisfy the minimum requirements for a university recognized student association.
- D. Political Action Committee shall:
  - 1. Keep the UGSA informed of any political issues that affect graduate students,
  - 2. Respond if and when necessary to political issues that affect graduate students and

3. Bring all proposed responses before the general UGSA council for a vote
  4. Organize at least one service event per semester.
- E. Publicity Committee shall:
1. create and distribute the UGSA newsletter.
  2. Keep all graduate students informed through posting of flyers
  3. Keeping the new student survival guide website up to date, and
  4. Publishing and distributing useful materials to current and incoming graduate students and
  5. Actively seek out and interact with special interest groups whose programs and missions are consistent with those of the UGSA.
- F. The Social Committee shall:
1. Organize social activities throughout the year for graduate students and
  2. Provide refreshments at the UGSA meetings.
- G. The Teaching Effectiveness Committee shall:
1. Work with the University Teaching Effectiveness Committee,
  2. Organize the UGSA Teaching Assistant Awards Program.

### **Section 10 – Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees shall be defined and approved by a simple majority of votes present. Committee members shall be appointed by the President. Ad hoc committees shall be disbanded by a simple majority of votes present.

### **Section 11 – Local Chapter Constitutions**

Local GSA chapter constitutions must be in agreement with the UGSA constitution and must be approved by the Judicial-Legislative Committee.

### **Section 12 – Financial Allocations**

- A. All financial allocations must be approved by a simple majority of votes present.
- B. Once a financial allocation has been approved, it may be exceeded by the maximum of \$50.00 or 3% of the allocated amount, whichever is larger, without further approval. Any other overcharge must be pre-approved by a simple majority of votes present.
- C. Chapters in good standing with the UGSA, in accordance with Article III, section 2, will be given a cash rebate each year. Chapters may not receive their rebate until they have submitted to the Secretary by the March meeting the name and email of contact person for the chapter over the summer.
  - a. Fifty percent (50%) of the money allocated to chapter rebates will be equally distributed amongst all chapters in good standing with the UGSA.
  - b. Fifty percent (50%) of the money allocated to chapter rebates will be distributed amongst all chapters in good standing with the UGSA according to the following criteria which incorporate both the amount of meetings attended and the size of the chapter:

Department Rebate =

$$\left( \frac{(\# \text{ of meetings attended} * \text{ size of chapter})}{(\text{The sum over all the chapters of } (\# \text{ of meetings attended by each chapter} * \text{ size of that chapter}))} \right) * (\frac{1}{2} \text{ allocation for rebate})$$

### **Section 13 – Special Interest Groups**

The UGSA shall recognize SIGs according to the following guidelines:

- A. The SIG shall have a valid constitution in agreement with the UGSA constitution. This constitution shall clearly outline the objectives of the SIG. The constitution shall be approved by the Judicial and Legislative Committee annually.
- B. In addition to the constitution, the SIG shall submit a letter signed by the faculty advisor stating the number of active members as defined by their constitution, annually. This letter will be submitted to the Vice President of Internal Affairs by October 1<sup>st</sup> or two months after the SIG is formed.
- C. Upon approval, a motion shall be made by the chair of the Judicial and Legislative Committee in order that the SIG present its objectives at the UGSA meeting.
- D. Induction or removal of SIGs will require a 2/3rds majority vote of the UGSA.
- E. Once approved as a valid SIG,
  1. The SIG will be in good standing.
  2. The SIG will have voting rights in accordance to the guidelines established in Section 5 of the bylaws.
  3. The SIG may apply for block grants in accordance to established guidelines.
- F. Once inducted, the SIG's membership status shall remain valid as long as the requirements outlined by the constitution in Article V, Section 12, paragraphs A and B are upheld.
- G. The SIG will not be eligible for chapter rebates
- H. The SIG shall have a representative and an alternate who shall be enrolled in a North Carolina State University graduate degree program and be in good academic standing.

#### **Section 14 – Legislative Process**

Official legislation concerning amendments to the UGSA Constitution or resolutions stating the position of the UGSA on certain issues shall be required to undergo a universal review and passage procedure.

- A. Any member(s) of the UGSA Council, as defined by Article III, Section 3, Paragraph A, or graduate students not represented by a chapter may initiate legislation on behalf of their constituents.
- B. Process
  1. Compelling concerns or ideas requiring legislation shall be presented to the Judicial/Legislative Committee for review at a regular meeting of that Committee. If the initiating party is a graduate student not represented by a chapter, they must secure sponsorship of a chapter representative before meeting with the committee.
  2. The Committee shall approve or deny any requests, as determined by majority vote of committee members. Upon approval, the committee, in conjunction with the initiating party, will draft the appropriate legislative document, in the form of a bill, for submission to the UGSA Council at the next regular Council meeting.
  3. The current Chair of the Judicial/Legislative Committee shall be responsible for submitting all bills to the Council.
  4. All new bills, regardless of the number of readings required, shall come to the floor during New Business.
  5. All bills requiring only one reading shall be debated and voted on after they are read unless tabled until a later meeting.

6. All bills requiring two readings, as outlined in Article IV, shall be debated and voted on after the second reading.
7. Any bill passed by the UGSA Council is final and does not require approval of the UGSA President or the Graduate School.