

# **GSA Constitution**

## **The GSA Constitution and By-Laws:**

CHARTER, CONSTITUTION, AND BY-LAWS OF NORFOLK STATE  
UNIVERSITY. NORFOLK. VIRGINIA, GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

(Amended 4/1/2005)

We, the graduate students of Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA, in order to represent the opinions and interests of the graduate students, form a permanent association of graduate students, according to the rules of Norfolk State University.

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Students Association of Norfolk State University, Norfolk, hereinafter referred to as the GSA.

### **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

1. The Graduate Students Association shall exist to serve the collective interests of the graduate students of NSU by promoting cooperation among graduate students of various programs of study at NSU, representing their interests to the faculty, administration and staff of NSU, providing a vehicle for and promoting cooperation with other graduate student organizations on this campus and state wide, and by providing services to the graduate student body which they cannot provide for themselves as individuals.
2. The GSA shall participate in the establishment of policies and regulations relating to the graduate program, in consultation with and subject to the final approval of the Director of Graduate Studies serving as the faculty advisor, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the President, and the Board of Visitors of Norfolk State University. The GSA shall also make recommendations to appropriate decision-making officers in matters concerning graduate and advanced professional students.

### **ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP**

1. All NSU graduate students, including both full-and part-time students, shall be members of the GSA.
2. With the exception of voting rights on matters before the GSA, all members of the graduate student body shall have full rights of participation in GSA affairs and committee membership and full eligibility for any post for which they meet the qualifications.

### **ARTICLE IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- A. The GSA shall have an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have seven positions elected from the GSA membership: President, External Vice President, Internal Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Historian. The President shall be chief executive officer and official representative of the GSA. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for recommending policy to the GSA Council and carrying on official GSA business between GSA Council meetings, to be approved by the GSA Council at the Council's next meeting.
- B. The order of succession for the GSA officers shall be: President, Internal Vice-President,

External Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Historian. In the absence of the President, the duties of the President follow the order of succession.

C. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote by the members of the GSA. The officers may not serve as both an officer and a program representative.

D. Officer Duties:

1. The President shall be the chief executive officer and official representative of the GSA, and promote communication within the Council and act as prime point of contact between the Director of Graduate Studies, the Council and the campus administration. The President is expected to attend meetings of the Academic Senate Committee and the Graduate Council as a GSA representative. The President is expected to implement various policies and decisions made by the GSA Council, and may make recommendations to the Council for necessary actions. The President shall also be chief spokesperson of the GSA, and shall represent the GSA in relations with other professional and educational organizations, foundations, and governmental agencies.
2. The Vice-President for Internal Affairs (also called the Internal Vice-President) shall be the liaison officer for the GSA representatives from each program and on campus--side committees. The Internal Vice-President shall coordinate council action regarding the Constitution, the bylaws, and operating procedures. The Internal Vice President is the primary person responsible for coordinating referenda elections, when elections are necessary. The Internal Vice President is expected to act as an ex-officio on all GSA committees. The Internal Vice-President is expected to attend meetings of the Graduate Council as a GSA representative.
3. The Vice-President for External Affairs (also called External Vice-President) shall act as prime point of contact between the Council and the system wide administration and Regents. The External Vice- President shall be the graduate representative to Norfolk State University's (NSU) GSA and coordinate all recruitment and membership drive. The External Vice President shall serve as the ex-officio for all GSA committees that publicize GSA activities off campus. The External to the University Committee on Planning and Budget.
4. The Secretary shall be the chief records officer for the GSA. The Secretary shall be ultimately responsible for taking, maintaining, and distributing the minutes of the Executive Council meetings and General Meetings, as well as any special business meetings as requested or dictated by the GSA. The Secretary shall also be responsible for assuring that the meeting agendas and other pertinent paperwork is available at all meetings. The Secretary shall be ultimately responsible for all correspondence among members and bodies of the Executive Council and all other GSA members.
5. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the GSA. The Treasurer shall be ultimately responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all funds of the GSA and for the establishment and maintenance of appropriate records of all fiscal transactions. The Treasurer shall make sure that all expenditures are within the approved budget and have been properly incurred under the policies of the GSA. The Treasurer shall present a proposed budget to the Executive council and members of the GSA for approval at the end of the academic year for the following year.
6. The Parliamentarian shall be the policy expert of the GSA and shall advise the GSA officers and members on the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and policies. The Parliamentarian shall assist in maintaining order during all meetings.

7. The Historian shall be responsible for documenting the history of the GSA and maintaining the GSA archives.

## ARTICLE V GSA COUNCIL

- A. The governing body of the GSA shall be the GSA Council.
- B. The Chair of the GSA Council shall be the President or an Executive Committee member designated by the President.
- C. The voting members of the Council shall be the program representatives and Executive Committee members, excepting the Chair. In the case of a tie, the Chair may vote.
- D. Program Representatives
  1. The program representatives shall represent their programs/department at all Council meetings and inform their program's graduate students of GSA activities. Graduate students of his or her program may recall all program representatives.
  2. There shall be one representative from each program of study that has a graduate program.
  3. Each program's graduate students may establish a valid organization or vote to select a representative to the GSA. Each representative shall produce a seating letter from their program chair and/or the board's graduate student organization naming them as the representative to the GSA.
  4. The validity of a program's organization may be challenged by the students of that department by students of that department by submitting an alternative document, which shall override any previous document.
  5. The Executive Committee of the GSA may declare a program representation invalid if it is not represented at two consecutive GSA meetings.
- E. A quorum shall exist when at least 1/3 of the program representatives are present. No GSA Council meeting may proceed without a quorum.
- F. Council members must be present at the meetings to cast votes.
- G. The council may, by 2/3 votes, remove an Executive Committee member for cause.
- H. The Council shall meet at least three times per quarter, and shall establish a regular meeting time and place. When unable to attend a regularly scheduled GSA Council meeting, members of the GSA Council shall transmit a written notice to the President prior to the designated meeting. GSA Council members shall submit written reports to the GSA Council at each meeting, and the last report shall be an "Annual Report". Any member of the GSA Council who twice fails to submit reports/and or prior written notices of GSA Council meeting absences as stipulated, shall resign from office as ordered by the President or Parliamentarian and confirmed by 2/3 majority vote of the GSA Council no less than a week proceeding the order of resignation. Any GSA Council member immediately removed from office shall reserve the right to appeal to the Council.
- I. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Executive Committee or at the written request of a quorum of Council members. A special meeting must be held on a weekday and must be publicized at least two days before the meeting is to occur. The Executive Committee or the Council members calling the meeting should post official notification, including time, place and agenda in each of the graduate programs of study.
- J. All graduate students are guaranteed the right to attend and to address Council meetings.
- K. By a 2/3 vote of the Council, an issue may be declared "open" for the following meeting. An "open" issue must be clearly specified as "open." An "open" issue is one that can be

voted upon by all graduate students.

#### **ARTICLE VI. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

- A. The Council shall have the power to create ad hoc and standing committees, and appoint GSA members to other campus committees.
- B. The President and Internal Vice-President shall nominate GSA representatives to serve on a campus committee at a Council meeting, subject to approval by a majority vote of the Council members present.
- C. Any graduate student shall be eligible to serve as a GSA representative on a campus committee.
- D. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all GSA committees.

#### **ARTICLE VII. PAST PRESIDENT**

- A. The outgoing President shall serve for one term as the Immediate Past President
- B. The Immediate Past President shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Committee and GSA Council.
- C. The Immediate Past President shall coordinate a transition meeting between the outgoing executive committee and the incoming executive committee.
- D. The Immediate Past President shall serve the purpose of assisting the new Executive Committee and GSA Council with becoming acclimated with their duties and responsibilities serving in an advisory capacity.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. REFERENDA**

- A. Only graduate students may propose referenda.
- B. Referenda may be approved for ballot by a majority vote of the Council.

#### **ARTICLE IX. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND BYLAWS**

- A. The Constitution may be amended only by referenda. A 2/3 majority vote of members present at the meeting is required to pass amendments to the constitution.
- B. Bylaws conforming to this constitution may be adopted, amended, or deleted by a majority vote of the entire Council.
- C. This Constitution supersedes all previous GSA Constitutions of NSU. This constitution will describe the only NSU organization permitted to use the appellation Graduate Students Association.

#### **BYLAWS OF THE NSU GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

##### **I. TAX EXEMPTION**

- 1. Tax Exemption. (this Bylaw is required to qualify for Federal Income Tax exemption under IRC (c) (3) and should not be changed except to conform to changes in the Internal Revenue Law).
- 2. No part of the net earnings of the Graduate Students Association shall inure to private shareholders or individual members.

## **II. AGENDA AND SUPPORT DOCUMENTS FOR GSA COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- A. The Chair shall furnish a copy of the agenda and of all documents to be considered or voted on at a Council meeting to each Council member at least two week-days before the meetings.
- B. Items not on the agenda at a Council meeting may be added to the agenda if so voted by a majority of Council members present. A separate vote is required for each new item. Recall of council members and changes in bylaws are exceptions and may not be added to the agenda in this fashion.
- C. No business shall be voted upon at a Council meeting unless it has been placed on the agenda.
- D. The Council may specify, upon majority vote, the items for the next agenda.

## **III. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 1. GSA officers will be elected at the last meeting of the Spring Quarter of any given year. In the event that any office is not filled at that time, elections will be held at each subsequent meeting until it is filled.
- 2. Nominees for any officer position must be registered NSU Graduate Students and active members of the GSA. Nominees must also have at least a full academic year remaining as a NSU graduate student.
- 3. In the event of a vacancy in the Council Officers (due to registration, recall, etc.) the Officer next in line for that office will assume the responsibilities according to the following order of succession: President, Internal Vice-President, External Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Historian. As a matter of course, the other Officers would be expected to help with the added duties. The vacancy must be filled as soon as possible.
- 4. Upon a two-week written notice from the Executive Committee to the Council, the Council may vote to remove any GSA officer from office. The two-week written notice must contain an exhaustive justification for the recommendation for removal from office. Upon a majority vote of the Council, the officer is removed.

## **IV. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

- A. In the event of the dissolution of this GSA, the assets of the GSA shall be transferred to the NSU Office of Graduate Studies, for providing financial aid to NSU graduate students.
- B. By the last Council meeting in the Spring Quarter, the Secretary-Treasurer shall present a budget to the GSA Council, with all line items displayed for the following year.
- C. The Treasurer shall explain all budgetary items to the GSA Council.
- D. Upon approval of the Council, the budget becomes GSA policy.
- E. Any changes in the budget shall be approved by the Council.
- F. The Council may subject the GSA to an audit.

## **V. CAMPUS WIDE COMMITTEES**

- 1. The GSA shall be responsible for officially nominating all graduate student representatives to all campus-wide committees; including all Administrative and all Academic Committees which call for graduate student representatives, including the Graduate Council meetings.

2. The President and internal Vice-President shall nominate campus-wide representatives at a GSA Council meeting, subject to approval by a majority vote of the GSA Council members present.
3. The various GSA campus-wide committee members shall be responsible for
  1. Voicing the official GSA position to their committees, where the official GSA position is determined by majority vote at any GSA Council meeting.
  2. Attending GSA Council Meetings, at the request of any GSA Council member
  3. Reporting all essentials of each committee meeting at the immediately subsequent GSA Council Meeting and general meeting.
4. Failure to uphold any of the above-listed responsibilities constitutes just cause for removal from the committee. Upon notification of the internal Vice-President, the Executive Committee will recommend to the Council a committee representative's removal from office. The Council must ratify this recommendation by majority vote. The internal Vice-President shall be responsible for monitoring the GSA Academic Senate Committee appointments.