

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia

Constitution and Bylaws

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

CONSTITUTION

This Constitution shall describe the only Norfolk State University organization permitted to use the appellation Graduate Student Association.

Article 1. Name

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

Article 2. Mission and Purpose

Section 1: The GSA shall exist to serve the collective interests of all graduate students (also referred to as the graduate student body) of Norfolk State University.

Section 2: The purpose of the GSA shall be to:

- A. Serve as an advocate for the issues and needs of graduate students with a focus on:
 - 1) Serving as a liaison between the graduate student body and faculty, staff and administrators;
 - 2) Receiving and considering criticisms, problems, suggestions or petitions submitted by a member or members of the graduate student body, faculty, staff or administrators and taking the necessary, appropriate and responsive action(s);
 - 3) Participating in the establishment of policies, procedures and resources related to graduate education at NSU.
- B. Support activities and resources that enhance the academic skills, professional development and social environment of graduate students.
- C. Provide a forum for discussion of matters involving graduate students and their welfare at NSU.
- D. Build and maintain cohesion and foster the exchange of ideas among the graduate students of NSU.
- E. Hold regular meetings to conduct GSA business.

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Article 3. Membership

Section 1: All students enrolled in graduate degree programs at NSU (the graduate student body) shall be members of the GSA.

Section 2: All GSA members are eligible to participate in and contribute to GSA and GSA activities based on parameters set by the GSA's Constitution and Bylaws.

Article 4. Organization and Governance - Officers

Section 1. The GSA shall be led by six officers elected from the GSA membership into the following positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian and Historian.

Section 2. The order of succession for GSA Officers shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian and Historian. In the absence of the President, the duties of the President follow the order of succession.

Section 3. Officers shall be selected by a majority of GSA members who vote in the election. Officers may not serve as both an Officer and a Program Representative.

Section 4. A term for an Officer begins the day after the last day of classes of the spring semester and ends on the last day of classes of the following spring semester.

Section 5. Duties

A. The President shall be the chief executive officer and official representative of the GSA.

Among other duties, the President shall:

- 1) Serve as the chief spokesperson of the GSA;
- 2) Lead Executive Committee and Council meetings;
- 3) Promote communication within the Council;
- 4) Act as the primary point of contact with the GSA advisor and NSU faculty, staff and administrators;
- 5) Attend meetings of committees or groups that require or invite graduate student representation;
- 6) Recommend actions to the Council;
- 7) Implement policies and decisions made by the Council;
- 8) Represent the GSA in relations with other professional and educational organizations, foundations and governmental agencies;
- 9) Designate other officers to fulfill some of these duties, as needed.

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- B. In consultation with the Executive Committee, the GSA Advisor may designate two co-Presidents to fulfill the duties of the President based on election results.
- C. The Vice President shall be the primary officer responsible for the operations of the GSA Council, including:
 - 1) Ensuring that the Constitution, Bylaws and other GSA policies and procedures are updated as needed;
 - 2) Coordinating elections and appointments and recruiting Officers and Representatives;
 - 3) Organizing meetings.
- D. The Secretary shall be the chief records officer for the GSA. The Secretary shall be the primary officer responsible for:
 - 1) Taking, maintaining and distributing the minutes of Executive Committee, GSA Council and general body meetings as well as any special business meetings as requested or dictated by the GSA;
 - 2) Assuring that meeting agendas and other pertinent documents are available at all meetings;
 - 3) Facilitating correspondence related to GSA affairs.
- E. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the GSA. The Treasurer shall be the primary officer responsible for:
 - 1) The creation and presentation of budgets to the GSA Advisor and GSA Council for approval;
 - 2) Adherence to the approved budget and spending policies of the GSA and NSU;
 - 3) The receipt and disbursement of all funds of the GSA;
 - 4) The establishment and maintenance of appropriate records of all fiscal transactions.
- F. The Parliamentarian shall be the primary officer responsible for advising the GSA Council and other students engaged in GSA activities on adherence to the provisions of the GSA Constitution and Bylaws and other policies and procedures.
- G. The Historian shall be the primary officer responsible for documenting the history of the GSA and maintaining GSA archives.

Section 6. The Executive Committee has the authority to fill the position of Immediate Past President at its discretion. When filled, the position of Immediate Past President shall serve as an *ex-officio*, non-voting member of the Executive Committee. The Immediate Past President shall serve the purpose of advising the new GSA Council (described in Article 5).

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Article 5. Organization and Governance – GSA Council (Council)

Section 1. The governing body of the GSA shall be the GSA Council and shall be comprised of an Executive Committee and Program Representatives.

Section 2. Executive Committee

- A. The GSA shall have an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have six positions elected from the GSA membership: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian and Historian.
- B. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for recommending policies and activities to the Council and executing official GSA business.
- C. The Executive Committee may, by a minimum of 2/3 of the votes, remove an Executive Committee member for cause related to stated expectations and requirements. Any Executive Committee member removed from office shall reserve the right to appeal the decision to the GSA Council.

Section 3. Program Representatives

- A. Each graduate degree program at NSU is entitled to select one voting representative to the Council. Program Representatives shall be accepted as Council members after the Secretary receives confirmation of their selection in writing from a faculty representative of the degree program.
- B. A term for a Program Representative begins the day after the last day of classes of the spring semester and ends on the last day of classes of the following spring semester.
- C. Among other duties, Program Representatives shall:
 - 1) Serve as a spokesperson of the graduate students enrolled in the degree program they represent;
 - 2) Share communications between the GSA and the graduates students represented;
 - 3) Attend and participate in GSA meetings and activities.
- D. Graduate students enrolled in a degree program may recall their Program Representative through an orderly replacement process that is shared with the Program Representative at the start of their service in this role.
- E. The Executive Committee may, by a minimum of 2/3 of the votes, remove a Program Representative from office for cause related to stated expectations and requirements.

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- F. Any Program Representative removed from office shall reserve the right to appeal the decision to the Administrator who leads the campus-wide graduate studies or education office (e.g., the Assistant Dean who leads the Office of Graduate Studies).

Section 4. Advisor

The Administrator who leads the campus-wide graduate studies or graduate education office (e.g., the Assistant Dean who leads the Office of Graduate Studies) shall serve as the Advisor of the GSA. This Administrator may designate one or two full-time NSU employees (faculty, staff or administrators) to serve in that role. The Advisor(s) will facilitate GSA's pursuit of its purpose and adherence to policies and procedures established by the Vice President for Student Affairs for NSU student organizations and other NSU offices.

Section 5. Voting

- A. The voting members of the Council shall be the Executive Committee members and Program Representatives.
- B. Voting shall occur at meetings and Council members must be present at a meeting to cast votes. By majority vote, the Council may approve exceptions to this requirement in advance of a meeting.
- C. A quorum shall exist when at least 1/3 of Program Representatives (excluding vacant positions) and 2/3 of the Executive Committee (excluding vacant positions) are present at a meeting. If fewer than three Program Representative positions are filled, at least one Program Representative must be present at a meeting to establish a quorum.
- D. Quorum is required for votes defined by the Constitution and Bylaws (e.g., the removal of an Officer and amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws).
- E. Quorum is required at the first Council meeting for each new term. At this meeting, the Council shall determine by at least a 2/3 vote the level of representation required for votes during that term that are not defined by the Constitution or Bylaws.
- F. An "open" issue is one that can be voted on by all graduate students. By a majority vote of the Council, an issue may be declared "open" for the following Council meeting. An "open" issue must be clearly designated as "open."

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Section 6. Meetings

- A. The Council shall meet at regular intervals no fewer than three times each spring and fall semester.
 - 1) Regular meetings shall be considered as General Body meetings.
 - 2) The President shall preside over Council meetings.
 - 3) The Executive Committee shall also establish a regular meeting time and place.
 - 4) Meetings may be held during a summer academic term at the discretion of the Council.
 - 5) Additional meetings may be called by the President or by petition of at least 1/3 of all Council members.
- B. All graduate students are guaranteed the right to attend and address Council meetings.
- C. The Executive Committee shall determine the method of keeping attendance.
- D. Special meetings of the Council may be called by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or at the written request of a quorum of Council members.
 - 1) A special meeting must be held on a weekday and must be publicized at least two days before the meeting is to occur.
 - 2) The Executive Committee or Council members calling the meeting must disseminate a notification, including time, place and agenda, to all GSA members. Determination of fulfillment of this requirement is at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- E. The Council shall have the authority to create ad hoc and standing committees to conduct the activities and operations of the Council.
- F. The Executive Committee may hold meetings separate from Council meetings. The President shall preside over Executive Committee meetings.

Article 6. Council Representatives to Campus Committees

Section 1. The Council shall have the authority to appoint GSA members to campus committees.

- A. Any graduate student shall be eligible to serve as a GSA Council Representative on a campus committee.
- B. The President or Vice President shall nominate Council Representatives to serve on campus committees. Representatives must be approved by a majority vote of the Council.
- C. The Executive Committee may, by a minimum of 2/3 of the votes, remove a Council Representative from office for cause related to stated expectations and requirements.

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- D. Any Council Representative removed from office shall reserve the right to appeal the decision to the Council.

Article 7. Referenda

Section 1. Referenda shall be presented to all GSA members for approval.

- A. Only graduate students and the GSA Advisor may propose referenda.
- B. Referenda must be approved for ballot by a majority vote of the Council.
- C. To be accepted, at least 20 percent of all graduate students must vote, and the referenda must be approved by a majority of the graduate students who voted.

Article 8. Constitutional Amendments and Bylaws Updates

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended only by referenda or special request of the GSA Advisor. A majority vote of the Council and a majority vote of additional GSA members present at the Council meeting at which a referendum is considered is required to pass amendments to the Constitution proposed by special request of the GSA Advisor.

Section 2. Bylaws conforming to this Constitution may be adopted, amended or deleted by a majority vote of the Council.

Section 3. This Constitution supersedes all previous versions of the Constitution of the Graduate Student Association of Norfolk State University.

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BYLAWS OF THE NSU GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Article 1B. Meetings

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall determine the agenda for each GSA Council (Council) meeting. The President shall determine the agenda for each Executive Committee meeting.

- A. The Secretary shall disseminate a copy of the agenda and all documents to be considered or voted on at a meeting to each Executive Committee or Council member at least two weekdays before each meeting.
- B. Items not on the agenda at the start of a meeting may be added to the agenda if so voted by a majority of Council or Executive Committee members present.
 - 1) A separate vote is required for each new item.
 - 2) The President has the ultimate discretion on how to set the agenda.

Section 2. The President and the Parliamentarian shall be responsible for establishing meeting protocols or rules of order at the start of a new term.

Article 2B. Nomination, Election and Removal of Officers and Representatives

Section 1. Nominees for any Officer, Program Representative or Council Representative position must be registered as NSU graduate students. Nominees must also have at least one full academic semester remaining as an NSU graduate student, with the exception of the President and Vice President, who must plan to serve for a full year.

Section 2. GSA officers and Program Representatives shall be selected no later than March 30 of each year.

- A. If an Officer position is not filled by March 30, by a majority vote, the Executive Committee may appoint a qualified graduate student to serve in the position.
- B. If a Program Representative position is not filled by March 30, the Executive Committee may solicit candidates directly from graduates students enrolled in the degree program not represented, and, by a majority vote, appoint an interim representative to serve in this role until the position is filled by the program's selection process.

Section 3. Council Representatives shall be appointed as needed.

Section 4. In the event of a vacancy in an Officer position (e.g., due to registration or recall), the President shall determine how to allocate unfulfilled duties. Considerations include the line of succession and the timing of the vacancy. Officer vacancies shall be filled as soon as possible.

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Section 5: Officers shall be selected to serve one (1) term on the Executive Committee.

- A. Eligibility to serve an additional terms may be granted by a majority vote of the Committee.
- B. Graduate students shall serve no more than three (3) terms as an Officer on the Committee.

Section 6: Program Representatives shall be selected to serve one (1) term on the Council.

- A. Eligibility to serve an additional terms may be granted by a majority vote of the Council.
- B. Graduate students shall serve no more than three (3) terms as a Program Representative on the Council.

Section 7. In consultation with the GSA Advisor, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for defining position expectations and requirements and consequences for not fulfilling them.

Section 8. In consultation with the GSA Advisor, the President shall be responsible for ensuring that all Officers and Representatives receive position expectations and requirements in writing before they begin service in their designated position.

Section 9. If at any point an Officer, Program Representative or Council Representative does not fulfill position expectations and requirements, the Executive Committee shall initiate actions to facilitate compliance and, as needed, removal from the position.

- A. When, by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote, the Executive Committee agrees that a complaint of non-compliance with position expectations or requirements warrants action, the Committee must record and submit a notice to the GSA Advisor and the Officer or Representative noted in the complaint.
- B. After three (3) notices, a special meeting of the Executive Committee will be called to discuss the removal of the Officer or Representative in question and schedule a vote.
- C. The Executive Committee must submit a written notice to the Council and GSA Advisor at least two weeks in advance of an Executive Committee vote for removal that documents warning notifications to the Officer or Program Representative and contains an exhaustive justification for the recommendation for removal from office.
- D. The Executive Committee will keep track of these reports and submit required communications.

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Section 10. A request for reinstatement to an Officer position must be submitted in writing to the Council within two (2) weeks of notification of removal. The Council must consider the appeal at the meeting that immediately follows receipt of the reinstatement request and make a final decision based on a majority vote.

Section 11. A request for reinstatement to a Program Representative position must be submitted in writing to the GSA Advisor within two (2) weeks of notification of removal. The Advisor should make a final decision in a timely manner.

Article 3B. Tax Exemption and Fiscal Accountability

Section 1. 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.

Section 2. GSA shall comply with all applicable rules, regulations and policies conferred by its status as a student organization officially recognized by Norfolk State University.

Section 3. No part of funds allocated to or earned by the GSA shall inure to private shareholders or other private entities connected with GSA or any individual.

Section 4. In the event of the dissolution of the GSA, the assets of the GSA shall be transferred to the NSU Office of Graduate Studies, School of Graduate Studies and Research or its successors to provide financial aid to NSU graduate students.

Article 4B. Budget and Appropriations

Section 1. The GSA will follow all applicable rules, regulations and guidelines required by its status as an officially recognized student organization of Norfolk State University funded by graduate students' fees.

Section 2. By the last Executive Committee meeting in the spring term (and no later than May 1), the Treasurer shall present a GSA budget to the Council, with all line items displayed for the following fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The Treasurer shall explain all budgetary items to the Council as well as the process for making, tracking and reporting on purchases.

Section 3. Upon approval of a majority of the new Council (with terms beginning the day after the last day of classes of the spring semester) the budget and budget process for the academic year becomes GSA policy (no later than July 1).

Section 4. After initial approval of the budget and budget process for an academic year, changes shall be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

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Section 5. The GSA Advisor has the authority to amend GSA budgets and budget processes to reflect university, state and federal policies and regulations. The Advisor may also subject the GSA to ad hoc or regular financial audits.

Section 6. If all GSA funds allocated for a fiscal year are not spent or encumbered by March 1, the GSA Advisor has the authority to spend the remaining funds on activities, programs or resources that support graduate students.

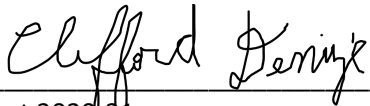
Article 5B. Council Representative Duties

Section 1. Graduate students selected to represent the GSA on campus committees are responsible for:

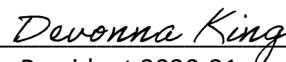
- A. Meeting attendance and other expectations established by the campus committee;
- B. Sharing official GSA views or positions, where the official GSA position is determined by majority vote at a Council meeting;
- C. Reporting all essentials of each campus committee meeting at the immediately subsequent Council Meeting.

Section 2. Failure to uphold any of the above-listed responsibilities constitutes just cause for removal from the Council Representative position. Upon notification of the President or Vice President, the Executive Committee will vote on a committee representative's removal from office. The Executive Committee must approve this recommendation by majority vote.

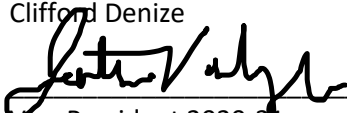
We affirm that revisions to the Graduate Student Association Constitution and Bylaws were officially approved on February 21, 2021.



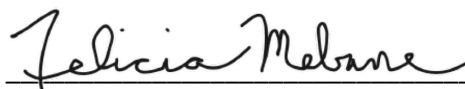
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Clifford Denize



Co-President 2020-21
Devonna King



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