

Commission on Student Affairs
Resolution 2010-2011B
Resolution Amending the Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly

First Reading, Commission on Student Affairs:	March 3, 2011
Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	March 17, 2011
Approved by University Council:	May 2, 2011
Approved by the President:	May 2, 2011
Effective Date:	Upon approval

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Virginia Tech Graduate Student Assembly to continually improve its processes and procedures;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Constitution of the Virginia Tech Graduate Student Assembly will be amended as follows (changes noted in highlights or strikethrough):

Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly

ARTICLE I - NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

This organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and shall be the pre-eminent governance organization for students enrolled in the Graduate School of Virginia Tech or are otherwise enrolled in graduate and professional studies at Virginia Tech, inclusive of all Virginia Tech campuses and satellite campuses.

ARTICLE II - FUNCTIONS

The purpose of the GSA shall be:

- (1) To represent the interests of graduate students in all university activities and to facilitate the exchange of information between the university governance structure and graduate students.
- (2) To solicit, codify, and promote graduate student opinions and concerns and to develop and recommend policies concerning graduate students to the university governance system.
- (3) To work with the administration of the Graduate School of Virginia Tech and other appropriate commissions and committees to improve the quality of graduate educational programs, graduate research activity, and graduate teaching programs.
- (4) To work within the university governance structure to improve graduate student life and social programs.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the GSA shall be all students enrolled in the Graduate School of Virginia Tech, or are otherwise enrolled in graduate and professional studies at Virginia Tech, including students enrolled at any Virginia Tech campus or satellite campus. Membership will be free of cost.

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNANCE

The governance of the GSA shall consist of an Executive Board, a Cabinet, and a Delegate Body. The GSA shall also have a faculty advisor, to be nominated and ratified by the Delegate Body; **nomination and ratification are not required annually.**

Section 1. Executive Board

- The overall activities of the GSA shall be coordinated by an Executive Board consisting of President, Vice-President of membership, Vice-President of Programs, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- The powers, duties, and remuneration of the Executive Board are described in Article IV, Section 1, Paragraph A-E in the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution (President – Paragraph A; Vice-President of Membership – Paragraph B; Vice-President of Programs – Paragraph C; Secretary – Paragraph ~~E~~**D**; Treasurer – Paragraph ~~D~~**E**).
- The Executive Board will meet at least twice monthly as an Executive Board, once a semester with the Cabinet, and shall participate in the monthly meetings and emergency meetings of the Delegate Body.
- Members of the Executive Board may not be registered departmental Delegates.
- Term of Office: The term of office of all Executive Board members shall be one year and initiate the first day of the month of June. No member may serve more than two consecutive elected terms in the same office, and no more than three elected terms on the Executive Board.

Section 2. Cabinet

- The cabinet shall consist of GSA representatives to each of the university's standing commissions and committees and the chairs of the committees of the GSA.
- The duties of the Cabinet are described in Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph A of the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution.
- The cabinet shall be chaired by the Vice-President of Membership.
- The cabinet shall meet at least once per semester.
- No Cabinet member may serve on more than two unrelated university committees or commissions.

Section 3. The Delegate Body

- The Delegate Body shall consist of two voting delegates (or their proxies) from each academic department within the university offering graduate degrees, as well as special delegates.
- ~~Special~~**Organizational** delegate status will be extended to representatives of an organization whose constituency may not be adequately or formally represented by regular departmental delegates. ~~Special~~**Organizational** delegates and associated procedures are described in Article

IV, Section 3, Paragraph A of the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution.

- The duties of the Delegate Body are described in Article IV, Section 3, Paragraph B of the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution.
- Only delegates or their proxies may vote, and a motion for a roll call vote may be called for by any delegate. Voting procedures are described in Article IV, Section 3, Paragraph C of the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution.
- The Delegate Body shall meet monthly and the meetings shall be open to all delegate members and interested parties.

ARTICLE V – PROGRAMS

Section 1: The following permanent programs of the GSA shall be established

Graduate Research and Development Program (GRDP)

The GRDP provides monetary support for doctoral and masters research required for degree. This research must have been conducted by graduate students. The GRDP will distribute monies during two cycles per year. Monies associated with the GRDP will be provided by the VT Graduate School. M.S. students can receive up to \$400 per funding cycle, and Ph.D. and MFA students can receive up to \$600 per funding cycle – these amounts may be reduced based on the number of applicants and the competitiveness of the program, as judged by the GRDP chair. No student can receive GRDP funding for more than one cycle per academic year.

Travel Fund Program (TFP)

The TFP provides graduate students funding to travel for presentation of their VT research at professional conferences, symposiums, and related events. The TFP will distribute monies during two cycles per year. Monies associated with the TFP will be provided by the VT Graduate School. Applicants can be awarded a maximum of \$1000 per funding cycle – this amount may be reduced based on the number of applicants and the competitiveness of the program, as judged by the TFP chair and associated evaluation committee. No student can receive TFP funding for more than one cycle per academic year.

Graduate Student of the Month Program (GSOM)

~~The GSOM is awarded at every delegate meeting. Nominations for the GSOM will be accepted up to a week prior to the meeting during which it is to be awarded, and the selection will be made by the Executive Board. The Executive Board reserves the right to have nominations stand over until a next meeting if it is decided that the state of the GSA finances warrants such a decision. The GSOM will be awarded a certificate from the GSA, as well as a gift certificate (e.g. from the VT Bookstore) paid for from the GSA generated funds. The criteria for deciding on the GSOM are described in Article V, Section 1, Paragraph A of the Bylaws of the GSA Constitution.~~

Research Symposium

The Research Symposium shall facilitate research by graduate (and undergraduate) students at Virginia Tech through an annual Research Symposium, organized by the Research Symposium committee. The Research Symposium shall coincide with Graduate Education Week during the spring semester, and shall provide students with the opportunity to present their VT research in

poster format. Prizes (sponsored by the GSA/Graduate School/Colleges) will be awarded to the best three (minimum) posters in each of the designated categories.

Graduate and Professional School Day Fair

This annual, 1-day event shall be a showcase where graduate schools from across the USA will be invited to present their graduate programs to students at Virginia Tech. The event should be coordinated with other Virginia colleges and universities to avoid overlap of similar programs. The undergraduate student body shall be the main audience for this event. It will be held in the fall semester and the registration fees from the attending graduate schools will go directly towards the GSA generated funds.

Section 2: Program-related positions within the GSA include the following:

Graduate Research and Development Program (GRDP) Chair

The GRDP Chair shall be responsible for the distribution of applications for the GRDP. The GRDP Chair shall oversee an application evaluation committee composed of graduate students and members of the Virginia Tech faculty, send out applications for professional review, and ensure those applications selected for funding are properly funded. The GRDP Chair shall report directly to the Executive Board. Remuneration for the position of GRDP chair is listed in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph A of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Travel Fund Program (TFP) Chair

The TFP Chair shall be responsible for the distribution of applications for the TFP. The TFP Chair shall oversee an application evaluation committee, and ensure those applications selected for funding are properly funded. The TFP Chair shall report directly to the Executive Board. Remuneration for the position of TFP chair is listed in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph B of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Research Symposium (RS) Chair

The RS Chair shall oversee the RS committee and planning of the Research Symposium. The RS Chair shall report directly to the Executive Board. Remuneration for the position of RS chair is listed in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph C.

Graduate and Professional School Day Fair (GPSDF) Chair

The GPSDF Chair shall oversee the planning and execution of the Graduate and Professional School Day Fair. The GPSDF Chair shall report directly to the Executive Board. Remuneration for the position of GPSDF chair is listed in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph D.

Events Chair

The Events Chair shall oversee the planning and implementation of social programs for graduate students at Virginia Tech. Remuneration for the position of Events chair is listed in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph E.

ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

- Permanent committees of the GSA may only be established or removed by amendment to the

Constitution of the GSA, as outlined in Article VI, Section 1. Permanent committees shall be added only when there is an expectation that the business of the committee will become an integral part of the GSA for an extended period of time.

- Representatives to university committees and commissions shall attend all pertinent meetings (or send a proxy) of their respective committees or commissions and shall provide a written summary of meetings (once per semester) to the GSA Vice-President of Membership at the meeting of the Cabinet. Representatives are also expected to contribute and participate fully in the activities of committees and commissions.

Section 1: The following permanent committees of the GSA shall be established

Committee on Programs

~~The committee on programs shall work to ensure that all current and future programs sponsored by the GSA are effective and efficient and shall oversee their development and promotion. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph A of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.~~

Board of Visitors (BOV) Graduate Representative Selection Committee

The board of visitors graduate representative selection committee is responsible for the recruitment of applications and selection of three finalists for the position. The three finalists will be forwarded to the Board of Visitors for a final vote. Selection committee membership is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph B^A of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Events Committee

The Events Committee shall plan and implement social programs for graduate students at Virginia Tech. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph C^B of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Research Symposium Committee

The Research Symposium Committee shall facilitate research by graduate (and undergraduate) students at Virginia Tech by ~~sponsoring~~ **organizing** an annual Research Symposium. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph D^C of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

GSA Outreach Committee

~~The GSA Outreach Committee shall coordinate graduate student efforts to perform outreach activities in the university and larger, surrounding communities. These outreach activities may include, but are not limited to: Blood drives, clean up drives, mentoring activities, etc. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph E of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.~~

Health Issues Committee

The Health Issues Committee shall work towards establishing and maintaining adequate health insurance coverage and monetary support from the university for graduate students. Main goals shall include the gauging of graduate student approval of current insurance coverage, raising awareness of graduate student health care issues among graduate students and the university

administration, and working towards increased monetary support for graduate student healthcare from the university. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph **FD** of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Karen DePauw Graduate Fund Annual Review Committee

The Karen DePauw Graduate Fund Annual Review Committee shall work towards reviewing the description of the fund and dispersal of the monies to meet the changing needs of Virginia Tech graduate students. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph **GE** of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the GSA.

Ad hoc committees

Ad hoc committees shall be established to address specific issues or concerns that affect the graduate community, and which are not already within the jurisdiction of any permanent committees. Ad hoc committees shall be recommended by the Cabinet and ratified by a simple majority vote of the Delegate Body. Ad hoc committees shall be charged by the Cabinet with a specific mission, time requirements and directions for the committee's product.

Virginia Tech extended campus GSA committees

Extended (satellite) campuses shall each have the option to establish an extended campus GSA committee, whose purpose will be to further GSA initiatives on the campus, to act as GSA representatives to the graduate students and administrators on the campus, and to liaise with the Blacksburg GSA (executive board), disseminating information to and from the Blacksburg GSA. An extended campus GSA committee will be made up of no more than five graduate students enrolled in a graduate program at the extended campus in question. The duties and membership of the extended campus GSA committee members are outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph **HF** of the Bylaws of the GSA constitution.

Each GSA extended campus committee will be elected during the third month of the spring semester, from the extended campus graduate students, and serve for a period of one year, serving no more than two consecutive years. Meeting dates for the extended campus GSA committee and its graduate student population will be decided on by the committee. Extended campus committees shall be responsible to the main Virginia Tech GSA, located in Blacksburg, VA. Extended campus committees shall obtain permission from the GSA Executive Board for GSA-related programs to be held at extended campuses. Funding for GSA extended campus committees and activities will be drawn from two sources, namely (i) fund raisers organized by the GSA extended campus committee and (ii) money from the GSA generated funds, as made available by the GSA Executive Board. Funds appropriated to the GSA by the Student Budget Board can not be used for GSA activities at extended campuses, since graduate students at extended campuses don't pay any student activity fees.

Section 2: Committee/Commission-related positions within the GSA include the following:

Chairs of the GSA Committees: It shall be the responsibility of the chairs of GSA committees to properly convene meetings of their committees and carry out their committees' charges as effectively and expeditiously as possible.

Section 3: Other positions within the GSA include the following:

GSA Webmaster

The GSA Webmaster will maintain the GSA website. The GSA Webmaster shall be responsible for ensuring current information regarding delegate contacts, delegate body agendas and minutes and Cabinet reports. It will also be the webmaster's responsibility to develop mechanism for better dissemination of GSA information through the website. Remuneration for the GSA Webmaster is listed in Article VI, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the GSA constitution.

GSA Historian/Media Coordinator

The GSA Historian/Media Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the records of the GSA. The GSA Historian/Media Coordinator will also be responsible for planning and implementing the transition meeting between old and new Executive Boards. Remuneration for the GSA Historian/Media Coordinator is listed in Article VI, Section 3 of the Bylaws of the GSA constitution.

GSA Executive Assistant

The GSA Executive Assistant shall be responsible for assisting the Executive Board with their duties when necessary. The Executive Assistant shall be responsible for working no more than 15 hours per week in the GSA office, assist the Treasurer with preparation and submission of an annual budget to the Student Budget Board and monitoring GSA representation on University governance. Remuneration for the GSA Executive Assistant is listed in Article VI, Section 4 of the Bylaws of the GSA constitution.

ARTICLE VII - ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS WITHIN THE GSA

Section 1: Executive Board

The President, Vice-President of Membership, Vice-President of Programs, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected by a simple majority of Delegates present at the ~~second~~ **February** ~~regular Spring~~ meeting of the Delegate Body, and will take office at the end of the Spring semester. This overlap will provide for a period of transition and new officer development, allowing the incoming officers to determine responsibilities and operations while current officers are available for advice.

Section 2: GSA Executive Assistant

The GSA Executive Assistant shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Section 3: Program Chairs

GSA Historian/Media Coordinator

The GSA Historian/Media Coordinator shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on

the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

GSA Webmaster

The Webmaster shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the first meeting of the second semester of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Graduate Research and Development Program (GRDP) Chair

The GRDP Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Travel Fund Program (TFP) Chair

The TFP Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Research Symposium (RS) Chair

The RS Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the first meeting of the second semester of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita, letter of reference) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Events Chair

The Events Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Board before or on the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Applications (application, curriculum vita) for the position shall be reviewed by the executive board, and interviews with the two final candidates will be held.

Section 4: Commission and Committee Representatives

The Representatives shall be appointed by the Vice-President Membership before or on the second meeting of the academic year, after advertisement through GSA listservs and after nominations have been received. Representatives shall be appointed as necessary during the year. These appointments shall last for the duration of the academic year or the duration of the committees' charges, whichever is of shortest duration.

Section 9~~5~~: The GSA Faculty Advisor

The GSA Faculty Advisor shall be ~~nominated by the Delegate Body and ratified by a majority~~

~~vote of the Delegate Body.~~ the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Education also known as the Graduate School Dean until the Graduate Student Assembly decides otherwise.

ARTICLE VIII - SUCCESSIONS AND IMPEACHMENTS

In the event that a President is unable to fulfill a term in office, the Vice-President of Membership shall assume the office of President. A new Vice-President of Membership shall be elected at the second meeting of the Delegate Body following the vacancy of the Vice-President of Membership. In the event that a Vice-President of Membership, Vice-President of Programs, Treasurer, or Secretary is unable to complete a term, the position will be filled by election at the first meeting of the Delegate Body following the vacancy of that position. Vacancies among the representatives to university committees and commissions shall be filled at the next regular meeting. In the event of a vacancy in the Executive Board at a period during the year when a meeting is not possible, the President shall have the power to appoint a person to fill the position until an election can be held. Such interim Executive Board members have to be officially elected to their positions by a simple majority of Delegates present at the next meeting of the Delegate Body following the vacancy of the position, after other nominations from the floor have been heard, and advertisement through GSA listservs have been done prior to the meeting. New GSA Board members will officially take office immediately following the meeting of their election.

In the event that a member of the Executive Board or Cabinet fails to faithfully discharge the duties of their office, as detailed above, they may be removed from their office in the following manner:

- (1) A motion to initiate impeachment proceedings is made at a regular meeting of the Delegate Body. All motions for impeachment shall be recognized by the President. If a simple majority of the Delegates present do not vote to continue impeachment, the matter is dropped. If a simple majority votes in favor of continuing impeachment proceedings, then an impeachment hearing will be held between one and two weeks from the date of the motion for impeachment.
- (2) The impeachment hearing of the Delegate Body will be structured so as to allow charges to be elaborated and a defense to be stated. The report of the impeachment hearing shall be distributed to all Delegates prior to the next regular Delegate Body meeting.
- (3) A secret ballot vote on impeachment shall be taken at the next regular Delegate Body meeting. The ballots shall be counted by members of the Executive Board not under impeachment and the Faculty Advisor. A two-thirds majority vote of the Delegates or their proxies present is required for the impeachment.
- (4) In the event that employees of the GSA fail to meet the criteria set forth in their contract, they will be removed in accordance to the terms of the contract.

ARTICLE IX – REMOVAL OF PERSONS IN NON-DELEGATE APPOINTED POSITIONS

Persons appointed in paid/unpaid positions within the GSA, appointed by the GSA Executive Board, and not the Delegate Body, can be removed by the GSA Executive Board, should the Executive Board feel that such a person is not fulfilling his/her duty, as outlined in the GSA

constitution. These positions include: GSA Executive Assistant, GSA TFP Chair, GSA GRDP Chair, GSA Research Symposium Chair, GSA GPSD Chair, **GSA Events Chair**, GSA Webmaster and GSA Historian/**Media Coordinator**. Removal of persons appointed in these positions shall only take place after the GSA Executive Board had an interview with the person, outlining how such a person is not fulfilling his/her duties. Removal of persons appointed in these positions can only take place by a majority vote of the GSA Executive Board. Any person removed from one of the afore-mentioned positions shall be responsible to pay back the stipend for the position to the VT Graduate School, with the payback amount pro-rated by the number of academic days such a person has spent in the appointed position.

ARTICLE X - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Additions, amendments, or deletions to the constitution and the bylaws shall be made in the following manner:

(1) A first reading to introduce a proposed change shall be made at a meeting of the Delegate Body.

(2) A second reading shall precede the vote on the proposed change at the next regular meeting of the Delegate Body. Changes to the constitution shall require a two-thirds majority of the Delegates present at the regular Delegate Body meeting. Changes to the bylaws shall require a simple majority vote of the Delegate Body.

(3) Changes to the constitution shall take place only after second reading approval by the Delegate Body, followed by approval by the Commission on Student Affairs (CSA), ~~and the University Council.~~

ARTICLE XI – POLICIES

This organization shall abide by all applicable policies contained in the university policies for student life. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order in all cases where such rules are applicable and are not inconsistent with the bylaws or special rules of order in this constitution.

Proposed Revision {3/27/2014} – First Reading