

**COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS  
RESOLUTION 2014-2015-A  
A RESOLUTION FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY**

Approved by Graduate Student Assembly:	March 19, 2015
Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	April 2, 2015
First Reading by University Council:	April 20, 2015
Second Reading by University Council:	May 4, 2015
Approved by the President:	May 4, 2015
Effective Date:	Upon approval

**WHEREAS**, under the current GSA Constitution, the internal structure and operation of the GSA are unclear; and

**WHEREAS**, the current GSA Constitution is unable to ensure sustainable operation of the GSA from year to year; and

**WHEREAS**, the current GSA Constitution is ineffective in guiding the GSA to fulfill its mission to serve graduate students at Virginia Tech;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Tech adopt a new Constitution addressing the above concern; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the proposed GSA Constitution be adopted.

**Constitution of the  
Graduate Student Assembly,  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University,  
Blacksburg, Virginia**

September 2000

(Last revision March 19, 2015)



# Preamble

We the graduate students of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, in order to establish representation in University Governance, ensure graduate student welfare, provide programs for graduate student development, promote interdepartmental dialogue, and secure impact and excellence beyond the graduate student body, do establish this Constitution for the Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

## Article I – Names, Definitions, and Mission

### Section 1: Name

This organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, hereafter referred to as the “GSA.”

### Section 2: Definitions and Governing Documents

- i. The home institution of the GSA, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, shall hereafter be referred to as “Virginia Tech” or the “University<sup>2.</sup>”
- ii. “Graduate Students” shall refer to all degree seeking students enrolled in a graduate program in a Department at Virginia Tech.
- iii. A “Department” shall refer to all academic units that offers a degree-granting graduate program and/or a graduate-level professional program as governed by the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, including but not limited to departments within a College, subunits within a School, interdisciplinary programs administered by multiple departments and/or Colleges, or a supra-departmental entity such as a School, a College, or the Graduate School, as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.
- iv. A “GSA Member” shall be a Graduate Student that meets the membership definition described in this Constitution.
- v. “Majority” shall be defined as one-half (1/2) of the voting members present plus one (1) vote being in accord.
- vi. “Two-Thirds Majority” shall be defined as two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present being in accord.
- vii. “Three-Fourths Majority” shall be defined as three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present being in accord.

- viii. This document, the Constitution of the GSA, shall be the central governing document ~~of in~~ which the purpose, function, mission, powers, and limitations of the GSA are defined. The GSA shall abide ~~to by~~ this document when identifying its vision, performing its functions, and fulfilling its mission. If there ~~shall be are~~ any conflicts with other governing documents this Constitution shall take precedence. The final interpretive authority of this Constitution shall be delegated to the Legislative Branch, where it's function and process is described in this Constitution. Amendments to this Constitution shall be ~~conducted made~~ in the manner described in this Constitution.
- ix. The Bylaws of the GSA shall be the governing document that enumerates the procedural function of the GSA, the powers and responsibilities of GSA personnel, and other detailed regulations and procedures ~~of~~ which the GSA shall abide ~~to by~~ while performing its mission. The final interpretive authority of the GSA Bylaws shall be delegated to the Legislative Branch of the GSA, where it's function and process is described in this Constitution. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be ~~conducted made~~ in the manner described in this Constitution.
- x. Certain personnel, programs, and entities within the GSA may generate their own Codes of Operations. These documents shall serve as recommendations and guidelines ~~on concerning~~ operation of those GSA entities. They shall not be binding, but serve as guidance for the proper functioning of ~~that the specific~~ GSA entity to which they pertain. Interpretations and changes to these documents rest ~~at with~~ the leadership of the GSA entities to which the documents pertain ~~to~~.

### Section 3: Purpose, Function, and Mission

The GSA represents the graduate student body of Virginia Tech. The purposes, functions, and missions of the GSA are:

- i. To represent the interests of graduate students in all university activities and to facilitate the exchange of information between the University and Graduate Students;
- ii. To solicit, codify, and promote Graduate Student opinions and concerns and to develop and recommend policies concerning Graduate Students to the University;
- iii. To cooperate and communicate with the Graduate School of Virginia Tech and other appropriate University administrative bodies to improve the quality of graduate educational programs, graduate research activity, and graduate teaching programs;
- iv. To provide and develop relevant programs for the augmentation of Graduate Student life and welfare.

### Section 4: Membership

- i. All Graduate Students that meet the definition as described in Article I, Section 2 shall be members of the GSA and are entitled to the services and programs that the GSA provides. GSA members are also eligible to be appointed and elected to leadership positions within the GSA.
- ii. Members of the GSA that are appointed and/or elected to a GSA leadership position in any of its branches shall aspire to support the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

## Section 5: Structure

The governing structure of the GSA shall ~~comprise~~ consist of two branches based on the principle of the separation of powers: the Executive Branch, and the Legislative Branch. Judicial matters shall be resolved by the Legislative Branch with advice by the Executive Branch via Judicial Procedures as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 6: Oversight

The GSA receives funding from various sources within the University, and therefore shall be subject to financial oversight by those funding entities. The GSA shall maintain a close relationship with the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, and shall engage in dialogue regarding the state of graduate studies at Virginia Tech. The GSA shall receive oversight from the appropriate body within University Council, as defined by University Policies pertaining to Student Organizations.

## Section 7: Parliamentary Authority

The proceedings of the Legislative Branch of the GSA shall adhere to the appropriate Parliamentary code as described in the GSA Bylaws to ensure effective and fair operations.

# Article II – Legislative Branch

## Section 1: Legislative Powers

Legislative powers of the GSA shall be vested in the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Assembly, a legislative body ~~comprised by~~ consisting of Graduate Students representing their home Departments or; non-academic communities, as well as the Executive Council. The Assembly shall exercise

its power through Acts of the Assembly at the advice of its Committees and the Executive Branch, as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 2: Eligibility

- i. All members of GSA shall be eligible to serve as delegates in the Assembly.
- ii. Any members of the Assembly who no longer fulfill the requirement of GSA membership shall be immediately removed from their positions in the Assembly and its committees and forfeit all duties, privileges, and powers thereof.

## Section 3: Composition

- i. Voting members of the General Assembly shall be limited to Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, and Delegates-at-large, hereafter collectively referred to as the Delegates. Alternates may vote in place of their Delegates if that power shall be temporarily delegated to them, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. All members of the GSA Executive Council, including but not limited to the members of the GSA Executive Board, shall be non-voting members of the Assembly. ~~If a n~~Non-Executive Board members of the Executive Council ~~shall who are~~ concurrently ~~be a~~ voting member of the Assembly; ~~they~~ shall retain their voting rights.
- iii. The Chair of the Assembly shall cast one (1) vote in case of a tie as described in this Constitution. Members of the Executive Board shall never have voting rights within the Assembly, except when casting one (1) tie-breaking vote in the position of Chair of the Assembly.
- iv. Other non-voting members of the Assembly may be created via procedures described in the GSA Bylaws.
- v. Guests attending General Assembly meetings shall be welcomed and their presence recorded and acknowledged by each meeting's minutes, as described in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 4: Representation, Selection, and Terms of Office

- i. Each individual Department, as defined in this Constitution, shall be allotted two (2) voting seats in the Assembly. The Department, after informing ~~their its~~ constituents, shall select two (2) GSA Members to serve as Departmental Delegates to the Assembly, each occupying one (1) voting seat in the Assembly, according to the selection method described in the GSA Bylaws.

- ii. Non-traditional Departments, including but not limited to School Subunits, Interdisciplinary Programs, and Graduate Programs administered by a supra-departmental entity, may be governed by exceptions of the representation regulation described in this Constitution. Such exceptions shall be enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. Each Departmental Delegates shall have one (1) vote in the Assembly, except for the cases noted in this Constitution.
- iv. In the event that a Department, as defined in this Constitution, ~~shall be~~ unable to select two (2) voting Delegates to the Assembly, ~~they it~~ may, after informing the Executive Board of the GSA, opt to select only one (1) voting Delegate to the Assembly. The Delegate under this exceptional circumstance shall occupy both of the two (2) voting seats allotted to that Department in the Assembly, where ~~they it~~ shall have two (2) votes in the Assembly.
- v. Special Delegates may be created only by an Act of the Assembly by a Two-Thirds Majority confirmation. These Special Delegates shall present evidence that they represent Graduate Student constituents or communities that are significant and distinct from those represented by Departmental Delegates. Special Delegates each occupy one (1) voting seat and retain all duties, privileges, and powers as all other Delegates. Communities sending Special Delegates to the Assembly shall be ratified by Majority in the Assembly no less than once (1) every academic year as ~~a~~ Department-equivalents. If a community fails to be ratified, the Special Delegate seats allocated to that community shall be removed, and the relevant Special Delegates shall forfeit their duties, privileges and powers thereof immediately. Student communities that are designated by the Assembly as Department-equivalents shall be allotted two (2) voting seats, adhering to representation regulations in the Assembly as a Department would as described in this Constitution. Further related regulations shall be described by the GSA Bylaws.
- vi. In the event that the Executive Board shall appoint a Graduate Student that is not a Departmental Delegate, a Special Delegate, or an Executive Board member as a representative of the GSA to the University Council and its Commissions and Committees, the Graduate Student appointee shall be a Delegate-at-Large of the Assembly. Delegates-at-Large shall retain all rights and privileges as a Departmental Delegate, each occupying one (1) voting seat within the Assembly. The creation of each Delegate-at-Large shall be approved by the Assembly as described in the GSA Bylaws, and the total number of the Delegates-at-Large shall never exceed ten percent (10%) of the total voting Delegates of the Assembly.
- vii. In the event ~~a~~ voting Delegates ~~shall be~~ unable to attend an Assembly meeting, they shall inform the Vice Chair of the Assembly and other relevant Officers of the Assembly of any upcoming absences, and shall provide ~~an~~ Alternates, who ~~m shall must~~ be ~~a~~ GSA members from the same departments ~~s~~ -or ~~e~~ community communities, to attend in their place. If ~~the~~ Delegates ~~shall be~~ unable to select ~~an~~ Alternates from their departments or communities to attend the Assembly meeting, they may vote by proxy by informing the appropriate Assembly officers before the beginning of the Assembly meeting of their vote on business on the meeting agenda, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. In accordance with this Constitution, amendments to the Constitution and the Bylaws of the GSA shall only be approved by Delegates and/or Alternates in person.

- viii. Non-voting members within the Assembly shall be granted their seats due to their positions. Other non-voting seats may be created and their occupants selected as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- ix. Delegates serve for a period of one (1) academic year. They may serve for ~~so as~~ long as they are eligible.

## Section 5: Officers

The officers of the Assembly are the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Parliamentarian, the Recorder, and the Chairpersons of the Assembly's Standing Committees and Special Committees.

- i. The President of the GSA shall serve as Chair of the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Chair of the Assembly, and shall chair each meeting in accordance with the Parliamentary Authority defined in this Constitution. The Chair of the Assembly shall not participate in voting, except in cases where an additional vote would affect the outcome. In such a case, the Chair may cast one (1) vote to change the outcome of the vote, except when the nature of the vote shall be an election for a leadership position within the GSA. In all other cases, the Chair shall remain neutral and impartial to all business before the Delegates, and if unable to do so, be recused from the Chair. If ~~the Chair is~~ unable to perform the ~~duties~~ of the Chair, ~~the these~~ duties ~~of the Chair~~ shall be carried out by the Vice Chair of the Assembly. If both officers are unable to perform the ~~duty~~ duties of the Chair, the voting Delegates shall elect by majority vote among the present Delegates and Executive Council members ~~a person~~ to serve as Chair pro tempore for that Assembly meeting. The Chair pro tempore, if a Delegate, shall forfeit ~~their~~ voting rights for the duration of ~~their~~ the tenure as Chair pro tempore.
- ii. The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs of the GSA shall serve as Vice Chair of the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Vice Chair of the Assembly. The Vice Chair of the Assembly shall assist the Chair of the Assembly ~~in their duties~~ during each Assembly meeting. The Vice Chair shall, together with the Parliamentarian, verify attendance of Delegates, and any circumstances involving Alternates, and votes by proxies. In the Chair's absence or in ~~the a~~ case ~~where in which~~ the Chair ~~shall be is~~ recused, the Vice Chair shall assume full authority and perform all duties of the Chair until the end of that meeting or when the Chair ~~shall be is~~ restored by the Assembly.
- iii. The Parliamentarian of the Assembly shall be responsible for the adherence ~~of to~~ the appropriate parliamentary procedures during Assembly meetings. The Parliamentarian shall, together with the Vice Chair, verify attendance of Delegates, and any circumstances involving Alternates and votes by proxies. The Parliamentarian shall concurrently be the chair of the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly with the purview of judicial affairs, and be elected according to the procedures ~~as~~ described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. In the event that the Parliamentarian ~~shall refuse themselves is recused~~ from ~~their the Parliamentarian's~~ duties or ~~shall be is otherwise~~ unavailable, ~~their~~ duties of the Parliamentarian of the Assembly shall be delegated temporarily by the Assembly, who ~~shall will~~ elect by Majority a Parliamentarian pro tempore among the present Assembly members.



- iv. The Director of Communications and Secretary of the GSA shall serve as the Recorder of the Assembly and shall prepare agendas and minutes of all Assembly meetings, which shall be made available to all members of the GSA. If the Director of Communications is unable to perform the duty of the Recorder, the Administrative Director of the GSA shall serve as Recorder for that Assembly meeting. If the Administrative Director of the GSA ~~shall-is~~ also be unable to serve as Recorder, then the Assembly shall elect a temporary Recorder of that Assembly meeting by Majority vote.
- v. Committee Chairpersons shall be elected according to procedures as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws, and shall be responsible ~~to-for convene-convening~~ and ~~presiding overe~~ the Committees, as well as ~~reporting~~ the Committees' work to the Assembly.
- vi. In the event of perceived ~~conflicts~~ of interests of Assembly Officers ~~to-in~~ the business at hand, the Assembly may compel the Officers in question to recuse themselves for the duration of the deliberations of the business at hand by Two-Thirds Majority.
- vii. All Assembly members with leadership positions as described in this Constitution shall wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 6: Duties and Powers of the General Assembly of the GSA

In accordance with this Constitution, the General Assembly of Delegates shall:

- i. Be the primary deliberative and representative body of the GSA. The Assembly shall represent the diverse voices of Graduate Students and act in ~~its-their~~ best interests;
- ii. Elect members of the Executive Board as well as Assembly Leadership personnel, and abide ~~to~~ ~~by~~ their leadership for as long as they hold the Assembly's confidence. The Assembly shall retain the power to remove Executive Board members and Assembly Leadership personnel from their ~~positions~~ via procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws;
- iii. Advise and give its consent to executive appointments made by the Executive Board, whether into the Executive Council; or to external entities. The Assembly shall retain the power to withhold consent to executive appointments by Acts of the Assembly;
- iv. Propose and vote upon Acts of the Assembly. These include Resolutions of the GSA, which are legislations detailing the will of the GSA including but not limited to changes in University Policy, GSA structure, procedure, and programming, which shall be pursued into fruition via the appropriate means;
- v. Retain power to fill, form, and dissolve its Committees. The Assembly shall also retain power to elect as well as dismiss leadership of its Committees. The Assembly shall hear reports from the Committees, and advise the Committees on their ~~businesses~~;

- vi. Advise and compel Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, or Delegates-At-Large that are representing the GSA in University Governance to vote in accord to the Assembly's will in University Council and its Commissions and Committees;
- vii. Advise and approve the GSA annual budget as well as any amendments to the budget according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- viii. Review GSA Governing Documents and, when deemed appropriate, propose amendments according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform further powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 7: Duties and Powers of the Delegates

In accordance with this Constitution, the Delegates of the Assembly shall:

- i. Attend Assembly meetings;
- ii. In the event that they shall be unable to attend an Assembly Meeting, inform the Vice Chair and other relevant Assembly Officers of the upcoming absence, and be represented by ~~an~~ Alternates at the meeting, or failing at that, inform Assembly Officers of their vote by proxies;
- iii. Support and perform the duties and powers of the Assembly, as described in this Constitution;
- iv. Inform constituents of GSA proceedings, including and not limited to legislation and programs;
- v. Solicit input from constituents on policies and legislation;
- vi. Be available to their constituents and communicate their concerns and issues to the Assembly;
- vii. Actively participate in at least one (1) service within the GSA including but not limited to the Executive Council, University Governance, Assembly Standing or Special Committees, and Executive Programming Committees, in addition to their services in the Assembly as a whole;
- viii. Have full rights and privileges of speaking, voting, and proposing motions and legislation at all Assembly meetings;
- ix. Be held accountable by the Assembly as a whole on their performances and participation in their duties as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws;
- x. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 8: Duties and Powers of the Alternates

In accordance with this Constitution, the Alternates of the Assembly shall;

- i. Together with the Delegates they ~~shall bear~~ representing, inform the Vice Chair of the Assembly and other relevant Officers of the Assembly of the circumstances of the temporary substitutions;
- ii. Perform and wield all duties and powers of a Delegate only when the Delegate is unable to attend an Assembly meeting, or any other services the Delegate is committed to;
- iii. Vote as directed by the Delegate in absence. ~~The An~~ Alternates may choose to vote differently from ~~the that~~ direction, without any repercussion, but shall inform the Delegate as to the reasons for the deviation.
- iv. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 9: Duties and Powers of Non-Voting Members of the Assembly

In accordance with this Constitution, the non-voting members of the Assembly shall:

- i. Have full speaking rights and privileges, as well as making proposals ~~of through~~ motions during Assembly meetings;
- ii. Not have the power to cast votes in all motions, legislation, and elections under consideration by the Assembly.
- iii. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 10: Removal and Vacancies of Assembly Members

- i. An Assembly member shall be under consideration for removal from the position if found to be failing to perform ~~their the~~ duties described in this Constitution and in the GSA Bylaws. The

Executive Board shall make available all appointments, attendance records, and meeting minutes to the rest of GSA. The Assembly member shall be notified at the first available opportunity ~~that they are under of the~~ consideration for removal. The removal process, from notification to resolution, shall proceed within a reasonable timeframe not exceeding two sessions of Assembly Meetings, unless an extension is granted by Majority of the Assembly. The accused shall have opportunity to be heard before the Assembly.

- ii. Removal proceedings shall be conducted as a motion of the Assembly, consistent with procedures as defined in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. If removed, the Assembly Member shall immediately forfeit all of the duties and powers given by the position.
- iv. If a Departmental or Special Delegate vacancy ~~shall be is~~ created by any circumstance, the respective Alternate shall fill the vacated seat until such time as a replacement is selected from the represented Department or organization.
- v. If a Delegate-at-Large seat is vacant by any circumstance, the seat shall be removed entirely. The Executive Board may create a new Delegate-at-Large seat ~~subjected~~ to approval by the Assembly via procedures as described by this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- vi. Incoming Delegates and Alternates to fill ~~vacaney~~ vacancies in the middle of a ~~school~~ academic year shall only serve until the end of the ~~school~~ academic year.
- vii. If members of Standing Committees and/or Special Committees shall be found to be not fulfilling their duties, they may be removed from the Committee by Two-Thirds Majority of the Committee. Such removal shall be recorded and reported to the Assembly.

## Section 11: Assembly Meetings

- i. The Assembly as a whole shall meet no less than once (1) per month when the University is in session (fall and spring ~~sessions~~ semesters). The Assembly is at recess when the University ~~is not in its session during the ordinary academic year~~ fall and spring session.
- ii. The exact meeting time, date, and place shall be determined by the Chair of the Assembly as advised by the Executive Council, and be ~~notified~~ communicated to all members of the GSA no less than seven (7) days before each meeting.
- iii. All Assembly meetings shall follow ~~the a~~ predetermined agenda, as prepared by the Executive Council with advice and consent of the Assembly.
- iv. Special meetings of the Assembly can be convened by the Chair of the Assembly, and shall be scheduled in a manner that allows Delegates no less than seven (7) days ~~in~~ notice in advance.

- v. Quorum shall be met and enforced during the meeting as specified by the GSA Bylaws. In the event a regularly scheduled meeting ~~failed~~ fails to convene due to the lack of quorum, the Chair of the Assembly shall convene a special meeting in replacement. The quorum requirement shall be not suspended either through Executive action or Assembly action.
- vi. Assembly meetings shall be announced to the rest of the Graduate Students and the University, and be open to all GSA Members and the public. The Assembly may move to enter a closed session by a Majority vote.
- vii. The agendas and minutes of all open meetings of the Assembly shall be made readily available to Members of the GSA as well as the public no later than five (5) days after the conclusion of the Assembly Meeting. Record of closed meetings shall be classified until made public by action of Assembly in a Majority vote. Classified Assembly record can be made available to interested party via relevant legal actions.
- viii. In the event of extremely time sensitive business that arises when Assembly is not scheduled to meet, and a Special Meeting cannot be scheduled in a timely manner, the Chair of the Assembly shall have the authority, with the advice and aid of the Executive Board, to conduct emergency votes electronically as described by the GSA Bylaws. All outcomes of an emergency vote shall be subsequently ~~ratify~~ ratified by the Assembly through the appropriate majority mechanism, depending on the subject matter, in an Assembly meeting ~~at~~ in a physical setting. If the emergency vote fails to be ratified, the outcome of the subject matter shall be considered unresolved, and be deliberated within an Assembly meeting. No Constitution and Bylaws changes shall be conducted by electronic votes.

## Section 12: Committees of the General Assembly on Delegates

Committees of the Assembly shall be created and perform their functions and duties in accordance to this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

- i. Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be permanent Committees established by the GSA Bylaws. A Standing Committee performs functions vital to Assembly operations. They shall deliberate and report their findings to the Assembly regularly. Voting members of a Standing Committee shall also be ~~a~~-voting Delegates of the Assembly.
- ii. Special Committees of the Assembly shall be created and dissolved by Acts of the Assembly by a majority vote. Each Special Committees shall deliberate and report on a specific matter deemed necessary by the Assembly. The composition of each special committee shall be determined by the Assembly. Voting members of a Standing Committee shall also be GSA members.
- iii. All Committees of the Assembly shall be subordinated to the Assembly itself. All outcomes of Committee deliberation shall be subjected to review, confirmation, referral, and rejection by the Assembly.

- iv. All deliberations of Committees shall be recorded in minutes, which shall be made available to all GSA Members and the public. The Committees may decide to classify their records. Classified Committees records shall be made public if the Assembly votes to do so with a Majority vote. Classified records shall be made available to interested party via relevant legal action.
- v. All Committees of the Assembly shall operate in accordance to procedures as specified by the GSA Bylaws.

### **Section 13: Referendums and Petitions**

- i. Any business of the Assembly may be referred to a general referendum to the entire membership body of the GSA if so motioned and thereafter confirmed by a Majority Assembly vote. The outcome of the referendum, if it shall be found valid, shall be considered equivalent to an Act of the Assembly. Referendums shall be conducted in accordance to the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. Any Members of the GSA may submit petitions to the Assembly provided they collect sufficient verified representations as described in the GSA Bylaws. The Assembly shall be compelled to deliberate the subject matter addressed by ~~the such~~ petitions and reach a reasonable outcome in each case.

## **Article III – Executive Branch**

### **Section 1. Executive Powers**

Executive powers of the GSA shall be vested in the GSA Executive Board, advised by the GSA Executive Council. Executive powers are granted by the will of the elected General Assembly of Delegates, who, as the legislative branch of GSA, represent the will of all GSA members.

### **Section 2: Composition of the Executive Council**

In accordance to this Constitution, the Executive Council shall be ~~comprised~~ composed of:

- i. All voting members of the Executive Board, with the President of the GSA acting as Chair;
- ii. The Administrative Director of the GSA;
- iii. The Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors;
- iv. The GSA Advisor;
- v. The Dean of the Graduate School;
- vi. The Chairpersons of all Standing Committees of the Assembly;
- vii. The Chairpersons of all active Special Committees of the Assembly;
- viii. The Chairpersons of all Executive Programming Committees.

### Section 3: Functions and Duties of the Executive Council

The Executive Council shall be the chief advisors to the Executive Board on matters related to each Council member's position. Executive Council members shall hold no additional powers except for those that are granted by the virtue of their positions. In accordance to this Constitution, the Executive Council shall:

- i. Meet at a minimum once (1) before each Assembly meeting to deliberate the agenda of the Assembly meeting and other relevant businesses, no less than seven (7) before each Assembly meeting;
- ii. Record all deliberations of the Executive Council on minutes, which shall be made available to GSA Members and the public. The Council may decide to classify ~~their~~ its records. Classified ~~Committees~~ Council records shall be made public if the Assembly votes to do so with a Majority vote. Classified records can be made available to interested parties via relevant legal action;
- iii. Invite guests to Executive Council meetings as appropriate
- iv. Perform further functions and duties as described in the GSA Bylaws.

### Section 4: Composition of the Executive Board

The Executive Board is comprised of both voting members and non-voting members. Positions within the Executive Board shall not grant voting rights within the Assembly. Voting members of the Executive Board may vote within the Executive Board to resolve differences. The members of the Executive Board, in order of succession, shall be:

- i. The President;
- ii. The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs;
- iii. The Director of Programs;
- iv. The Director of Finance and Treasurer;
- v. The Director of Communications and Secretary;
- vi. The Administrative Director of the GSA, the Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, and the GSA Advisor, ~~who~~ shall be non-voting participating members of the Executive Board. They shall not have voting rights within the Executive Board to resolve differences. These non-voting members of the Executive Board shall not be considered in the order of succession.

## Section 5: Election and Eligibility of the Executive Board Members

- i. Each voting member of the Executive Board shall be a member of the GSA.
- ii. Voting members of the Executive Board may not be voting Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, and Delegates-at-Large of the Assembly, with the only exception being ~~while~~ serving as the Chair of the Assembly casting a tie-breaking vote. In the event ~~of that~~ voting Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, and Delegates-at-Large of the Assembly ~~shall be~~ elected as members of the Executive Board, they shall forfeit their positions ~~as a~~ voting Delegates, and surrender all rights from ~~that those~~ positions when they ~~shall~~ assume office.
- iii. Members of the GSA may not concurrently run for ~~the~~ election for more than one (1) Executive Board post except when given consent by the Assembly in a Two-Thirds Majority vote.
- iv. All members of the Executive Board shall serve for a term of one (1) year.
- v. All members of the Executive Board may not serve for more than two (2) consecutive full terms in the same posts. Consent shall be given by the Assembly in a Two-Thirds Majority if outgoing Executive Board members ~~shall~~ wish to run for ~~the~~ election for the same post beyond their term limits.



- vi. All voting members of the Executive Board ~~are will be~~ elected by the General Assembly of Delegates; no later than the last Assembly meeting of the school year, in accordance with the election procedure described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 6: Powers and Duties of the Executive Board

The Executive Board of the GSA ~~are is composed of~~ the elected executive officers of the GSA. ~~They are~~ It is vested with executive power by the Assembly to ensure the effective operation of the GSA. In accordance to this Constitution, the Executive Board as whole shall:

- i. Be collectively responsible ~~to for~~ the effective operation of the GSA and ~~for~~ fulfilling the purpose, function, and mission of the GSA as described in this Constitution;
- ii. Report to the Assembly individually ~~their with respect to each member's~~ responsibilities and ~~results~~ activities at each Assembly meeting;
- iii. In the event of diverging opinions, come to a decision by compromise, consensus after deliberation, or majority vote, and thereafter be collectively supportive of and responsible to the final decision;
- iv. Keep good records of Executive Board meetings, and make records available upon requests, and, in the case of closed session records, make them available upon Acts of the Assembly;
- v. Be responsive to ~~the inquiry~~ ies and recommendations from Assembly members pertaining to all operations of the GSA;
- vi. Operate under the leadership of the President and be held accountable ~~by to~~ the Assembly regarding to the performances of their duties;
- vii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the GSA Bylaws.

## Section 7: Powers and Duties of the President

The President of the GSA, hereafter referred as the President, shall be the ~~representing representative~~ voice of all GSA Members. As the chief executive officer of the GSA, the President communicates on the behalf of all GSA Members to University administrators, faculty, staff, undergraduate students, the Blacksburg community, and other external bodies. The President sets the tone and overall strategic plan of the GSA as advised by the Executive Council, and is accountable to as well as empowered by the Assembly. With assistance from the rest of the Executive Board, the President shall identify, communicate, and pursue graduate student interests within the University. In accordance to this Constitution, the President shall:

- i. Represent the GSA and graduate student interests at all official functions and meetings as appropriate;
- ii. Lead each Executive Council meeting and with ~~their~~its advice generate agendas for Assembly meetings;
- iii. Act as Chair of the Assembly and conduct Assembly Meetings as an impartial chairperson;
- iv. Oversee the duties and responsibilities of other Executive Board members;
- v. Oversee the strategy and execution of all Resolutions adopted by the Assembly;
- vi. Provide information to the Assembly regarding matters of graduate student welfare and University policies;
- vii. Represent the GSA ~~in~~on University Council Commissions and Committees, including but not limited to the University Council, the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Student Affairs;
- viii. Be in close contact with relevant University entities, including but not limited to the Graduate School and the Division of Student Affairs;
- ix. Work closely with the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors and attend Board of Visitors meetings to ensure effective communication of graduate student issues to the Board of Visitors;
- x. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific topics relevant to the GSA, and ultimately reporting ~~its~~their findings to the Assembly;
- xi. Be an *ex officio* non-voting member of all Committees, Commissions, and Working Groups of the GSA;
- xii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

## Section 8: Powers and Duties of the Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs

The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs, hereafter referred to as the Vice President, shall be the chief administrative officer of the GSA, and also the chief advisor to the President and the Executive Board especially in matters of University governance. The Vice President shall be responsible for ensuring effective internal operation within the GSA, including and not limited to executive appointments, maintaining the Delegate roster, and recording and enforcing Delegate participation. The Vice President shall partner and assist the President in fulfilling the purpose, function, and mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President, especially on matters related to University policies;
- ii. With the consent of the Assembly and the advice of the Executive Board, make all executive appointments and nominations except for personnel pertaining to GSA Programs;
- iii. With the consent of the Assembly, nominate GSA members as representatives of the GSA to ~~the~~ University governance ~~structure~~bodies, including the University Council, its Commissions, and its Committees, subjected to final appointment decisions made by the University administration;
- iv. Coordinate the activities of the representatives to ~~the~~ University governance ~~structure~~bodies, collect all information ~~of~~about University governance activities from the representatives, and compile the relevant information into University Governance Reports to be presented at each Assembly Meetings;
- v. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific University policy development, and ultimately reporting ~~its~~their findings to the Assembly;
- vi. ~~Oversee~~Ensure that there is adequate representation in the Assembly ~~from of~~ all Departments of the University, and oversee and maintain information ~~of~~about their participation and activities in the GSA;
- vii. Serve as the Vice Chair of the Assembly;
- viii. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees, including but not limited to the University Council, the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Student Affairs;
- ix. Be an *ex officio* non-voting member of all Committees and Working Groups of the GSA;
- x. Perform all presidential duties described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws if the President becomes temporarily unavailable;
- xi. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Section 9: Powers and Duties of the Director of Programs

The Director of Programs shall be the chief operating officer for all programs, including but not limited to funding programs and events; organized by the GSA. The Director of Programs shall be ultimately responsible for the effective operation of all programs provided by the GSA in pursuant to the mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Programs shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to GSA programs and events;
- ii. With the assistance of the Chairpersons of Programming Committees, report relevant activities to the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- iii. Coordinate the efforts of the Chairpersons of Programming Committees;
- iv. Be ultimately responsible for the execution and development of all GSA programs and events;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees, including but not limited to the Student Budget Board;
- vi. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to review and discuss specific GSA Programs and potential new programs that adhere to the mission of the GSA, and ultimately report findings to the Assembly;
- vii. Be an *ex officio* non-voting member of Committees of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Section 10: Powers and Duties of the Director of Finance and Treasurer

The Treasurer and Director of Finance, hereafter referred to as the Director of Finance, shall be the chief financial officer of the GSA. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for all financial matters within the GSA, and advise both the Executive Council and the Assembly of the financial situation of the GSA as appropriate. The Director of Finance shall work closely with other members of the Executive Board to ensure there are sufficient funds for the effective operation of all aspects of the GSA. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for identifying funding sources, and the drafting of the GSA Annual Budget, to be approved and adopted by the Assembly. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Finance and Treasurer shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to the finances of the GSA;
- ii. Maintain accounts and records of all GSA financial transactions, deposits, and disbursements;
- iii. Draft the annual budget for the GSA to be approved by the Assembly according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- iv. Report to the Assembly at each meeting the financial situation of the GSA, while advising the Assembly on all matters related to GSA finance;

- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees, including but not limited to the Student Budget Board, and the University Council for Strategic Budgeting and Planning;
- vi. With the aid and advice of the Executive Board, explore and maintain external funding sources as appropriate in order for the GSA to adhere to its mission;
- vii. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to explore and discuss specific topics related to the finances of the GSA, and ultimately report findings to the Assembly;
- viii. Be an *ex officio* non-voting member of Committees and Commissions of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## **Section 11: Powers and Duties of the Director of Communications and Secretary**

The Director of Communications and Secretary, hereafter referred to as the Director of Communications, shall be the chief communications officer of the GSA. With the advice of the Assembly and the Executive Board, the Director of Communications shall be responsible for all official communications originating from the GSA. The Director of Communications shall ensure activities within the GSA are communicated in an effective manner to all interested parties, and maintain an appropriate public relations campaign, including but not limited to letters, websites, and social media. The Director of Communications shall also be responsible for the archival of all GSA documents. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Communications and Secretary shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to the communications and public relations of the GSA;
- ii. Maintain the archive of all GSA documents, including but not limited to Assembly agendas and minutes, governing documents, and resolutions;
- iii. Draft official communications of the GSA, subject to approval by the appropriate bodies within the GSA;
- iv. Serve as the Recorder of the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees;
- vi. Maintain an appropriate presence of the GSA in the media, including but not limited to, [the](#) University Relations publications, the GSA Website, and social media;

- vii. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to explore and discuss specific topics related to public relations of the GSA and ultimately report findings to the Assembly;
- viii. Be an *ex officio* non-voting member of Committees and Commissions of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Section 12. The Administrative Director of the GSA

The Administrative Director of the GSA shall be a Graduate Assistant position as administered and selected jointly by the Graduate School of Virginia Tech and the Executive Board of GSA, and shall ~~be-serve as~~ the manager of the day-to-day operations of the Executive Board, as well as the rest of the GSA. The Administrative Director shall perform duties as prescribed in ~~their-the~~ Graduate Assistant contract, with a primary focus in administrative tasks delegated by the Executive Board. In accordance with this Constitution, the Administrative Director to the GSA shall:

- i. Ensure the effective operation of the Executive Council, including the Executive Board, as well as the Assembly by securing meeting locations and materials;
- ii. Support the President and the Vice President in their administrative tasks;
- iii. Assist the Director of Programs as well as the Chairpersons of Programming Committees on the execution of GSA programs and events;
- iv. Assist the Treasurer in maintaining the accounts and records of all GSA financial transactions, deposits, and disbursements;
- v. Assist the Director of Communications in maintaining the archive of GSA documents;
- vi. Record all Executive Board meeting proceedings as well as make them available upon request;
- vii. Be subject to performance review and dismissal if necessary by the Executive Board and the Graduate School;
- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Section 13. The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors of Virginia Tech

The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors, hereafter referred to as the BoV Representative, shall be the representative voice of all Graduate Student to the Board of Visitors of the University. Guidelines for the nomination of BoV Representatives candidates shall be outlined in the GSA Bylaws. While appointed by the Board of Visitors, the BoV Representative shall be an integral part of the GSA by participating in relevant discussion and planning ~~in such a way that they would be able so as~~ to effectively and accurately report the state of Graduate Student life to the Board of Visitors as well as advocate for the adoption of University Policies and ~~actives-activities~~ that adhere to the mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors, in addition to their duties and powers granted through the position, shall:

- i. Report relevant activities of the Board of Visitors to the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting,
- ii. With the advice of the Assembly and the Executive Board, draft and present the Graduate Student Constituency Report to the Board of Visitors at each of their meetings;
- iii. As a non-voting member of the Executive Board, advise other members and participate in the strategic planning of relevant GSA activities, and be able to utilize resources accessible by the Executive Board, including but not limited to services provided by the GSA Administrative Director;
- iv. Partner with the President as the ~~representing representative the~~ voice of Graduate Students, primarily to the Board of Visitors, advocating for the betterment of Graduate Student life;
- v. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific topics relevant to the GSA, and ultimately report findings to the Assembly;
- vi. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

#### **Section 14: Executive Working Groups**

Members of the Executive Board may form Executive Working Groups as they see fit to facilitate their function and duties. These Working Groups shall not make any binding decisions; ~~;~~ their activities shall be considered as an extension to those performed by the Executive Board, subjected to Assembly scrutiny.

#### **Section 15: Removal and Vacancies of Voting Executive Board Members**

- i. Removal of a voting Executive Board member shall be initiated as a motion of no confidence by an Assembly member and approved by Majority, consistent with procedures as defined in the GSA Bylaws.

- ii. A voting Executive Board member who fails to maintain the confidence of the Assembly shall receive written notice of the charges and shall have an opportunity to be heard before the Assembly. All investigation and initial hearings shall be conducted by the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. Final removal decision shall be determined by an Act of the Assembly by Two-Thirds Majority. The removal procedures, from notification to removal or acquittal shall not exceed ten (10) days unless an extension shall be granted by Majority of the Assembly.
- iv. If removed, the Executive Board Officer shall immediately forfeit all of the duties and powers given by the position.
- v. If an Executive Board position shall be vacant by any circumstance, the duties of the removed officer shall be temporarily assumed by the officer next in the line of succession, unless the Assembly shall decide otherwise via Majority vote, or the officer next-in-line shall accept, they that person shall carry out both ~~their~~ previous duties and the duties of the vacant officer post.
- vi. A special election shall be scheduled at an upcoming Assembly meeting, as soon as possible, no later than ten (10) days after the vacancy was created.
- vii. The incoming Executive Board member, filling a vacancy in the middle of a school year, shall only serve until the end of the current Executive Board term.

## Section 16. The GSA Advisor

The GSA Faculty Advisor, here after referred to as the Advisor, shall be an Administrative/Professional Faculty Member of the University, acting as advisor to the GSA as described in relevant University Policies on Student Organizations. The GSA Advisor shall receive support from and reports to both the Graduate School as well as the University Division of Student Affairs, and shall be appointed by those bodies with the advice of the GSA Executive Board. The GSA Advisor shall provide support for the effective and sustainable operation of the GSA, as well as lending ~~their~~ expertise in University Policies, potential funding sources, and other relevant knowledge. In accordance to this Constitution, the GSA Advisor shall:

- i. Advise the Executive Board in the planning and development of all GSA activities in order to further the mission of the GSA by providing support and representation from both the Graduate School and the Division of Student Affairs;
- ii. Assist outgoing and incoming Executive Board members between school years to ensure an effective transition of powers and long term sustainability of GSA operations;
- iii. Advise the Assembly in all deliberations to ensure adherence to the mission of the GSA;



- iv. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Section 17. The Dean of the Graduate School

The Vice President for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School of the University, hereafter referred to as the Dean of the Graduate School, shall be the primary strategic advisor and partner for the advancement of the mission of the GSA for the Executive Board. The Dean of the Graduate School shall share with the Assembly developments, initiatives, and activities within the Graduate School and solicit input from Assembly Members as appropriate.

## Section 18. Delegates, Special Delegates, Delegates-at-Large selected to represent the GSA within University Governance

Delegates selected to represent the GSA ~~to in~~ the University governance ~~structure~~bodies, including the University Council and its Commissions and Committees, shall wield and perform executive powers and duties additional to those granted by their positions as Delegates. These Delegates shall be the primary representing voices of Graduates Students in specific aspects of University Governance. They shall report to the Vice President as well as to the Assembly all relevant activities from the University governance ~~structure~~bodies in order to advocate and pursue the Mission of the GSA. In accordance to this Constitution, Delegates, Special Delegates, Delegates-at-Large selected to represent the GSA within University Governance, in addition to the powers and duties granted by their position as Delegates, shall:

- i. Be appointed by the Executive Board with the consent of the Assembly according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws, and may be dismissed from their position as representatives by the Executive Board if found to ~~be~~ performing in an unsatisfactory manner;
- ii. Attend University Governance meetings, including meetings of the University Council, and/or its Commissions and Committees, as appropriate to their appointments;
- iii. Actively participate in all discussions in meetings of the University governance ~~structure~~bodies, advocate for Graduate Students when appropriate, and offer perspectives from a Graduate Student in all other deliberations;
- iv. Communicate all information and activities that they are aware of in University governance to the Vice President of the GSA and report to the Assembly as appropriate;

- v. In the case of an imminent vote on a University Resolution, report and deliver all relevant information and documents to the Vice President of the GSA in a timely manner for distribution within the GSA;
- vi. With the advice of the Assembly, vote according to the will of the Graduate Students;
- vii. Immediately inform the Vice President of the GSA if unable to attend a meeting, such that ~~an~~ Alternates from the GSA ~~may~~ might be selected according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws to attend in their place.
- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## **Section 19. The Chairpersons of Standing Committees of the Assembly**

Delegates selected to chair Standing Committees of the Assembly, in addition to their legislative responsibility as Delegates as well as Committee Chairpersons, shall wield and perform additional Executive powers and duties for the effective cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of the GSA. They shall serve as the legislative advisors to Executive Board members, according to their role as described in the GSA Bylaws.

## **Section 20. GSA Programs**

GSA Programs shall be created to promote the mission of GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws, and may only be created or removed by Acts of the Assembly and amendments to the GSA Bylaws.

## **Section 21. Executive Programming Committees**

Executive Programming Committees of the Executive Council shall be responsible for operating each GSA program as specified in the GSA Bylaws. Members of Executive Programming Committees shall be recruited from Graduate Students by the Program Chairs via procedures described in the GSA Bylaws.

## **Section 22. The Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees**

The Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees, hereafter referred to as Program Chairs, shall be the managers of each GSA Programs, responsible for the day-to-day preparation and development of GSA

Programs. Program Chairs shall be appointed by the Executive Board according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws. The Program Chairs shall report to the Director of Programs and the Executive Board on the preparation and execution of the GSA Programs they are responsible for. In accordance to this Constitution, the Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees shall:

- i. Recruit from the GSA Executive Programming Committees members for the effective operation of GSA Programs;
- ii. Develop and execute GSA Programs in an effective manner to enact the Mission of the GSA;
- iii. Report to the Director of Programs and the Executive Board, and cooperate in amending GSA Programs operation procedures;
- iv. Report to the Assembly relevant GSA Programs activities and information, and solicit input;
- v. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

## Article IV – Judicial Procedures

### Section 1. Judicial Powers

Judicial Powers of the GSA shall ultimately rest ~~in-with~~ the Delegates of the Assembly, who ~~in~~ collectively represent the will of the diverse Graduate Student population in the University. The Parliamentarian of the Assembly shall advise the Assembly on interpretation of this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The Assembly as a whole shall delegate Initial Judicial Jurisdiction to the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly, according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws, while the Assembly as a whole shall hold final appellate jurisdiction.

### Section 2. Initial Jurisdiction

All judicial disputes, including but not limited to ~~the~~ constitutionality of all GSA activities and removal procedures, shall be delegated to the relevant Assembly Standing Committee as described in the GSA Bylaws, ~~where they shall~~ hold initial jurisdiction. ~~They Members of the relevant Assembly Standing Committee holding initial jurisdiction~~ shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and recuse themselves from holding jurisdiction if present or otherwise be removed by Acts of the Assembly. Those who hold initial jurisdiction shall be responsible for ~~all the~~ investigation, and synthesis of information related to the dispute. They shall report all findings and recommendations to the Assembly, who ~~in~~ may ratify the recommendations.

Upon ratification, the recommendation shall be enacted as an Act of the Assembly. Initial judicial process shall adhere to procedures as detailed in the GSA Bylaws.

### Section 3. Appellate Jurisdiction

Any involved party within the dispute may appeal the ratified recommendation put forth by the Standing Committee of the Assembly with initial jurisdiction, no later than seven (7) days since the ratification by submitting a formal appeal to the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly. The appeal shall state reasonable grounds, which shall only be the introduction of new evidence, or failure to adhere to proper procedures during prior Judicial Procedures. The appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly shall notify the Assembly of the appeal, and the Assembly shall determine the validity of the appeal. If the appeal ~~shall be~~ found valid, the Assembly may refer the case to the original Standing Committee, refer the case to a Special Committee, or by Acts of the Assembly determine the fate of the case. If the appeal ~~shall be~~ found invalid, the previous decision shall stand. The appeal process shall adhere to procedures detailed in the GSA Bylaws.

## Article V – Election and Appointment Procedures

The Assembly, acting as the represented will of all GSA members, shall grant executive powers to the voting members of the Executive Board, as well as leadership responsibilities in the Assembly to the Officers of the Assembly, by electing them to their positions, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The Executive Board shall make all executive appointments, and shall report these appointments to the Assembly.

- i. All voting members of the Executive Board are elected by the General Assembly of Delegates in person, no later than the last Assembly meeting of the academic year in accordance with the election procedure described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. ~~They~~ The vote shall be rescheduled only if given explicit consent by the Assembly.
- ii. Executive Board members are elected by Majority vote at the Assembly via secret ballot. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the two candidates receiving the largest pluralities will immediately participate in a run-off election, the winner of which shall be determined by a majority vote.
- iii. Executive Board election shall be conducted by an Election Officer, nominated by the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly, and confirmed by the Assembly, as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- iv. Candidates running for Executive Board positions shall reveal their intent no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting immediately prior to the Assembly Meeting when the

election shall take place. Candidates shall be admitted to the election past this deadline only if given explicit consent by the Assembly.

- v. Candidates of Chairpersons of Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be nominated by any members of the Assembly during the first Assembly meeting of the fall semester. They are elected by Majority Vote of the Assembly, no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting immediately subsequent to the Assembly meeting when nomination ~~shall~~ take place. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the two candidates receiving the largest pluralities will immediately participate in a run-off election, the winner of which shall be determined by a majority vote.
- vi. Chairpersons of Special Committees may be nominated at the Committee's formation, or by its members during its first meeting. The Chairperson of any Special Committees shall be confirmed by the Assembly no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting subsequent to the Assembly meeting when the Special Committee was formed.
- vii. Other officers of Standing Committees and Special Committees of the Assembly shall be elected by the Committee's membership, and reported to the Assembly, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- viii. Delegates, Special Delegates, Delegates-at-Large selected to represent the GSA within University Governance shall be nominated by the Executive Board, and confirmed by the Assembly, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- ix. The Executive Board shall make executive appointments to leadership positions in Executive Programming Committees, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws. These auxiliary appointments shall be reported to the Assembly.
- x. The Executive Board shall appoint the Administrative Director of the GSA, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws, and report the appointment to the Assembly.
- xi. The Executive Board shall make other executive auxiliary appointments to external bodies not part of the University governance structure as described by the Constitution of the University Council. These auxiliary appointments shall be reported to the Assembly.

## **Article VI – Amendments and Replacements**

### **Section 1. Amendments**

- i. All amendments to this Constitution shall only be enacted by Acts of the Assembly in accordance ~~to~~with procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. Amendments to the Constitution shall be considered no earlier than the second Assembly meeting of the academic year, and approved no later than the Assembly meeting prior to elections;
- iii. Amendments shall not be both proposed and voted on within the same Assembly meeting, unless such requirement is waived by a Two-Thirds Majority vote.
- iv. Once proposed, amendments shall be voted on by the Assembly within sixty (60) days; otherwise, the amendment dies.
- v. Constitutional amendments shall always be proposed and approved in person in an Assembly meeting, and never electronically;
- vi. The Graduate School and the Commission ~~of~~on Graduate Studies and Policies shall be notified of the proposed amendments, where recommendations may be deliberated.
- vii. All amendments shall require a Three-Fourths Majority in the assembly to be approved. Amendments must be approved by Delegates or Alternates in person at an Assembly Meeting, and cannot be approved electronically or by any voting by proxy.
- viii. The amended Constitution shall be considered by the Commission on Student Affairs providing oversight to the GSA, ~~who~~which may approve it, refer it back to the Assembly with comments, or reject the proposed constitution in its entirety.
- ix. Upon approval ~~from~~ by the Commission on Student Affairs the amended Constitution shall take effect immediately, unless specified by the amendment itself.
- x. Once adopted and approved, the amended GSA Constitution shall be provided to all members of the Assembly, and be made available to all Graduate Students and the public.

## Section 2. Replacement

If this Constitution ~~shall be~~is replaced by a new document, it is subject to the same procedures as if it were amended.

# **Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly**

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## **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 D; Treasurer – Paragraph 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.

# Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly

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## 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.
- Organizational delegate status will be extended to representatives of an organization whose constituency may not be adequately or formally represented by regular departmental delegates. 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.

#### 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



# Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly

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

## Graduate and Professional School 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 Fair (GPSF) Chair

The GPSF Chair shall oversee the planning and execution of the Graduate and Professional School Fair. The GPSF Chair shall report directly to the Executive Board. Remuneration for the position of GPSF 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.

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

### 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 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 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 organizing an annual Research Symposium. Membership on this committee is outlined in Article VI, Section 1, Paragraph C 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 D 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 E 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 Dele gate 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 F 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

# **Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly**

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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. 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 February 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.

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## 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 5: The GSA Faculty Advisor

The GSA Faculty Advisor shall be the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Education also known as the Graduate School Dean until the Graduate Student Assembly decides otherwise.

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## **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.

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## **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.