

# Constitution of the Graduate Student Council

## Arkansas State University

### Preamble

We, the graduate students of Arkansas State University, in order to provide means for responsible and effective graduate student participation in the planning and conduct of University affairs, establish this constitution of the Graduate Student Council of Arkansas State University. This Graduate Student Council shall exist as the student government organization representing all students in the Graduate School of Arkansas State University Jonesboro. The Graduate Student Council shall serve as the liaison among graduate students, individually and collectively, the faculty, the administration, and the alumni of Arkansas State University. Further, the Graduate Student Council shall exist as a social and intellectual forum to support and improve the quality of the environment for graduate students at Arkansas State University.

In addition, the general functions of the Graduate Student Council shall be to protect and advocate for the civil rights, social welfare, and economic well-being of graduate students by making recommendations regarding Arkansas State University policies; to sponsor and lend its name to events conducted for the benefit of all graduate students; to extend its fund appropriately for the fulfillment of all graduate student needs; and to facilitate graduate students' access to information regarding the resources and services available to graduate students.

Moreover, we the graduate students acknowledge the diversity of human experience; and, whereas, we the graduate students exist to further knowledge within our disciplines by eliminating biases and prejudices; be it resolved that the Graduate Student Council shall adopt, as continuing policy, that no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, age, disability, national and/or ethnic origin, marital status, gender, or sexual orientation.

### Article I. Purpose

**Section 1:** The Graduate Student Council, henceforth referred to as “the GSC,” shall constitute the official governing body of the graduate students of Arkansas State University and the official liaison between the graduate student community and the University.

**Section 2:** The GSC shall be responsible for the distribution of annual student activities fees that are charged to graduate students as distributed to the GSC by the administration. These funds shall be distributed as the GSC sees fit, in accordance with this Constitution, and the mission of the GSC to support the graduate student community.

**Section 3:** The GSC shall be responsible for informing the graduate student community of activities and events that directly impact them.

**Section 4:** The GSC shall be responsible for recognizing official graduate student groups within the graduate student community.

**Section 5:** The GSC shall be responsible for ensuring a graduate student voice within the University by appointing graduate student representatives to University governance boards and committees in accordance to the Shared Governance Oversight Committee (SGOC) policies.

**Section 6:** The GSC shall be responsible for advocating graduate student interests to the University.

## **Article II. Membership and Representation**

**Section 1:** Membership in the GSC shall include all students enrolled in Ph.D. or Masters Programs within the Graduate School at Arkansas State University, who will be hereafter referred to as “graduate students.”

**Section 2:** The Vice-President of the GSC shall coordinate with each College or Department that offers a graduate program proper graduate student representation. Graduate students within each department that offers a graduate program shall select representative(s) according to their own procedure. Departments shall be entitled to select one representative for every twenty graduate students enrolled in that department, such that departments with 1-20 graduate students shall select one representative, departments with 21-40 graduate students shall select two representatives, and so forth according to the previous year’s fact book reported by Arkansas State University.

1. The Graduate School shall have the ability to select, at their discretion, a maximum of 2 representatives. One representative shall be a Master’s student and one shall be a Ph.D. student. If the Ph.D. position cannot be filled by a Ph.D. student then a Master’s student can fill this seat and vice versa.
2. The Office of International Programs (OIP) shall have the ability to select, at their discretion, a maximum of 2 representatives. The selected representative(s) shall be in addition to those that may be appointed through the department selection process.

**Section 3:** Each departmental representative shall serve as a voting member of the GSC. Each voting member shall have one vote.

**Section 4:** The expectations of a GSC Representative are held to the same high standards as those that are established by Arkansas State University. A GSC Representative shall:

1. Be continuing their degree program throughout their term of office which shall consist of one academic year;
2. Be able to serve on ancillary committees which require GSC representation;
3. Attend all GSC meetings and functions; two (2) unexcused absences are grounds for dismissal;
4. Coordinate and facilitate discussions with their College’s Dean, Department Chair and Graduate Student Body.
5. Members of the GSC who shall be elected to the Executive Board shall serve as voting representatives, and upon appointment to the Executive Board shall relinquish their

previously held representative position. Requirements and duties of the Executive Board shall be defined in Article III.

**Section 5:** Departments and Colleges must provide a new representative, either by appointment or special election, within 14 calendar days of being notified by the Vice-President of a vacated seat within their Department or College. If a department fails to select a representative, the Vice-President shall have the power to recognize any at-large graduate student representative, who has attended two regular meetings of the Graduate Student Council, to represent that department.

### **Article III. Officers**

**Section 1:** The GSC shall elect as its officers a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and appoint a Communications Chair and Travel Fund Administrator.

**Section 2:** Officers shall preside for a term of one year. All officers are required to attend every meeting of the GSC and Executive Board. Two unexcused absences from any meeting are grounds for immediate removal.

**Section 3:** General GSC Executive Board duties

1. To secure the annual budget for the GSC;
2. To set the calendar of events for the GSC;
3. To review any proposed amendments to the constitution;
4. To review any SGOC proposal presented to the GSC;
5. To determine the annual objectives of the GSC, and coordinate the functions of the officers in meeting those objectives;
6. To serve as the “voice of all graduate students at Arkansas State University,” serving as an advocate and resource.

**Section 4:** The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer will receive a stipend at the end of each semester. The amount of stipends will be determined by the executive council.

### **Section 5: Office of President**

The President shall serve as Chair of the GSC and shall preside at all general meetings and GSC Executive Board meetings. He or she shall serve as the official representative of the GSC to the University and greater Providence community. The President shall be responsible for maintaining the common vision and goals of GSC, promoting its growth and sustainability, and upholding its Constitution.

1. If a graduate assistantship position is open in the Graduate Student Council Office, the President shall be employed as one of the two GSC GA's and shall oversee the office and maintain the office in a professional and efficient manner.
2. If the President-elect is currently employed by ASU-J in any manner, the President-elect will be allowed to maintain current employment status and the President-elect and

President Emeritus can seek to employ a second office GA to assist in maintaining the office in a professional and efficient manner.

3. The President is accountable to the Executive Board and the GSC.
4. The President along with the members of the executive board will appoint a three person Travel Fund Committee that will include a Travel Fund Administrator.
5. The President is responsible to attend, or send a proxy to the SGOC, Graduate Council, AARC and ASU's Budget Committee meetings.
6. The President shall represent the GSC on matters of business with the Dean of the Graduate School and other Arkansas State University Officials.
7. The President shall have the power to form ad-hoc committees and appoint the chairman of said committee.
8. The President has the power to interpret the meaning of any ambiguous articles, clauses, or provision of the GSC Constitution.
9. The President, in their interpretation of said meaning, shall not abridge or repeal any of the rights, privileges or duties set forth with the articles of the Constitution.
10. The President is responsible to oversee parliamentary authority procedures during every meeting:
  - Speaking without being recognized by the presiding officer.
  - Interrupting a speaker who currently has the floor.
  - Not remaining germane to the subject matter currently up for discussion.
  - Discussing topics designated for open forum during times delegated for business.
11. The President has the parliamentary authority to remove any member from the GSC meeting for boisterous behavior.
12. The President shall seat elected executive officers at the closing of the last meeting of the spring semester.
13. The President shall perform such duties as the office shall require.

## **Section 5: Office of Vice President**

The Vice President shall fulfill all the duties of the President and act on his or her behalf in the absence of the President.

1. The VP shall review and revise any proposal sent to the SGOC by the GSC.
2. The VP shall be responsible for overseeing graduate student representation on University Shared Governance Committees.
3. The VP shall be responsible for overseeing graduate student representation from each college/department on campus.
4. The VP shall appoint representative to any open seats left vacant by any campus college/department.
5. The VP shall serve as the official representative of the GSC to the SGA and serve as the primary proxy for the GSC representative on all Shared Governance Committees.
6. The VP is responsible to oversee spring elections of the Executive Board. These duties include accepting nominations for the executive board no later than two weeks before last spring Council meeting, present the executive board with nominations no later than one week before last meeting, creating the ballots, passing out ballots to every GSC member

present at the last meeting, take up ballots, officially count ballots with secretary and announce the winners of the election.

7. The VP shall perform such duties as the office shall require.

In the case of the President having an excused absence from a meeting, the Vice-President shall maintain parliamentary authority while conducting business meeting.

### **Section 6: Office of Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of each meeting of the GSC and Executive Board.

1. The Secretary shall maintain the official roster of all council members and take attendance at all GSC meetings.
2. The Secretary shall notify members, graduate advisors, and the campus daily digest of all Council meetings.
3. The Secretary shall create official GSC minutes, and present them to GSC meetings for approval.
4. The Secretary shall be responsible to make sure that the minutes are posted promptly to the GSC website.
5. The Secretary shall perform such duties as the office shall require.

In the case of the Secretary having an excused absence from a meeting, the Communications Chair shall keep record of the proceedings of said meeting.

### **Section 7: Office of Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall manage the GSC's University accounts and assets.

1. The Treasurer shall create an official report monthly and present to the Executive Board for approval before presenting to the GSC.
2. The Treasurer shall receive and maintain monthly reports submitted by the Travel Fund Administrator.
3. The Treasurer shall prepare with the President the annual budget of the GSC by the end of the fall semester.
4. The Treasurer shall perform such duties as the office shall require.

### **Section 8: Office of Communications Chair**

The Communications Chair shall be responsible for maintaining the webpage, Facebook, Blog or any other social media accounts used by the GSC. The CC shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

The Communications Chair shall be excused from their position by the Executive Board at any time and does not fall under Article V of this Constitution, if it is deemed that the CC is not fulfilling their duties that have been set forth by the Executive Board and this constitution.

## **Section 9: Travel Fund Administrator**

The Travel Fund Administrator and two member committee shall be appointed by the elected Executive Board during the first Executive Board meeting after assumption of duties in the spring.

1. The Travel Fund Administrator shall develop a yearly calendar for travel fund hearings.
2. The TFA will lead the Travel Fund hearing.
3. The TFA shall notify each applicant specific scheduled time for hearing.
4. The TFA shall notify the President and Treasurer of the awarded funds before applicants are notified.
5. The TFA shall notify each applicant if they have been awarded any funds.
6. The TFA shall be responsible for all applications, and vouchers, making sure they are in compliance with the Travel Fund Guidelines.
7. The TFA shall be responsible in keeping all travel fund records in order and present the Executive Board with a monthly report.
8. The TFA shall be responsible to keep the Treasurer notified of any funds that are being paid out.
9. The TFA or any member of committee must excuse themselves if they are applying for travel funds. The President or Vice President shall be the official proxy.
10. The TFA shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

The TFA or any member of the Travel Fund committee shall be excused from their positions by the Executive Board at any time and does not fall under Article V of this Constitution, if it is deemed that the committee or administrator is not complying with the Travel Guidelines that has been set forth by the Executive Committee.

**Section 10:** Upon completion of his or her active term, the President shall remain on the GSC Board for one semester in the capacity of President Emeritus. The President Emeritus shall advise the officers of the GSC in accordance with the Constitution.

## **Article IV. Election of Officers**

**Section 1:** Any graduate student that is currently in good standing and serving on the GSC shall be eligible for nomination to any office of the GSC for the upcoming year.

**Section 2:** Elections shall be held once per year at the last spring meeting.

**Section 3:** Nominations shall be opened during the meeting prior to election of officers.

**Section 4:** For each office, the candidate securing a plurality of votes of the representatives present shall be elected to that office.

**Section 5:** All officers shall assume the duties of their office at the closing of the last meeting of the spring semester.

**Section 6:** If for any reason the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall assume the position and duties of President, and the office of Vice President shall be vacant and shall be filled in accordance to Article IV Section 7.

**Section 7:** If for any reason any executive seat besides that of the President becomes vacant, the President shall appoint an interim that will take on the responsibilities of the vacated executive seat. The interim will maintain this position until the following spring election at which time, the interim can officially be elected to this position or any other position if desired.

## **Article V. Recall of Officers**

### **Section 1: Justification**

1. Willful violation of this Constitution, incompetence, consecutive or continual absences, and neglect of the duties of the office shall be sufficient justification for a recall of any member of the executive board.

### **Section 2: Procedure of Recall**

1. The President must call a recall election if at least thirty-three percent (33%) of the active (members who have been to at least 4 meetings in a semester) Graduate Student Council members sign a petition demanding the recall of an officer; said petition must state the reason for seeking a recall.
2. Upon receipt of the recall petition, the President and /or Secretary shall send written notice to the Graduate Student Council members informing them of the date of the recall election, the name of the officer facing recall, and the reasons for recall explicitly listed on the petition. This notice shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the recall election and must take place within seven (7) days after written notification has been sent out.
3. Upon receipt of the recall petition, the President and/or Secretary shall quickly notify the officer whose recall is being sought that they are facing a recall and be given a copy of the list of charges they are facing. The officer facing recall shall be immediately suspended from their office and duties pending the recall election.

### **Section 3: The Recall Meeting**

1. Both the officer facing recall and a designated representative of the members seeking their recall shall have the opportunity to present their respective arguments prior to the actual vote.
2. All present members of the Council are entitled to one (1) vote. This vote shall be by written ballot.
3. The President and/or Secretary shall count the written ballots.

#### **Section 4: Needed Votes**

1. Any officer may be removed from their position by a vote of a 2/3 majority of the representatives present at a GSC meeting.

### **Article VI. Meeting Guidelines**

#### **Section 1: Council Meetings**

1. The GSC shall meet twice per month during the academic year.
2. The day and time of the Council meeting shall be determined by the GSC Executive Board availability.
3. The President shall schedule the Fall and Spring meetings. Yearly meetings should be posted on the GSC website by September 1.
4. The GSC meetings shall take place in the Executive Board Room on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the Library.
5. Meetings shall be open and accessible to all graduate students.
6. The first meeting of the academic year must be held prior to September 1.
7. The last meeting of the academic year must be held prior to the first day of the spring semester finals.

#### **Section 2: Executive Meetings**

1. The Executive Board shall meet twice per month, opposite weeks of the GSC meetings.
2. The Executive Board shall review minutes of the last council meeting and shall discuss the agenda for next council meeting.

#### **Section 3: Emergency Meetings**

1. Emergency meeting must be called by the President and the President must give the GSC representatives a two (2) day notice before the date of the emergency meeting.

Meetings may be scheduled, rescheduled, or cancelled by a majority vote of the GSC or at the discretion of the President.

#### **Section 4: Quorum**

1. Representation from 1/2 of the departments of the Graduate School shall constitute a quorum.

#### **Section 5: Motions**

1. The GSC shall consider all motions brought before it by individual members. Motions, except those otherwise specified in this Constitution, may be passed by approval of the majority of voting members present.



## **Article VII. Finances**

**Section 1:** The annual revenue of the GSC shall include monies from student activities fees collected from each graduate student at the beginning of the academic year.

**Section 2:** At the first GSC meeting of the academic year, the Treasurer shall present a report of the previous fiscal year's budget, revenues, and expenses.

**Section 3:** At the first GSC meeting of the academic year, the Treasurer shall submit a budget of expected revenues and proposed expenses for the upcoming academic year.

**Section 4:** Upon majority vote of the representatives present at any meeting, the GSC shall provide funds from the revenues specified in the budget to support events or activities that are of interest to the graduate student body or graduate student groups.

**Section 5:** As long as a minimum reserve of monies is maintained, the GSC may provide grants from its carry-over funds to support proposals that will have a lasting impact upon the graduate student body. Such grants shall require approval by a 2/3 majority of representatives present at a GSC meeting.

## **Article VIII. Amendments**

### **Section 1: Powers of Amendments**

1. The powers to amend the Constitution of the Graduate Student Council shall rest with the Council.
2. The Constitution may be amended by approval of a 2/3 (2/3) majority of the representatives present at two consecutive meetings of the GSC.

### **Section 2: Sponsored Amendments**

1. Amendments must be sponsored by a GSC representative currently serving on the GSC.
2. The Council members must present the proposed amendment in writing to the Secretary.
3. The Secretary has forty-eight (48) hours to take said proposal to the Executive Board for review.
4. Proposed amendments shall be made available to all voting members at least one week prior to the second vote.

### **Section 3A: Executive Board Review**

1. The Executive Board must deliberate on the validity of said amendment.
2. If the amendment is approved, the GSC must be given a minimum of one (1) weeks' notice with a maximum of three (3) weeks' notice, in writing, prior to the meeting at which the amendment(s) is/are to be considered.

3. If the amendment(s) is/are deemed invalid, it must be returned to the petitioning members with a full explanation, in writing, of the reasons for disapproval. The Executive Board will have two (2) weeks following the next official meeting to render a decision.

### **Section 3B: Executive Board Review Override**

1. In the event that said amendment(s) are deemed invalid, the proposing members can take the amendment to the floor of the next general meeting. If the proposing members decide to attempt an override, they must alert the Secretary within forty-eight (48) hours that they will bring the amendments(s) to the floor. The amendment must stand for a minimum of two (2) weeks to a maximum of four (4) weeks prior to the amendment voting meeting.

### **Section 4: Amendment Adoption**

1. Amendments shall be adopted immediately upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) present of the voting members present at a Council meeting.
2. Amendments to the constitution shall be binding immediately upon passage at the second consecutive meeting.
3. In the event that the proposed amendment(s) fail(s) to meet the two-thirds (2/3) requirement for adoption, the members who proposed the amendment must wait a minimum of four (4) weeks to resubmit the amendment proposal.

## **Article IX. Constitution**

**Section 1:** Adoption of a new constitution shall follow the same procedure as amendments to the Constitution as stated above in Article VIII, Section 1.

**Section 2:** If a new Constitution has been proposed and pass, it shall be binding immediately upon passage at the second consecutive meeting.

**Section 3:** A new Constitution shall supersede all previous constitutions and should be documented under the following Article X Section 1 the date of implementation.

## **Article X. Powers of the Constitution**

**Section 1:** This Constitution supersedes all previous constitutions as of November 30<sup>th</sup> 2011.

## **Article XI. Equal Opportunity**

**Section 1:** The GSC shall support and abide by all Arkansas State University Equal Opportunity guidelines, and shall never discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, and disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex, except where sex is a bona fide occupational qualification.