

# University of Delaware Graduate Student Government Bylaws

(Updated: 25 March 2020)

## Article I. Membership

### Section 1. GSG Members

(a) Membership in the GSG shall be all students enrolled in a graduate-level Academic Plan at any campus or satellite campus of the University.

### Section 2. Members-at-Large

(a) The members-at-large of the GSG are those graduate students wishing to participate fully in the activities of the GSG.

(b) Unlike senators, members-at-large are unable to vote, except when serving as a proxy.

(c) Members-at-large are eligible to serve as committee chairs.

(d) Graduate College Council Representatives are considered honorary members-at-large.

### Section 3. Organizational Delegates

(a) Organizational delegate status shall be extended to representatives of University-recognized student organizations.

(b) Organizational delegates must be graduate students.

(c) A delegate cannot represent multiple organizations or both an Academic Plan and an organization simultaneously.

(d) Organizational delegates may not vote.

### Section 4. Senators

(a) The senators of the GSG, to be elected following Article IV, Section 3 of these Bylaws, shall consist of one representative per Academic Plan.

(b) The most current official list of Academic Plans as compiled by the Graduate College shall be considered binding for the purpose of determining eligibility for Senate membership.

## Section 5. Committee Membership

- (a) Committees of the GSG, as defined in Article III of these Bylaws, are open to all GSG members.
- (b) Only members-at-large, senators, and officers may serve as committee chair.

## Section 6. Officers

- (a) The officers of the GSG, to be selected following Article IV, Section 2 of these Bylaws, shall consist of the President, the Vice President of Internal Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Membership, the Secretary, and the Parliamentarian.

## Section 7. Graduate College Council Representatives

- (a) Graduate College Council Representatives, to be elected following Article IV, Section 5 of these Bylaws, are those graduate students who serve on the Graduate College Council.
- (b) There shall be at least one Representative per College of the University, in accordance with the Bylaws of the Graduate College.
- (c) All Representatives serve on the Graduate College Council Committee, as detailed in Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

## Section 8. Active Standing

- (a) Each senator, committee chair, and officer must meet the active standing requirements defined in Article II of these Bylaws.
- (b) Each Graduate College Council Representative must meet the active standing requirements defined in Article III of these Bylaws.
- (c) If an officer, senator, committee chair, or Graduate College Council Representative falls out of active standing, they will be subject to removal as outlined in Article V of these Bylaws.

# **Article II. Structure**

## Section 1. Meetings

- (a) GSG meetings shall be held once a month beginning in September and ending in May, inclusive of January, and shall be open to the public.

1. The meeting will be called to order by the President, at which point the

Secretary must begin taking minutes.

2. During the Executive Branch portion of the meeting, all GSG members and any visitors are permitted to speak.

3. Senate Floor must be opened with a motion.

a. The standard debate protocol used on the Senate Floor is described in the Standard Operating Procedures.

(b) The Executive Council shall meet at least twice a month in closed meeting sessions.

(c) Each Committee Board shall meet at least once a semester.

(d) Special meetings may be called by any officer.

## Section 2. Executive Branch

(a) The duties of each officer of the Executive Council, which will constitute the requirements to maintain active standing, are as follows:

1. The President is responsible for:

a. Presiding over GSG meetings.

b. Presiding over Executive Council meetings.

c. The overall operations of the GSG.

d. Chairing the Graduate College Council Committee.

e. Serving as the primary spokesperson for the graduate student community and representing the community at appropriate functions.

f. Attending major GSG programs and functions and assisting in planning GSG programs as needed.

g. Serving as the main liaison to the Faculty Advisor.

h. Reviewing GSG governing documents, including the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standard Operating Procedures, and updating them as appropriate in consultation with the Governance Committee.

2. The Vice President of Internal Affairs shall:

- a. Oversee the Internal Affairs Board and all committees that pertain to the internal organization of the GSG, including the Communications, Events, and Social committees and any pertinent ad hoc committees.
- b. Serve as an ex-officio member of the aforementioned committees.
- c. Serve as the main liaison between the aforementioned committees and the Executive Council. In this manner, they shall function as an intermediary and a facilitator for committee work and will ensure that fruitful collaborations across committees occur.
- d. Help the President implement any and all policies, initiatives, and events they undertake in their time as President.
- e. Be responsible for running GSG meetings if the President is not in attendance.

3. The Vice President of Student Affairs shall:

- a. Oversee the Student Affairs Board and all committees that pertain to the student advocacy-focused committees of the GSG, including the Diversity, Mental Health, Student Life, and Sustainability committees and any pertinent ad hoc committees.
- b. Serve as an ex-officio member of the aforementioned committees.
- c. Serve as the main liaison between the aforementioned committees and the Executive Council. In this manner, they shall function as an intermediary and a facilitator for committee work and will ensure that fruitful collaborations across committees occur.
- d. Help the President implement any and all policies, initiatives, and events they undertake in their time as President.
- e. Be responsible for running GSG meetings if the President and Vice President of Internal Affairs are not in attendance.

4. The Vice President of Membership shall:

- a. Be responsible for the maintenance and dissemination of the membership roster of the GSG in accordance with these Bylaws, including maintaining accurate records of member service.
- b. Grant senators excuse from absence at public GSG meetings, as needed.
- c. Chair the Elections Committee.
- d. Be responsible for the elections procedure outlined in Article IV of these Bylaws.
- e. Serve as the GSG's chief recruitment officer and contact Academic Plans when seats are vacant.
- f. Recommend to the Graduate College the removal of any Graduate College Council Representative who fails to maintain active standing.
- g. Help the President implement any and all policies, initiatives, and events they undertake in their time as President.
- h. Be responsible for running GSG meetings if the President, the Vice President of Internal Affairs, and the Vice President of Student Affairs are not in attendance.

5. The Secretary shall:

- a. Record minutes at all public GSG meetings and Executive Council meetings.
- b. Prepare the agenda and subsequent PowerPoint for all public GSG meetings.
- c. Help the President implement any and all policies, initiatives, and events they undertake in their time as President.
- d. Be responsible for running GSG meetings if the President, the Vice President of Internal Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the Vice President of Membership are not in attendance.

(b) In addition to the Executive Council, the Executive Branch is composed of the Internal Affairs Board, the Student Affairs Board, and the members of each committee, as described in Article II, Section 1 and Article III of the Constitution.

### Section 3. Legislative Branch

(a) Per Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, the Senate shall be the legislative body of the GSG.

1. Senate Floor shall be run per Article II, Section 1 of these Bylaws.

(b) Each senator shall have the following duties:

1. To attend all public GSG meetings. No Academic Plan shall go unrepresented, and it is the duty of the senator to ensure proper representation of their Academic Plan.

a. A senator may request an excuse from absence at a public GSG meeting due to exceptional circumstances such as family emergencies or illness. Senators will notify the Vice President of Membership and should identify a proxy in advance of the meeting if circumstances allow. Such an excused absence will not count against the senator's fulfillment of their duties.

2. To vote on legislation.

3. To vote for officers to serve on the Executive Council and for Representatives to serve on the Graduate College Council.

4. To disseminate information and recommendations from the GSG to their constituents.

5. To be responsible for soliciting ideas and opinions of their constituencies and forwarding them to the Executive Council.

6. To attend any special meeting warranted by the Executive Council.

7. To serve on at least one internal standing or ad hoc committee.

a. The Internal Affairs committees and Student Affairs committees are outlined in Article III of these Bylaws.

b. Senators may also serve on an external University committee, including but not limited to any Faculty Senate committee, the Sustainability Council, or the Newark City Council.

c. Service on a committee requires attendance at all meetings, unless an absence has been pre-approved by the committee chair.

8. The responsibilities outlined here are considered the requirements for maintaining active standing as a senator. Failure to maintain active standing is grounds for removal, as outlined in Article V of these Bylaws.

(c) Per Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, the chairperson of the Senate shall be the Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian is required to uphold the duties outlined below to maintain active standing.

1. The Parliamentarian ensures an adherence to parliamentary procedure.

2. The Parliamentarian shall be the chair of the Governance Committee.

3. The Parliamentarian shall chair the Senate Floor. In the event the Parliamentarian is not in attendance at a meeting, the Deputy Parliamentarian shall chair the Senate.

a. The Executive Council shall nominate a Senator to be the Deputy Parliamentarian prior to the first meeting.

b. The Senate shall vote to approve the nominee at the first meeting. In the event the nominee is not approved, nominations will be taken from the Floor and an election held immediately.

c. The sole duty of the Deputy Parliamentarian will be to chair the Senate in the Parliamentarian's absence. They shall be an ex-officio member of the Governance Committee.

4. The Governance Committee shall review all amendments to the GSG's governing documents as well as any legislation brought before the Senate. This includes yearly review of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standard Operating Procedures in consultation with the President, as per Article II, Section 2 of these Bylaws.

5. The Parliamentarian shall be elected in the spring with the rest of the officers.

6. To ensure the unbiased nature of the position, the Parliamentarian will not be a member of the Executive Council, nor can they serve as a senator.

7. The Parliamentarian shall meet monthly with the Executive Council to aid in the planning of the public meeting's agenda.

### **Article III. Committees**

#### **Section 1. The Internal Affairs Board**

(a) Per Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, the Internal Affairs Board shall be chaired by the Vice President of Internal Affairs and shall consist of the committee chairs for each of the standing Internal Affairs committees and any relevant ad hoc committees. The Internal Affairs Board shall meet a minimum of once per semester.

#### 1. The Standing Internal Affairs Committees

a. The standing Internal Affairs committees shall be the Communications, Events, and Social committees.

b. Each standing Internal Affairs committee shall organize its first meeting before the second public GSG meeting of the academic year.

c. Each standing Internal Affairs committee must consist of a chair and at least two additional members, who may be any combination of senators and members-at-large.

d. Each standing Internal Affairs committee must choose a committee chairperson, in line with Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution.

1. This must occur at the first committee meeting of the academic year through a secret ballot. A simple majority among the committee members determines who serves as chair.

2. Any member-at-large, senator, or officer is eligible for the position of committee chair.

3. Committee members may choose to elect two co-chairs in lieu of a single chair.

4. Under certain circumstances, described in Article IV, Section 4 of these Bylaws, committee chairs may be appointed.

#### 2. Standing Internal Affairs Committee Chairs

a. Shall be appointed by the second public GSG meeting of the year.

b. Shall be responsible for calling committee meetings at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters.

- c. Shall be responsible for scheduling the location of the meeting, unless otherwise advised by the Vice President of Internal Affairs.
- d. Shall be responsible for recording and maintaining meeting minutes and committee member attendance.
- e. Shall remain in close communication with the Vice President of Internal Affairs throughout the academic year and report committee member standing to the Vice President of Membership.

## Section 2. The Student Affairs Board

(a) Per Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, the Student Affairs Board shall be chaired by the Vice President of Student Affairs and shall consist of the committee chairs for each of the standing Student Affairs committees and any relevant ad hoc committees. The Student Affairs Board shall meet a minimum of once per semester.

### 1. The Standing Student Affairs Committees

- a. The standing Student Affairs committees shall be the Diversity, Mental Health, Student Life, and Sustainability committees.
- b. Each standing Student Affairs committee shall organize its first meeting before the second public GSG meeting of the academic year.
- c. Each standing Student Affairs committee must consist of a chair and at least two additional members, who may be any combination of senators and members-at-large.
- d. Each standing Student Affairs committee must choose a committee chairperson, in line with Article IV, Section 3 the Constitution.
  - 1. This must occur at the first committee meeting of the academic year through a secret ballot. A simple majority among the committee members determines who serves as chair.
  - 2. Any member-at-large, senator, or officer is eligible for the position of committee chair.
  - 3. Committee members may choose to elect two co-chairs in lieu of a single chair.

4. Under certain circumstances, described in Article IV, Section 4 of these Bylaws, committee chairs may be appointed.

## 2. Standing Student Affairs Committee Chairs

- a. Shall be appointed by the second public GSG meeting of the year.
- b. Shall be responsible for calling committee meetings at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters.
- c. Shall be responsible for scheduling the location of the meeting, unless otherwise advised by the Vice President of Student Affairs.
- d. Shall be responsible for recording and maintaining meeting minutes and committee member attendance.
- e. Shall remain in close communication with the Vice President of Student Affairs throughout the academic year and report committee member standing to the Vice President of Membership.

## Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees

(a) Ad hoc committees shall be provisional committees to manage temporary functions for the GSG and/or address topics of interest to the graduate student body that do not fall under the purview of the existing standing committees.

1. Ad hoc committees must be created under either the Vice President of Internal Affairs or the Vice President of Student Affairs, as appropriate.
2. Ad hoc committees must consist of a chair and at least two additional members, who may be any combination of senators and members-at-large.
3. Upon creation of an ad hoc committee, the charge, deliverables, and time frame of the committee must be declared.
4. The Senate may create an ad hoc committee by a simple majority.
5. Ad hoc committees are automatically dissolved at the end of each academic year unless designated to continue by a two-thirds majority vote.
6. The Senate may dissolve an ad hoc committee before the end of the time frame stated during its creation by a two-thirds majority vote.

(b) Ad Hoc Committee Chairs

1. Shall be appointed at the first committee meeting of the academic year through a secret ballot. A simple majority among the committee members determines who serves as chair.
2. Shall be responsible for calling committee meetings at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters.
3. Shall be responsible for scheduling the location of the meeting unless otherwise advised by the Vice President under whose management the committee falls.
4. Shall be responsible for recording and maintaining meeting minutes and committee member attendance.
5. Shall remain in close communication with the Vice President of Internal Affairs or the Vice President of Student Affairs, as the case may be, throughout the academic year.
6. Shall report committee member standing to the Vice President of Membership.
7. May be appointed, under the circumstances described in Article IV, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

#### Section 4. Graduate College Council Committee

(a) The Graduate College Council Committee shall be a stand-alone committee outside the purview of any Vice President.

1. Its members shall consist of every Graduate College Council Representative and every GSG officer.
2. It shall be chaired by the President of the GSG.
3. It shall meet at least once a semester.

(b) The duties of the Graduate College Council Representatives include:

1. At least one Representative shall be present at each public GSG meeting and provide any pertinent updates to the rest of the GSG body. In the case that no Representative can be present, any of their Alternates may attend in their stead.
2. To maintain active standing, a Representative must:

a. Have no more than two unexcused absences from Graduate College Council meetings.

b. Adhere to the rules of the Graduate College Bylaws.

3. If a Representative fails to maintain active standing, the Vice President of Membership shall recommend their removal to the Graduate College Council, as outlined in Article V, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

#### Section 5. External Committees

(a) Nominations, including self-nominations, to serve on Faculty Senate and other external standing or ad hoc committees for the academic year must be received by the President prior to the September meeting.

1. Nominees shall be vetted by the Executive Council, which shall then present a slate to the Senate for approval in full at the September meeting.

2. No nominee may serve on more than one Faculty Senate standing committee.

3. If the slate is not approved, Senate Floor shall be opened for elections from among the original pool of nominees and each position shall be elected individually.

4. Any positions that remain unfilled at the end of the September meeting shall default to the President until another election can be held at the October meeting.

(b) Appointments to fill any vacancies or any other external committee appointments, standing or ad hoc, shall be made by the President. All interested students are encouraged to discuss their interest in serving on an external committee with the President.

### **Article IV. Elections and Appointments**

#### Section 1. Elections Committee

(a) The Elections Committee shall be responsible for developing standard Elections Rules and for coordinating all aspects of elections.

1. Elections Rules must be approved by the Senate by the end of the February meeting.

(b) The Elections Committee shall consist of four members. One member shall be the Vice President of Membership, who shall serve as chair and as a non-voting

member of the committee. The three voting members may be senators or members-at-large.

## Section 2. Officer Elections

(a) Eligibility: Any graduate student is eligible to run for any officer position in which they have not already served two terms.

(b) Terms: The term for the offices of President, the Vice President of Internal Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Membership, the Secretary, and the Parliamentarian shall be one year, with a limit of two terms.

(c) All officers and senators who are in active standing at the time polls open may vote in officer elections.

(d) Elections Timeline: Nominations are due to the Elections Committee by the March meeting. A special elections meeting will be held at least two weeks prior to the April meeting, and online polls will open that evening. Polls will be open for one week, and the victors will be announced to the Senate within 72 hours of polls closing. The outgoing and incoming officers shall run the April meeting together. The incoming officers shall be formally sworn in at the May meeting and will run the May meeting.

(e) Vacancies: A vacancy among the officers shall be filled by the Senate by a special election to be held at the public meeting immediately following that at which such vacancy was announced.

1. A newly elected officer may serve as the proxy senator for their respective Academic Plan over the course of two meetings of the GSG. Every effort shall be made to fill the senator position with an individual other than the officer. If no new senator is found after two meetings of the Senate, the Academic Plan shall lose representation until such time that a senator is found.

2. If, after a replacement senator is designated, an officer relinquishes their office, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the vacating officer shall not claim or reclaim voting rights for any Academic Plan. However, they may continue to serve in the Senate as a member-at-large.

## Section 3. Senator Elections

(a) Eligibility: All graduate students who are enrolled with the University and are members of the Academic Plan they wish to represent are eligible to run for a senator position.

(b) Terms: All senator positions run for a term of one year.

(c) Elections Timeline: Nominees from each Academic Plan must be submitted to the Elections Committee by the March meeting. Online polls shall be open for one week thereafter, at the conclusion of which the Elections Committee shall announce the victors.

(d) Unrepresented Plans: In the event that an Academic Plan is unrepresented after an election, the senator vacancy shall be filled in one of the following ways:

1. Single Candidate: If an individual graduate student expresses interest in serving as senator for an unrepresented program, the Vice President of Membership may appoint them as acting senator for at most three meetings prior to a special election. This acting senator will have the ability to vote on legislation presented at any public meeting. The Senate has the ability to veto said appointment with a two-thirds majority vote on the Senate Floor. This vote must occur prior to the consideration of any other business.

2. Multiple Candidates: When multiple candidates express interest in serving as senator for an unrepresented program, a special election will be scheduled and administered by the Elections Committee under the most recently approved Elections Rules.

3. Special Elections: The special elections process begins with the Vice President of Membership informing the unrepresented program that constituents have two weeks to submit nominations, including self nominations, for the vacant position. An election is held at the end of the two weeks, the results of which determine the program's next senator.

#### Section 4. Committee Chair Elections

(a) Committee chairs shall be elected following the regulations set forth in Article III of these Bylaws.

(b) Appointments: If a committee is without a chair due to removal (as outlined in Article V, Section 3 of these Bylaws) or due to an unfilled chair position, the Executive Council may appoint a new committee chair by the date of the next public GSG meeting.

#### Section 5. Graduate College Council Representative Elections

(a) Eligibility: Eligibility is outlined in Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution.

(b) Terms: Representatives shall serve in terms of one year, with a limit of two terms.

(c) Incoming and outgoing officers and outgoing senators who are in active standing at the time polls open may vote in Representative elections.

(d) Timeline: Nominees from each College of the University must be submitted to the Elections Committee by the May meeting. Online polls shall be open for one week thereafter. Representatives shall be chosen through a ranked-choice vote.

(c) Every Representative shall have an Alternate. Alternates will be selected as the runners-up to the Representative vote.

1. If the Representative vote is uncontested, the elected student may choose their Alternate.

## **Article V. Removal**

### Section 1. Officers

(a) If an officer does not maintain active standing as outlined in Article II, Section 2 of these Bylaws, the GSG shall follow these guidelines for removal:

1. The other officers shall notify the negligent officer in writing of their negligence.
2. If no compromise can be reached, a formal letter signed by the remaining officers shall indicate a Senate vote for removal.
3. Removal of an officer requires a two-thirds Senate vote.
4. After the formal removal of the officer in question, a special election for a new officer should be administered as outlined in Article IV, Section 2 of these Bylaws.

### Section 2. Senators

(a) If a senator does not maintain active standing as outlined in Article II, Section 3 of these Bylaws, the GSG shall follow these guidelines for removal:

1. The Vice President of Membership shall notify the senator in writing of their negligence.
2. If no compromise can be reached, a formal letter signed by each officer indicating the removal of the senator shall be provided to the senator.
3. After the formal removal of the senator in question, the outgoing senator's Academic Plan shall be contacted by the Vice President of

Membership to commence the process of electing a new senator for that Academic Plan, as outlined in Article IV, Section 3 of these Bylaws.

### Section 3. Committee Chairs

(a) If a committee chair or co-chair does not maintain active standing as outlined in Article III of these Bylaws, the GSG shall follow these guidelines for removal:

1. The Vice President of Internal Affairs or Vice President of Student Affairs shall notify the committee chair or co-chair in writing of their negligence.
2. If no compromise can be reached, the Vice President of Internal Affairs or Vice President of Student Affairs shall formally inform the committee chair or co-chair about their impending removal as chair.
3. Removal of a committee chair requires a majority vote of the other committee members, with the Vice President of Internal Affairs or the Vice President of Student Affairs in attendance. Upon removal, the committee in question shall elect a new chair as outlined in Article IV, Section 4 of these Bylaws.
4. After the formal removal of the committee chair or co-chair in question, the former chair or co-chair shall be contacted by the Vice President of Membership to re-evaluate their active standing as senator or member-at-large.

### Section 4. Graduate College Council Representatives

(a) If a Representative does not maintain active standing as outlined in Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, the GSG shall follow these guidelines for removal:

1. The Vice President of Membership shall notify the Representative in writing of their negligence.
2. If no compromise can be reached, the Vice President of Membership shall formally contact the Graduate College about removal of the Representative.
3. Representatives shall be removed by the procedure outlined in the Graduate College Council Bylaws.

### Section 5. Appeals

(a) Any removal may be brought to the Senate for an appeal.

## **Article VI. Amendments**

### **Section 1. Voting Requirements**

(a) As outlined in Article VI, Section 1 of the Constitution, changes to the Constitution require a three-fourths Senate vote and changes to the Bylaws require a two-thirds Senate vote.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

(a) Anyone wishing to bring forth an amendment to these documents must submit the bill or resolution to the Governance Committee three weeks before the next public meeting.

(b) One week before the meeting, the Parliamentarian must send the document to the senators. The document is then eligible to be voted on at the next public GSG meeting.

(c) All amendments must be sponsored by a senator. Amendments may also be sponsored by the Governance Committee.

## **Article VII. Bylaws Suspension**

### **Section 1. Voting Requirements**

(a) Any clause of these Bylaws may be suspended by a two-thirds Senate vote.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

(a) The motion for suspension shall designate a limited time of suspension and specify the reason for the suspension.

(b) All suspensions lapse at the end of each academic year.

## **Article VIII. Conduct of GSG Meetings**

### **Section 1. Quorum**

(a) Quorum is defined to be a simple majority of active senators.

(b) In order to conduct any official GSG business, quorum must be present at the time Senate Floor is opened.

### **Section 2. Voting Procedures**

(a) All votes taken shall require an appropriate majority or supermajority of those senators present, excepting abstentions, to be in favor of the motion.

(b) Senators who are granted an excused absence shall submit their votes for pending legislation to the Vice President of Membership in advance of the meeting.