The Constitution and Bylaws of
the Graduate Student Senate
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Washington University in St. Louis

Ratified: November 2010

ARTICLE I: NAME

This council shall be known as the Graduate Student Senate of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Washington University and hereinafter be referred to as the Senate or GSS.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Senate shall be to:
A. Represent and advocate for the interests of the graduate students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Washington University to:
   a. the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences,
   b. the Faculty in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences,
   c. the Graduate Council of Arts and Sciences,
   d. the Graduate Professional Council of the University,
   e. any others within the University whose actions or positions may affect the interests of the graduate students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and
   f. any others outside of the University making decisions or taking positions that affect graduate students in their role as graduate students.
B. Provide a channel of communication between graduate students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and other members of the Washington University community
C. Encourage and facilitate within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences:
   a. interdisciplinary academic activities,
   b. graduate student governing associations within each department/program, and
   c. interdepartmental social activities.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

The Senate shall be composed of one representative from each degree-granting department or program within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and five officers. Representatives should send someone in their place to a Senate meeting or function if they are unable to attend. This alternative may speak, vote, initiate acts, and have all other rights and responsibilities of an elected representative for the agreed-upon duration.

ARTICLE IV: REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1: Selection of Representatives
A. Department/Program representatives for the upcoming academic year shall be selected at the end of the spring semester by the graduate student associations/graduate students of their respective departments/programs.
B. Departments/Programs may choose to re-select the same representative for an additional one-year term.
C. Representatives shall ordinarily serve no more than two consecutive one-year terms. If a department/program chooses to select the same representative for a third one-year term, this decision must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Senate.
D. The departments/programs whose representatives are elected to the Executive Committee of the Senate shall select additional representatives to the Senate to serve during the officer’s term of office.

Section 2: Term of Office
A. Department/Program representatives shall begin their term of service at the first Senate-sponsored event or at the first regular meeting of the Senate in the Fall semester, as determined by the Executive Committee.
B. Each representative shall serve on the Senate until one day before the first regular meeting of the following academic year. If a representative cannot serve the full term, the representative must, in consultation with the graduate students of the represented department/program, find a replacement (preferably the representative selected by the department/program for the following academic year) for the remainder of the term.

Section 3: Powers and Duties
A. Representation
   Representatives shall represent the interests of the graduate students in their department/program to the Senate.
B. Communication
   a. Representatives shall communicate interests, concerns, and department/program activities to the Senate.
   b. Representatives shall communicate interests, concerns, services, and activities of the Senate to students in their department/program by distributing Senate minutes and other information.
C. Initiation and Voting
   Representatives may choose to initiate Senate acts and vote on Senate initiatives.
D. Committees
   Representatives shall be willing to chair and are expected to serve on committees.

ARTICLE V: ELECTED OFFICERS

Section 1: Election of Officers
A. The Senate shall elect, in the following order, Co-Presidents and Vice Presidents of Communication, Programming, and Finance by secret ballot and simple majority.
B. A simple majority is defined as greater than half of the total number of voting members in attendance. A minimum of fifteen voting members must be present for an election to take place.
C. Nominations are taken from the floor and must be seconded.
D. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off election will be held between the candidates who received the highest number of votes in the previous election until an officer has been elected.
E. Candidates that run but are not elected to an office may run for another office.

Section 2: Term of Office
The term of office begins immediately after the final meeting of the academic year and lasts through the final meeting of the following academic year.

Section 3: Powers and Duties of Co-Presidents
A. The Co-Presidents shall convene meetings of the Senate and set the agenda.
B. The Co-Presidents shall act as chairpersons and presiding officers of Senate meetings.
C. The Co-Presidents shall act as the official representatives of the Senate.
D. The Co-Presidents shall oversee the Senate budget.
E. The Co-Presidents shall regularly report the recent interests, concerns, and activities of the Senate to the Dean of the Graduate School.
F. The Co-Presidents shall be non-voting members of the Senate and shall vote only in the case of a tie.

Section 4: Power and Duties of Vice Presidents
A. The Vice Presidents shall exercise the duties and powers of the Co-Presidents whenever the Co-Presidents are absent.
B. The Vice Presidents shall serve the remainder of the President’s term if the President resigns, is recalled, or is no longer able to serve. In the case that more than one of the Vice Presidents are interested in assuming this role, a simple majority vote will determine the Co-President’s replacement.
C. The Vice Presidents shall be voting members of the Senate if not currently exercising the powers of the Co-Presidents.

Section 5: Powers and Duties of Vice President of Communication
A. The Vice President of Communication shall take minutes as Senate meetings.
B. The Vice President of Communication shall maintain current membership and contact information lists and shall distribute announcements, notes, and minutes to members of the Senate.
C. The Vice President of Communication shall oversee maintenance of the GSS website.

Section 6: Powers and Duties of Vice President of Programming
A. The Vice President of Programming shall maintain lists of committee membership and coordinate with the Co-Presidents and committee chairs to schedule events.
B. The Vice President of Programming shall serve as the liaison between the GSS and Event Services.
C. The Vice President of Programming shall work with the Vice President of Communication to update the news and events sections of the GSS website.

Section 7: Powers and Duties of Vice President of Finance
A. The Vice President of Finance together with the Co-Presidents shall manage the Senate budget.
B. The Vice President of Finance shall keep records of expenditures and communicate with the Dean of the Graduate School about GSS finances.
Section 8: Replacement
A. If one or both of the Co-Presidents of the Senate resigns, is recalled, or is no longer able to serve, that office shall be immediately filled by one of the Vice Presidents as established in Article V, Section 4, B.
B. If the offices of the Vice President of Communication, Programming, or Finance become vacant, a special election by simple majority vote shall be held at the next regular meeting (or special meeting, if desired) to replace that officer.
C. These special elections shall follow the officer election procedures established in Article V, Section 1, B-D.

Section 9: Recall
A. An officer may be removed from office for reasons of nonfeasance, malfeasance, or misfeasance through Senate initiative brought by any voting member of the Senate.
B. A minimum of fifteen voting members must be present to recall an officer.
C. A two-thirds vote is required to remove an officer.

ARTICLE VI: APPOINTED OFFICERS

Section 1: Committee Chairs
A. Committee chairs shall be decided by the Committee members in conjunction with the Executive Committee and will serve at the discretion of the Co-Presidents.
B. Responsibilities include holding regular meetings, advancing the will of the Senate, and executing any other duties established for committee chairs.

Section 2: Other Appointed Officers
Other officers may be appointed by and serve at the discretion of the Co-Presidents.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular Meetings
A. The Senate shall meet at least three times a semester to conduct its business.
B. These meetings shall be scheduled in advance by the Co-Presidents.

Section 2: Special Meetings
A. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Co-Presidents with reasonable notice.
B. All functions of regular meetings may occur.

Section 3: Annual Meeting
A. The Annual Meeting shall be held each year in April for the purpose of officer elections.
B. All functions of regular meetings may occur.

Section 4: Access
A. Regular meetings and the Annual Meeting shall be open to all graduate students represented by the Senate and to guests previously approved by the Co-Presidents.
B. Upon recognition by the Co-Presidents, any person present at a meeting may address the Senate concerning matters of interest to representatives on the Senate.

**ARTICLE VIII: BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

Section 1:
A. A minimum of fifteen voting members must be present to vote on bills and resolutions.
B. Bills and resolutions (excluding constitutional amendments) require approval by majority vote.

Section 2: Procedures
Any voting member may initiate a bill or resolution for consideration by the Senate.

**ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES**

A. The Senate shall create, staff, and disband such committees as it wishes to conduct its business.
B. Committee membership shall be open to any graduate student who is represented by the Senate.

**ARTICLE X: RELATIONSHIP TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL**
The Co-Presidents shall serve on the Graduate Council and be the communications liaisons between the Council and the Senate.

Section 1: Role of Senate Members
A. Senate representatives may be proposed to the degree-granting departments/programs by the Senate to serve as the student representatives on the Graduate Council of Arts and Sciences.
B. The Senate shall propose a slate of three Senate members that are also members of the Graduate Council to serve (as representatives of the graduate students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences) on the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council.

Section 2: Role of the Senate Co-Presidents
A. The Senate Co-President’s program may choose the Senate Co-President to be its student representative to the Graduate Council. In this case, the Senate President will be a voting member of the Graduate Council.
B. If the Senate Co-President’s program chooses another student representative for the Graduate Council, the Senate Co-President will not be a voting member of the Graduate Council. In this case, the Senate’s Co-President will be invited (by invitation of the Dean) to attend all Graduate Council meetings in the role as Senate Co-President and will be included on the Graduate Council mailing list.
C. The Senate Co-President will meet with the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences before the fall semester begins each school year to coordinate the issues to be considered that year by the Graduate Council and the Senate.
D. The Senate Co-President shall forward Senate initiatives affecting Graduate Council affairs to the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for possible inclusion on the agenda of the Graduate Council or other appropriate body.

Section 3: Role of the Remaining Three Senate Members Serving on the Graduate Council
A. If this officer’s program does not choose to send another student as its representative to the Graduate Council, this Senate officer will be a voting member of the Graduate Council.
B. If this officer’s program does choose to send another student as its representative to the Graduate Council, this Senate officer will not be a voting member of the Graduate Council. In this case, the Senate officer will be invited (by invitation of the Dean) to attend all Graduate Council meetings in his/her role as a Senate officer and will be included on the Graduate Council mailing list.

ARTICLE XI: RELATIONSHIP TO GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL
One member of the Executive Committee will serve on the Graduate Professional Council, with one other member of the Senate. These representatives shall be responsible for all communication between the Graduate Professional Council and the Senate.

ARTICLE XII: PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES
All procedural matters not specified herein shall be resolved in accordance with the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

ARTICLE XIII: RATIFICATION
Section 1: This Constitution and Bylaws shall take effect upon ratification by a two-thirds vote. A minimum of fifteen voting members must be present.

Section 2: Upon ratification, this Constitution and Bylaws shall supersede and replace all previous Constitutions and Bylaws of the Senate, including the original constitution that brought this body into being June 18, 1993 and the versions amended and approved April 22, 1994 and April 1997.

ARTICLE XIV: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
Section 1: Initiation
A. Any voting member of the Senate may initiate an amendment to the Constitution.
B. Each amendment must be proposed to the body and circulated to the members in written form before the vote occurs.

Section 2: Ratification
A. This Constitution shall be amended when at least fifteen voting members are present. A two-thirds vote is required to adopt the amendment.
B. An amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption.