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## **Graduate Students' Association Carleton University**

# **Constitution**

Last amended 2016-01-22

# Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement.....	3
Revision History.....	4
Article 1.0 Name.....	5
Article 2.0 Objectives .....	6
Article 3.0 Membership.....	7
Article 4.0 Canadian Federation Of Students.....	8
Article 5.0 Organization.....	9
Article 6.0 Council Organization.....	11
Article 7.0 Finances .....	13
Article 8.0 Elections .....	14
Article 9.0 By-Elections .....	15
Article 10.0 Recall.....	16
Article 11.0 By-Laws .....	17
Article 12.0 Amendment To The Constitution.....	18
Article 13.0 Amendment To The By-Laws.....	19
Article 14.0 Referendum .....	20

## **Land Acknowledgement**

*We, the members of GSA-Carleton are committed to following Indigenous legal traditions of acknowledging the sovereign waters, lands, and the Algonquin Anishinaabeg Nation in the territory of the Kitchissippi watershed, which includes the City of Ottawa. In doing so, we are also acknowledging the illegalities of our presence under Indigenous legal traditions, and acknowledging the ongoing and violent methods of settler colonialism. This acknowledgement is but a first step in accepting our responsibility to correct these injustices through action and furthering the education of ourselves and others.*

## **Revision History**

Accepted in totality on February 10, 1995.

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## **Article 1.0 Name**

- 1.1 The organization shall be known as the “Graduate Students’ Association” of Carleton University, hereinafter to be referred to as the GSA.

## **Article 2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 The GSA shall represent the collective interests and promote the general welfare of the graduate students of Carleton University.
- 2.2 The GSA shall promote and assist in maintaining an academic and social environment free from prejudice, rape culture, discrimination, exploitation, or abuse on the basis of, but not limited to, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation, age, nationality, socio-economic status, political affiliation or belief, disability, or marital status.
- 2.3 The GSA shall promote and maintain communication between the graduate students and the university administration and represent graduate students within the university.
- 2.4 The GSA shall administer graduate students' affairs within the limits prescribed by this constitution (hereinafter to be referred to as the Constitution) and the by-laws of GSA Carleton Inc. (hereinafter to be referred to as the Corporate By-Laws).
- 2.5 The GSA shall aid individual graduate students with specific problems related to the university community.
- 2.6 The GSA shall act to stimulate social, intellectual, and political contact among graduate students.

## **Article 3.0 Membership**

- 3.1 All master's, doctoral, qualifying year, graduate certificate and diploma, and all other students registered as full-time or part-time students within the Faculty of Graduate and Post Doctoral Affairs at Carleton University shall be members of the GSA.
- 3.2 All members of the GSA shall be entitled to use the facilities of the GSA.
- 3.3 All members of the GSA shall be entitled to vote in GSA elections, by-elections, recalls and referenda.

## **Article 4.0 Canadian Federation Of Students**

- 4.1 The GSA is Local 78 of the Canadian Federation of Students and members of the GSA are also members of the Canadian Federation of Students.
- 4.2 The GSA collects and remits membership dues to the Canadian Federation of Students on behalf of its members.



## Article 5.0 Organization

### 5.1 Executive

- 5.1.1 The administrative authority of the GSA shall be vested in the Executive of the GSA, hereinafter to be referred to as the Executive.
- 5.1.2 The Executive shall consist of the President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Operations, Vice-President External and Vice-President Academic.
- 5.1.3 The Executive shall be elected according to the Constitution and By-Laws.
- 5.1.4 An Executive member shall hold office until a successor is duly elected following regulations in the Constitution and By-Laws. The term of office of the Executive shall be from May 1 to April 30 of the following year.
- 5.1.5 The Executive shall be empowered by the council of the GSA (hereinafter to be referred to as Council) to act in the place of Council in dealing with routine business.
- 5.1.6 All members of the Executive shall be members of the GSA. Members of the Executive shall not hold the equivalent of full-time employment (defined as cumulative employment greater than 35 hours/week), outside the GSA, during their term of office unless permitted to do so by Council.
  - 5.1.6.1 An executive member will be considered a member of the GSA if they are registered with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in a minimum of two of the three academic terms during their term of office.
  - 5.1.6.2 An Executive member who accepts the equivalent of full-time employment shall petition Council (as per 5.1.6.3) at the first meeting after having accepted the position(s). Said executive member shall also petition Council at the first meeting of each subsequent academic term.
  - 5.1.6.3 Council shall vote by secret ballot, at the time of request, following the submission of a written work schedule proposal. This proposal shall include, at minimum, attending Council meetings.
  - 5.1.6.4 A performance review, based on Council's criteria, of the Executive member shall be conducted monthly by the Board of Directors of GSA Carleton Inc. excluding the individual concerned during the work term. The performance review shall be presented to Council for decision at the earliest opportunity.
  - 5.1.6.5 An Executive member permitted by Council to hold the equivalent of full-time employment outside the GSA shall be paid 50% of the rate set for the position under Article 5.1.9.
- 5.1.7 The Executive shall be responsible for monitoring the actions of standing and ad hoc committees of Council.
- 5.1.8 Executive members shall regularly report to Council on their activities.
- 5.1.9 A salary shall be provided to each Executive member. Executive remuneration shall be determined by Council in a policy specific to this purpose.
- 5.1.10 In addition to the duties specified in the Constitution and By-Laws, members of

the Executive shall perform other duties at the direction of Council.

5.1.11 The Executive shall not receive any monetary or in kind benefits other than the honoraria referred to in Article 5.1.9, without the consent of Council. This shall not affect the use of GSA facilities and funds reasonably associated.

5.2 Executive members shall perform duties as set out in By-law #4.

## Article 6.0 Council Organization

- 6.1 The legislative authority of the GSA shall be vested in Council.
- 6.2 Council shall be vested with the power to interpret the Constitution and By-Laws and the right to delegate authority.
- 6.3 There shall be a Council chairperson who is appointed by the Executive with the advice and consent of Council. The chairperson shall interpret the Constitution and By-Laws if issues of dispute arise. Council members may appeal a decision of the chair as allowed by Robert's Rules of Order, so the ultimate authority rests with Council. The Chair shall also receive petitions as per Article 5.19.
- 6.4 Members of Council shall hold office until the new Council meets at the beginning of the Fall academic session. If no new nomination is received from their department, then a member of Council may extend their term by one meeting of Council.
- 6.5 Council elections shall be conducted pursuant to Article 8.1.
- 6.6 Members of Council shall include the Executive as defined in Article 5.1.2, departmental representatives as specified in Article 6.7, and other representatives as listed in Article 6.8.
- 6.7 The number of representatives from each department shall be based on the enrollment figures from Carleton University. Each department having twenty-five or more full-time-equivalent graduate students shall be eligible for two departmental representatives on Council. Each department having less than twenty-five full-time-equivalent graduate students shall be eligible for one departmental representative on Council. Here "departments" shall refer to those academic departments, schools and institutes in which graduate students who are members of the GSA may be enrolled.
- 6.8 One seat shall be reserved for a representative of the Graduate Residence Caucus representing graduate students living in campus residence. One shall be reserved for each of the Graduate Student Senators. One/ two seat(s) shall be reserved for the Graduate Student representative/ representatives to the Board of Governors. One seat shall be reserved for the President of the Carleton University Students' Association, or their designate.
- 6.9 All meetings of Council or committees of Council shall adopt those sections of Robert's Rules of Order which do not conflict with the Constitution and By-Laws.
- 6.10 Council meetings shall be open to all members of the GSA but only those Council members specified in Article 6.6 or their designated proxies may vote.
- 6.11 Proxies shall be allowed in Council so long as a standard Council proxy form is completed and presented to the Council chairperson before the proxy is to take effect. A standard proxy form shall only be valid for the meeting at which it is presented, and shall include the signatures of the member, the proxy, and the Council chairperson. Summer proxy forms are subject to all of the aforementioned restrictions, except that they shall be valid for a maximum of three consecutive meetings of Council. A member of Council may only give their proxy to a graduate student from the same department, or a member of the same organization in the case of those members of Council specified in 6.8. No person shall have more than two votes.
- 6.12 Members of the Executive may only proxy to, and use the proxy of, other executives.
- 6.13 A quorum for Council meetings shall be nine members of Council or a total of nine members and proxies, at least two of whom shall be Executive members. Where quorum does not exist the meeting may proceed on an informational basis.

- 6.14 If a member of Council misses three consecutive meetings of Council, excluding emergency meetings, then they shall be automatically removed from Council, and the seat shall be deemed vacant.
- 6.15 Decisions of Council shall be made by a majority vote (i.e. abstentions count neither for nor against, and the motion is defeated on a tie vote).
- 6.16 Members of Council shall refrain from voting on any matter in which a personal conflict of interest exists. A member of Council may speak to an issue so long as they declare such a conflict of interest exists.
- 6.17 A minimum of ten Council meetings shall be held during the course of the academic year, four in each of the fall and winter terms, and two during the summer term.
- 6.18 Meetings of Council shall be held at any time at the call of the Executive or by five members of Council who petition the Chair or, in the event the position of Chair is vacant, the President, in writing for this purpose. Furthermore, this meeting shall be held no later than seven business days after the receipt of said petition.
- 6.19 Notification of Council meetings shall be at least seven days in advance of the meetings and shall include minutes of the preceding meeting.
- 6.20 Council shall be responsible for creating committees made up of GSA members to facilitate the functioning of the GSA. Council shall specify the duties, powers, and responsibilities of such committees.
- 6.21 In addition to the members of Council, there shall be Council Observers. The following Council Observers shall have the right to speak in debate and remain present for “in camera” sessions: full-time staff of the GSA. The following Council Observers shall have the right to speak in debate: the President of the Rideau River Residence Association (RRRA), one representative of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4600 (CUPE 4600), and one representative of the Carleton University Post-Doctoral Association (CUPA).
- 6.22 Council members are members of GSA Carleton Inc. and have voting rights at all General Meetings of GSA Carleton Inc.
- 6.23 Executive members of the GSA shall receive a maximum of one vote each, unless an executive is acting as a proxy for another executive member.

## **Article 7.0 Finances**

7.1 All the monies received by the GSA shall be disbursed by the Executive for the defraying of expenses which are in accordance with the appropriations by Council and/or the Executive and/or the Board of Directors.

### **7.2 Budget**

7.2.1 Monies allocated to the GSA shall be distributed, in principle, by a budget prepared by the association's Vice-President Finance.

7.2.2 Prior to the upcoming fiscal year, the Vice-President Finance, with the advice of the Executive and the Board of Directors shall prepare the estimates for the expenditure of GSA funds for the next fiscal year. These estimates shall be presented and voted on at the May or June meeting of Council and the approved estimates shall constitute the budget for the fiscal year.

7.2.3 Should changes in the need for funds arise during the fiscal year, the Vice-President Finance, on behalf of the GSA, shall present supplementary estimates which upon adoption by the Board of Directors shall be a supplement to the budget. The Vice-President Finance and/or the Board of Directors shall report any such changes to Council.

## **Article 8.0 Elections**

### **8.1 Departmental Representatives on Council**

- 8.1.1 It shall be the responsibility of the graduate students in each department to arrange for the election of their representative(s) to Council. Departments shall have full autonomy in choosing their representative(s).
- 8.1.2 Where no election occurs, an acclamation will be declared after a nomination form containing ten signatures or 50% of the members of the department, whichever is less has been remitted to the Executive.
- 8.1.3 The acclamation will take effect if the position is not contested within one week after submission to the Executive.

### **8.2 Chief Electoral Officer(s)**

- 8.2.1 One or two Chief Electoral Officer(s) (CEOs) will be hired to run GSA general elections, by-elections and referenda. CEOs shall be hired by the GSA Electoral Board as defined in the GSA By-Laws.
- 8.2.2 The CEOs shall be responsible to Council and shall be members of the GSA.
- 8.2.3 The duties of the CEOs shall be defined by the GSA By-Laws and Electoral

Policy.

### **8.3 Elections**

- 8.3.1 The offices of the President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Operations, Vice-President External, and Vice-President Academic, the graduate nominees to Senate, and the graduate nominees to the Graduate Faculty Board shall be contested by a secret ballot general election, as defined in the GSA By-Laws and Electoral Policy.
- 8.3.2 Representatives to the Senate will normally consist of at least one doctoral student, at least one graduate student from either the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Business, or from the Faculty of Public Affairs, and at least one graduate student from either the Faculty of Engineering and Design or from the Faculty of Science.
- 8.3.3 Representatives to the Graduate Faculty Board will normally consist of at least two doctoral students and at least three master's students, and at least four of whom shall be registered full-time.
- 8.3.4 In the event that a candidate is running unopposed, members of the Graduate Students' Association will be able to vote in favour or against electing the candidate to the position.

## **Article 9.0 By-Elections**

- 9.1 When a departmental Council member is unable to complete their term of office, the department shall choose another representative as described in Article 8.1.
- 9.2 If an Executive member is unable to complete their term of office, or should no candidate come forward to run for an Executive position, or should members vote against electing an unopposed candidate, Council may, at its discretion, appoint a replacement officer for the duration of the term of office, or hold a by-election. Council may choose to appoint an interim officer to hold the position until a permanent replacement is made.
- 9.3 If a Board of Governors representative nominated by the GSA is unable to complete their term of office, the Executive will recommend a replacement to be approved by Council.
- 9.4 If a graduate student Senator is unable to complete their term of office, Council may, at its discretion, appoint a replacement Senator for the duration of the term of office or hold a by-election.
- 9.5 If a Graduate Faculty Board representative is unable to complete their term of office, Council may, at its discretion, appoint a replacement representative for the duration of the term of office. By-elections will not normally be held for Graduate Faculty Board representatives between general elections.

## **Article 10.0 Recall**

### **10.1 Departmental Representatives on Council**

- 10.1.1 Recall proceedings may be initiated against a departmental representative on Council, by the presentation of a petition signed by 25% of the graduate students within the department concerned to the Vice-President Operations of the GSA who shall initiate recall procedures.
- 10.1.2 Within ten days of the receipt of the petition a referendum within the department concerned shall be held.
- 10.1.3 The Council member shall be removed from their position should a majority of the represented graduate students voting be in favour of recall.

### **10.2 Council Chairperson**

- 10.2.1 The Council chairperson may be removed from the chair by a vote of 2/3 majority of Council members present at a GSA meeting, where quorum exists.
- 10.2.2 Council shall decide if the removal of the chairperson is to be for the meeting in which the removal was moved or is to be considered a permanent action.
- 10.2.3 In the event of the permanent removal of a Council chairperson, Council shall elect, from among its members, a temporary chairperson who shall serve until a replacement is found as specified in Article 6.3.

### **10.3 Executive**

- 10.3.1 Recall proceedings may be initiated against the President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Operations, Vice-President External, or the Vice-President Academic by the presentation of a petition signed by 5% of graduate students, with no more than 25% (of the 5%) of the signatures being from one department, to the Council chairperson.
- 10.3.2 Within fourteen days of the receipt of the petition a referendum shall be held, notwithstanding Article 14.2.
- 10.3.3 The Executive member shall be removed from their position should a majority of the GSA members voting be in favour of recall.

### **10.4 General**

- 10.4.1 Recalled departmental representatives on Council or recalled Executive members shall be eligible to contest the following by-election.
- 10.4.2 By-elections shall be conducted according to Article 9.0.



## **Article 11.0 By-Laws**

- 11.1 All Council decisions intended to stand as having the force of law for the GSA, rather than force of resolution or recommendation shall be enacted and recorded as By-Laws.
- 11.2 By-Laws may be added to the Constitution by a 2/3 vote (i.e. abstentions count neither for nor against) at each of two consecutive Council meetings, where quorum exists. Any amendment to a proposed By-Law that is made on the final reading and exceeds the scope of the By-Law as it stood after the previous reading, will require an additional 2/3 vote for the By-Law at the following meeting.
- 11.3 By-Laws shall come into effect immediately on being duly passed by Council.

## **Article 12.0 Amendment To The Constitution**

### **12.1 General**

- 12.1.1 An amendment may be presented to Council in petition of 25% of the members of the GSA.
- 12.1.2 Unless the proposal is enacted by Council it shall be submitted to a referendum no later than one month after its presentation to Council.
- 12.1.3 An amendment shall be enacted if it receives a 2/3 majority of those graduate students voting in the referendum.
- 12.1.4 The decision of the referendum shall be binding on the GSA and come into force one week following the referendum.

### **12.2 Council**

- 12.2.1 An amendment may be proposed by two Council members with at least one Council meeting notice.
- 12.2.2 The amendment shall be enacted if it receives a 2/3 vote (i.e. abstentions count neither for nor against) at each of two consecutive Council meetings, where quorum exists. Any amendment to an amendment to the Constitution that is made on the final reading and exceeds the scope of the main amendment as it stood after the previous reading, will require an additional 2/3 vote for the main amendment at the following meeting.
- 12.2.3 The amendment shall come into force one week after Council action provided no written petition signed by 25% of graduate students is presented. If such a petition is presented, a referendum shall be held.

## **Article 13.0 Amendment To The By-Laws**

- 13.1 By-Laws may be amended by a 2/3 vote (i.e. abstentions count neither for nor against) at each of two consecutive Council meetings and shall require notice of motion of amendment at least one meeting prior to the meeting considering the amendment. Any amendment to an amendment to the By-Laws that is made on the final reading and exceeds the scope of the main amendment as it stood after the previous reading, will require an additional 2/3 vote for the main amendment at the following meeting.

## **Article 14.0 Referendum**

- 14.1 Referenda may be called on important issues of GSA business.
- 14.2 The Executive, Council or any graduate student may initiate a referendum of GSA members. Council shall have the power to approve or amend questions, set a voting date, and give public notice of the question at least two weeks prior to the voting date.
- 14.3 The majority vote among graduate students voting in a referendum shall be binding on the Executive and Council of the GSA where the overall participation rate of the entire GSA membership (measured in full time equivalence), at the time of the referendum, be 6% or greater. In the event that the participation rate is less than 6% of the GSA membership (measured in full time equivalence), the referendum cannot be ratified by Council.
- 14.4 Conduct of the referendum shall adhere to election procedures under Article 8.0.