

The Constitution of the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

A. Name

1. There shall be an organization known as the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS). This organization may otherwise be known as SASgov.

A. Purpose

1. The Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences shall be the coordinating student body charged with respecting all graduate and professional students in the School of Arts and Sciences.

2. All graduate and professional students in the School of Arts and Sciences shall be members of the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences during their period of enrollment as a student in the University of Pennsylvania, and are encouraged to participate in all activities sponsored by SASgov.

3. The Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences shall work with the student governments of the graduate and professional schools of the University, nominate and elect graduate and professional students to the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, University committees and other bodies, and represent the concerns of graduate and professional students to the administration of the School of Arts and Sciences.

4. The Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences shall monitor issues of importance to its constituents and foster a dialogue among its members for the purpose of identifying relevant issues of advocacy.

5. The Graduate and Professional Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences shall sponsor academic, cultural, and social events of interest to the graduate and professional community. It shall continue to focus on programming, funding, and academic resources.

ARTICLE II: THE GENERAL BODY

A. Membership

1. The General body shall be composed of one voting Representative from each graduate group and graduate program.

2. Graduate groups and graduate programs are defined by the University administration. Such designations are determined jointly by the faculty and administration and approved by the Graduate Council of the Faculties.

3. If a graduate group or graduate program is eliminated, the members of such group or program may continue to be represented as full voting members of the General Body until there are five or less than five students remaining in the graduate group or graduate program. At that time, those students in the eliminated graduate group or graduate program shall be represented by a non-voting Representative in the General Body.

A. Representatives from New Graduate Groups and Graduate Programs.

1. New graduate groups and graduate programs may apply for membership in the General Body by sending notice of their status as a graduate group or graduate program to the Executive Board and the designation of a Representative from the graduate group or program to the General Body.
2. Upon approval by the Executive Board, these graduate groups and graduate programs shall be entitled to full membership in the General Body, with all of the rights and responsibilities that are attached to such recognition.
3. The new graduate group or graduate program must be recognized as an independent entity by the University administration.
  - A. Representatives
    1. Each graduate group and graduate program shall appoint or elect, according to their own procedure, their representative to the General Body.
    2. Representatives shall provide documentation to the Vice President for Communications that certifies their election or appointment to the General Body and their status as a duly appointed or elected representative.
    3. Representatives shall serve as the official liaison of their graduate group or graduate program to SASgov and from SASgov to their graduate group or program.
    4. Representatives shall attend all meetings of the General Body. Any graduate group or program which has more than two unexpected absences per semester may have its Representatives dismissed by the General Body.
      - a. Upon this dismissal of a graduate program's or group's Representatives, SASgov shall contact the graduate group or graduate program from which the students were Representatives in order to seek a replacement.
    5. Representatives shall serve efficiently on one standing committee of the General Body in order to help SASgov carry out its mission.
    6. Representatives shall keep the Vice President for Communications apprised of their current contact information.
      - A. General Body Meetings
        - a. The general body shall meet on the first Tuesday following the second Monday in September and every two weeks thereafter. It shall also meet on the call of the President, three members of the executive Board, or by petition of one-quarter of its members.
          - A.a.i. The Executive Board may, with the approval of the General Body, alter the regular meeting schedule of SASgov.
          - b. Meeting of the General Body shall be limited to one hundred and twenty minutes.
            - A.b.i. Meetings may be extended by a vote of two-thirds of SASgov members present. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recently published edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, and other such rules as contained in this Constitution. The Executive Board may appoint a parliamentarian.
 

When there is evidently no opposition to a motion, the formality of voting can be avoided by asking if there is any objection to the proposed action, and if there is none, announcing the result. This is known as general consent.

A single objection means that general consent has not been given, in which case the usual requirements of a motion, a second, a debate, and a majority vote become necessary.

- c. A General Body meeting does not exist without a quorum. A quorum shall exist when a majority of the Representatives and three members of the Executive Board are present.
- d. Meetings shall be open to all members of the public. Any graduate or professional student from the School of Arts and Sciences who is not a member of the General Body may participate in its discussions. Members of the public may participate in discussions only at the invitation of the President. When two-thirds of the General Body votes in the affirmative, it shall meet in closed session.
- e. The Vice President for Communications shall at the beginning of the Academic Year, notify all School Representatives of all scheduled meeting dates. When it is necessary for the General Body to meet in a special session, the President shall give no fewer than three days notice of the time and place of such a session to its members. The President shall distribute a tentative agenda to the General Body no less than thirty-six hours prior to a regularly scheduled meeting. Information regarding matters to be put to a vote including draft resolutions where applicable, will be distributed to the General Body no less than thirty-six hours prior to a meeting
- f. The text of any proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be distributed to the General Body no less than ten days prior to the meeting at which it will be introduced.
- g. Minutes from General Body meetings shall be posted on the SASgov website as soon as practical after their approval.
- h. The final General Body meeting in the spring shall serve as a transition meeting. The outgoing Executive Board shall act on all items of old business. The first items of new business shall be acted upon by the new Executive Board.
- B. Voting
  - a. Each graduate group or program shall have one vote in all matters.
  - b. Members of the Executive Board, except for the President, shall not vote on the approval of the budget and in elections for members of the Executive Board. Otherwise, each shall have one vote in all matters.
  - c. The President shall vote only when the General Body is equally divided.
  - d. In order to pass the General Body, a motion must receive a majority of the votes cast.
  - e. Motions to suspend the rules or to deviate from the standard procedure of the General Body must receive two-thirds of the votes cast in order to be approved.
  - f. School Representatives and members of the Executive Board with voting privileges may select a proxy to participate on their behalf in a General Body meeting with full voting and other rights, provided that notice is given to the Vice President for Communications no less than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.
- C. Non-Voting Seats
  - a. The General Body may add non-voting seats when it deems necessary.
  - b. Non-voting members of the General Body shall not count towards quorum.
  - c. Non-voting members may not make or second motions. They may speak and otherwise participate in meetings.
  - d. Non-voting members may remain in General Body meetings during a closed session.

ARTICLE III: Committees of the General Body

- A. Standing Committees
  - a. A standing committee may be formed upon the initiative of a member of the Executive Board, the Executive Board as a whole, or a majority of the General Body.
  - b. The General Body shall have four standing committees:
    - A.b.i. The Committee on Administration and Policy shall be chaired by the Vice President for Policy and is responsible for all academic and student life issues related to graduate and professional students of the School of Arts and Sciences in their life at the University.
    - A.b.ii. The Finance Committee shall be co-chaired by the Vice President for Finance and the Vice President for Financial Operations and is responsible for managing the financial affairs of the General Body, including the funding for individual graduate groups and graduate programs.
    - A.b.iii. The Public Affairs Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Public Affairs and is responsible for marketing and public relations for the General Body as well as the coordination of academic and career development programs. The Public Affairs Committee may also grant (an) award(s) to members of the University or of the community at large who deserve SAS recognition for contributions in mentoring, teaching, etc.
    - A.b.iv. The Social Activities Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Social Affairs and is responsible for the coordination of social programs as well as cultural, athletic, and community service events. The Social Activities Committee shall arrange at least two (2) events per semester.

#### ARTICLE IV: Elections for the Executive Board

- A. Elections
  - a. The General Body shall elect the Executive Board from the SASgov membership each spring by a simple majority vote. Any graduate or professional student in the School of Arts and Sciences may run for an Executive Board office.
  - b. Elections for the Executive Board shall be held no sooner than the second meeting in March and no later than the second meeting in April.
  - c. The date of the election shall be announced at the previous meeting, and each School Representative shall have ten days written notice of the election.
  - d. Individuals may hold only one Executive Board position concurrently. Current members of the Executive Board may run for another Executive Board position. They must resign their current position upon their election to a new office.
  - e. No member of the Executive Board shall simultaneously serve as a Representative.
  - f. The General Body shall be given no fewer than ten days notice of a special election to fill a vacancy on the Executive Board.
  - g. The Vice President for Communications and two impartial witnesses shall oversee the elections process.
  - h. The Vice President for Communications shall conduct an annual review of the election rules.
  - i. The rules governing the conduct of elections to the Executive Board shall be Appendix A of this Constitution.

## ARTICLE V: The Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of the following positions: President, Vice President for Policy, Vice President for Communications, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Financial Operations, Vice President for Public Affairs, and Vice President for Social Affairs.

- A. General Responsibilities
  - a. The term of office of members of the executive Board shall be one year, beginning on May 15 of the year in which they are elected and ending one year thereafter.
  - b. The Executive Board shall meet bi-weekly.
  - c. Attendance at Executive Board meetings is mandatory for all of its members. Therefore, the meetings shall be scheduled at a time convenient to all members.
  - d. Members of the Executive Board shall participate in relevant meetings with the President and officials of the School of Arts and Sciences.
  - e. Members of the General Body may attend and speak at meetings of the Executive Board. However, upon a two-thirds vote of all Executive Board members, the Executive Board shall meet in closed session. The minutes from every Executive Board meeting shall be posted on the SASgov website as soon as practical after they are approved.
  - f. Whenever feasible, a schedule of Executive Board meetings should be set at the beginning of each semester. However, the President or any two members of the Executive Board may call a meeting at any time.
  - g. The Executive Board may adopt resolutions when it is impractical for the General Body to act. In such a case, a resolution must receive the affirmative votes of a majority of all Executive Board members.
  - h. Any resolution approved by the Executive Board in such a situation shall be forwarded to the General Body for its approval or rejection at its next meeting. If it is not approved, then the Executive Board's prior action shall be considered null and void.
  - i. Any member of the Executive Board may, with the advice and consent of the General Body, appoint a deputy who shall serve at his or her pleasure.
  - j. The Executive Board shall provide to the General Body, in January and April, a public report summarizing its work throughout the academic year.
- B. Removal of a member of the Executive Board
  - a. A member of the Executive Board who is found to be in violation of this Constitution or the Rules of the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences may be removed upon a vote of two-thirds of the General Body at any meeting, provided that the member whose conduct is in question has been given fourteen days written notice stating the violation or violations and has been granted an opportunity to be heard.
  - b. Just cause, i.e., malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance, must be shown in any case involving the removal of a member of the Executive Board.

## ARTICLE VI: Executive Board Positions

- A. President
  - a. The Executive Board shall include a President who shall lead the General Body and Executive Board on all matters. The President shall be present at all General Body and Executive Board meetings.

- b. The President shall be the primary SASgov representative to all School of Arts and Sciences and College of General Studies administration and personnel, and shall attend all meetings with such personnel as necessary and appropriate.
  - c. The President, in conjunction with the Executive Board, shall devise and implement annual goals and strategies for fulfilling the SASgov mission.
  - d. The President shall organize, motivate, and empower student volunteers in support of all SASgov projects, initiatives and events.
  - e. The President shall delegate such responsibilities as appropriate to other members of the Executive Board.
  - f. If the President is unable to execute the duties of his or her office, the Vice President for Policy shall act as Interim President until a special election can be held at a subsequent General Body meeting. If the Vice President for Policy is unable or unwilling to serve as Interim President, the Vice President for finance shall serve as Interim President until the special election.
- B. Vice President for Policy**
- a. The Executive Board shall include a Vice President for Policy, who along with the President shall serve as a representative of School of Arts and Sciences' graduate and professional students across the University.
  - b. The Vice President for Policy shall monitor and evaluate federal, state, local, University and School of Arts and Sciences policies that are of concern to graduate and professional students and bring them to the attention to[sic] the General Body.
  - c. The Vice President for Policy shall recruit and recommend graduate and professional student candidates to the General Body for election to the University committees and other bodies.
  - d. The Vice President for Policy shall act as Interim President when the President is absent or otherwise unavailable.
  - e. If the President is no longer able to serve, the Vice President for Policy shall act as Interim President until a special election can be held at a subsequent General Body meeting.
  - f. The Vice President for Policy shall chair the Administration and Policy Committee.
- C. Vice President for Communications**
- a. The Executive Board shall include a Vice President for Communications who shall record the minutes of all Executive Board and General Body meetings and report those minutes to each body as soon as possible.
  - b. The Vice President for Communications shall serve as a School Representative to the General Assembly of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly.
  - c. The Vice President for Communications shall maintain a record of all SASgov proceedings and keep on file all resolutions approved by the General Body.
  - d. The Vice President for Communications shall coordinate all room reservations, logistical planning, refreshments and supplies for Executive Board and General Body meetings.
  - e. The Vice President for Communications shall monitor, screen, and disseminate all SASgov e-mail communications.

f. The Vice President for Communications shall verify the certification of Representatives, and recruit members from grad groups and programs that have not sent a representative to SASgov by the second meeting of the year.

D. Vice President for Finance

a. The Executive Board shall include a Vice President for Finance who shall be responsible for all budget issues. The Vice President for Finance shall maintain accurate and current financial reports and records.

b. The Vice President for Finance shall present to the Executive Board a final, detailed budgetary and expenditure report for the prior academic year no later than the first day of December in each academic year. This report shall remain on file with the Executive Board and shall be available for review by any member of the General Body.

c. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice President for Finance to prepare a copy of the annual SASgov budget for the Graduate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences as necessary.

d. The Vice President for Finance shall budget, allocate, and monitor funds dispersed under the auspices of funding policies established by the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences.

e. The Vice President for Finance may spend SASgov funds over the summer and into the following academic year until the second general meeting when the annual budget is approved in a manner consistent with the provisional budget and with the approval of a majority of the Executive Board.

f. The Vice President for Finance shall co-chair the Finance Committee with the Vice President of Financial Operations.

E. Vice President for Public Affairs

a. The Executive Board shall include a Vice President for Public Affairs who shall work with school newspapers and other publications to promote the communication of information between SASgov and graduate and professional students in the School of Arts and Sciences; graduate groups and graduate programs; and academic, administrative, and student life departments in the University and the School of Arts and Sciences.

b. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall manage the SASgov website.

c. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall maintain current information, on the SASgov website, including the current contact information for all members of the General Body and upcoming SASgov Programs.

d. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall devise, implement, and monitor SASgov advertising, public relations, and communications initiatives.

e. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall devise, implement, and monitor academic and career development programs.

f. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall share responsibility for organizing SASgov's role in welcoming incoming graduate students at a reception at the beginning of the academic year.

g. The Vice President for Public Affairs shall chair the Public Affairs Committee.

F. Vice President for Social Affairs.

a. The Executive Board shall include a Vice President for Social Affairs who shall be responsible for coordinating SASgov sponsored athletic, cultural, social, and special events. These may include and are not limited to films, receptions, social events, speakers, and any other such events that may arise.

- b. The Vice President for Social Affairs shall work closely with the Vice President for Finance to manage the social budget and shall make periodic, detailed expenditure reports to the Vice President for Finance and Executive Board.
- c. The Vice President for Social Affairs shall share responsibility for organizing SASgov's role in welcoming incoming graduate students at a reception at the beginning of the academic year.
- d. The Vice President for Social Events shall chair the Social Affairs Committee.
- G. Vice President for Financial Operations
  - a. The Vice President for Financial Operations shall oversee, evaluate, and process all applications for grants distributed by the General Body, including individual funding and group/event funding.
  - b. The Vice President for Financial Operations shall administer the Funding for Graduate Groups and Graduate Programs as Described in Article VII.B of the Constitution
  - c. Any additional recurring grants may be assigned to the Vice President for Financial Operations to manage at the discretion of the Executive Board
  - d. The Vice President for Financial Operations will co-chair the the Finance Committee alongside the Vice President for Finance, as described in Article III. A. 2. b., for the purpose of evaluating applications for funds
  - e. At the end of each month, the Vice President for Financial Operations will provide a detailed accounting of all funds distributed under their auspices to the Vice President for Finance to include in the budget

#### ARTICLE VII: BUDGET AND FINANCE

- A. The Budget
  - a. At the final Executive Board meeting of the spring semester, the outgoing and incoming Vice Presidents for Finance shall represent a provisional budget for the next academic year to the Executive Board.
  - b. Prior to the second scheduled General Body meeting of the Fall semester, the Vice President for Finance shall propose a final budget to be approved by the General Body. No SASgov funds may be spent after that date without General Body approval of a budget.
  - c. In the event that the Executive Board cannot act with its complete authority due to vacancy, incapacity, or unresolved grievances that deal with the positions of the Executive Board, the process for proposing and approving the final budget may be extended to the third meeting of the academic year.
  - d. Upon a two-thirds vote, the General Body may amend the budget at any time.
  - e. The budget shall provide the funds necessary for the operations of the General Body and for such other activities as the General Body may decide in accordance with its purpose and mission.
  - f. The Executive Board shall establish two deadlines per semester by which graduate groups and graduate programs shall submit merit funding requests.
  
- B. Funding for Graduate Groups and Graduate Programs



- a. Only those graduate groups and graduate programs whose representatives have no more than 2 General Body meeting absences in the previous semester shall be eligible to apply for merit funding. In the case of new graduate groups and programs joining SASgov, merit funding will be available only after the completion of one semester without more than 2 absences.
- b. Graduate groups and graduate programs shall be eligible for merit funding based on the number of students in the graduate group or graduate program. The following annual caps shall apply:
  - i. Graduate groups and graduate programs with 1 to 50 students shall be eligible to receive up to \$300 per year for merit requests.
  - ii. Graduate groups and graduate programs with 51 to 100 students shall be eligible to receive up to \$500 per year for merit requests.
  - iii. Graduate groups and graduate programs with more than 101 students shall be eligible to receive up to \$750 per year for merit requests.

ARTICLE VIII: Representatives to the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, and the Graduate Council of the Faculties

- A. The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
  - a. The General Assembly shall elect graduate and professional students from the School of Arts and Sciences to serve as School Representatives to the General Assembly of the Graduate and Professional School Assembly.
  - b. School Representatives are not required to be SASgov Representatives.
  - c. SAS School Representatives shall be required to attend all meetings of the SASgov General Body and shall report on the activities of GAPSAs to the General Body.
- B. The Graduate Council of the Faculties
  - a. The President of the Graduate Student Government of the School of Arts and Sciences, or a presidential appointee, shall be nominated for appointment by the Deputy Provost to serve as a member of the Graduate Council of the Faculties.

ARTICLE IX: STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

- A. SASgov shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age disability or status as a veteran or disabled person in its membership, the administration of its programs, activities, and its nomination policies and procedures.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendments to the Constitution
  - a. In order to be adopted a proposed amendment to this Constitution must receive two-thirds of the votes cast.

ARTICLE XI: RATIFICATION

- A. Ratification of the Constitution
  - a. The approval of two-thirds of the representatives of the Graduate Student Associations Council from the School of Arts and Sciences present shall be necessary for the ratification of this Constitution.
  - b. This Constitution shall take effect on May 1, 2007.

AMENDMENT I: QUORUM

The general Body shall be defined as all graduate group or program representatives who have submitted their paperwork to the Vice President for Communications by the third General Body meeting of each semester. A General Body meeting does not exist without a quorum. A quorum shall exist when four-fifths of the General Body – not to be below 12 representatives – and three members of the Executive Board are present. This number will be established by the Vice President for Communications at the third General Body meeting of every semester. Graduate Group representatives who submit their paperwork after this date will be able to vote in all SASgov matters, though their paperwork will not be counted in quorum calculations until the next semester. For the first two meetings of each semester, quorum shall be defined as 4/5 of the average attendance from the previous semester.

*Amendment passed by the SASgov General Body 1 April 2008*

## AMENDMENT 2: GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

### Addition to Article VIII: Committees

#### C. Grievance Committee

- a. There are three seats on the Grievance Committee of the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences that are reserved for graduate students.
- b. The Vice President for Policy of SASgov shall be appointed to one of these seats *ex officio*.
- c. The Executive Board shall interview graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences to fill the two remaining seats on the Grievance Committee and recommend candidates to the Executive Board and General Body.
- d. The General Body shall vote to confirm candidates for the two remaining seats as soon as possible each fall.

*Amendment passed by the SASgov General Body 21 April 2009.*

### Election Rules (Appendix I)

#### I. Executive Elections.

- a. Elections for Executive Board will be announced to both the General body and the School at least 2 weeks (14 days) before elections will be held. AT that point, nominations shall be solicited.
- b. The election meeting shall be open to members of the school at large, who may participate in the discussion; however, only members of the SASgov General Body may vote on candidates.

#### II. Nomination

- a. Nominations made before the elections meeting should be submitted to the Vice President for Communciations, via email.
- b. Nominations may be made by the nominee or a third party. In the case where the nomination is made by a third party, the nominee must agree to run for the position.
- c. Nominations may be made at the elections meeting for any given office. Nominations for an office will be cut off right before the vote for that office is held.

#### III. Running the Elections for the Executive Board

- a. Elections for the SASgove executive body shall be run by the Vice President for Communications, unless the current office holder is running for an Executive Body

position. In such a situation, the Vice President for Communications may designate another member of the current Executive Board to run the elections.

b. Positions shall be voted on in the following order:

III.b.i. President

III.b.ii. Vice President for Policy

III.b.iii. Vice President for Communications

III.b.iv. Vice President for Finance

III.b.v. Vice President for Public Affairs

III.b.vi. Vice President for Social Affairs

III.b.vii. Vice President for Financial Operations

c. After nominations for a position are closed, each candidate shall be given a three-minute period in which to discuss their candidacy, to be followed by a three-minute question and answer period. No other candidates for the position may be in the room at this time. After all candidates have spoken, all candidates will leave the room and the body shall have an open period to discuss the candidates. At the close of the discussion, voting will take place via paper ballot.

III.c.i. The current Executive Board may not vote, but may take part in the discussion if directly asked for their opinion by a member of the general body.

d. Should any candidate not win a position, they are welcome to run again for any other position that remains to be filled.