

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

## **Preamble**

We, the graduate students of the University of Florida, hereby constitute ourselves to further the cause of graduate students and to act as a united voice to express graduate students' needs and concerns.

## **Article I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION**

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Council. This organization shall utilize the acronym GSC in all publicity materials and correspondence. Graduate Student should be defined as any student continuing on in school after receiving a Bachelor's degree. This includes, but not limited to professional students, master students, and Ph.D students.

## **ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION**

As outlined in the RSO Classification Policy, the Graduate Student Council is considered a General Registered Student Organization. As a GRSO, our organization is a separate 3rd party entity, not considered a part of the University of Florida. Through registering with the University, our student group agrees to follow its policies and operate on campus with access and/or eligibility for specific campus benefits.

## **Article III. PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The objectives of GSC shall be:

- A. To provide an agency for the coordination of graduate student activities and programs toward common goals and interests.
- B. Promote and enrich the academic and educational objectives of the University of Florida by funding and sponsoring programs applicable to the intellectual, educational, and cultural interests of graduate students.
- C. Seek the improvement of graduate student education through active and permanent communication with governing bodies at the University of Florida such as the Graduate School, University Administration, Student Government, and Faculty Senate.
- D. Represent the interests of graduate students at the local, state, and national levels.

## **Article IV. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT & UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS**

Upon approval by the Department of Student Engagement, the Graduate Student Council shall be a registered student organization at the University of Florida. The Graduate Student Council shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as all University of Florida regulations, policies, and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University's regulations related to Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment (including sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

### **Section A. Non-Discrimination**

The Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. Discrimination on the basis of the protected classes described in University of Florida Regulation 1.006 (Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies) is prohibited.

### Section B. Sexual Harassment

The Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that creates a hostile environment. Behaviors that could create a hostile environment include sexual harassment (which could include inappropriate sexual comments), sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking and repeated instances of cyber abuse. Sexual harassment as described in University of Florida Regulation 1.006 (Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policy) is prohibited.

### Section C. Hazing

The Graduate Student Council agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization. Hazing as defined in the University of Florida Regulation 1.0081 (Prohibition of Hazing; Procedures and Penalties) and 4.040 (Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code) is prohibited. If found responsible for hazing, sanctions may be imposed against the organization, its leaders and/or members.

### Section D. Responsibility to Report

The University of Florida identifies Responsible Employees and Campus Security Authorities to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of campus. If the Graduate Student Council becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, they are encouraged to report it immediately to staff in Student Engagement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, the University's Title IX Coordinator, or to their Student Organization Advisor, who are identified as mandated reporters.

### Section E. Officer Eligibility

The Graduate Student Council understands, acknowledges, and agrees to uphold and abide by the specific minimal requirements regarding officer eligibility as defined in the Registered Student Organization Classification and Officer Eligibility Policy.

## Article V. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this organization is open to all enrolled students at the University of Florida. Non-enrolled students, spouses, faculty, and staff are prohibited from holding membership, office or voting powers. All members are free to leave and disassociate without fear of retribution, retaliation, or harassment.

## Article VI. BY LAWS FOR THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

The Graduate Student Council may elect to maintain separate bylaws document to outline the day-to-day operations of the organization and to clarify policies and procedures otherwise not included in the previous articles. Bylaws and/or other guiding documents may not take precedence over the requirements set forth by local, state, and federal laws, the university of Florida's regulations, policies, and procedures, and the Student Engagement constitution requirements. Amendments and changes may be made to the bylaws and shall be consistent with the Student Engagement approved constitution on file and student engagement's constitution requirements. Should the organization transition leadership, all bylaws and guiding documents will be transitioned to new student organization leaders and/or advisor(s). The Graduate Student Council agrees to provide all unaltered by laws and guiding documents and/or clarify its procedures in writing to any University of Florida student, faculty, or staff upon request.

## **Article VII. STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR**

Each registered student organization must have an eligible student organization advisor. The student organization advisor must be a full-time, salaried faculty or staff member not on extended leave for 4 consecutive weeks or longer during their advisor term. The student organization advisor shall serve as a resource person providing advisory support to officers and members and may not vote or hold office in the organization.

The advisor is appointed by the President and serves a one-year term with the option for renewal for subsequent years. If the advisor is to be replaced mid-term, nomination by the President and approval by a majority of the Executive Board can name a new advisor.

## **Article VIII. OFFICERS**

- A. Elected Officers - Registered student organizations are required to have a minimum of a President, Treasurer, and Vice President as elected officers. These officers must abide by the Registered Student Organization Classification and Officer Eligibility Policy. The elected officers of the Graduate Student Council shall be President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. At no time should one person hold more than one of these positions. Other elected officers include Secretary, Website Coordinator, Grants Committee Chair, Graduate Affairs Committee Chair, New Student Orientation Committee Chair, Social Committee Chair, and International Affairs Chair. At no time should one person hold more than one of these positions as well. These officers are chosen based on elections that involve the entire council. Roles and responsibilities can be found in Bylaw 1 Section A.
- B. Elected officers shall report via email (1) any major organizational issues or concerns to the President, (2) any financial information regarding the costs/revenues associated with any recent or forthcoming activities to the Treasurer, (3) any announcements and other information for the General Body to the Secretary and Website Coordinator, and (4) any information associated with a standing committee's responsibilities to the respective committee chair and the Vice President.
- C. Elected officers shall submit their contact information (and, if applicable, the contact information of their appointees, invitees, alternates, and committee members) to the Secretary, and update this contact information when necessary.
- D. All elected officers will present updates at every general body meeting related to their GSC officer position or their executive appointment.
- E. Elected officers shall inform the President if they are unable to perform their duties for two months or more. The President shall then appoint an interim officer as described in Article VIII. Section G except, in this case, the original officer plans to return.
- F. Term of Office
  - a. Newly elected officers shall assume office following the May GSC meeting.
  - b. The term of any previously elected officer expires at the end of the May GSC meeting, though re-election is possible.
- G. Vacancies
  - a. In the event of an elected officer vacancy, meaning the officer is not returning, the President shall appoint an interim officer within 14 days of the vacancy with the advice and consent of the Executive Board. The process of appointing an interim officer is identical to all other appointments, as specified in Bylaw 2 Section A.
  - b. Upon the vacancy of the president, the vice-president immediately becomes the acting president.

- i. The vice-president has the option to assume the presidency, or to return to the vice-presidency upon the election of a new president.
  - ii. If the vice-president decides not to assume the presidency, they shall oversee the election of a new president. This will be done following the procedure established in Article VIII.
  - iii. If the vice-president assumes the presidency, they shall assume all the responsibilities of the President as detailed in Bylaw 1 Section A.1.
- H. The term of any replacement officer shall expire at the end of the May GSC general body meeting, though re-election is possible.
- I. Appointed Officers- These positions may be appointed on an as needed basis and include Faculty Senate Liaison(s), Graduate Council Representative, Graduate Coordinator's Advisory Committee Representative, Graduate School Advisory Council Representative, Student Senate Liaison, and Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms. Roles and responsibilities can be found in Bylaw 1 Section B.
- J. In the event of a vacancy of an appointed position, a replacement may be appointed.
- K. The term of any appointed position shall expire after the May GSC general body meeting.
- L. Elected officers and officers appointed through vacancy per Article VIII section G comprise the voting members of the Executive Board.
- M. All appointed and invited positions are ex-officio members of the Executive Board.
- N. The Executive Board provides direction and sets goals for GSC and confirms appointments of the President.
- O. Impeachment
  - a. An elected or appointed officer may be removed for malfeasance, neglect of duty, or abuse of power through the submission of an impeachment resolution that is approved by a two thirds majority of Department Representatives present at any quorum-established General Body meeting.
  - b. Impeachment resolutions must be introduced with the sponsorship of five Department Representatives.
  - c. Upon two unexcused absences of an elected or appointed officer from Executive and/or general body meetings, the President may open up the position. The general body and/or Executive board both may override the President's decision with a simple majority vote.

## **Article IX. ELECTIONS**

- A. Elections shall be held at the March General Body meeting of the spring semester. If quorum is not established, all Department Representatives (and alternates) in addition to all departments' graduate coordinators shall immediately receive a warning email that all students will be suspended from receiving GSC monetary awards until quorum is established at a special election meeting that will be held within 7 days of the previous meeting.
- B. Nominations for elected officers can be made during and after the February General Body meeting. All candidates must expect to be enrolled full-time for the entire term of office and be eligible as described in Article IV. Section E. A person may accept a nomination for multiple officer positions.
- C. The order of elections for officer positions shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Web Coordinator, Grants Committee Chair, International Affairs Chair, Graduate Affairs Committee Chair, Social Committee Chair, and New Student Orientation Committee Chair.
- D. Immediately prior to voting for an officer position, each candidate may address the General Body for up to two minutes followed by up to one and a half minutes of questions and answers. During this question and answer session, the candidate may field questions from any member.

- E. All candidates are expected to attend the March General Body Meeting for its entire duration unless special circumstances arise. If a candidate is unable to be present during their election time, they must provide either a recording of their speech or a written version to be read by a representative of their department or the Parliamentarian. If a Parliamentarian is not appointed, then the President shall read the written speech.
- F. Election shall be determined by simple majority (>50%) of Department Representatives present. If no simple majority is achieved, a new election shall be held between the two candidates who received the most votes. A losing candidate may slate down and run for a lower officer position (as defined by the order in Article IX.C) or slate up if an officer position failed to acquire nominations. If an officer position only has one candidate running, the candidate shall automatically win the election.
- G. Each academic department represents one vote of the GSC General Body, this one vote is determined by that department's representative. Upon sign-in at each General Body meeting in which a vote is scheduled, the Secretary provides a voting card to a representative from each department. If two or more representatives from a single department attend the meeting, the representative who receives the voting card and casts the official vote for their department shall be determined by designated Department Representative (or alternate), then the first undesignated Department Representative to sign in at the meeting. If the election is held over a virtual platform, then the representatives have to communicate with one another and agree to vote for one candidate. In the case of virtual elections, the first vote submitted is the one that counts.
- H. In the absence of clear direction on election, amendment, and /or voting procedures, the Graduate Student Council agrees to follow the guidance and instruction of Robert's Rules of Order for the election or amendment process.

#### **Article X. FINANCE**

As a General Registered Student Organization, the Graduate Student Council does not receive any funding or resources from other UF Departments or Colleges, rather, this organization is funded by:

- A. Applying for Student Government funding each semester.
- B. Other sources of funding shall be acquired by appropriate means including, but not limited to, grants, sponsorship, donations, and other fundraising activities.
- C. GSC shall operate as a non-profit organization.
- D. There are no member dues.

#### **Article XI. DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION**

Upon dissolution, student organizations are prohibited from leaving their organizational assets to any individual or any other student organization. Rather, student organizations may designate a specific charity that will receive such organizational assets. At the time of dissolution, after all outstanding debts are paid, the Graduate Student Council will leave any assets and outstanding funds to UF Student Government, except for OSRV funding, which will be donated to the University of Florida Office of Research Graduate Student Travel Grant Program.

#### **Article XII. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

Student Engagement has established a process through which constitutions may be amended, reviewed, and approved. Student organizations wishing to amend their constitutions must utilize their constitution on file listed on GatorConnect to make amendments and submit those changes to Student Engagement.

The Constitution may be amended at any quorum-established General Body meeting by a two thirds majority of voting members present, provided that notice of the proposed amendments was given at the previous General

Body meeting and that the proposed amendments shall be subject to approval by Student Engagement. Provisional changes to the constitution in order to comply with UF and Student Engagement requirements may be made as necessary by the Executive Board and approved at the next General Body meeting.