



**CONSTITUTION OF THE**  
**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**



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## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the University Graduate Student Association. It shall be hereinafter referred to as the UGSA.

## ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

All graduate students of North Carolina State University shall be members of the UGSA.

## ARTICLE III. THE UGSA COUNCIL

### Section 1 – Definition

The UGSA Council shall be the governing body of the UGSA.

### Section 2 – Objectives

The objectives of this council shall be:

- A. To be the school council for the Graduate School as provided for in the Student Body Constitution
- B. To represent the graduate students of this university in any matter which may affect the welfare of the graduate students
- C. To disseminate information of interest or of importance to the graduate students
- D. To provide a forum for discussion of problems and other matters of importance to the graduate students
- E. To provide services to the graduate student body.

### Section 3 – Council Composition

- A. The UGSA Council shall be composed of:
  1. Representatives and Alternates from each chapter
  2. Current Graduate School Senators of the Student Government
  3. A faculty advisor appointed by the graduate school
  4. Officers of the UGSA
  5. Representatives and Alternates from each Special Interest Group (SIG).
- B. A chapter shall be an organization consisting of all the graduate students in one or more majors. A major is an area of study for which one may receive an advanced degree, as defined by the NC State University Graduate Catalog. To be in good standing with the UGSA, a chapter shall:
  1. Register their GSA chapter with the Student Organization Resource Center prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> of the current academic year or within two months after the chapter has formed
  2. Submit a copy of their GSA constitution to the Vice President of Internal Affairs prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> of the current academic year or within two months after the chapter has formed. The constitution must include the name(s) of the degree programs(s) incorporated in the chapter and be accepted by the UGSA in accordance with Article V, Section 9, Paragraph C-3
  3. Submit a letter of credentials, signed by the faculty administrator of their degree program, to the Vice President of Internal Affairs prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> of the current academic year or within two months after the chapter has formed

4. Have a Representative, Alternate, or Other Member of your Chapter actively participate on a UGSA Internal Standing Committee. Each committee member is expected to contribute equally to the objectives of the committee as outlined by the Executive Board and coordinated by the committee chair.  
Determination of whether a chapter has met the standard for active participation is at the discretion of the chair. A written appeal can be made to the Executive Board via the committee's Executive Board liaison.
- C. Representatives and Alternates shall be selected by each chapter annually as provided for in each chapter's constitution.
- D. Each Representative, Alternate, and Officer shall be currently enrolled in a North Carolina State University graduate degree program and be in good academic standing.
- E. Each Representative and Alternate shall be a member of the chapter represented.
- F. Any graduate student enrolled in a degree program that is interdepartmental by nature may, at his or her own discretion, become a member of the chapter graduate student organization in the department (or degree program) of his or her major professor. Those qualified departments (or majors) that are participating members of an interdepartmental program are outlined by the Graduate School.
- G. Any graduate student enrolled in a major in which there is not an existing chapter may form a chapter or join an existing active chapter representing another major or group of majors. However, multiple students from the same major pursuing the latter option must join the same chapter and be represented solely by that chapter.

#### **Section 4 – Apportionment**

Each chapter shall have one Representative and one Alternate.

#### **Section 5 – Chapter Vacancies**

Representatives and Alternates shall be chosen by each chapter annually as provided for by each chapter's constitution. At other times, vacancies shall be filled as follows:

- A. If a Representative resigns or is removed from office and if there is an Alternate, the Alternate shall assume the office of representative.
- B. If a Representative resigns or is removed from office and there is no Alternate, that chapter shall be responsible for filling the vacated position according to its constitution.
- C. If an Alternate resigns or is removed from office, the chapter shall be responsible for filling the vacated position according to its constitution.

### **ARTICLE IV. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution shall be passed by simple majority of the votes present at the second reading of the proposed amendment. The first and second readings shall occur at consecutive council meetings at which a quorum is present.

### **ARTICLE V. BYLAWS**

#### **Section 1 – Election of Officers**

- A. General Election Rules

1. The following rules apply to all UGSA elections unless otherwise stated in the bylaws:
  - a. The annual opening of nominations for regular elections shall occur according to the schedule in Article V, Section 1, Paragraph B-2. The opening of nominations for other elections must pass by a simple majority vote. All nominations must be closed by a two-thirds majority vote.
  - b. All nominations shall come from the council floor, and may be declined without repercussions. All nominations must be seconded.
  - c. The period between the opening and closing of nominations shall be at least three weeks, except in the case of temporary officers.
  - d. A description of the open officer positions shall be sent to the graduate student body at least one week before nominations are opened for all elections except the election of temporary officers.
  - e. Before elections are held, all candidates for President and Vice President positions shall give speeches of ten minutes or less. For all other positions, a time limit of 15 minutes shall be allotted for each position, to be divided evenly among the candidates, with a minimum of two minutes and a maximum of five minutes per candidate. These time limits may be changed by a majority vote at the council meeting at which nominations are closed.
  - f. All elections shall be won by a simple majority of the votes present.
  - g. If there is only one nominee, voting shall be done by voice vote. In this case, the nominee shall decide if he or she wants to be present for the election. If the nominee's vote is necessary to break a tie, he or she shall be asked to cast a vote in the presence of the quorum.
  - h. For elections with two or more nominees, elections will be done by ballot.
  - i. If no person receives a majority of votes, the two candidates receiving the most votes shall have an immediate runoff. In the event of a tie, the presiding officer will vote to break the tie.

#### B. Regular Elections of Permanent Officers

1. The permanent offices shall be those of President, Vice President for External Affairs, Vice President for Internal Affairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Electronic Communications Officer, and Travel & Thesis Fund Administrator.
2. Nominations for the regular elections shall be opened at the January council meeting, and closed at the February council meeting. Regular elections shall be held during the March council meeting. Newly elected officers shall assume office at the conclusion of old business during the regular April council meeting and may not serve as a Chapter Representative or Alternate during their 12 month term of service.
3. Candidates for permanent positions must submit a written personal statement no later than two weeks after their nomination. Their personal statement shall be posted immediately to the UGSA website. Unopposed candidates will write a personal statement.

#### C. Special Elections for Replacement of Officers

1. A special election will be held to replace an officer in the event that a vacancy arises due to either resignation or removal as defined in Article V, Section 2.
2. The replacement officer will serve on the Executive Board for the remainder of the vacated term and will assume the responsibilities of that office as defined in Article V, Section 3.
3. The replacement officer will receive a prorated portion of the honoraria for the vacated office according to the amount of time in which they serve in that role.
4. A special election due to an officer resignation as defined in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph A will result in the immediate opening of nominations via e-mail and nominations will be closed during the next UGSA council meeting. Elections will be held immediately following the closing of nominations.
5. A special election due to a removal of an officer will open nominations for a replacement officer at the meeting in which the motion for removal is made. Nominations will close following the successful vote to remove the officer in the following UGSA council meeting. The election for the replacement officer will be held in the same meeting. If the removal of the officer is not successful, the nominations will be voided.
6. In the case of a resignation or removal of an officer, the Executive Board will assume the responsibilities of that officer until a replacement officer is elected.

**Section 2 – Removal of Officers**

- A. An officer may resign by written or email notification to the Executive Board. The resigning officer must notify the Executive Board at least one week before the next council meeting.
- B. An officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority of the votes present at the next council meeting after the meeting at which the motion for removal is introduced.
- C. Any officer who does not complete his/her term of service, whether through resignation or removal, shall forfeit a prorated amount of his/her allotted honoraria according to the following formula:

1. Forfeited Amount = Honoraria  $\left[ 1 - \left( \frac{\text{Length of term served}}{\text{Length of term elected}} \right) \right]$

2. Length of term is rounded to the nearest whole month.
3. In accordance with the budget, for the purpose of determining the officer’s prorated honoraria, the length of term elected shall be 8 months when the officer’s final month of service falls within May to December or 4 months when the officer’s final month of service falls within January to April.
- D. Acceptable reasons for removal of an officer are as followed:

1. The officer is not performing the tasks set forth in Article V, Section 3 or is performing these tasks in an unsatisfactory manner as judged by the Executive Board.
2. The officer is unable to attend the UGSA council meetings or will miss more than one meeting in a semester.

### **Section 3 – Duties of the Officers**

- A. The President shall:
  1. Call and preside over UGSA council meetings
  2. Call UGSA elections and special elections whenever necessary
  3. Represent the UGSA at University and Student Government functions
  4. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of the Political Action Committee
  5. Perform those duties imposed on the office by the Student Body Constitution.
- B. The Vice President for External Affairs shall:
  1. Preside over UGSA council meeting at the request of or in the absence of the President
  2. Act as proxy for the President at University or Student Government functions at the President's request
  3. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of one UGSA Internal Standing Committee as appointed by the Vice President for Internal Affairs
  4. Promote and appoint willing graduate students to serve on University Standing Committees
  5. Actively track attendance of appointed graduate students to University Standing Committees by collecting brief reports following each attended meeting and present these reports during UGSA regular council meetings
  6. Reappoint University Standing Committee seats that have a record of unsatisfactory attendance
  7. Be responsible for maintaining UGSA's "organizational membership" to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students and keep UGSA members apprised of national events
  8. Coordinate the planning and facilitation of the fall International and University Graduate Student Orientations.
- C. The Vice President for Internal Affairs shall:
  1. Be responsible for obtaining a letter of credentials and constitution from each chapter, graduate degree program and SIG, and verify each chapter's registration with the Student Organization Resource Center
  2. Appoint and oversee the operations of the UGSA Internal Standing Committees and serve as a liaison with those committee chairs
  3. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of the Judicial-Legislative Committee
  4. Maintain parliamentary procedure at UGSA council meetings and have a copy of Roberts' Rules of Order present at each council meeting
  5. Work with the Treasurer, and Secretary on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates.
- D. The Secretary shall:

1. Record and maintain minutes of the UGSA council meeting and circulate copies of the minutes to the council members
  2. Maintain a roll of council members and call the roll whenever a roll call vote is taken
  3. Determine and announce whether or not a quorum is present for each council meeting
  4. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of one UGSA Internal Standing Committee as appointed by the Vice President for Internal Affairs
  5. Prepare and carry out UGSA correspondence
  6. Work with the Vice President for Internal Affairs, and Treasurer on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates.
- E. The Treasurer shall:
1. Keep the financial records of the UGSA
  2. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of the Finance Committee
  3. Work with the Vice President for Internal Affairs, and Secretary on the calculation and distribution of chapter rebates
  4. Coordinate the submission of annual budget requests from the UGSA internal standing committee chairpersons. The budget requests may be submitted in a manner chosen by the Treasurer and approved by the Finance Committee. This must be completed before February 1st.
  5. Submit the annual budget, approved by the Executive Board, to the UGSA Council
  6. Oversee block grant requests in accordance with the UGSA Block Grant Policy.
- F. The Electronic Communication Officer shall:
1. Maintain the UGSA Website
  2. Maintain the UGSA list serves
  3. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of one UGSA Internal Standing Committee as appointed by the Vice President for Internal Affairs
  4. Work with the Executive Board to provide and maintain a prompt and reliable flow of information from the UGSA and its constituent members.
- G. The Travel and Thesis Fund Administrator shall:
1. Facilitate the requests and appropriations of the UGSA travel fund in accordance with the UGSA Travel Fund Policy
  2. Facilitate the requests and appropriations of the UGSA thesis fund in accordance with the UGSA Thesis Fund Policy
  3. Serve as a member and liaison, but not chair, of one UGSA Internal Standing Committee as appointed by the Vice President for Internal Affairs
  4. Provide the Graduate School Bookkeeper with the names, amounts, and receipts to cover each reimbursement
  5. Coordinate with the Treasurer as needed to ensure TTA recipients are paid in accordance with the UGSA Travel Fund Policy and UGSA Thesis Fund Policy



#### **Section 4 – Quorum**

- A. A quorum shall consist of at least one eligible vote above one-half of all the UGSA Officers, Representatives or Alternates showing active membership in the UGSA Council.
  - 1. The UGSA presiding officer shall not be counted in the calculation of quorum.
  - 2. Active membership of a Representative or Alternate shall be defined as a Representative or an Alternate of a Chapter or SIG in good standing who has been present for at least one of the two previous UGSA council meetings.
- B. In determining if a quorum is present, the Secretary shall:
  - 1. Take the roll at the beginning of each council meeting to calculate whether or not a quorum is present
  - 2. Record the names of the UGSA Officers, Representative, and/or Alternates present
  - 3. Announce whether or not a quorum is present for the meeting.

#### **Section 5 – Voting**

- A. Only chapters in good standing with the UGSA in accordance with Article III, Section 3, paragraph B may vote.
- B. The Representative or Alternate from each chapter shall have one vote, despite the number of majors represented by an individual chapter.
- C. The presiding officer may not have a vote, unless it is needed to break a tie.
- D. Each SIG in good standing shall have one vote.

#### **Section 6 – Council Meetings**

Council meetings shall be held at least once a month during the academic year, except December and May. Meetings shall be open to all graduate students of North Carolina State University and to guests, but non-council members shall enter discussion only with permission of the presiding officer. Procedure shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. The date of the next meeting shall be announced at each meeting.

#### **Section 7 – Executive Board**

- A. The Executive Board shall be made up of the regular officers of the UGSA.
- B. The Executive Board shall:
  - 1. Produce the agendas for UGSA council meetings
  - 2. Conduct and be responsible for the long-term planning
  - 3. Determine and delegate the charges for each UGSA Internal Standing Committee.
- C. Executive Orders
  - 1. When an issue arises that normally requires a vote of the council and a council meeting is not possible before a decision is necessary, the Executive Board shall have the power to issue an executive order regarding that decision
  - 2. The Executive Order must be made known to the council representatives as soon as the order is issued via the UGSA website.

## **Section 8 – UGSA Internal Standing Committees**

- A. The standing committees shall be:
  - 1. The Finance Committee
  - 2. The Academic Policy Committee
  - 3. The Judicial-Legislative Committee
  - 4. The Political Action Committee
  - 5. The Publicity Committee
  - 6. The Social Committee
  - 7. The Teaching Effectiveness Committee.
- B. The members of these committees will be volunteers from the Representatives and Alternates. In the event that enough members cannot be obtained in this manner, the President will appoint members to these committees.
- C. A chairperson shall be chosen from the committee members, and shall not be the Executive Board liaison.
  - 1. The chairperson's fulfillment of duties shall be reviewed at the end of their term by the Vice President for Internal Affairs to determine eligibility for the awarding of their honoraria
  - 2. The decision of the Vice President for Internal Affairs may be appealed to the Judicial-Legislative Committee.
- D. A chairperson may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority of the votes present at the next UGSA Internal Standing Committee meeting after the meeting at which the motion for removal is introduced. If removed, the chairperson forfeits all honoraria regardless of length of term served.
- E.
- F. Committees shall meet at least once a month during months in which there is a council meeting. Each committee chair shall determine the time, frequency, and method of meetings and appoint a committee member to take the minutes. Meetings may be conducted in person or via electronic communication. Minutes for each meeting shall be submitted electronically to the Vice President for Internal Affairs.

## **Section 9 – Duties of UGSA Internal Standing Committees**

- A. The Finance Committee shall:
  - 1. Prepare an annual budget proposal for submission to and approval by the UGSA council
  - 2. Be responsible for any fund raising activities of the UGSA.
- B. The Academic Policy Committee shall:
  - 1. Advise the President on academic issues and policies that affect graduate students
  - 2. Develop, plan and execute the University Graduate Student Research Symposium
  - 3. Work with the Graduate School to develop a comprehensive Research Ethics program for graduate students.
- C. The Judicial-Legislative Committee shall:
  - 1. Enforce and review the constitution of the UGSA and to make recommendations to the UGSA for improvements when necessary

2. Review the constitutions of the local GSA chapters to verify compliance with the UGSA constitution. The committee shall either accept the constitutions or make recommendations for their correction
  3. Determine that the local GSA chapter has fulfilled the requirements to be legally recognized by the UGSA:
    - a. Each local GSA chapter shall have a duly elected President and Treasurer, or their equivalent, who shall be responsible for maintaining the financial records of that organization
    - b. Each local GSA chapter shall have a constitutional procedure for choosing a Representative to the UGSA council. Each chapter may also have a constitutional procedure for designating an Alternate to the UGSA who can serve in place of the Representative. In the absence of a constitutionally designated Alternate, either the President of the chapter or the UGSA Representative may designate any chapter member as a temporary representative by providing prior electronic notice to the UGSA Secretary
    - c. The local GSA chapter shall have a written constitution accepted by the Judicial-Legislative Committee
    - d. Each SIG shall satisfy the minimum requirements for a university recognized student association.
- D. The Political Action Committee shall:
1. Keep the UGSA informed of any political issues that affect graduate students
  2. Respond if and when necessary to political issues that affect graduate students
  3. Bring all proposed responses before the general UGSA council for a vote
  4. Organize at least one service event per semester.
- E. The Publicity Committee shall:
1. Create and distribute the UGSA newsletter
  2. Keep all graduate students informed through posting of flyers
  3. Keep the new student survival guide website up to date
  4. Publish and distribute useful materials to current and incoming graduate students
  5. Actively seek out and interact with special interest groups whose programs and missions are consistent with those of the UGSA.
- F. The Social Committee shall:
1. Organize social activities throughout the year for graduate students
  2. Provide refreshments at the UGSA council meetings.
- G. The Teaching Effectiveness Committee shall:
1. Work with the University Teaching Effectiveness Committee
  2. Organize the UGSA Teaching Assistant Awards Program.

### **Section 10 – Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees shall be defined and approved by a simple majority of votes present. Committee members shall be appointed by the President. Ad hoc committees shall be disbanded by a simple majority of votes present.

**Section 11 – Local Chapter Constitutions**

Local GSA chapter constitutions must be in agreement with the UGSA constitution and must be approved by the Judicial-Legislative Committee.

**Section 12 – Financial Allocations**

- A. All financial allocations must be approved by a simple majority of votes present.
- B. Once a financial allocation has been approved, it may be exceeded by the maximum of \$50.00 or 3% of the allocated amount, whichever is larger, without further approval. Any other overcharge must be pre-approved by a simple majority of votes present.
- C. Chapters in good standing with the UGSA, in accordance with Article III, section 3, paragraph B, will be given a cash rebate each year. Chapters may not receive their rebate until they have submitted to the Secretary by the March council meeting the name and email of the contact person for the chapter over the summer.
  - 1. Fifty percent (50%) of the money allocated to chapter rebates will be equally distributed amongst all chapters in good standing with the UGSA
  - 2. Fifty percent (50%) of the money allocated to chapter rebates will be distributed amongst all chapters in good standing with the UGSA according to the following criteria which incorporate both the amount of council meetings attended and the size of the chapter:

$$\text{Fifty percent (50\% ) of Department Rebate} = \left( \frac{1}{2} \text{ allocation for rebate} \right) \left( \frac{\left( \begin{matrix} \# \text{ of council} \\ \text{meetings attended} \end{matrix} \right) \left( \begin{matrix} \text{size of} \\ \text{chapter} \end{matrix} \right)}{\sum_{\left( \begin{matrix} \text{chapters in} \\ \text{good standing} \end{matrix} \right)} \left[ \left( \begin{matrix} \# \text{ of council meetings} \\ \text{attended} \end{matrix} \right) \left( \begin{matrix} \text{size of} \\ \text{chapter} \end{matrix} \right) \right]} \right)$$

**Section 13 – Special Interest Groups**

The UGSA shall recognize SIGs according to the following guidelines:

- A. The SIG shall have a valid constitution in agreement with the UGSA constitution. This constitution shall clearly outline the objectives of the SIG. The constitution shall be approved by the Judicial-Legislative Committee.
- B. In addition to the constitution, the SIG shall submit a letter signed by the faculty advisor stating the number of active members as defined by their constitution. This letter will be submitted to the Vice President of Internal Affairs by October 1<sup>st</sup> or within two months after the SIG is formed.
- C. Upon approval, a motion shall be made by the chair of the Judicial-Legislative Committee so that the SIG may present its objectives at the UGSA council meeting.
- D. Induction or removal of SIGs will require a two-thirds (simple) majority vote of the UGSA.
- E. Once approved as a valid SIG,
  - 1. The SIG will be in good standing
  - 2. The SIG will have voting rights in accordance to the guidelines established in Article V, Section 5

3. The SIG may apply for block grants in accordance to established guidelines.
- F. Once inducted, the SIG's membership status shall remain valid as long as the requirements outlined by the constitution in Article V, Section 13, paragraphs A and B are upheld.
- G. The SIG will not be eligible for chapter rebates.
- H. The SIG shall have a Representative and an Alternate who shall be enrolled in a North Carolina State University graduate degree program and be in good academic standing.

#### **Section 14 – Legislative Process**

Official legislation concerning amendments to the UGSA Constitution or resolutions stating the position of the UGSA on certain issues shall be required to undergo a universal review and passage procedure.

- A. Any member(s) of the UGSA Council, as defined by Article III, Section 3, Paragraph A, UGSA Internal Standing Committee, SIG in good standing, as defined by Article V, Section 13, or graduate student(s) not represented by a chapter may initiate legislation on behalf of their constituents.
- B. Procedure for Legislation
  1. Compelling concerns or ideas requiring legislation shall be presented to the Judicial-Legislative Committee for review at a regular meeting of that committee. If the initiating party is a graduate student not represented by a chapter, they must secure sponsorship of a chapter representative before meeting with the committee
  2. The Judicial-Legislative Committee shall approve or deny any requests, as determined by majority vote of committee members. Upon approval, the Judicial-Legislative Committee, in conjunction with the initiating party, will draft a bill for submission to the UGSA Council at the next regular council meeting
  3. The current Chair of the Judicial-Legislative Committee shall be responsible for submitting all bills to the Council
  4. All new bills, regardless of the number of readings required, shall come to the floor during New Business
  5. All bills requiring only one reading shall be debated and voted on after they are read unless tabled until a later council meeting
  6. All bills requiring two readings, as outlined in Article IV, shall be debated and voted on after the second reading
  7. Any bill passed by the UGSA Council is final and does not require approval of the UGSA President or the Graduate School.