

Constitution of the Graduate Student Association

As of 10 April 2006

Article I. Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Association, abbreviated as GSA.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the GSA is to represent and give voice to the concerns of all graduate and professional students at Miami University. The GSA will work to foster greater participation of graduate students in the Miami University community, and will serve as a channel of communication between the graduate students and other segments of the University (i.e. the faculty and administration). The GSA will help institute and encourage initiatives central to graduate student welfare at Miami broadly conceived. GSA is likewise responsible for administering the Graduate Travel Assistance Fund. Departmental participation in the GSA is required in order for graduate students in that department to remain eligible to receive travel reimbursement from this fund.

Article II. Membership and Representation to the GSA

Section 1. Membership

The membership shall be open to all graduate and professional students currently enrolled or enrolled in the previous semester at Miami University. No further requirements may be imposed. No dues, nor any other membership fee, shall be collected. Likewise, all general meetings are open to the entire graduate population and students not serving as departmental representatives are nonetheless encouraged to attend.

Section 2. Representation to the GSA

Each division within the graduate and professional student body is invited to have representation to the GSA. Academic departmental and programs (including interdisciplinary programs) are asked to provide a representative to the GSA. The GSA expects specifically intra-divisional nomination and voting policy in determining divisional representation. While the GSA encourages divisional autonomy in regulation of their representation, if a department is not being represented at the monthly meetings, the GSA will contact that particular department and ask that a new representative be selected or appointed.

Section 3. Departmental Representative Responsibilities

Representatives selected to serve their particular departmental constituency must attend ALL regular GSA meetings over the course of their term. If for some reason a representative cannot attend, then an alternate should be sent in her/his place, as funding for travel is directly tied to departmental attendance of the regular GSA meetings.

Representatives are responsible for forwarding and distributing all announcements and information disseminated by the GSA to all graduate students in the representative's home department or program. In order for transitions to work smoothly from year to year, departmental representatives or their respective department or program administrators are responsible for appropriately finding a successor for the following academic term before the first meeting of the next academic year.

Article III. Board Positions, Duties

Section 1. Executive Board

The executive board shall consist of eleven positions, which are the President, Administrative Vice President, Associate Vice President, 2 Treasurers, Secretary, Webmaster, Benefits Chair, Communications Chair, Lecture Series Chair, and Events Chair.

Section 2. Election of Executive Board

Elections for Executive Board positions will be held at the penultimate general meeting of the year in order to make the transition between administrations as seamless as possible. Nominations will be solicited via email and collected by the Communications Chair until the Friday prior to the scheduled election. Persons wishing to run for office may either nominate themselves or receive nomination from another GSA departmental representative. Each departmental representative will have exactly 1 vote per position and is responsible for soliciting the opinions/thoughts of her/his constituency. As soon as the nominations have been closed, the Communications Chair will send out information regarding the candidates, where each candidate will have the opportunity to present her/his platform, qualifications, etc. in written form. A simple majority of departmental representative votes will determine the outcome of the election for each Executive Board position.

Section 3. Duties

Each Executive Board member shall have specific duties during the term of office.

President: The President shall coordinate committees and administrate the GSA general and board meetings. The President is a liaison between the University Community and GSA and shall serve on the Graduate Council. The President reports to the executive board and the GSA body.

Administrative Vice-President: The Administrative Vice-President fills in for the President whenever needed, confers with the President on all matters that involve the Graduate School and the University administration including serving as the liaison between the GSA and all graduate students, serving on university councils or committees (Graduate Council, University Senate, etc.) The Administrative Vice-President serves on the Graduate Council and University Senate, and reports to the President.

Associate Vice-President: The Associate Vice-President fills in for the Administrative Vice-President whenever needed. The Associate Vice-President serves as the chair of the members-at-large committee that consists of all department representatives. The Associate Vice-President is a liaison between GSA and other

Graduate or Professional student organizations and serves of the University Senate. They report to the Administrative Vice-President.

Treasurers: The Operations Treasurers are responsible for coordinating all day-to-day financial transactions, including keeping records of these transactions and reporting the financial state of the GSA to the executive board and the general body. This includes the timely processing of all reimbursement requests from the graduate student body. The Operations Treasurers are also responsible for developing a budget at the beginning of each school year with the approval of the Executive Board. It is the responsibility of the individual chairs to discuss expenses in the planning stages of any initiative or GSA-sponsored activity with the Operations Treasurers and to gain financial approval prior to implementing any activity or initiative. Due to the large volume of reimbursement requests, having two treasurers to manage the funds is crucial to the timely processing of all reimbursement applications.

Secretary: The Secretary will maintain a current membership and committee list and keep the minutes of the meetings. The Secretary will also gather all information from outside sources and distribute to pertinent board members. Accordingly, the Secretary will be the liaison Miami University GSA and the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS). The Secretary is responsible for all clerical work (typing letters, copies, coordinate mailings, etc.) The secretary will also work closely with the Communications Chair in coordinating correspondences to external sources.

Benefits Chair: The Benefits Chair will oversee the Benefits Committee, which is responsible for advocating for benefits such as health insurance, stipend increases, etc. This committee will benchmark Miami University's benefits alongside a number of peer institutions and keep track of all gains made in the implementation of university policies for the increase in support for student health insurance in order to remain engaged on this front. The Benefits Chair will be responsible for remaining in dialogue with the administration throughout the year and will be appointed to represent graduate student interests on the University Fiscal Priorities and Budget Planning Committee.

Communications Chair: The Communications Chair will be responsible for distributing pertinent information related to graduate students and graduate studies over the GSA email listserv. This listserv (gsa@listserv.muohio.edu) is also to be kept up to date by the Communications Chair. Also, the Communications Chair will oversee a communication committee that is responsible for publicizing GSA events and activities to general membership and the university and local communities.

Webmaster: The Webmaster will implement, maintain and trouble shoot the GSA website and listserv. The Webmaster will report to the Communications Committee.

Lecture Series Chair: The Lecture Series Chair will oversee the GSA Lecture Series Committee, which will be responsible for scheduling annual lectures and workshops intended to be open to the entire university community. The larger purpose of the committee will be to engage speakers that have a wide interdisciplinary appeal and will help to encourage dialogue between and among departments, programs and divisions. In this manner, the GSA Lecture Series will take as its greater intellectual mission the fostering of these channels of communication and exchange by inviting speakers and organizing events that productively engage in interdisciplinary work.

Events Chair. The Events Chair will coordinate and organize the GSA Events Committee. The Events Committee will be responsible for coordinating all social and

professional events sponsored by GSA, with the exception of the GSA Lecture Series. The committee will work closely with all of the other board members to facilitate advertising of GSA events, obtain funds for the events and recruit attendees from within the university and surrounding communities. All members of the Events Committee will have a seat on the Executive Board.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. General Meetings

General meetings of the GSA will be held as called by its executive board and will be conducted in accordance of Robert's Rules of Order, on schedule as approved by the executive board at the beginning of each academic year. General meetings require eight voting representatives present.

Section 2. Executive Board Meetings

Executive Board Meetings of the GSA will be held as called by the officers and will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, held on schedule as approved by the Executive Board at the beginning of each academic year. Executive Board Meetings shall be open to the public.

Section 3. Voting Procedure for General Meetings

A simple majority of departmental representative votes will determine the outcome of any matter put before the GSA at the monthly meetings. This likewise pertains to new business and items that need to be acted on in a timely manner. Though the general meetings are open to the entire graduate student body, only department representatives will take part in roll call votes concerning matters of GSA interest and involvement.

Article V. Amendments

Section 1.

Amendments may be made to this Constitution by a vote of two-thirds of departmental representatives present.

Section 2.

Any voting departmental representative may propose amendments, as long as they are introduced in written or electronic form to the Executive Board and the larger group of GSA departmental representatives at least 30 days prior to the vote, which will take place within the context of a general meeting.

Article VI. By-Laws

Section 1.

The Executive Board shall enact By-Laws to supplement this Constitution.

Section 2.

The By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote. Amendments to the By-Laws shall take effect immediately upon passage, unless otherwise specified. All such amendments shall be reported to the membership.

Article VII. Ratification

Section 1.

This Constitution shall take effect upon ratification by a majority of the members present.

Section 2.

Upon Ratification, this Constitution shall supersede all previous Constitutions for the GSA at Miami University.