

UConn

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

Constitution

Effective April 1st, 2018

Graduate Student Senate
Student Union, Room 213
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3008
E-Mail: gssuconn@gmail.com Web: gss.uconn.edu

ARTICLE I: Name

- 1) The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Senate of the University of Connecticut, hereafter referred to as "GSS."

ARTICLE II: Purpose

- 1) To represent the Graduate community within the University community.
- 2) To serve as an advocate of the Graduate community's concerns and needs to both University and non-University organizations.
- 3) To serve as a liaison between the Graduate community and the University administration.
- 4) To provide services to meet the special needs of the University's diverse Graduate community.
- 5) To enhance and encourage cooperation and association within the Graduate community.
- 6) To enrich the lives of the Graduate students at the University.

ARTICLE III: Membership

- 1) **Senate.** The senate shall consist of the following:
 - A. Senators representing active constituencies whose members pay the Graduate Student Activity Fee, as apportioned by the Senate.
 - B. At-Large Senators representing all graduate students who pay the Graduate Student Activity Fee.
 - C. If the said constituency represents a Tier-II organization, then all officers of the organization must be fee-paying graduate students.
- 2) **Alternate Senators.** In the event that a Senator is unable to attend a meeting, that Senator may designate an alternate for that meeting by notifying the Parliamentarian, Vice President, or Communications Director before the meeting in question. For the duration of that meeting, the alternate Senator will have full voting privileges.

ARTICLE IV: The Executive Committee

1) The Executive Committee of the Graduate Student Senate, hereafter referred to as “the Executive Committee,” will be made up of six Officers.

2) The Officers of the GSS shall be the President, Vice President, Communications Director, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Activities Director.

3) President

A. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the GSS.

B. The President shall represent the GSS, the graduate student body, and their interests to the University administration, other University organizations, and non-University organizations.

C. The President shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Committee.

D. The President shall oversee the activities of GSS and supervise its offices and its personnel.

In the event of the President’s resignation or recall, the Vice President shall be named Acting President until a new President is elected.

4) Vice President

A. The Vice President shall chair the meetings of the Senate.

B. In the absence of the President or if the President is temporarily unable to fulfill his or her duties, the Vice President shall serve as Acting President.

C. The Vice President shall chair the Student Life Committee

D. The Vice President shall be a member of the Procedures Committee.

E. The Vice President shall assist the President in the execution of the President’s duties.

5) Communications Director

A. The Communications Director shall be the recording officer of the Senate.

B. The Communications Director shall supervise the maintenance of all GSS records.

- C. The Communications Director shall provide preliminary minutes of the Executive Committee within seven days after a Senate meeting.
- D. The Communications Director shall chair the Public Relations Committee.
- E. In the event of a recall or the resignation of the Communications Director, The Activities Director shall be named Acting Communications Director until a new Communications Director is elected.

6) Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall be the Chief Financial Officer of the GSS.
- B. The Treasurer shall keep or supervise all financial records pertaining to the GSS.
- C. The Treasurer shall prepare or supervise the preparation of all financial statements necessary to comply with University, State, and Federal regulations.
- D. The Treasurer shall authorize the disbursement of funds.
- E. In the absence of the Treasurer, the President shall be responsible for the disbursement of funds using the same procedures as required of the Treasurer.
- F. The Treasurer shall enforce GSS financial policies as specified by the Finance Policies and Procedures.
- G. The performance of the Treasurer will be routinely monitored by the Student Activities Business Office and the Executive Committee.
- H. The Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee.

7) Parliamentarian

- A. The Parliamentarian shall provide interpretations of the GSS Constitution, Bylaws, and Finance Policies and Procedures.
- B. The Parliamentarian shall chair the Procedures Committee.
- C. The Parliamentarian shall act as advisor to the President and Vice President.
- D. The Parliamentarian shall chair the Senate meetings in the absence of the Vice President.

8) Activities Director

- A.** The Activities Director shall manage all GSS-sponsored activities with the exception of those originating in and organized by other committees.
- B.** Management of activities shall include but not be limited to planning, scheduling, organizing, supervising, and advertising.
- C.** The Activities Director shall chair the Activities Committee.
- D.** In the event of the resignation or recall of the Activities Director, The Vice President will be named Acting Activities Director until a new Activities Director is elected.

ARTICLE V: Organization

1) Standing Committees

- A. The Standing Committees of the GSS are charged with the task of overseeing the administration of the Senate.
- B. The Standing Committees of the GSS are as follows:
 - i. The Executive Committee
 - ii. The Student Life Committee
 - iii. The Public Relations Committee
 - iv. The Finance Committee
 - v. The Procedures Committee
 - vi. The Activities Committee
- C. The functions of the Finance Committee shall be defined in the Finance Policies and Procedures. The functions of the other standing committees shall be designated in the Bylaws.

2) Special Committees

- A. The Senate may create special committees with a majority vote. A resolution creating a special committee shall charge it as to its purpose, the scope of its operations, the scope of its authority, and its membership.
- B. Special committees shall be charged with acting on behalf of the needs and interests of the graduate students in areas beyond the scope of the standing committees of the GSS.
- C. All special committees are automatically disbanded at the end of the academic year, unless otherwise decreed by the Senate.
- D. Special committees shall have no control over GSS finances. A majority vote of the Senate shall be required to appropriate a special committee with limited funds necessary to carry out its charge.

3) Committee Membership

A. Committee Chairs

- i. All committee chairs shall be Senators or Executive Committee members.
- ii. All committee chairs, except those specifically assigned to GSS officers in Article VI, shall be elected by a majority closed ballot vote of the senate.
- iii. Nominations for committee chairs are to originate from the Senate in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. The Officers of the Executive Committee may put forth nominations after nominations from the floor are closed. All nominations must be seconded.

B. Members

- i. The members of all committees shall be appointed by the chair of that committee.
- ii. The Senate may choose to add members to a committee with a majority vote.
- iii. Any graduate student may be a member of a GSS committee.

C. All committees shall consist of at least three members, including the chair.

D. In the event that a committee member proves unable to fulfill the duties assigned, the committee chair or a majority dissenting vote in the Senate may remove that member from the committee, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. All committee memberships terminate at the end of the academic year.

4) External Committees

A. An External Committee shall be defined as any University of town committee outside of GSS which allows a graduate student to have full voting and/or speaking rights.

B. An External Committee Representative must be a graduate student at the University of Connecticut.

C. Appointment of External Committee Representatives

- i. The Executive Committee shall appoint External Committee Representatives not specifically designated by the Bylaws.

- ii.** The term of an External Committee Representative shall end at the first Senate meeting of each academic year, with the exception of those which have multiple year terms as designated by the University.
 - iii.** In the event that an External Committee Representative is required before the next meeting of the Senate, the Executive Committee may appoint a temporary representative to that External Committee.
- D.** An External Committee Representative may appoint an alternate for any meeting of the External Committee that he or she is unable to attend.
- E.** The President shall appoint graduate students to sit on disciplinary hearing boards convened by the Graduate School. Representatives of the hearing boards must not come from the same discipline or program as the accused student.

ARTICLE VI: Procedures

1) Conduct of Business

- A. Senate meetings shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
- B. A quorum shall consist of 25% of GSS Senators, rounded up the nearest integer.
- C. The Senate shall meet at least four times per semester. All meetings will be advertised to the general population of graduate students.
- D. Senate meetings shall be limited to two hours from call to order. Once two hours have elapsed, any Senator may move to extend the meeting at agreed upon intervals. Such motions shall be approved by a majority vote in the Senate.
- E. All graduate students attending a meeting shall have the same speaking rights as Senators. Only Senators shall make motions. Any Senator or officer can make a nomination.
- F. All documents pertaining to a scheduled GSS meeting must be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting time.

G. Issues Forum

- i. Every meeting of the Senate shall include the Issues Forum on its agenda.
- ii. Any attendee may bring up a topic for discussion during Issues Forum. These topics may end up providing a basis for action or investigation by the Senate, by one of its standing committees, or by a special committee.
- iii. The Issues Forum shall be limited to 20 minutes. When time has expired, any Senator may move to extend the Issues Forum by an additional ten minutes. Such motions shall be approved by a majority of the Senate.

2) Special Meetings of the Senate

A. Scheduling

- i. Special Senate meetings shall take place more than 72 hours after a regular Senate meeting.

- ii. The Communications Director shall inform Senators at least 48 hours before a special meeting.

B. Authority to Call

- i. A majority vote of the Executive Committee shall call a special meeting, if no fewer than three members vote in the affirmative.
- ii. A written petition submitted to the President by no less than one-third of Senators shall call a special meeting.
- iii. A written petition signed by ten percent of full-time graduate students and submitted to the President can call a special meeting.

- C.** The President shall issue a call for a special meeting within three days of receiving a petition or Executive Committee decision. No more than ten days shall pass between the receipt of a valid petition or Executive Committee vote and the special meeting.

3) Elections

- A.** The Election of all Officers shall be held annually at the next to last Senate meeting of the Spring semester; nominations will be opened at the regular meeting prior to the election.
- B.** No more than two officers shall be from the same constituency, and the President, Vice President, and Treasurer must be from different constituencies.
- C.** Candidates for President shall have been a Senator or member of the Executive Committee for at least one academic year.
- D.** Closed ballots shall be used in all elections for officers and committee chairs.
- E.** Each officer shall have a term of one year; terms shall end on the last day of the spring semester and begin on the following day.
- F.** If a vacancy in the Executive Committee is created during a meeting, nominations for the position will open at that meeting. The election to fill the position shall occur at the next meeting. If a vacancy opens between meetings, the election may be held at the next meeting, provided the Executive Committee notifies the Senate at least one week before the meeting where the election is to be held. The Executive Committee may schedule special meetings of the Senate for these purposes.

- G.** Procedures for electing or appointing constituency Senators, their timing, and term lengths shall be at the discretion of particular constituencies.

4) Recall

A. Officers, committee chairs, and at-large Senators are subject to recall by a two-thirds closed ballot vote of all approved GSS senators for the academic year, regardless of quorum calculations, for the following offenses:

- i.** Failure to perform one's duties
- ii.** Violation of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Finance Policies and Procedures
- iii.** Violation of the Student Conduct Code of the University

B. All such decisions are at the discretion of the Senate in accordance with procedures specified in the Bylaws.

C. A majority closed ballot vote of the Senate shall be necessary to initiate the recall procedure.

- i.** In the event that an Officer of the Executive Committee fails to perform their duties when the Senate is unable to convene (outside of the Academic Year), a unanimous vote of the remaining Executive Board members shall initiate the recall procedure.

5) Voting

A. A vote of those Senators present at a quorum shall be considered legal and binding except where otherwise specified in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Finance Policies and Procedures.

B. A majority vote of the Executive Committee can constitute a veto of any motion passed by the Senate, with the exception of those pertaining to recall. This vote must take place within five working days of the meeting at which the motion was passed and all Senators must be informed immediately of the veto. A majority vote of the Senate at its next meeting, unless it is a financial vote, shall constitute an override of the veto. A motion once vetoed and overridden may not be vetoed again.

C. The President shall have no vote in the Senate. The Vice President shall cast a vote only to break a tie. The rest of the Executive Committee may vote only in elections for officers, at-large Senators, and committee chairs.

6) Resignations

- A.** The President shall resign to the Vice President. The President shall receive the resignations of at-large Senators, committee chairs, and other officers.
Committee chairs shall receive the resignations of their committee members.
- B.** Resignations may be submitted via email if the email is entered into the minutes of the next Senate meeting.
- C.** Officers may choose to resign effective a future date. If one does so, the election will be held at the last meeting to that date, and nominations will open at the meeting previous to the election, so long as there is enough time to allow this process to transpire.

ARTICLE VII: Finances

- 1) The finances of the GSS shall be governed by the “University of Connecticut Graduate Student Senate Finance Policies and Procedures” document.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

1) **Constitutional Amendments**

- A. Constitutional amendments shall be presented to the Senate one meeting in advance of any voting action.
- B. Constitutional amendments shall be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.
- C. All constitutional amendments must be approved by the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees.

2) **Bylaw Amendments**

- A. Amendments to the GSS Bylaws shall be presented to the Senate one meeting in advance of any voting action.
- B. Amendments to the GSS Bylaws shall be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.

3) **Finance Policies and Procedures Amendments**

- A. Amendments to the Finance Policies and Procedures shall be presented to the Senate one meeting in advance of any voting action.
- B. Amendments to the Finance Policies and Procedures shall be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Senate.

ARTICLE IX: Scope

- 1) The Constitution of the Graduate Student Senate of the University of Connecticut shall not conflict with University of Connecticut policies or any applicable laws.