

Article I: Name

The graduate student body at the University of Rhode Island shall be organized under the name of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Rhode Island, hereafter referred to as the GSA. The governing body of the GSA shall be referred to as the Graduate Senate, hereafter referred to as “the Senate”.

Article II: Purpose

Section 1: The Senate shall operate the best form of student government, representing and securing the freedom of choice for all graduate students to the end that it enhances the academic, health, intellectual, and social interests of all its members, as well as establish and maintain an attitude and atmosphere conducive to graduate studies in the university community and community at large.

Section 2: The Senate shall stimulate communications among its members throughout the university community and the community at large and maintain awareness of all issues of concern to its members and act upon such issues.

Section 3: The Senate shall be responsible for determining the fiscal and operational policies that govern the GSA.

Section 4: Each member of the Senate shall be responsible for presenting any required or relevant information on their respective area to the Graduate Senate. They shall also communicate to the students and faculty in their departments all relevant information concerning the Graduate Senate and its policies.

Section 5: The constitution shall have ultimate authority over the Senate’s other instruments in the event that Senate by-laws or policies conflict with what is stated in the constitution.

Article III: Membership

Section 1: All students enrolled in a full-time or part-time program leading to a Graduate degree at the University of Rhode Island are members of the GSA and are therefore eligible for any positions in the Senate. A member of the GSA may withdraw in accordance with the By-laws.

Section 2: Associate/ex-officio members of the GSA may include postdoctoral researchers, representatives from university organizations, and a liaison from the Undergraduate Student Senate. These members shall be recognized at meetings and be allowed to speak, but do not hold any voting power.

Section 3: Any student currently enrolled in a graduate class while pursuing a recognized Graduate Certificate at the University of Rhode Island, but not pursuing a Graduate Degree, may request membership in the GSA.

Section 4: All members of the Senate shall receive remuneration as stated in the By-laws.

Article IV: Meetings

Section 1: Regular meetings of the Senate shall be called at least three times per semester during the Fall and Spring semesters and shall consist of both the executive and legislative branches. Meetings are to be held during the first and last months of each semester, with a third meeting to be held in between. Special meetings of the Senate shall be called by majority vote of the executive branch as deemed necessary. All senators are to be given at least one week's notice of any additional meetings.

Section 2: Only members of the legislative branch shall have voting power on legislation during regular meetings of the Senate. The President may veto legislation passed by the legislative branch. A veto may be overturned by the legislative branch with a 2/3rds majority vote.

Section 3: The Executive Branch and Senate committees shall hold meetings outside of regular Senate meetings. Only members of the Executive Branch or Senate committee shall hold voting power in their respective committees.

Section 4: An option must be made for members of the Senate to join meetings virtually.

Article V: Executive Branch

Section 1: The Executive Branch, hereafter referred to as “the cabinet”, shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Past President, Webmaster, GAU Liaison, Event Coordinator, and Social Media Manager. With the exception of the President, Vice President, and Past President, all cabinet members shall begin their term on the first meeting of the Fall semester and shall be selected from any member of the GSA.

1.1 President: The President serves as the Senate’s executive officer and spokesperson, coordinating officers' activities, and acting as a liaison between the university community and the GSA. They oversee daily financial transactions, co-sign on them, and are responsible for developing an annual budget. They shall have the power to veto legislation passed by the Legislative Branch.

1.2 Vice President: The Vice-President fills in for the President whenever needed. The Vice-President 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 the university councils or committees. They shall have the responsibility of seeking out potential appointees to various university committees and organizations requesting graduate student representation, such names to be submitted to the Executive Branch for approval. The Vice President shall also be responsible for initial formation of legislative

committees upon taking and receiving preferences from Senators which must then be approved by the Legislature by majority vote at the first Fall meeting.

1.3 Treasurer: The Treasurer of the GSA shall be responsible for disbursement of all GSA funds except as noted in the By-Laws. They shall also maintain complete and accurate records of all financial transactions and present an updated financial report at each Executive Branch and Graduate Senate meetings. In conjunction with the Budget and Finance Committee, they shall prepare and present an operating budget in good form.

1.4 Secretary: The Secretary of the GSA shall be responsible for keeping current and detailed Senate meeting minutes and shall be the one taking the minutes during cabinet meetings. They shall coordinate reports of those committee and organization representatives responsible to the Senate. They shall be responsible for maintaining communication between the GSA and all graduate students. As such, they shall be responsible for working with the Graduate Senate to inform via email all graduate students of GSA's upcoming meetings and social events.

1.5 Past President: The post of Past President will be filled by the previous year's President. They shall act as a consultant to the other board members regarding the operation of the GSA, actively assist with the recruitment of Senators, maintain office hours like other board members, and serve in a public relations role to promote the involvement of graduate students with GSA. If the Past President is no longer enrolled at URI or no longer wants to serve as a member of the Executive Branch, the position shall be open to the previous year's Vice President; if the Vice President is not available to serve, there will be a position of Past Treasurer open to

the previous year's Treasurer; if that person is not available to serve, there will be a position of Past Secretary open to the previous year's Secretary.

1.6 Webmaster: The web-master oversees the maintenance of the GSA Web pages on the website ensuring that all the links, information, and documents uploaded on the website are correct and up-to-date.

1.7 GAU Liaison: The GAU Liaison is responsible for attending all Graduate Assistants United and keeping the Senate informed of any ongoing issues and discussions in the GAU.

1.8 Social Media Coordinator: The Social Media Coordinator shall curate, create, and schedule engaging content across various social media platforms to promote association events, news, and updates. They shall monitor, respond to, and engage with online community feedback, comments, and direct messages. Analyze social media metrics, track engagement rates, and adjust strategies accordingly.

1.9 Event Coordinator: The Event Coordinator organizes all the major social and community events; and focuses on internal relations and building membership engagement throughout the academic year. They shall work in collaboration with the Events Committee.

Section 2: The executive branch shall be responsible for executing the policies determined by the Senate. It shall report to the Senate regarding its implementation of such policies. Meetings of the cabinet shall be called and chaired by the President. All members of the cabinet shall have voting power during meetings of the executive branch, but do not hold voting power during regular Senate meetings. Any duties, obligations, or privileges not specifically delegated to an officer in the Constitution or By-laws shall be so designated by a majority vote of the cabinet. A quorum at cabinet meetings shall consist of three voting

members. Any member of the cabinet may call a special cabinet meeting to take place as soon as feasible and cabinet members must be notified.

Section 3: All other members of the cabinet, with the exception of the Past President, shall be nominated by the President and Vice President by the first meeting of the Fall semester and must be confirmed by a simple majority with the Senate. No person may hold more than one cabinet position at a time.

Section 4: In the case that a cabinet member has not committed to their duties, as defined in the Constitution, all other executive branch members may, by simple majority vote of, decide to propose the removal of the member from office and must notify the member at least one week before the final vote. A unanimous vote by the entire cabinet, excluding the member in question, is then necessary to approve the decision. An appointment must then be made by the Senate for the position.

Section 5: Quorum for a cabinet meeting shall consist of at least three (3) members.

Article VI: Legislative Branch

Section 1: All legislative power shall be devoted to the legislative branch, hereafter referred to as “the legislature”. Members of the legislature shall consist of all senators who represent their respective constituency and shall all hold voting power during regular Senate meetings. All committee chairs and a Speaker of the Senate shall be internally nominated and elected by the legislative branch.

1.1 Speaker of the Senate: The Speaker shall be responsible for chairing regular meetings of the Senate. The Speaker shall be aware of parliamentary proceedings (as stated in Robert’s Rules of Order and the GSA By-laws) and ensure they are practiced during Senate meetings. They shall be responsible for appointing a Speaker

Pro Tempore from a member of the legislative branch to take over and assist with speaker duties in their absence. The Speaker shall also be responsible for handling and releasing all agendas for regular or special Senate meetings, unless the special meeting is called for an issue involving the Speaker. Senators may send items to the Speaker to be properly placed within a meeting's agenda in accordance with the Senate's instruments. No item may be rejected or prohibited by the Speaker from being placed on the agenda. The Speaker shall also be responsible for maintaining committee assignments after committees are formed. In the event that the Senate does not have, or is currently unable to find a Speaker or Speaker Pro Tempore, the Vice President shall chair regular meetings. Candidates for Speaker must have served at least two (2) semesters on the Senate prior to taking the position.

1.2 Committee Chairs: All Committee chairpersons are responsible for scheduling and presiding over their committee meetings and shall submit regular reports to the Graduate Senate. Their duties shall be commensurate to and per their respective titles. No person may be chair of more than one committee, nor can one person be both a committee chair and speaker.

1.3 Senators: Senators shall be responsible for representing and presenting any required or relevant information on their respective department to the Graduate Senate. They shall also communicate to the students and faculty in their departments all relevant information concerning the Graduate Senate and its policies. Every senator must serve on at least one GSA Committee but may serve on multiple.

Section 2: All meetings of the Graduate Senate shall be run according to the parliamentary procedure outlined in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. A quorum at any Graduate Senate meeting shall be a third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the legislature's voting members. All

members of the Graduate Senate shall be notified at least two weeks in advance of all regular meetings.

Section 3: The legislative branch may form committees as deemed necessary to address any issues or concerns of graduate students. Standing committees shall be permanent until an amendment is made that states otherwise. Special committees, as well as their members, may be formed as deemed necessary by majority vote of the Legislative Branch and dissolved once their purpose has been fulfilled. The standing committees shall be listed as follows:

- Budget and Finance Committee
- Constitution and By-laws Committee
- Events Committee
- Graduate Student Conference Committee
- Publicity Committee
- Nominations and Elections Committee
- Technology Committee.
- Quality of Life Committee

Article VII Elections

Section 1: The Senate shall be composed of forty-five (45) elected members based on and elected by their respective constituencies, with the exception of First Year Representatives. Thirteen (13) seats shall be At-Large Representatives, which may be filled by any graduate student and voted on by the graduate student population at-large. Three (3) seats shall be dedicated to each college and elected by graduate students of the respective college as follows: three (3) College of Arts and Science Representatives, three (3) College of Business Representatives, three (3) College of Education Representatives, three (3) Graduate School

of Oceanography Representatives, three (3) College of Engineering Representatives, one (3) College of Nursing Representatives, three (3) College of Pharmacy Representatives, three (3) College of Environment and Life Sciences Representatives, and three (3) URI Online Representatives.

Section 2: Five (5) seats shall be reserved for First Year Representatives, who shall be elected internally by the Senate at the beginning of the Fall semester. They shall consist of graduate students who were not enrolled during Spring elections and are beginning their program during that Fall semester.

Section 3: Spring elections shall be held in between the last and second to last meeting of the Spring semester. Results shall be certified by the current administration on the last meeting of the Spring semester to which the current President shall swear in the President-elect. The new President shall then swear in all newly elected officers.

Section 4: The position of President and Vice President shall run under one ticket as if they are a single candidate. Each graduate student may cast one vote for an executive ticket to which the ticket with the most votes shall assume the positions upon certification of results. Candidates for President and Vice President must have served at least two (2) semesters on the Senate prior to taking office.

Section 5: Any vacancies in the legislative branch shall be filled through nominations from members of the legislative branch and confirmed with a simple majority vote. Any seats that remain vacant after an election shall be converted into an at-large representative and elected in the same manner. Vacancies in the executive branch shall be filled through nominations from the President and confirmed by a simple majority vote from the legislative branch.

Section 6: Candidates may run for one seat in each position or constituency in which they are a part of or eligible for, but may not accept or hold more than one position in the event they win more than one of their elections.

Article VIII Amendments

Section 1: Amendments to the Constitution may be made by any senator and must be sponsored by either a committee or five (5) other senators. Sponsored amendments must then be made available to the Senate via announcement by the bill handler through Senate communication channels or through the Speaker by placing it on that meeting's agenda at least a week prior to the meeting in which it will be voted on. A two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority is required by all senators present at that meeting for the amendment to pass.

Section 2: Amendments to the Constitution or By-laws that correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, terminology, or format may be passed by the Constitution and By-laws Committee without approval of the Senate. Any of these changes must still be brought to the attention of the Senate during the committee's report at the next regular meeting, to which the Senate may motion to reject the changes with a majority vote if they are deemed to exceed their purpose.

Article IX Impeachment

Section 1: If any member of the executive or legislative branch has failed to properly carry out their duties or is thought to be acting unethically, there may be a call for impeachment and immediate removal of the individual(s) in question.

Section 2: Any seven (7) members of either the legislative or executive branch may issue a formal request for impeachment that must be made available to the entire Senate and the individual in question at least two weeks prior to the vote for removal. A special meeting may

then be called so the Senate can deliberate and hold the vote for removal. Alternatively, the vote may be added to the agenda of a regular meeting. A two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of all present executive and legislative members at this meeting is required for removal of the individual from the Senate.

Section 3: Any member removed from office under this section shall be ineligible to seek or hold any elected or appointed position within the Graduate Student Association indefinitely, unless reinstated by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate.