



CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

GSA Constitution Document Control. Revisions to the constitution, upon approval by the Senate, may be updated by the current secretary only. Changes must be tracked using this document and approved by the Executive Council before website updates.

Article I

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.

Article II Aims

Section 1 The GSA shall attempt to:

- A. operates the best form of student government, 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.
- B. stimulate communications among its members throughout the university community and the community at large.
- C. maintains an awareness of all issues of concern to its members and, whenever possible, acts upon such issues.

Section 2 The GSA shall:

- A. represent the interests of its members to the university community and to the community at large.
- B. establish and maintain an attitude and an atmosphere conducive to graduate studies in the university community and community at large.

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, except as noted in Article III, Section 2.

Section 2 A member of the GSA may withdraw in accordance with the By-laws.

Section 3 Associate/ex-officio members of the GSA may include postdoctoral researchers, representatives from university organizations, and a liaison from the Undergraduate Senate. These members will be recognized at meetings and be allowed to speak but not vote.

Section 4 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. This must be introduced as a new business during a Graduate Senate meeting but will not be denied.



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Article IV The Graduate Senate

Section 1 The governing body of the GSA shall be the Graduate Senate. The Graduate Senate shall be considered the Student Senate for graduate students at the University of Rhode Island.

Section 2 The Graduate Senate will be made up of senators.

Section 3 One Faculty Advisor may be a non-voting member of the Graduate Senate.

Section 4 Senators will receive a sum of \$100 per semester, to be disbursed at the end of each semester. Senators also serving as committee chairs will receive the sum of \$150 per semester.

Section 5 Senators may schedule a meeting with any two Executive Council officers, to take place within one week of a missed Graduate Senate meeting, in the case of a class or work conflict to fulfill duties under Article V, Section 3. Other instances may be approved on a case-by-case basis by a majority vote of the Executive Council. Such meetings meet the requirements under Article IV, Section 4, for stipends. Voting proxies will be accepted if notice is provided by the absent senator before a Graduate Senate meeting.

Section 6 If a department has not had a senator for more than two semesters, a nomination may be requested during a Graduate Senate meeting.

Section 7 Only one Senator position may be held by a person at a time.

Article V. Graduate Student Organizations

Section 1 The Graduate Senate may recognize student organizations whose missions and actions are unique and serve to better the University community.

Section 2 Recognition can be granted with a majority vote of the Graduate Senate.

Section 3 Graduate Student groups may be represented at GSA meetings per the By-Laws Article VI,

Section 4. Graduate Student groups can be officially recognized by the Graduate Senate if they meet the following criteria:

- A. The group must provide a constitution (and by-laws if available), mission statement, and list of members.
- B. The group must consist of at least 66% graduate students.
- C. The group must be associated with an institution at URI.
- D. The group must have non-discriminatory policies.
- E. Should there be a conflict between the group's policies and those of the GSA, the GSA policies supersede other policies.
- F. Group recognition with the GSA is for recognition only. Speaking at meetings will be permitted, but voting will not be allowed.
- G. The group must provide a yearly report regarding parts A through F that includes events and any updates.

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Article VI Graduate Senate Responsibilities and Powers

Section 1 The Graduate Senate shall be responsible for determining the fiscal and operational policies that govern the GSA.

Section 2 The Chairperson of the Graduate Senate shall call and preside over all Graduate Senate meetings.

Section 3 Senators 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. Every senator must serve on at least one GSA Committee.

Section 4 The Graduate Senate may create ad-hoc and temporary committees as necessary.

Section 5 All Graduate Senate Committee Chairpersons are responsible for scheduling and presiding over their Committee Meetings and shall submit regular reports to the Graduate Senate each semester. Copies of reports will be made available during Graduate Senate meetings. Their duties shall be commensurate to and per their respective titles.

Article VII The Executive Council

Section 1 The Executive body of the GSA shall be called the Executive Council and will consist of graduate students at the University of Rhode Island.

Section 2 The members of the Executive Council shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Past President, and four At-Large Representatives. If the Past President is no longer enrolled at URI or no longer wants to serve as a member of the Executive Council, there will be one position of Past Vice President open on the Executive Council to the previous year's Vice President; if, however, that individual 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.

Article VIII Executive Council Duties and Powers

Section 1 The Executive Council shall be responsible for executing the policies determined by the Graduate Senate. It shall report to the Graduate Senate regarding its implementation of such policies.

Section 2 Executive Council members shall receive stipends as described in this section. Such a stipend is to be paid from the budget of the GSA. If the performance of any officer is contested, the matter will go before the Senate or the other Executive Council members for a vote.



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- A. The President of the GSA shall receive as a stipend for the full performance of his/her duties the sum of \$950 or 100% of student fees, whichever is larger, each semester to be paid at the end of each completed semester.
- B. The Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Past President (or other Past officer per Article VI, Section 2) will be compensated for the full performance of their duties with the sum of \$475 or 50% of student fees, whichever is larger, per individual, to be paid at the end of each completed semester.
- C. The At-Large Representatives will be compensated for the full performance of their duties with the sum of \$285 or 30% of student fees, whichever is larger, per individual, to be paid at the end of each completed semester.
- D. The student fees will be determined based on the Graduate Manual.

- Section 3 The President of the GSA shall be the Chairperson of the Executive Council. They shall call and preside over Executive Council meetings. They shall maintain full and constant communication with the Executive Council. They shall represent the GSA and its interests within the university community and in all other areas encompassed by the GSA. They shall present to the Graduate Senate Executive Council nominations for GSA committee Chairpersons and for graduate student representatives for any university committee or organization requesting such personnel. In the absence of the Vice-President, they shall act as Chairperson of the Graduate Senate.
- Section 4 The Vice-President of the GSA shall assume all presidential duties, specified in Article VII, Section 3, in the absence of the President. They shall act as Chairperson of the Graduate Senate. 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 Council for approval.
- Section 5 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 Council and Graduate Senate meeting. In conjunction with the Budget and Finance Committee, they shall prepare and present an operating budget in good form.
- Section 6 The Secretary of the GSA shall be responsible for the agenda and for keeping current and detailed Graduate Senate minutes (meetings). They shall coordinate reports of those committee and organization representatives responsible to the



Graduate 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.

- Section 7 The post of Past President will be filled by the previous year's President. The Past President (or Past Vice President, Past Treasurer, or Past Secretary, as described below) retains voting and advisory powers intended for continuity and student engagement. The Past President shall be a voting member of the Executive Board. 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 a Past President is no longer enrolled at URI or no longer wants to serve as a member of the Executive Council, there will be one position of Past Vice President open on the Executive Council to the previous year's Vice President. If, however, that individual 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.
- Section 8 The At-Large Senator/Webmaster will be responsible for keeping the GSA website updated to inform graduate students of upcoming events and announcements.
- Section 9 The At-Large Senator/GAU Liaison will be responsible for attending all Graduate Assistants United, hereafter referred to as the GAU, executive board meetings and keeping the GSA Executive Council and Graduate Senate informed of any ongoing issues in the GAU. This position does not require a specific role in GAU, nor does it preclude one.
- Section 10 The At Large Senator/Social Media Webmaster will maintain all social media platforms on a regular basis and will organize campaigns to increase following and engagement on social media platforms.
- Section 11 The At Large Senator/Event Coordinator will be responsible for all major social and community events. This person will oversee all GSA programming and is responsible for managing a Social Events Committee. This position focuses on internal relations and building membership engagement throughout the academic year.
- Section 12 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 Executive Council.
- Section 13 In the case that an Executive Council member has not committed to his/her duties, as defined in the Constitution, the other Executive Council members may,

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by unanimous vote, decide to propose the removal of the member from office after notifying the member at least one week before the final vote. A majority vote is necessary to approve the decision. An appointment must then be made by the Senate for the position.

Section 14 The Executive Council shall be responsible for maintaining a reserve balance of a minimum of 30% of the previous year's operating budget. These funds are to be used only if cash on hand is not available to meet the needs of the current fiscal year's budget. If the account falls below the 30% minimum, it is to be replenished by the end of the fiscal year to pass on to the future Executive Council.

Section 15 It is the responsibility of the Executive Council to fill vacant positions.

Section 16 Executive Council members may only hold one position at a time.

Article IX Term-Limits

Section 1 Lifetime limits on Executive Council membership will allow for a maximum cumulative total of three years or two consecutive years. Changing position or title does not reset this number.

Section 2 Lifetime limits as a senator will allow for a cumulative total of three years or two consecutive years. Changing the department represented or title does not reset this number.

Section 3 The faculty advisor must be voted on at least every academic year. A faculty advisor can be voted for and elected more than once; however, a total lifetime appointment to this position may not exceed three years.

Article X Meetings

Section 1 Regular meetings of the Graduate Senate shall be called at least three times per semester during the Fall and Spring semesters. Meetings are to be held during the first and last months of each semester, with a third meeting to be held in between.

Section 2 Special meetings of the Graduate Senate shall be called by the Executive Council as deemed necessary. All senators are to be given at least one week's notice of any additional meetings.

Section 3 Any member of the Executive Council may call a special Executive Council meeting, the meeting to take place as soon as feasible. All voting members must be notified.

Article XI Amendments

Section 1 Amendments to the Constitution may be made after specific written notification of proposed changes has been made available to the GSA by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, of which the President is a member. Written copies of



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the proposed changes can be made at the GSA and voted on at the same Graduate Senate meeting. The GSA shall be notified (date, time, and location) of the impending vote and any constitutional changes must be ratified by a majority of those senators present at the meeting.

Section 2 The By-Laws may be altered by a majority vote of the Executive Council and the Graduate Senate. Proposed changes may be discussed and voted on in the same meeting.

Version History

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