

Constitution and By-Laws
Graduate Student Association of the
University of Maryland, Baltimore

We, the graduate students, do hereby establish this as the Constitution and By-laws of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Article II – Purpose

The purpose of the GSA shall be:

1. to act as an official liaison body to communicate graduate students concerns to the Graduate School Administration and to University officials;
2. to provide a platform for discussion and suggestions on matters involving graduate students;
3. to communicate and support research interests of graduate students;
4. to promote efficient orientation and integration of incoming graduate students
5. to promote a better graduate student life;
6. to represent the interests of graduate students as members of campus-wide organizations; and
7. to recognize, foster, and reward outstanding leadership among individuals who promote GSA ideals.

Article III – Membership

- A. Membership in the GSA is open to all graduate students enrolled in programs at the UMB campus.
- B. The executive committee of the GSA shall consist of the six Officers listed in Article IV.
- C. Election of Graduate Student Representatives to the GSA.

The Graduate Program Director of each of the graduate programs will be requested to provide two Graduate Student representatives to the GSA each academic year. Students in each program shall elect a representative to the GSA; failing student participation the Graduate Program Director shall solicit a volunteer. If there is no formal selection, any graduate student from that program may volunteer as a representative. Those programs that fail to provide representation will not be considered as active members and will be subject to all ramifications as listed in Article V-A.

D. Terms of Office

The term of office of the members of the GSA shall be for a period of one year, commencing with the first official meeting of the Graduate Student Association in July. If, for some reason, a representative must terminate the office before the end of the term, notice of such termination must be submitted to the Executive Committee as soon as possible so that a replacement may be chosen.

A graduate student representative may serve multiple terms.

E. Duties of GSA representatives

It shall be the responsibility of each representative to:

1. Communicate with their program coordinator to organize forums to introduce constituents to the GSA and openly exchange information.
2. Maintain a representative handbook with current information and forms for constituents.
3. Participate in subcommittees to further the mission of the GSA.
4. Participate in the planning of the Graduate Research Conference (GRC).
5. Attend or send an alternate to at least five (5) of the six (6) GSA General Assembly meetings each semester.

Article IV – Officers

A. Election of Officers

There shall be six elected officers of the GSA:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Treasurer
4. Graduate Council Representative
5. Secretary
6. Public Relations Chair

The election of GSA officers shall take place at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Graduate Student Association in May. Nominations and election of officers shall be conducted successively for President, Vice President, Treasurer, Graduate Council Representative, Secretary, and Public Relations Chair so that a defeated nominee for the Office of President may also be nominated for the Office of Vice President, *et cetera*.

To be nominated for GSA executive office, a graduate student must have attended at least three meetings within the academic year, during which nomination occurs. A representative may volunteer his own nomination or be nominated by another representative. Each nomination must be seconded and accepted. Nominations will be taken up until the actual election. A simple majority vote shall be sufficient to win the election. Provided a quorum is present, as uncontested candidate must obtain the majority vote of active GSA representatives. In the event that this does not occur, the position remains open until a candidate fulfills this requirement.

Any officer may serve consecutive multiple terms.

B. Duties of Officers

1. President:

The president shall conduct the meetings of the GSA and act as the official spokesperson for the GSA in communicating its decisions and opinions to the Graduate School Administration, to the graduate student body, and to other relevant parties. The President shall present his/her proposed agenda/goals for the upcoming year to the GSA representatives within three months of taking office. The President shall also conduct monthly Executive committee meetings. The president shall serve as the chairperson of the Meet & Confer Subcommittee. Finally, the President will plan for GSA growth and development through activity in national/region conferences and collaboration with other GSAs.

2. Vice President:

The Vice President shall conduct the meetings of the GSA in the absence of the President, coordinate the activities of the various subcommittees of the GSA, and supervise the communication of committee functions to the President and GSA. The Vice President will also organize and maintain GSA participation in the University

Student Government Association (USGA) by appointing USGA members representing the GSA, and relay information from this organization to the GSA representatives of the Social Activities Subcommittee.

3. Treasurer:

The treasurer shall be responsible for all monetary affairs of the GSA, shall keep the GSA checkbook, shall make reports of spending to the GSA, present a proposed budget to the Executive committee, and present a line-item budget for the year to be approved by the GSA representative. The treasurer will serve as the chairperson of the Financial Services Subcommittee.

4. Graduate Council Representative:

The Graduate Council Representative will represent the GSA at Graduate Council Meetings held monthly. It is the duty of this office to relay information to and from the Graduate Council and the GSA student body.

5. Secretary:

The Secretary shall be responsible for the general communications within the GSA, for approval of the GSA minutes and management of records important to the GSA. The Secretary will serve as the chairperson of the Graduate Research Conference Subcommittee.

6. Public Relations Chair:

The Public Relations Chair shall be responsible for maintaining the GSA website and facebook page to reflect important GSA meetings and events. The Public Relations Chair shall promulgate announcements via electronic and paper advertisements to GSA representatives and the GSA student body. The Public Relations Chair will serve as the chairperson of the Communications Subcommittee.

Article V – Conduct of Meetings

A. Attendance

Attendance at GSA meetings is open to all graduate students.

Any representative not attending or sending an alternative to at least five (5) out of six (6) meetings per semester (semesters defined as January through June and July through December) will be considered an inactive member. In such a case, the students in the program the member represents will be ineligible to receive any GSA benefits. Active status will be reviewed at the beginning of each semester. During the first semester of activity (before active status is reinstated) the student of the program in question will be eligible to receive all GSA benefits except for the following: travel awards, research awards, nomination for elections to Executive Office. Exceptions can only be made by a written appeal to the executive committee by the representative and the decision made by the Executive Committee is discretionary and final.

B. Meetings

The GSA will meet once a month in a legislative session (typically the first Wednesday of the month). Standing and Ad Hoc committees will meet as needed and will report to the GSA at legislative session.

C. Rules of Order

The meetings shall be presided over by the President and all orders of business shall be conducted on an informal basis, except as noted below:
If a quorum (1/2 + 1 representation) is present at a meeting then formal procedures shall be re-instituted, provided that two-thirds of the representative present at the meeting desire such procedure.

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised Edition, shall be used as a guide.

D. Agenda

A preliminary agenda will be made available to all representatives at least three days prior to the meeting.

Any representative wishing to present items at the meetings which might take longer than ten (10) minutes should place the item on the agenda three (3) days prior to the legislative meeting.

Generally, the order of business will be:

- Call to order
- Circulation of roster
- Minutes of last meeting
- Officer's reports
- Subcommittee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

E. Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated within one (1) week of that meeting. Notice and agenda of the upcoming meeting will be circulated to each representative prior to each meeting.

F. Voting Procedures

A representative of alternate who is unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the GSA may declare his opinion on a matter to be voted upon by submitting a proxy vote in writing to a member of the Executive Committee prior to the meeting.

A motion called to a vote at a meeting shall be decided upon only by a majority vote (one vote per program) of those present and those not present but voting by proxy. With the exception of the president, executive committee members are also allotted one vote each. In the event of a tie the President shall provide the deciding vote.

Article VI – Finances

The Executive Committee (provided a quorum is present) of the GSA has the authority to spend up to \$250 of the GSA budget under emergency authority and must inform the GSA membership of the expenditure by the next monthly meeting. The representatives of the GSA must approve all other spending from the GSA budget.

Article VII – Functions

- A. The Graduate Student Association shall make recommendations to the Graduated School Administration and to other relevant parties for actions on matters concerning graduate students.
- B. Subcommittees

The GSA subcommittees shall generally consist of not less than three (3) representatives. *Ad Hoc* committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the GSA. The subcommittee chairperson shall be as denoted by the constitution or selected by members of each Subcommittee and approved by the Executive Committee.

The following is a list of GSA Subcommittees and their primary objectives:

Graduate Research Conference (GRC):

The Graduate Research Conference Subcommittee will be responsible for planning and organization of all events for GRC. A GRC planning notebook will be maintained to aid with these tasks.

Professional Development:

The professional Development Subcommittee will be responsible for planning and organization of professional lectures and seminars, as well as honor societies and related events.

Social Activities:

The Social Activities Subcommittee will be responsible for planning and organization of Crab Feast, fall orientation mixers, Fall Fest, social hours, movie nights, Hooding Ceremony reception, and all other social events.

Financial Services (one representative to maintain each program):

The Financial Services Subcommittee will be responsible for reviewing and awarding travel fellowships.

Meet & Confer:

The Meet & Confer Subcommittee will be responsible for discussing student issues, health insurance, and student funding. It will meet with the President and Dean of the Graduate School at least one time per semester to present these issues.

Communications:

The Communications Subcommittee will be responsible for the GSA newsletter, submissions to UMB publications, and publicity.

C. GSA Representation

Members and representatives of the GSA shall not speak on behalf of the GSA to campus or non-campus organizations or administrators without the approval of the Executive Committee.

D. GSA Appointments

The Graduate Student Association shall appoint/elect representatives to those campus organizations which provide the GSA a seat. Each representative will report to the GSA monthly with verbal or written reports.

1. University Student Government Association (USGA)

The Vice President shall appoint representatives to the USGA.

Article VIII – Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws

Two options for amending the Constitution exist.

Option A:

Proposed amendments of the Constitution shall be presented to the GSA and a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active membership shall be required for adoption of amendments.

Each representative shall be notified of a meeting at which an amendment will be called, and representatives should be present at this meeting or submit a written proxy to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting.

Option B:

A call for a vote on a proposed amendment to this Constitution may be made by a majority of representatives present at a meeting, provided that a quorum is present.

The vote on such an amendment shall be made by mail ballot to each representative in the GSA within two (2) weeks following the meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active membership is required to adopt the proposed amendment.

Article IX – Amendments to the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Orders

Amendment 1:

The following policy has been adopted as Amendment 1 to the Constitution and By-laws of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Maryland Baltimore.

Guidelines for GSA spending and co-sponsorship of events:

Any group requesting GSA to commit funds for co-sponsorship of an event must comply with the following policy:

- I. A written request must be sent to the GSA President and Treasurer which states:
 - i. The date, time, place, and nature of the event.
 - ii. What measures will be taken to advertise the event to graduate students in all school on campus.
 - iii. An estimate of the amount of money being requested from GSA, how the money will be spent, and an itemized budget for the total event.
 - iv. The identification of funding source(s) of the sponsoring group and feasibility of the event if GSA does not support the event.
 - v. A name, telephone number, and address of a contact person.
- II. For co-sponsorship, the contact person must be a GSA member or choose a GSA member as a GSA contact. One of the contact people will then be placed on the agenda by the GSA Secretary for an upcoming GSA meeting. The contact person must present the funding request at the general body meeting along with details and field questions from the GSA body. A motion to fund the group for the amount deemed appropriate by the GSA must be passed.
- III. Funding will be done on a reimbursement basis; the GSA can be billed directly for the agreed amount by a supplier only after the event has taken place.
- IV. GSA will require that the group report on the event at the GSA meeting immediately after the event. This may be delivered by a GSA member in attendance at the event. The report should include the relative success of the event and written documentation of the graduate students in attendance.

Failure to provide this information will affect future funding requests by the requesting group.

The GSA reserves the right to deny funding to any group if the request is not considered to benefit the graduate student population.

Amendment 2:

The following policy has been adopted as Amendment 2 to the Constitution and By-laws of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Maryland Baltimore.

- I. Obtaining recognition as a supported group
 - a. The founder(s) of the requesting organization must meet with the GSA President prior to filing documentation to discuss the criteria for recognition as a supported organization and potentially accessible funding allocations.
 - b. After a meeting has occurred, the requesting organization must file required documentation at least thirty (30) days prior to the GSA Body meeting at which it will be discussed, including:
 - i. The supported group's Constitution and By-laws, list of officers and representatives from the various programs, meeting days, times and locations, events previously held and list of attendees, list of current members, and future planned events.
 - c. Recognition of the requesting organization will be discussed at the next applicable GSA Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board will then make a recommendation to representatives at a following GSA Body meeting, given that the organization has met the following criteria:
 - i. The organization must be a student-run group.
 - ii. The membership and the privileges of all GSA recognized organizations shall be open to all graduate students of the University of Maryland, Baltimore equally, without regard to race, national origin, age, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, creed, religion, or academic standing. Any group violating the aforementioned shall not be recognized by the GSA and shall not be eligible to receive funding from the GSA.
 - iii. The organization must develop a written Constitution and By-laws which conforms to the missions and principles of the GSA Constitution and By-laws. Such a constitution must include:
 1. The name of the organization
 2. Purpose and mission of the organization
 3. The organizational structure and procedures of the group
 4. Qualifications for membership
 5. Procedural process for selecting officers and representatives
 6. Voting procedures
 7. Procedure for amending and/or modifying the constitution
 8. A clause stating the group's commitment to uphold the non-discriminatory policy of the University and the GSA
 - iv. Other requirements which must be met include:
 1. The organization must meet on a regular basis during the school year
 2. Established with sufficiency to the Executive Board that their mission is relevant to multiple programs within the Graduate School
 3. Show sufficient stability e.g. holding previous events, meeting
 4. Address any other concerns the Executive Board may have on a case-by-case basis;
 - v. The Requested Organization will then appear at the next applicable GSA meeting and give a short presentation to the body on why they should be recognized as a supported organization

- vi. During this time representatives may also question the organization as appropriate
 - vii. Thereafter, the GSA will go to a closed session where the Executive Board will give their decision to support the group's application for recognition as a supported organization.
 - viii. If the Executive Board supports the group's application for recognition as a supported group, the body will discuss and vote on whether the requesting organization meets the requirements to become a supported organization. A super majority (2/3) is needed for the group to obtain supported group status.
 - ix. The requesting organization will be notified within two (2) weeks of the GSA's decision in writing.
- II. Probationary Period:
- a. Each organization approved through the above process will be on probation for one calendar year (12 months).
 - b. At the meeting closest to the one year mark, the GSA body and Executive Board will review whether the organization on probation still meets the above criteria and will review documentation showing the organization's future plans that will be provided before that year period has ended.
 - c. The GSA can revoke supported status based upon this review with a majority vote.
- III. Funding for Supported Groups
- a. Supported Groups may present a funding request to the representatives and Executive Board in accordance with the funding guidelines.
 - b. Supported groups must present a budget request according to the funding guidelines for the upcoming semester, to the President and Treasurer, prior to the last executive board meeting of each semester.
 - c. This request may not include events that are scheduled before the last day of the month in which the upcoming semester begins.
 - d. The Executive Board will meet to review the budget and develop funding recommendations for the GSA representatives prior to the last GSA body meeting of the semester.
 - e. The supported groups that request funding must have someone in attendance at the last meeting of the GSA each semester.
 - f. Each supported group will give a 10 minute presentation session at that meeting.
 - g. The representatives will vote on funding appropriations at that meeting.
 - h. Funding decisions are appealable as per the guidelines within this Constitution and By-Laws.
- IV. Requirements to Maintain Recognition as a Supported Organization
- a. The following information must be presented at the GSA meeting, in writing, before the representative body votes on allocating operating and/or programming funds to any GSA Supported Group. This information must be on file with the GSA Secretary and updated yearly.
 - i. The Constitution, By-laws and Amendments of the organization
 - ii. The executive board of the organization or the contact person should be made clear; names, address, email, and telephone number of officers should be listed.
 - iii. A list of the number of active members for the last year of the group's existence. If the organization is a new, the number of active members for the last year of the organization's existence is not needed. However, new groups must have a list of names and signatures of those students who intend to be members during the organization's first year of existence. Additionally, addresses and emails addresses of these members should be included.
 - iv. A budget report from the previous year, including an itemization of operating costs (not a proposed budget, but the actual budget). New organizations should prepare a proposed budget with explanation.

- V. Required Procedures
 - a. The organization must meet at least once per semester.
 - b. Meeting dates, times and location should be posted throughout graduate school buildings.
 - c. Minutes from the meeting should be given to the GSA Secretary to be made publicly available.
 - d. Events being held should be advertised through email and flyers to all graduate students. A short event description with pertinent details should be provided to the GSA Chief of Public Relations at least two (2) weeks prior to the event date for inclusion in GSA News emails.
 - e. Events should be open to all graduate students.
- VI. Procedure for Revocation of Recognition
 - a. Recognition can be revoked according to the following procedure:
 - i. A motion for revocation is brought to the GSA body by a representative or an Executive Board member. This motion will be tabled until the next GSA body meeting.
 - ii. The organization in question will be notified at least ten (10) days prior to the GSA body meeting in which they will be discussed.
 - iii. The GSA body either:
 - 1. Develops a record of mismanagement of GSA appropriations by the organization, or
 - 2. Identifies requirements not maintained by the organization as outlined in the Required Procedures section.
 - iv. At the applicable GSA body meeting, the body will vote on the motion for revocation. Passage will be by majority of the voting members present.
 - v. The organization can reapply for recognition after one calendar year and upon demonstration that the improprieties have been corrected.
- VII. Appeals process for Appropriations
 - a. Persons wishing to challenge appropriation decisions of the GSA must meet the following requirements:
 - i. Right to Appeal:
 - 1. Any qualifying supported organization or student organization requesting funds from the Graduate Student Association (GSA) has a right to an appeal.
 - 2. A qualifying student organization is one which has been recognized by the Graduate School, or by the GSA.
 - ii. Necessary requirements to request an appeal from the GSA:
 - 1. Any student organization or that requests an appeal from a GSA body vote concerning the appropriation of funds must meet the following criteria. The student organization:
 - a. Must submit a completed GSA funds request for the semester in which they are requesting the appeal by the established deadline for that semester.
 - b. Must appear at the presentation meeting or have an appointed representative appear at the meeting to present the funds request.
 - 2. Any student group not meeting the aforementioned qualifications for appeal will not have their appeal heard by the GSA representative body.
- VIII. Procedural Process for Appeals
 - a. A representative of the qualifying student organization must be present at the meeting in which the GSA body votes on funding request.
 - b. At the conclusion of the body vote on all funding requests, the President will ask if any student organization or student would like to request an appeal. This will serve as a verbal notification to the GSA body of the student organizations' desire to appeal the vote.
 - c. The student organization representative must at this time provide for the record:

- i. The name of the student organization or student they represent
 - ii. Their name and graduate program
 - iii. They must state that they are requesting a formal appeal to the body vote, which determined the distribution of GSA appropriations.
 - d. The body will not hear a presentation from the requesting student organization, nor will they vote at this meeting.
 - e. A written request must follow the verbal notification within two (2) business days of the vote.
 - i. The written request should state with specificity the basis for the appeal.
 - ii. The request must be submitted to the GSA executive board.
 - iii. The request must be in hard copy and *hand delivered* to either a Student Services representative or a current Executive Board member.
 - f. Following the submission of the request the GSA Executive Board will meet to determine if all qualifications have been met and all procedures followed as stated above.
 - g. If it is determined that the student organization has qualified for an appeal:
 - i. The GSA President will call for a special meeting of the GSA body and the requesting student organization will be notified of the date, time, and place of that meeting.
 - ii. The requesting student organization or student should be prepared to present their case to the GSA at that meeting and answer questions from representatives concerning their funding request.
 - iii. Following the presentation, the President will hear motions from the body and call for a vote.
 - iv. The vote of the GSA body at the special meeting is dispositive of the appeal for the GSA body. The body will not hear a second appeal concerning any student organization funding request.
- IX. Representation and Official Record
- a. The GSA Treasurer will represent the position of the Executive Board at the special meeting and field all questions from representatives regarding their original recommendations for funds appropriations.
 - b. The GSA Secretary will produce the official record of the special meeting of the GSA body and the vote.
 - c. If the student organization wishes to challenge the vote of the GSA body at the special meeting, the student organization must submit a written request to the faculty advisor and Associate Dean of the Graduate School.