

The University of Texas at Austin

BYLAWS OF THE

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY

ARTICLE I

Objectives

Section 1. General Objectives

- 1.1. To represent the views of graduate students to the university community and the community at large.
- 1.2. To facilitate graduate student communication and interaction.
- 1.3. To gather and disseminate information pertinent to graduate students.
- 1.4. To conduct activities that promote the general welfare of graduate students.
- 1.5. To serve as the nominating source for all graduate and professional student appointments to university governance committees or advisory groups.

Section 2. Annual Objectives. Each year, during the summer, the Executive Committee shall develop annual objectives to guide the direction of the Graduate Student Assembly during the following year. The Executive Committee shall present the objectives to the Assembly for adoption as an ordinary motion at the first regular meeting of the academic year.

ARTICLE II

Departmental Representation

Section 1. Annual Reapportionment

- 1.1. **Timely Passage.** The Graduate Student Assembly shall reapportion itself yearly by no later than one (1) month before the spring elections. If the body fails to pass a resolution to this effect by that time, the body shall revert to the previous year's representational apportionment.
- 1.2. **Minimum Requirements.** Each field of study as defined in the most recent *Graduate Catalog* and *Law School Catalog* shall receive, at minimum, one alternate seat and one representative seat.
- 1.3. **Additional Seats.** Each field of study as defined in the most recent *Graduate Catalog* and *Law School Catalog* that is under represented, as determined by the number

of students per seat, may receive additional seats with the goal of seeking approximately equal numbers of students represented by each seat.

Section 2. Apportionment Authority

1.1. Relevant Statistics. For purposes of determining additional seats, the registration report published by the Office of Information Management and Analysis should be considered the primary authority. Additional or more in depth registration numbers from other sources may be used if these data are not able to be procured from the Office of Information Management and Analysis.

ARTICLE III Member Responsibilities

Section 1. Member Responsibilities.

1.1. Faithful Representation. Members of the Graduate Student Assembly shall be responsible for representing faithfully, to the organizations to which they are elected or appointed, the interests of their graduate student constituencies, rather than their personal or departmental interests. Their specific responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1.1.1. Communicating with their constituencies to maintain knowledge of graduate student needs and desires related to the issues they have the authority to represent.

1.1.2. Regularly attend meetings, events, programs, and activities of the Graduate Student Assembly and encourage constituents to participate as well. If a member is unable to attend a Graduate Student Assembly activity, they shall notify the alternative representative and the Membership Director of the reason for non-attendance.

1.2. Availability. Members of the Graduate Student Assembly shall make themselves available to their constituencies and their Assembly colleagues. The Graduate Student Assembly through Rules of Order may specify appropriate methods of communication.

1.3. Conflicts of Interests. Members shall be responsible for ensuring that they do not represent multiple constituencies that may have conflicting interests. The scope of their participation in other organizations shall not conflict with the scope of their responsibilities as Graduate Student Assembly members.

Section 2. Membership Status. The Administrative Director and Administrative Committee shall work with the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) to be sure each member remains in good standing and continues to meet other criteria specified in the Constitution during their terms of membership and shall automatically recall the membership of any member who does not.

2.1. Membership Disputes. The decisions of the Administrative Director and Administrative Committee shall be subject to review by the Assembly and may be challenged by ordinary motion.

2.2. Notification. The Administrative Director and the Administrative Committee shall notify all affected organizations of any changes in Graduate Student Assembly members or participants and keep membership information current.

Section 3. Resignation. Any officer, representative, or member of the Election Oversight Board may resign by submitting their written resignation to the President.

ARTICLE IV

Graduate Representation to University Governance Committees

Section 1. Broad Representation. Based on a recommendation from the President, the Assembly shall select and sponsor graduate students to university governance and advisory groups so that graduate students are broadly representative of the graduate student body in terms of academic discipline and diversity categories listed in the Constitution.

Section 2. Number. The number of graduate student representatives the Assembly approves for each university governance committee is determined by the rules of the committee and through discussions between the Assembly and other university units. The Administrative Director and Administrative Committee shall make available upon request the committee composition of each university governance committee.

Section 3. Term of Office. Graduate Representatives to university governance committees shall generally serve from the beginning of the fall semester each academic year to the beginning of the fall semester the following year or as specified in the charter or rules of their committee. These representatives may be reappointed.

Section 4. Nominations. Annually, each spring semester, the President shall call for graduate student volunteers to represent graduate students on university governance committees. The President shall provide a list of recommendations to the Assembly for approval at the next available meeting as an ordinary motion. Assembly approval constitutes appointment or nomination to the appropriate university governance committees. The President forwards recommendations to the appropriate university office supporting the committee.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Executive Committee

Section 1. Executive Officers.

1.1. President of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.1.1. Duties of the President.

- a. The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Graduate Student Assembly.
- b. The President shall faithfully execute all acts of the Assembly.
- c. The President shall be the representative of the graduate students to the administration of the University of Texas at Austin, to the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System, to the City of Austin, and to the Texas Legislature.
- d. The President shall serve on, or send a representative to, the committees, boards, and legislative bodies of which the President is a member.
- e. The President shall, with advice and consent of the Assembly, nominate or appoint, as appropriate, students to serve on university committees and boards.
- f. The President shall forward to the President of the University the names of students nominated to serve as members of the standing committees of the Graduate Assembly, General Faculty and the Presidential Standing committees as provided in established University policy.
- g. The President shall nominate the Chair of each Graduate Student Assembly Standing Committee. The President shall have the power to form ad hoc and other committees and shall assign the members of such a committee.
- h. The President shall, at each meeting of the Assembly, give information on the state of the University, the Graduate Student Assembly, and graduate student body, and recommend to their consideration such measures judged necessary and expedient.
- i. The President shall have the power to, on extraordinary occasions, convene the Assembly giving written notice to all representatives at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the special meeting.
- j. The President shall chair the Executive Committee.
- k. The President shall ensure the enforcement of the Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly, and of the Bylaws, and Rules of Order.

1.2. Vice-President .

1.2.1. Duties of the Vice-President.

- a. The Vice-President shall monitor all internal and external operations of the Graduate Student Assembly as defined by the President.
- b. The Vice-President shall preside over the Assembly, but shall have no vote unless they be equally divided.
- c. The Vice-President shall serve on the committees, boards and legislative bodies of which the Vice-President is a member.
- d. The Vice-President shall have the authority to assign Representatives to Graduate Student Assembly Standing Committees.
- e. The Vice-President shall assist the President with assigned responsibilities.

1.3. Financial Director.

1.3.1. Duties of the Financial Director.

- a. The Financial Director shall manage the finances of the Graduate Student Assembly according to University rules and regulations.
- b. The Financial Director shall assist the President in developing the annual budget and fiscal reports, and shall present the annual budget to the appropriate university unit.
- c. The Financial Director shall present to the Assembly a report and recommendation based on the fiscal impact of all bills with the appropriations of funds.
- d. The Financial Director shall oversee maintenance all property owned by the Assembly including electronic hardware and software.
- e. The Financial Director shall investigate and suggest methods of acquiring additional sources of funding.
- f. The Financial Director shall maintain a history of the Assembly and develop relationships with past members.
- g. The Financial Director shall chair the Finance Committee.
- h. The Financial Director shall report directly to the President.

1.4. Administrative Director.

1.4.1. Duties of the Administrative Director.

- a. The Administrative Director shall create and maintain a record of the activities of the Graduate Student Assembly.
- b. The Administrative Director shall record the minutes of each meeting of the Assembly and the Executive Committee, file them, and make them available for public review.
- c. The Administrative Director shall compile detailed records from each executive officer.
- d. The Administrative Director shall collect, update and distribute the time and location of Assembly meetings.
- e. The Administrative Director shall organize rosters, nametags, copy accounts, meeting agendas, monthly calendars of Graduate Student Assembly events, and other administrative affairs.
- f. The Administrative Director shall keep official attendance records and notify representatives of absences.
- g. The Administrative Director shall coordinate the recruitment and recognition of Assembly representatives, committee appointees, and the graduate student body.
- h. The Administrative Director shall be responsible for keeping track of the accomplishments of the members of the Graduate Student Assembly throughout their term in office.
- i. The Administrative Director shall chair the Administrative Committee.
- j. The Administrative Director shall report directly to the President.

1.5. Programs Director.

1.5.1. Duties of the Programs Director.

- a. The Programs Director shall be responsible for planning and coordinating programs and events that benefit the graduate student community including lectures, events, the Williams S. Livingston Outstanding Graduate Student Employee Awards, and Graduate and Professional Student Week Activities.
- b. The Programs Director shall assist with travel plans for visiting speakers and coordinate logistical arrangements.
- c. The Programs Director shall chair the Programs and Events Committee.
- d. The Programs Director shall report directly to the President.

1.6. Communications Director.

1.6.1. Duties of the Communications Director.

- a. The Communications Director shall be the official communications officer of the Graduate Student Assembly.
- b. The Communications Director shall serve as the official liaison between the Executive Committee and the media.
- c. The Communications Director shall work with the Administrative Director to keep a record of all Graduate Student Assembly events, which shall contain pictures and accounts of Graduate Student Assembly events and meetings.
- d. The Communications Director shall manage the Assembly electronic mailing lists.
- e. The Communications Director shall manage the Assembly website.
- f. The Communications Director shall coordinate publication of posters, brochures, advertisements, and other Assembly publicity materials.
- g. The Communications Director shall chair the Communications Committee.
- h. The Communications Director shall report directly to the President.

1.7. Legislative Relations Director.

1.7.1. Duties of the Legislative Relations Director.

- a. The Legislative Relations Director is responsible for representing the interests of graduate students to the State Legislature, Governor, City Council, Mayor, White House, Department of Education, and Congress.
- b. The Legislative Relations Director also serves as the official voice to the media on issues regarding legislation and government.
- c. The Legislative Relations Director shall chair the Legislative Committee.
- d. The Legislative Relations Director shall report directly to the President.

1.8. Student Affairs Director.

1.8.1. Duties of the Student Affairs Director.

- a. The Student Affairs Director shall serve as the official liaison between the Assembly and the Offices of the Dean of Students and Associate Dean for Graduate Student Services.
- b. The Student Affairs Director shall aid the Office of the Dean of Students and Office of Graduate Studies in raising awareness of graduate student affairs issues and developing university-sponsored programs and activities for graduate students.
- c. The Student Affairs Director shall chair the Graduate Student Affairs Committee.
- d. The Student Affairs Director shall report directly to the President.

1.9. Academic Affairs Director.

1.9.1. Duties of the Academic Affairs Director.

- a. The Academic Affairs Director shall serve as the official liaison between the Assembly and the Offices of the Provost.
- b. The Academic Affairs Director shall aid the Office of the Provost in raising awareness of graduate academic affairs issues.
- c. The Academic Affairs Director shall chair the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee.
- d. The Student Affairs Director shall report directly to the President.

ARTICLE VI Assembly

Section 1. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Assembly shall be scheduled at the beginning of each academic year and shall be held at least monthly during the two long semesters of the academic year on a specific day and time to be set by the Vice-President.

Section 2. Special Meetings. The graduate student body or the Assembly may upon written petition call for a special meeting to address a specific matter that requires special attention or cannot wait until the next regular meeting.

2.1. Petition. Five members of the Assembly or twenty graduate students in good standing from at least three different colleges or schools may petition the President to call a special meeting. The drafter of such a petition shall introduce it to the Assembly as new business through an Assembly member or shall submit it to a member of the Executive Committee for addition to the agenda of the next regular meeting. If the President considers that the timing of the matter requires immediate action, he or she should either call a special meeting of the Assembly or take action on behalf of the Assembly.

Section 3. Open Deliberation. All interested persons shall be able to attend meetings of the Assembly.

Section 4. Notification. The Administrative Director shall post the time, duration, and location of each Assembly meeting and notify all Members of the Assembly five (5) days prior to each regular meeting and at least 72 hours prior to each special meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. The quorum to conduct business shall be fifty (50) percent of the departments with elected members at a regular meeting and twenty-five (25) percent of the departments with elected members at a special meeting unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or Bylaws.

Section 6. Chair. The Vice-President shall normally be the presiding officer or Chair of Assembly meetings. In the absence of the Vice-President or if the Vice-President wishes to participate in the deliberations of the Assembly, another Officer shall assume the role of Chair.

Section 7. Secretary. The Administrative Director shall normally be the Secretary of the Assembly. In the absence of the Administrative Director, the Assembly shall appoint an acting secretary to record the actions taken in the meeting.

Section 8. Parliamentarian. The President shall normally be the Parliamentarian of the Assembly. In the absence of the President, another Officer shall assume the role of parliamentarian.

Section 9. Resolutions and Other Motions. Assembly business shall be conducted according to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules of Order. Proposed assembly actions shall be introduced under new business through resolution and other motions.

Section 10. Order of Business. The order of business for regular and special meetings shall be provided in the Rules of Order.

Section 11. Agenda. The Administrative Director shall post the agenda for each meeting at least 72 hours prior to each regular and special meeting. The agenda shall include all resolutions scheduled for final consideration.

Section 12. Minutes. The Administrative Director shall record the attendance at the meetings, produce the minutes of Assembly meetings according to the Rules of Order, and post them within seven (7) days after each meeting.

Section 13. Communications. The Administrative Director with the assistance of other Officers, Directors, and Committee Representatives shall ensure Assembly members and graduate students are kept advised of actions of the Assembly and its members as well as university issues and other matters that potentially or actually affect graduate students.

Section 14. Records. The Administrative Director shall maintain paper copies of all records, archives, and correspondence of the Assembly and its committees regardless of original media. The Administrative Director and the Assembly shall specify in the Rules of Order the records and archives that must be maintained.

ARTICLE VII Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees. These committees are permanently established and may be composed of members of the Graduate Student Assembly and graduate students at-large. The President shall create standing committees as deemed necessary or upon majority vote of the Assembly.

1.1. Executive Committee

1.1.1. Purpose. The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Assembly when the Assembly is not in session by providing guidance to the Officers of the Graduate Student Assembly on behalf of the Assembly. It shall also coordinate the work of and provide guidance to graduate student members of university governance committees and to committees of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.1.2. Chair. The President of the Graduate Student Assembly. The Administrative Director shall act as Secretary.

1.2. Communications Committee

1.2.1. Purpose. The Communications Committee shall facilitate easy, open, and honest external and internal communications for the Graduate Student Assembly by developing procedures for use of existing communications tools and recommending new tools to facilitate communications within the Graduate Student Assembly and its Committees. Procedures shall be documented in the Rules of Order.

1.2.2. Chair. The Communications Director.

1.3. Finance Committee

1.3.1. Purpose. The Finance Committee shall develop and propose financial procedures, Assembly budgets, track Graduate Student Assembly expenses, and make financial recommendations to the Assembly and the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee shall also identify funding sources for the Assembly and make recommendations to the Assembly and Executive Committee for utilizing those sources. The Finance Committee shall aid in the maintenance of a history of the Assembly and development of an Assembly alumni relations program. Financial procedures shall be documented in the Bylaws or Rules of Order.

1.3.2. Chair. The Financial Director.

1.4. Legislative Committee

1.4.1. Purpose. The Legislative Committee shall review United States Congress, Texas State Legislature, Austin City Council and other governmental actions that potentially or actually affect University of Texas at Austin graduate students and make recommendations to the Assembly of course of action that the Graduate Student Assembly, its members, and other graduate students may take to increase positive effect and reduce negative effect of such actions.

1.4.2. Chair. The Legislative Relations Director.

1.5. Programs and Events Committee

1.5.1. Purpose. The Programs and Events Committee shall organize activities to further the academic enrichment and social integration of graduate students including colloquia, symposia, ceremonies, and other programs of interest to graduate students.

1.5.2. Chair. The Programs Director.

1.6. Administrative Committee

1.6.1. Purpose. The Administrative Committee shall assist the Administrative Director in developing recommending and interpreting Graduate Student Assembly rules embodied in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules of Order. The committee shall review Graduate Student Assembly rules to ensure they are consistent with United States federal law, Texas state law, University of Texas System rules, and University of Texas at Austin policy and procedures. The committee shall develop and recommend accounting procedures for membership that balance the need for public information on the members and respect for their privacy. The committee shall assist the President and Vice-President in recruiting graduate students to fill vacant positions in the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.6.2. Chair. The Administrative Director.

1.7. Graduate Student Affairs Committee

1.7.1. Purpose. The Graduate Student Affairs Committee shall be responsible for all issues that pertain to the quality of life of graduate students. The Graduate Student Affairs Committee shall review issues and other matters of concern to specific groups of students including but not limited to the concerns of masters degree students, doctor of philosophy degree students, professional degree students, graduate student academic employees, and international students.

1.7.2. Chair. The Student Affairs Director.

1.8. Graduate Academic Affairs Committee

1.8.1. Purpose. The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee shall be responsible for all issues that pertain to the educational policies of graduate students. The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee shall review academic issues and other matters of concern to specific groups of students including but not limited to the concerns of masters degree students, doctor of philosophy degree students, professional degree students, graduate student academic employees, and international students.

1.8.2. Chair. The Academic Affairs Director.

Section 2. Ad hoc and Other Committees. These committees are temporarily established for a special purpose or to complete a particular task and may be composed of members of the Graduate Student Assembly and graduate students at-large. The President shall create ad hoc or other committees as deemed necessary or upon majority vote of the Assembly.

Section 3. Quorum. A quorum for Graduate Student Assembly committee meetings is a majority (1/2) of the committee membership. Committees shall schedule their meetings so that their members may attend. The Chair shall recommend dismissal of a committee member to the Administrative Committee for failure to attend two consecutive meetings without sufficient reason.

Section 4. Documentation. The Administrative Director of each Graduate Student Assembly committee shall maintain electronic and paper copies of agenda, minutes, and other documentation of the work of the committee. The minutes shall be completed and made available to members of the Graduate Student Assembly within seven days of each meeting. Minutes shall be subject to correction at the meeting following the one they document. The Administrative Director shall work with each committee secretary to ensure the committee follows proper record management principles.

Section 5. Committee Recommendations. Each committee recommendation shall be introduced to the Assembly as a main motion (and as a resolution if the recommendation is particularly complex). The Assembly shall take action on each motion.

ARTICLE VIII Financial Management

Section 1. Officer Compensation. The President, Vice-President, Administrative Director, Communications Director, Programs Director, Financial Director, Legislative Affairs Director, Student Affairs Director, and Academic Affairs Director shall each receive financial compensation as budgeted during the period for which he or she shall be serving as an executive officer, and the amount of financial compensation shall be neither increased nor decreased after election or while in office.

1.1. Performance. All officers receiving stipends shall be responsible for demonstrating adequate work each month as defined by Rules of Order before the Financial Director may release payment.

1.2. Adjustments. The Assembly may reduce, suspend, or eliminate the stipend of any officer at any time during the year should that officer fail to fulfill the responsibilities of the office. This shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote.

1.3. Budget Requirements. The President and Financial Director shall be responsible for designating the amount of each stipend per year when preparing the budget, subject to the approval by the Assembly.

Section 2. Appropriation of Assembly Funds. No individual organization or group may submit a request for funds to the Graduate Student Assembly without sponsorship from a voting member of the Assembly. This Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the intended application of funds to ensure that basic internal spending rules are not violated.

ARTICLE IX Assembly Rules

Section 1. Rules of Order.

1.1. Main Rules of Order. Graduate Student Assembly adopts as its Main Rules of Order Darwin Patnode, Ed., *Robert's Rules of Order, Modern Edition* for normal operation of the Assembly. Scott, Foresman, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 9th ed.* shall be the ultimate authority.

1.2. Special Rules of Order. Graduate Student Assembly may supplement and amend the Main Rules of Order by Special Rules of Order. These rules facilitate smooth functioning of the Assembly and provide a basis for resolving questions of procedure. They provide the rules for conduct of meetings, more specific duties of officers, duties of others in elected and appointed roles, and general administrative rules of the elements of the organization. They consist of a collection of individual Rules of Order (RO).

1.3. Standing Rules of Order. The Standing Rules of Order are the lowest governing document within Graduate Student Assembly. They consist of a collection of specific Standing Rules (SR) that document Executive Committee-approved internal procedures supporting Graduate Student Assembly operations.

Section 2. Amendment

2.1. Special Rules of Order. Upon review by the Executive Committee, the Graduate Student Assembly may amend the Special Rules of Order, by adopting, amending, or repealing any specific Rule of Order (RO) by a main motion at a general or special meeting of the Assembly provided the complete written text of the proposed amendment

was introduced to all Graduate Student Assembly members at least ten days before the meeting.

2.2. Standing Rules of Order. On behalf of the Assembly, the Executive Committee may amend the Standing Rules of Order, by adopting, amending, or repealing any specific Standing Rule (SR) by an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote of all Executive Committee members after discussion at a regular or special meeting of the Executive Committee. The Assembly will be notified of the adoption of the amendment before it becomes effective and may, by a motion, call for the rule or amendment to be approved using procedures for resolutions.

Section 3. Suspension. At a regular or special meeting, the Assembly may suspend any individual rule from the Rules of Order, Special Rules of Order, and Standing Rules of Order for the duration of the meeting by an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present.

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Amended on October 6, 2003

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Amended on November 15, 2005.

Amended on February 10, 2006.

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