

UConn

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

Bylaws

Effective October 1, 2014

Graduate Student Senate

Student Union, Room 213

Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3008

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BYLAW I: Scope

- 1) The Bylaws of the Graduate Student Senate “GSS” at the University of Connecticut shall not conflict with the Constitution of the GSS, University of Connecticut policies, or any applicable law.

BYLAW II: Executive Committee

- 1) **Membership.** The Executive Committee of the GSS shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Communications Director, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and the Board of Trustees Graduate Student Representative.
- 2) **Responsibilities.** As a coordinating and policy-recommending body for the Senate, the committee shall:
 - A. Recommend a budget to the Senate.
 - B. Prepare an agenda for Senate meetings.
 - C. Appoint individuals to committees and posts outside of the GSS, subject to approval of the Senate.
 - D. Facilitate communication among Senators and between Senators and their constituencies.
- 3) **Authority.** According to its role as an executive body for the Senate, the committee may:
 - A. Request reports from other Senate committees and appointees to outside committees or posts on their activities.
 - B. Approve expenditures as necessary between Senate meetings, subject to a three-fifths majority vote, consistent with the Finance Policies and Procedures.
 - C. Voice its opinion on motions before the Senate.
 - D. Exercise jurisdictional authority over all disputes that cannot be settled at a lower level, including disputes between committees.
- 4) **Committee Meetings**
 - A. The President shall prepare an agenda for and preside over all meetings.
 - B. The Communications Director shall record and sign minutes of all meetings and shall communicate those minutes to the senate.
 - C. Any vote taken by the Committee shall require a three-fifths majority for passage.
 - D. Meetings shall occur at least once per month.

- E.** If circumstances preclude a meeting, the President may solicit an electronic vote from the members on issues that call for immediate action. At least five-sixths of the Executive Committee must participate in the vote, and its results shall be recorded in the minutes of the next Executive Committee meeting.
- F.** Quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the Executive Committee.

5) Officer Duties

- A.** Each officer shall be required to report to the Senate at each Senate meeting.
- B.** Each officer shall be required to participate as a full Executive Committee member.
- C.** Each officer shall attend the regular meetings of the Executive Committee and the Senate.
- D.** The President and Treasurer shall not be an officer of any other graduate student organization. The Vice President, Communications Director, Parliamentarian, and Activities Director may serve as officers on graduate organizations, but must abstain from any votes relating to the funding of those organizations.

6) Transition of Officers

- A.** To ensure an effective transition of Executive Committee duties, each officer and officer-elect shall document that a comprehensive transition plan has been developed and agreed to by both the incumbent and the officer-elect. The plan will terminate when both parties have attested to the accomplishment of the goals set forth in the plan by way of their signatures.
- B.** The final stipend for each officer, as approved by the Senate, shall not be issued until the transition plan is submitted to and approved by both the incumbent and incoming President.

7) Board of Trustees Graduate Student Representative

- A.** To enable effective communication between the GSS and the Board of Trustees, the Graduate Student Trustee shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee *ex officio*.

- B.** The Executive Committee shall invite the Graduate Student Trustee to deliver a report on the past year's proceedings of the Board of Trustees to the GSS during the final meeting of the Senate in the Fall semester.
- C.** The Graduate Student Trustee may also be a Senator for a constituency or an at-large Senator if so elected.

BYLAW III: Apportionment of the Senate

1) Establishing Constituencies

- A. Academic constituencies based on upon fields of study recognized by the Graduate School and/or academic departments of the University having graduate degree programs shall form the basis of the Senate.
- B. Non-academic constituencies of graduate students may be recognized by the Senate upon the recommendation of the Procedures Committee.

2) Apportionment of the Senate based upon Constituencies

- A. At the first meeting of the Spring Semester of alternate academic years, the Procedures Committee shall determine the constituencies to be represented in the Senate and the apportionment of seats among those constituencies, to take effect at the beginning of the Fall Semester of the next academic year.
- B. The apportionment of academic constituencies shall be based upon the enrollment figures found in the most recent Graduate School Enrollment Report.
- C. Apportionment shall meet the following conditions:
 - i. The minimum numbers of graduates student in any constituency is 1
 - ii. All academic constituencies shall be entitled to at least 1 seat.
 - iii. The GSS officers shall not count as a Senator against their constituency's apportionment, nor shall they count against the apportionment of at-large Senators.
 - iv. Academic constituencies shall be apportioned at least three-fourths of the total number of seats apportioned, including at-large seats but not including the GSS officers.
 - v. Academic and non-academic constituencies shall be apportioned separately.
- D. While the Procedures Committee shall have flexibility in apportioning seats in the Senate amongst the academic constituencies, the following guidelines should be used:

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- i. Thresholds for each level of representation (1, 2, or 3 seats per constituency) should correspond to natural breaks in the distribution of constituency enrollments.
 - ii. Constituencies below roughly the 50th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 1 seat.
 - iii. Constituencies within roughly the 50th-to-75th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 2 seats.
 - iv. Constituencies above roughly the 75th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 3 seats.
- E.** To be represented in the Senate, a non-academic constituency:
- i. Will only have 1 seat.
 - ii. Must have a membership that is not a subset of an academic constituency. Its members must belong to a diverse range of academic constituencies.
 - iii. Must demonstrate to the Procedures Committee a need for representation that is not being met by the existing constituencies.
- F.** The Senate shall approve the apportionment of the Senate by majority vote.
- G.** Once the Senate has approved the apportionment, the representation of each constituency shall remain set, regardless of changes in enrollment, until the Senate approve a new apportionment.
- H.** The procedures for electing or appointing constituency Senators and setting their term lengths shall be at the individual discretion of the constituencies.
- I.** Changes in Apportionment
- i. Should an unrecognized constituency emerge after apportionment and petition for representation, the Procedures Committee shall review the petition and recommend to the Senate how the apportionment of the Senate should be changed, if at all.
 - ii. Should a recognized constituency petition for changes in its representation, the Procedures Committee shall review the petition and recommend to the Senate how the apportionment of the Senate should be changed, if at all.

3) At-Large Senators

- A. At least one-twentieth of the apportioned seats shall be at-large. All graduate students who do not already represent a constituency in the Senate or serve as an officer shall be eligible to be an at-large Senator.
- B. At-Large Senator terms shall end with the last day of the Spring Semester and begin on the following day.
- C. Elections shall occur by the following procedures, overseen by the Parliamentarian and the Procedures Committee:
 - i. Applications to run for at-large seats shall be solicited from the graduate student community a reasonable time before the elections.
 - ii. At-Large elections shall take place during the Spring Semester. Voting by closed ballot shall be open for multiple days to all members of the graduate student community. All graduate students may cast up to one vote for each open seat. The nominees with the most votes shall obtain the positions.
 - iii. At-large elections may be conducted electronically in conjunction with the Student Activities Joint Elections program.
- D. If there is a vacancy in an at-large seat during a term:
 - i. Candidates who wish to fill a vacant At-Large Senator seat must collect a petition with 25 verifiable signatures from graduate students supporting his or her candidacy. The Procedures Committee shall review and verify the petition.
 - ii. If the Procedures Committee approves a candidate's petition to fill an At-Large Senator vacancy, a closed ballot vote of current active senators shall be held. If a majority votes in favor of the candidate, that candidate is elected.

BYLAW IV: Recall Procedure

1) Initiation of Recall Procedure

- A. A senator shall move to initiate recall procedures against a specific individual for specific violations of Article VI, Section 4, Subsection B of the Constitution of the Constitution.
- B. Senators may motion to add, remove, or change specific charges.
- C. Debate shall be limited to the sufficient specificity of the charges and validity of those charges as a violation of Article VI, Section 4, Subsection B of the Constitution.

2) Notification of Recall

- A. The individual charge must receive written notification of the specific charges outlined in the motion to initiate recall against said individual within one day of the motion and at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the hearing will take place.
- B. All Senators and officers shall be notified at the same time as the accused.

3) Recall Hearing

- A. The Senate shall consider only those charges made in the initiation of the recall procedure.
- B. The individual charged shall have the right to present a defense before the Senate.

BYLAW V: Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund

- 1) The GSS Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund, hereafter referred to as the Loan Fund, has been designed to meet the immediate financial obligations that may confront graduate students. Loans made through the Loan Fund are for emergency purposes only.
- 2) Standard operating procedures are designed to meet State statutes and University regulations.
- 3) **Eligibility**
 - A. Any graduate student who is enrolled at the University of Connecticut and is a member of a recognized academic constituency shall be eligible for a loan from the Loan Fund, provided they have no University financial hold and satisfy all other eligibility requirements.
 - B. Eligibility for a Loan is limited to one per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) and three per calendar year, as determined by the date of loan application.
 - C. Any student who is currently delinquent in his or her repayment of a past loan shall be ineligible to borrow additional funds, of any amount, until such time as the previous debt has been settled.
 - D. Any student who has had loan eligibility revoked by the Office of Student Services and Advocacy shall have Loan Fund eligibility revoked by the GSS.
- 4) The maximum amount one individual may borrow at any one time is \$1,500. The Administrative Assistant may, in consultation with the Executive Committee, lower this maximum if the loan fund is in danger of default.
- 5) The period of each loan is 90 days. A loan may be extended once, for up to 30 additional days, upon application to the Senate Office and approval by the Administrative Assistant in consultation with the Executive Committee. Applications for extension must be submitted before the initial due date.
- 6) If a loan through the Loan Fund is approved, funds will be disbursed via check from the Office of the Bursar in accordance with the Bursar policies and procedures.
- 7) Loans not picked up within 30 days of the date of application will be automatically cancelled.

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- 8) All loans made through the Loan Fund shall be interest free. However, late payment penalties may be applied by the Bursar's Office.
 - 9) Repayment of a loan made through the Loan Fund is made at the Office of the Bursar.
 - 10) Any loan not paid by the due date shall result in a hold being placed on the account of the person involved; therefore, restricting future enrollment, student benefits, and eligibility for academic transcripts from the University.
 - 11) Any loan originally paid on time that is subsequently overdue as a result of financial aid being rescinded shall be given an automatic 30-day extension from the date funds are rescinded. Following this 30-day period, all penalties shall apply as normal.
 - 12) The treatment of past due loans will be handled in accordance with the policies and procedures employed by the Bursar's Office pertaining to other, similar accounts receivable.
 - 13) Standard Operating Procedures for the Loan Fund shall be outlined in the Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund Guidebook, which shall remain in the Senate Office at all times, with copies maintained by the Communications Director, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant.

BYLAW VI: Stipends

- 1) The GSS may award funds to its officers as stipends, in recognition of contributions made to the GSS and its work by the individuals holding those offices, subject to a majority closed ballot vote of the Senate.
- 2) Stipends awarded to officers of the execution of duties as defined in the GSS Constitution and Bylaws shall be limited to the following totals for each office, regardless of the number of individuals serving in each office:

A. President

- i. Up to \$3,000 paid in nine equal monthly installments from September through May.
- ii. Up to \$600 paid in equal monthly installments from June through August.

B. Vice President

- i. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall semester.
- ii. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring semester.

C. Communications Director

- i. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall semester.
- ii. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring semester.

D. Treasurer

- i. Up to \$3,000 paid in nine equal monthly installments from September through May.
- ii. Up to \$600 paid in equal monthly installments from June through August.

E. Activities Director

- i. Up to \$800 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall semester.
- ii. Up to \$800 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring semester.
- iii. Up to \$400 awarded for the Summer at the first Senate meeting of the following Fall semester.

F. Parliamentarian

- i. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall semester.
 - ii. Up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring semester
- 3) At the last Senate meeting of each month, any Senator can motion to adjust the pay of the President and/or the Treasurer for that month by a majority closed ballot vote. If no such motion is made, then the Senate defaults to approving the pay for the month. The Parliamentarian shall announce that fact during his or her report at each relevant meeting.
- 4) Stipends up to \$250 per graduate student per semester may be specifically awarded for the organization of any substantial undertaking involving duties beyond those specifically defined in the GSS Constitution and Bylaws subject to a majority closed ballot vote of the Senate. No more than \$750 in total per semester may be awarded for this purpose from the GSS budget.

5) Summer Duties and Stipends

- A. The President, the Activities Director, and the Treasurer shall play an active role over the summer, coordinating summer events, overseeing GSS finances, and preparing for the coming year, including but not limited to the pre-planning of Fall activities.
 - B. During the summer months, the Executive Committee may withhold any portion or all of the monthly stipend paid to the President by majority vote. At the first Senate meeting of the Fall semester, the Senate shall vote to award any portion or all of the funds withheld by Executive Committee vote.
 - C. In the case that officers are unable or unwilling to fill their summer roles, the Senate may appoint individuals to do so in their place.
 - D. In the event that officers or their appointed substitutes becomes unwilling or unable to continue in the role over the summer, the Executive Committee may appoint by a three-fifths majority vote a substitute to serve the role for the remainder of the summer.
- 6) The individuals being considered for stipends shall abstain from voting on their own awards.

BYLAW VII: Procedures Committee

- 1) The Procedures Committee shall oversee all GSS elections.
- 2) The Procedures Committee shall oversee the membership and verify credentials of both the membership and other graduate student organizations.
- 3) The Procedures Committee shall report any election and membership violations to the Senate for action.
- 4) The Procedures Committee shall deliver a recommendation on disputes concerning the interpretation of the Constitution and its Bylaws.
- 5) The Procedures Committee shall periodically review and recommend changes to the Constitution and Bylaws in light of operational exigencies of the Senate. The contents of this update shall be subject to approval of the Senate.

BYLAW VIII: Activities Committee

- 1) The Activities Committee shall be responsible for scheduling and carrying out events applicable to graduate student enrichment, subject to approval by the Senate.
- 2) The Activities Committee shall be responsible for the planning, scheduling, organizing, and advertising of GSS-sponsored events under the fiscal constraints imposed by the Senate and the Financial Policies and Procedures.

BYLAW IX: Student Life Committee

- 1) The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for addressing any major graduate student life issue which is brought to the attention of the Senate and is delegated to the Student Life Committee by the Executive Committee.
- 2) The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for identifying graduate student life issues. The Committee shall bring them to the focus of the Senate along with as much information as possible and shall be involved in as much of the communication on this problem as necessary.
- 3) The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for creating and organizing projects that will be directed towards or will improve graduate student life, especially those direct towards issues pertinent to graduate students.

BYLAW X: Public Relations Committee

- 1) The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for promoting the GSS, Senate sponsored events, and any information that is pertinent to the graduate student body.
- 2) The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the GSS website (<http://gss.uconn.edu>).

BYLAW XI: External Committee Representatives

- 1) External Committee Representative shall accurately represent to the best of their abilities the interests of the graduate student body with limited personal bias.
- 2) External Committee Representatives shall attend formal committee meetings and notify the Executive Committee if unable to attend committee meetings.
- 3) External Committee Representatives shall provide information concerning the organization, activity, and mandate of their committees.
- 4) External Committee Representatives shall provide written reports of committee meetings to the Executive Committee within seven days of each meeting, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Executive Committee and the External Committee Representative. These reports shall be provided to the Senate at the next Senate meeting.
- 5) Members of the Executive Committee shall be required to serve on certain external committees:
 - A. The President shall serve as representative to:
 - i. University Senate
 - ii. University Senate Executive Committee
 - iii. Graduate Faculty Council
 - B. The Vice President shall serve as representative to:
 - i. University Senate
 - C. The Treasurer shall serve as representative to:
 - i. Student Fee Advisory Committee
 - ii. University Budget Committee
 - iii. Any External Committee whose principal aim concerns matters of finance or budget
 - D. The Communications Director shall serve as representative to:
 - i. Student Union Board of Governors Student Union Policy Council

- ii. Any External Committee whose principal aim concerns the Student Union

E. The Parliamentarian shall serve as representative to:

- i. Graduate Faculty Council
- ii. Student Activities Joint Elections Committee
- iii. Student Trustee Election Committee
- iv. Any External Committee whose principal aim concerns elections or issues of procedure.

- 6) If scheduling concerns prevent a member of the Executive Committee from serving on a designated External Committee, the President may appoint another member of the Executive Committee to serve. If no member of the Executive Committee is available, the President may appoint a Senator. These appointments are subject to the approval of the Senate.

BYLAW XII: Administrative Assistant

1) Eligibility

- A. The Administrative Assistant must be a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, campus.
- B. The Administrative Assistant shall not be either a member of the Executive Committee or a Senator.

2) Application and Hiring

- A. The application process shall be designed and administered by the Executive Committee.
- B. The hiring decision shall be made by the President, a second member of the Executive Committee, and at least one Senator.
- C. The Senate shall then approve the chosen Administrative Assistant by majority vote.

3) Responsibilities

- A. The Administrative Assistant shall manage the short-term emergency loan fund.
- B. The Administrative Assistant shall hold office hours in the Senate office at regularly scheduled and posted times.
- C. The Administrative Assistant shall complete any appropriate duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

4) Compensation

- A. The Administrative Assistant shall receive equitable compensation for duties performed in accordance with the University of Connecticut's established guidelines and norms.

BYLAW XIII: The GSS Graduate Community Service Award

1) Name

- A. The name of the award shall be "The GSS Graduate Community Service Award."

2) Purpose

- A. The GSS shall institute the annual awarding of the GSS Graduate Community Service Award to honor a graduate student who, through his or her exemplary service, has made a significant contribution to intellectual, cultural, and professional capital of the graduate student community at the University of Connecticut.

3) Eligibility

- A. Eligible award candidates must:

- i. Be enrolled in a graduate-degree granting program at the University.
- ii. Be in good academic standing.
- iii. Have completed at least one full year of study at the University at the time of awarding.

- B. Individuals ineligible to receive the award shall include:

- i. Current executive officers of the GSS.
- ii. Current Service Award Committee members.
- iii. The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees.
- iv. Past award recipients.

- C. Preference for the award shall be given to:

- i. Nominees whose service to the graduate student community was primarily uncompensated and/or voluntary in nature.

4) Service Award Committee

A. Each year, the GSS shall form the Service Award Committee (hereafter, “the award committee”) to certify nominations and award the nominee who has demonstrated the most significant contribution to the graduate student community over the course of his or her graduate career at the University among those nominated.

B. Membership

- i. The award committee shall consist of five voting members.
- ii. The Communications Director shall serve as the chair of the award committee.
- iii. All committee members, including the chair, must represent different constituencies.
- iv. All other GSS officers shall not be members of the award committee.
- v. All other graduate students may be members of the award committee.
- vi. All committee members shall be appointed by the Senate.
- vii. Nominations for award committee membership shall be open at the beginning of the first spring semester meeting of the GSS.

5) Nominations

- A.** Nominations for the GSS Service Award shall open March 1st and close March 31st. The Communications Director shall announce this fact via the graduate student listserv, the faculty/staff daily digest, and the GSS website.
- B.** Nominations may be submitted by graduate students, faculty, or staff of the University.
- C.** Nominations shall be submitted to the Communications Director.
- D.** The award committee shall determine the method and procedure for accepting nominations.
- E.** Self-nominations shall not be considered by the award committee.

6) Voting

- A.** The award committee shall meet to select the recipient of the GSS Service Award within one week after nominations close.
- B.** The award committee shall select the recipient of the GSS Service Award from among those nominated by a majority vote of the committee.
- C.** The award committee may, in the absence of a meritorious nominee, elect to suspend granting of the award for that year by a majority vote.

7) Presentation of Award

- A.** The Vice President shall notify the awardee and invite him or her to the next meeting of the senate.
- B.** At the next meeting of the Senate, the awardee shall receive a certificate of award and \$500 as a token of the Senate's appreciation for his or her service.
- C.** The awardee shall be given the opportunity to address the Senate

BYLAW XIV: Alcoholic Beverage Policy

- 1) Events sponsored by the GSS at which alcohol is to be served must encourage responsible consumption of alcohol in the publicity, promotion, and execution of the event. There is to be no reference or publicity regarding the amount of alcohol that is available.