

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

## **Preamble**

We, the Graduate Students of the University of South Carolina, in order to provide for better representation of graduate and professional needs, secure to ourselves better working conditions, and to ensure a better experience for all members of the Graduate Student Community, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE I – ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

### **Section 1 NAME**

The name of this body shall be the Graduate Student Association of the University of South Carolina.

### **Section 2 AUTHORITY**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) shall have the authority in accordance with other university policies and procedures to provide a comprehensive voice on behalf of all graduate students at USC.

### **Section 3 MEMBERSHIP**

All duly enrolled graduate students, whether seeking a degree or not, who are taking at least one (1) academic credit (except undergraduates exercising “senior privilege”), are members of the GSA and are represented by the GSA Executive Board. All members are free to attend and vote at any GSA meeting.

## **ARTICLE II – EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

### **Section 1 VESTING OF EXECUTIVE POWER**

1.1 The Executive Power of the GSA shall be vested in the Executive Branch.

### **Section 2 OFFICERS**

2.1 The Executive Branch shall be made up of the Graduate Student Association President, Vice President and Treasurer.

2.1 Additionally, the Executive Branch shall consist of whatever permanent and ad hoc committees approved by the membership.

- 2.2 The President, Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected in a manner provided for by this Constitution and any rules passed by the membership.
- 2.3 All other executive officers, as they shall be defined by the membership, shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the membership.

### Section 3 DUTIES

- 3.1 Duties of the President  
The President shall:
  - 3.1.1 Uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the GSA and administer all regulations established by the membership.
  - 3.1.2 Appoint all other executive officers as specified in this Constitution or membership.
  - 3.1.3 Remove any cabinet member from an appointed position, without prior consent from the membership.
  - 3.1.4 Act as the official representative of the GSA before the President of the University, President of the Student Government, Board of Trustees or any other office of the University, and as an official representative of the University at the request of the President of the University.
- 3.2 Duties of the Vice President  
The Vice President shall:
  - 3.2.1 Serve in lieu of the President in his or her absence or disability and succeed to that office should it become permanently vacated.
  - 3.2.2 Serve as an ex-officio member of any committee established under this Constitution at the request of the President
- 3.3 Duties of the Treasurer  
The Treasurer shall:
  - 3.3.1 Be responsible for the preparation and presentation of the budget of the GSA.
  - 3.3.2 Serve as the chair of the Finance Committee
  - 3.3.3 Inform all department organization treasurers of the rules under which funding will be determined no later than the distribution of funding request forms.
  - 3.3.4 Should the Vice President be removed from office for various reasons he or she will become the Vice President.

### Section 4 ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

- 4.1 The Graduate Student Association President, Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected by a majority of those voting in GSA elections (a majority being defined as fifty percent (50%) plus one of the total votes cast in a general election).

- 4.2 All general elections for executive officers shall take in accordance with GSA rules and will be held no later than April 1 of each year.
- 4.3 All run-off elections shall take place no later than April 8 in any calendar year.
- 4.4 All elected executive officers shall serve from May 1 of the calendar year in which they were elected until April 30 the following year.
- 4.5 If no President shall have been elected by May 1, the Vice President shall serve as President, until a second election can be held.
- 4.6 If any other elected executive office remains vacant on May 1, the President shall appoint such executive officers with the approval of the membership. The President shall have the power to call a special session of the GSA for this sole purpose.

## Section 5 IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL

- 5.1 Any elected executive officer may be impeached by the membership and removed from office, following a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present at the meeting in which the impeachment occurs.
- 5.2 Any member may call for the impeachment of an Executive officer by presenting a written complaint, stating the reasons for impeachment at any GSA meeting.
- 5.3 Upon receipt of Articles of Impeachment, the highest Executive Officer not being impeached shall chair the hearing.
- 5.4 Impeachable offenses shall be defined by the membership.
- 5.5 The membership shall appoint an Impeachment Committee, consisting of at least 5 members at the meeting at which the Articles of Impeachment are presented. The member filing the Articles may not serve on the Impeachment Committee, neither may the targeted officer.
- 5.6 The Impeachment Committee must be composed of at least two Master's Degree students and two Ph.D. students. The fifth member can be from any program.
- 5.7 A recommendation of conviction to the full membership shall require a two-thirds (2/3) concurrence of the Impeachment Committee. Failure to make a recommendation of conviction shall constitute an acquittal.
- 5.8 Conviction shall require a two-thirds (2/3) concurrence of all members who did not serve on the Impeachment Committee.
- 5.9 Conviction by the membership will result in the immediate removal from office.
- 5.10 No officer impeached by the membership may be appointed or stand to election for any position in GSA.

## ARTICLE III – GRADUATE COUNCIL

### Section 1 DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The Graduate Council Representative is an elected position within the GSA. This person will represent graduate interests in the Graduate Council.

Section 2 ELECTION

- 2.1 The Graduate Council Representative will be elected at the same time as GSA Executive Officers.
- 2.2 The Graduate Council Representative will serve for the same term as GSA Executive Officers.

**ARTICLE IV – AMENDMENTS**

Section 1 AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

- 1.1 When two-thirds (2/3) of the membership shall deem it necessary, they may propose amendments to this Constitution. No amendment shall be valid, except that it shall be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of all graduate and professional students voting in an election called for that purpose.
- 1.2 No amendment shall be valid that denies to any academic department the right to the representation to which they would otherwise be entitled under this Constitution.
- 1.3 No amendment shall be valid that denies to any academic department or professional school equal access to funding or any other benefit enjoyed by all other academic departments or professional schools.

**ARTICLE V – RATIFICATION**

Section 1 APPROVAL BY STUDENTS

- 1.1 This Constitution shall not be effective until it shall have been approved by a simple majority (50% plus 1) of all eligible graduate students who vote in a special election for that purpose.

Section 2 EFFECT OF APPROVAL

- 2.1 Upon compliance with Sections 1.1 and 2.1 of this Article, this Constitution shall become effective immediately.
- 2.2 All prior constitutions or other documents governing the running of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) will be null and void.