

Constitution of the Graduate Student Union

University of Notre Dame

Preamble

The graduate students of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, in order to secure the fullest possible participation of graduate students in university life, create the Graduate Student Union and authorize this document as its Constitution.

Article I: Membership

All graduate students of the four divisions of the Graduate School (Engineering, Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences) and School of Architecture are members of the Graduate Student Union ('GSU'). The GSU does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, age, disability, military and veteran status, socioeconomic status or immigration status.

Article II: Objectives

The objectives of the GSU are:

- Effective representation of graduate student interests to the university administration;
- Promotion of excellence in graduate education at Notre Dame;
- Improvement of life for graduate students through social, cultural, professional, and intellectual activities;
- Promotion of cooperation and interaction between graduate students and faculty, undergraduates, and all other members of the university community.

Article III: The Graduate Student Council

Section 1. Powers

The governing body of the GSU is the Graduate Student Council. This representative assembly has the power to collect dues, spend monies, hold elections and establish committees; to represent the graduate student body to the administration, faculty, other educational institutions and associations, and the public in general; and to carry out all other duties assigned to it in this Constitution.

Section 2. Composition

Voting Members. The voting members of the Council are the President, the Vice Presidents, the representatives of the constituent departments or degree granting programs of the Graduate School (Departments), the Chairs of the GSU Committees, and the GSU representatives on university committees. Only the representatives of the Departments can

vote on budget issues or amendments to the constitution.

Selection of Representatives. Representatives to the Council must be members of the GSU. Officers of the GSU may not serve as departmental representatives. *Departments having nineteen (19) or fewer resident graduate students are entitled to one (1) representative; those having twenty (20) or more are entitled to two (2) representatives. For departments with only one representative, that representative should be determined, if possible, for the following academic year prior to the commencement of Finals Week of the previous academic year. For departments with two representatives, both GSU Department Representatives should be determined, if possible, for the following academic year prior to the commencement of Finals Week of the previous academic year. For programs that are complete in one year or less (e.g., ESTEEM program), GSU Department Representative(s) should be determined within thirty (30) days of the start date of the incoming class' academic year. GSU representatives elected prior to the summer session are not required to be on campus during the summer months. GSU Department Representatives must be determined in one of two ways: (1) through an intra-departmental election, giving all members of their respective departments the opportunities to vote. The GSU recommends the use of Google Forms to aid in the process of hosting this election for each department. In the event of a tie, a runoff vote shall be held. (2) A student collects the signatures from 1/5 of the members of a department in favor of appointing the student as the GSU Department Rep. One-fifth of the department signatures is based on current Spring Enrollment. Signatures must be filed with the GSU Administrative Assistant prior to the end of Finals Week of the previous academic year. In the event that more candidates are supported than positions available, a runoff election shall be held.* Departmental elections or nominations are administered in accordance with procedures set by the students of that Department, such procedures being kept on file with the GSU. If a Department does not have such procedures on file, nominations or elections are subject to ratification by the Council. The Council may establish procedures for the election of representatives from Departments that have not filed such procedures with the GSU.

Alternate Representatives. In the event that the official program representative to the GSU council cannot attend a particular council meeting, another representative from the program may serve as the program's delegate with the same voting privileges as the official delegate. The alternate delegate should receive the official delegates' approval in a manner prescribed by the GSU executive council. The alternate delegate's name shall occur in the place of the regular representative list as 'ad hoc <department> representative' on the minutes of that meeting.

Section 3. Meetings

- A. *Regular Meetings.* The Council holds regular monthly meetings during the academic year, and may by resolution provide for the further regular meetings.
- B. *Special Meetings.* The President may, at his or her discretion, and shall, upon the petition of any five (5) representatives, call a special meeting of the Council. The President or Secretary gives each member of the Council five days' notice of such

a meeting; notice for this purpose consists of a letter by U.S. or campus mail, a published notice in the *Observer*, and one of the following additional communications: electronic mail notice, telephone call, face-to-face conversation, or posted notice in each department. The business conducted at a special meeting is limited to that set out in the notice.

C. *Quorum*. A quorum of the Council, except as hereinafter specifically provided consists of either (a) The President or Vice Presidents and representatives from one-third of those Departments that have selected representatives to the Council, or (b) Representatives from two-thirds of those Departments that have selected representatives to the Council.

D. *Conduct of Business*.

1. *Presiding Officer*. The President may appoint any member of the council, including himself, to preside over GSU meetings.

2. *Open Meetings*. Except for discussions of internal discipline and personnel matters, which discussions may be held in executive session accordance with the council meetings *are held* in executive session only by the vote of three-fourths majority of those present and voting. When the Council is not in executive session, its meetings are open to all members of the GSU.

Article IV: Officers

Section 1. General Provisions

The officers of the GSU are the President and the two Vice-Presidents. They must be members of the GSU. The President and Vice-Presidents are elected annually in a general election of the GSU; they assume office immediately following the general election. Should any officer resign during their term, the remaining elected officers have the power to appoint a replacement. The officers are empowered to carry out all duties assigned to them in this Constitution. The officers may, at their discretion and upon notification of the Council, delegate the authority to carry out their duties to committees, individual GSU members (whether members of the Council or not), or to GSU staff, *provided* that full responsibility for performance of their duties remains with the officers.

Section 2. The President

The President is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the GSU and the conduct of its staff, and for the other officers' performance of their constitutional duties. The President is an *ex officio* member all committees of the GSU. *Once* each year, the President and Vice-Presidents present a report on graduate student life and issues to the Council and the University's Board of Trustees. The President is responsible for distributing an agenda to each council member prior to every meeting. With the advice and consent of the Council, the President appoints the *President pro-tempore* of the Council, the Chairs of the GSU committees, and GSU representatives to the Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and other policy-making bodies of the University. The President ensures that all such GSU representatives report the activities of their policy-making bodies to the Council. The President also serves as the GSU representative to other post-baccalaureate organizations on campus (specifically, organizations run by the post-baccalaureate students in the College of Business,

College of Law, and School of Architecture). Finally, the President and Vice-Presidents are mandated to serve as the liaison to the state and national governments as well as to organizations.

Section 3. *The Vice-Presidents*

Two Vice-Presidents are elected with the President, and share with the President the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the GSU, and the responsibilities of external liaisons. The Vice-Presidents are *ex officio* members of all committees of the GSU, and oversee the formation and ordinary workings of all GSU committees and Professional Development Programs. One of the Vice-Presidents (to be decided by majority of the council) is appointed the President pro-tempore; the same Vice-President assumes the President's duties until the end of the President's term in the event that the President is unable to fulfill the duties of the office.

Section 4. *The President Emeritus*

When a GSU President leaves office at the end of his/her term, he/she will immediately assume the title and office of President Emeritus. The outgoing GSU President will retain the title "President Emeritus" and will occupy the office for one (1) year after finishing his/her term. The role of the President Emeritus is advisory, to provide advice on procedures relating to the GSU and to act as an official source of institutional memory. This position is unpaid and the President Emeritus will not be a voting member of the GSU. The duties of the President Emeritus are such that they may be executed while the President Emeritus is non-resident.

Article V: Committees

Section 1. *General Provisions*

Committees of the GSU are empowered to carry out all duties assigned to them in this Constitution. Committee chairs are responsible for graduate student issues and concerns reflected by the title of their committee. Committee chairs work with the appropriate branch of the administration and are responsible for university committee positions relevant to their portfolio. Committee members are members of the GSU who volunteer to serve in that capacity; they need not be members of the Council. Payment of *professional development funds* (*PD funds*) to committee chairs is contingent upon performance of duty and Council approval. Committee chairs must attend five (5) out of seven (7) Council meetings in order to receive their full *PD fund*. When more than one person shares a Committee chair, each Committee chair will receive the full PD fund. The President appoints the Chairs of committees with the advice and consent of the Council; the Chairs of Committees are responsible to the Vice-Presidents for:

- Convening regular meetings of their committees;
- Ensuring that the committee promptly conducts all business committed to it by the Council;
- Reporting the activities of the committee in such form as the Vice-Presidents may direct;
- Maintaining itemized accounts of receipts and expenditures by the committee and

providing monthly and annual fiscal reports. In the event of a vacancy in the office of a chair of any committee, one of the Vice-Presidents shall act as chair.

Section 2. *The Standing Committees of the GSU are:*

Academic Affairs

The Academic Affairs Committee acts as an advocate for the academic and professional concerns of graduate students in order to create an environment that is conducive to academic and research excellence. The Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee will represent the graduate student populations on the Academic Council and Advanced Studies Committee, the University Committee on Libraries, and the University Committee on Academic Technologies. The committee is mandated to advocate for and promote graduate student contributions and needs to each of these committees, including concerns about graduate student spaces (i.e. library carrels), computing needs (i.e. functions of Sakai, print quotas, etc.), and other institutional resources. In addition, the Academic Affairs committee is mandated with the appointment of graduate student representatives to any active subcommittees or ad-hoc committees of the committees on which she/he sits. *Annual PD fund: \$1200*

Health Care Committee

The Health Care Committee is responsible for providing information concerning the health of the graduate student population and negotiating health insurance improvements, as well as educating graduate students on health insurance and community resources. Activities include organizing informational meetings, supplemental health care coverage, and days that promote healthy diets and exercising. The Health Care Committee sends representatives to the ad-hoc *Student Health Insurance Advisory Committee*. *Annual PD fund: \$1200*

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee acts as an advocate promoting the professional development of graduate students in order to fully prepare them with confidence in their careers in academia, the private sector, government, or not-for-profit organizations. The Professional Development Committee shall work closely with the Associate Dean for Professional Development at the Graduate School. The Chairs of the Professional Development Committee will attend the weekly Graduate School Professional Development team meetings. These meetings connect and coordinate the efforts of the various centers, institutes and other entities at Notre Dame that provide events, workshops and services for graduate students, such as the Kaneb Center, Graduate Career Services, the Writing Center, the Center for Social Concerns, or the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts. In addition, the Chairs of this committee, collaborating directly with the Graduate School, will be tasked with assisting with workings relating to "3MT" (Three-Minute-Thesis). This committee is encouraged to support, organize, and co-host events on campus that promote the professional development of graduate students at Notre Dame. *Annual PD fund: \$1200 (3 Chairs)*

Quality of Life Committee

The Quality of Life Committee is responsible for all issues dealing with the daily living of graduate students. Past topics have included taxes, university housing, library hours, ResNet in University Village, and day care options. The committee is also responsible for the celebration of diversity within the Notre Dame community by facilitating and co-sponsoring events that speak to issues and concerns regarding gender, culture, and ethnicity as these issues affect graduate students. The Quality of Life Committee provides a forum that gives air to the needs, concerns, and grievances of graduate students; raises these issues to the university administration via the committee chairs; and initiates change in university policies so that the graduate student body might be best served. Annual *PD fund*: \$1200 (3 Chairs)

Social Committee

The Social Committee's mission is to offer a range of social, fun events that accommodate the diversity of the graduate student population. There are two social chairs to divide the planning of the year's events (e.g., one chair may oversee organizing the Spring semester and Summer social activities and the other may oversee organizing the Fall semester social activities). In addition, the Social Chairs are mandated with planning at least one social outreach/charity event per semester. However, the chairs are encouraged to work together throughout the year. The largest responsibility of the Social Chairs is the planning of the annual Graduate Student Union Charity Gala, held each spring. Annual *PD fund*: \$1200 (2 Chairs)

Section 3. University Committees

Representatives to University Committees

In order to further the mission of the GSU, it is necessary to appoint representatives to various University committees. Because these representatives play an active role in helping to shape University policy and advocating for the graduate student population, it is vital that their selection and terms of appointment be transparent. Committee representatives will be appointed by the GSU President and are required to be selected before the beginning of the Fall semester of the President's term. The exception to this process is the selection of representatives to the Academic Appeals Process Committee, which is specified below. The selection of the representatives is subject to the approval of a majority of the GSU council. Committee representatives are expected to attend every meeting of their charge. In certain circumstances, a representative may be unable to attend the assigned meeting of their charge. In that case the representative is responsible for ensuring, on a single time basis, that another graduate student attends the meeting. Should a committee appointee not fulfill his or her obligation, it may be necessary to recall that representative. This can be done either at the discretion of the GSU President or with the approval of the GSU Council.

Representatives to the Graduate School's Academic Appeals Process Committee

Contingent with the implementation of the Graduate School's Academic Appeals Process Committee is the selection of graduate students to serve as representatives to appeals hearing on an ad-hoc basis. It is the duty of the GSU to provide the Graduate School with a list of graduate students willing to serve on the Academic Appeals committee. The list should

comprise no fewer than two students from each division of the Graduate School (Arts & Letters, Engineering, Sciences, Social Sciences) but from different departments from within that division. This pool of at least eight (8) students will be appointed by the incoming President of the GSU at the beginning of his/her term. Students appointed to the committee may be removed from the committee by a majority vote of the GSU Council. Students appointed to the committee are expected to serve a one (1) year term, beginning in May of the year of their appointment. The list shall be sent to the appropriate representative of the Graduate School within one (1) month of selection.

Section 4. *Ad-Hoc Committees*

The President forms ad-hoc committees as the Council deems necessary.

Article VI: Administrative Assistant

The Council hires a Level 6 Administrative Assistant. The principal duties and responsibilities of the GSU assistant include, but do not exclusively consist of: (1) scheduling appointments and meetings for members of the Graduate Student Union office; (2) computerizing the financial/ bookkeeping function and entering all past and present information; (3) auditing and maintaining records on budget expenditures and comparing to internal records to verify charges; (4) coordinating adjustments with General Accounting as necessary; (5) approving travelND submissions for the GSU Officers and Chairs; (6) typing, proofreading and editing all letters, memos, committee correspondences, meeting agenda, and meeting minutes; (6) coordinating dispersal of publicity to all departments as needed; (7) ordering and maintaining office supplies (8) preparing Journal Vouchers, Check Requisitions, Cash Advances, Deposit forms, and Non-Employee Payment for Services; and (8) designing flyers for GSU events when needed.

This position also administers the Conference Presentation Grant program which includes: (1) the printing of applications from Wufoo; (2) verifying fee has been paid and records past funding awarded; (3) recording conference information to an Excel report; (4) preparing a chart of all pending applications for a 3-month period for the CPG Review Committee; (5) filing the applications according to conference dates; (6) sending emails to applicants with a decision; (7) recording decisions on an Excel report; (8) approving travelND submissions on an on-going basis, and (9) following up with students if they are approaching the 60-day period. A copy of the CPG application can be found online at www.gsu.nd.edu.

The GSU President in consultation with the Graduate School and the Council hires the Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant is directly accountable to the GSU President.

Article VII: Finances

Section 1. *Annual Budget*

The President and Vice-Presidents prepare an itemized annual budget listing all projected

income and expenditures for the GSU, including office expenses, costs of administrative assistance, and committee expenditures and grants. The Council at the meeting next submits the budget for adoption before the University's budget deadline whenever the University deadline permits; the newly elected President and Vice Presidents prepare the annual budget.

Section 2. *Expenditures by Committees*

Individual committees may at their discretion spend or grant those GSU funds budgeted for their work, provided that each expenditure must be approved by the Chair and at least one other member, and further, provided that each expenditure of more than \$500 must be approved by the Council.

Section 3. *Expenditures by Officers*

Officers may at their discretion spend those GSU funds which have been budgeted for purposes other than the work of individual committees, provided that each expenditure must be approved by at least two officers, and further provided that each expenditure of more than \$500 must be approved by the Council.

Section 4. *Monthly Account Statements*

Statements are kept on file in the GSU office and are available for inspection by any member of the GSU. All individuals and groups which receive GSU funding present to the Council, each month for the duration of their funding, a monthly account statement that includes beginning and ending balances, an itemized account of income and expenditures, and receipts for all expenditures. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in the cessation of funding.

Article VIII: Amendment, Construal and Removal from Office

Section 1. *Amendment*

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any voting member of the Council, or by a petition bearing the signatures of any twenty (20) members of the GSU, representing at least one-third of the Departments that have selected representatives to the Council. Each proposed amendment to the Constitution is submitted to GSU Administrative Assistant, who forwards the proposal, together with its recommendations thereon, to the Council within thirty days (30). This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at any two consecutive regular meetings of the Council, *provided* that a quorum for this purpose shall consist of the President or Vice-Presidents and representatives from one-third of those Departments which have selected representatives to the Council.

Section 2. *Construal*

Wherever this Constitution specifies a period of time within which an action must be taken or a frequency with which the duty must be performed, the stated times do not include University vacations.

Section 3. *Removal of Appointees*

Any person appointed to office by the President with the advice and consent of the Council may be removed from office by the President upon notification of the Council.

Section 4. *Removal of Elected Officers*

Elected officers of the GSU may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Council, *provided* that quorum is met.

Section 5. *Expulsion of Representatives*

Representatives to the Council may be expelled from the Council by a three-fourths majority of those present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the council, *provided* quorum is met.

Section 6. *Recall of Representatives*

The graduate students of any Department may recall their representative(s) according to their established procedures, such procedures being kept on file with the GSU. If a Department does not have such procedures on file, recall is subject to ratification by the GSU Administrative Assistant. The Council may, upon recommendation of the GSU Administrative Assistant, establish procedures for the recall of representatives from Departments that have not filed such procedures with the GSU.