

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. Apportionment.** The Graduate Student Assembly divides graduate students into constituencies based on their field of study. A college, school, institute, department, university center, or program in which graduate students are enrolled may be considered a constituency.

- 1.1 **List of Constituencies.** A current list of graduate student constituencies shall be maintained by the Membership Director and published on the GSA website.
- 1.2 **Affiliation.** Graduate students are considered affiliated with the constituency to which their graduate program belongs. Students enrolled in interdisciplinary or intercollegial programs may be considered members of multiple constituencies, but can represent only one constituency to the Graduate Student Assembly.
- 1.3 **Minimum Requirements.** Constituencies shall be determined such that each graduate program, as defined in the most recent Graduate Catalog and Law School Catalog, is included within a constituency. Each constituency shall receive, at minimum, one representative seat and one alternate seat.
- 1.4 **Annual Reapportionment.** The Graduate Student Assembly shall reapportion itself yearly by no later than one (1) month before the end of the legislative session. 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.

***1.4.1 Additional Seats.***

Additional seats can be allocated to a constituency with the goal of seeking approximately equal numbers of students represented by each seat.

***1.4.2 Notification.*** The Membership Director shall notify all affected Graduate Programs of any changes in apportionment.

**1.5 Apportionment Authority.** Apportionment recommendations shall be the responsibility of the Membership Director and the Membership Committee in consultation with the Office of Graduate Studies.

***1.5.1 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.

**Section 2. Elections.** General elections for departmental and alternate representatives shall be held by the second week of the fall semester. Each graduate student constituency shall elect its representatives at its own discretion, following the subsequent guidelines:

**2.1 Voting.** Each graduate student may cast one (1) vote for their respective departmental representative(s), and one (1) vote for their respective alternate representative(s) in the Graduate Student Assembly.

**2.2 Certification.** The candidate for each departmental representative or alternate representative receiving the highest number of votes for the Assembly seat shall be certified in the respective position.

**Section 3. Vacancies.** Voting Member positions that are not filled during general elections may remain open through the term and may be filled by nominations, at the discretion of the Membership Director and Membership Committee.

### **ARTICLE III Representative Responsibilities**

**Section 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 constituents, rather than their personal or departmental interests.

**Section 2. Conflicts of Interest.** Representatives shall be responsible for ensuring that the scope of their participation in other organizations shall not conflict with the scope of their responsibilities as Graduate Student Assembly members.

**Section 3. Voting Member Responsibilities.**

**3.1 Attendance** Departmental Representatives shall attend regular and special meetings of the Assembly.

**3.1.1. Absence.** If a Departmental Representative cannot attend an Assembly meeting, (s)he shall notify the Administrative Director prior to the meeting and make arrangements for the Alternate Representative to Attend.

**3.2 Communication.** Representatives shall report on meetings in a timely fashion to constituents and communicate with their constituents to maintain knowledge of Graduate student needs and desires. The Graduate Student Assembly, through Rules of Order, may specify appropriate methods of communication.

**3.3 Participation.** Voting Members shall participate in GSA functions, events and committees, and encourage constituents to participate.

**3.4 Resignation.** If a Voting Member is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities, (s)he shall make a diligent effort to find a replacement to fill his or her position.

## **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 the selected 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. Powers and Duties of the Executive Officers.**

##### *1.1. President of the Graduate Student Assembly.*

1.1.1. The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.1.2 The President shall faithfully execute all acts of the Assembly in accordance with the Governing Documents.

1.1.3 The President shall ensure the enforcement of the Constitution of the Graduate Student Assembly, and of the Bylaws, and Rules of Order.

1.1.4 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.

1.1.5 The President shall serve on, or send a representative to, the committees, boards, and legislative bodies of which the President is a member.

1.1.6 The President shall, with advice and consent of the Assembly, nominate or appoint, as appropriate, students to serve on university committees and boards.

1.1.7 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.

1.1.8 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 may assign the members of such a committee.

1.1.9 The President shall have the authority to nominate ad-hoc officers, with the advice and consent of the Assembly

1.1.10. 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.

1.1.11 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.

1.1.12 The President shall chair the Executive Committee.

## *1.2. Vice-President .*

1.2.1. The Vice-President shall monitor all internal and external operations of the Graduate Student Assembly as defined by the President.

1.2.2 The Vice-President shall determine, and at his discretion, formally call all regular meetings of the Graduate Student Assembly when in session

1.2.3 The Vice-President, upon request of the president of appropriate petition, shall call and make known any Special Meeting of the Graduate Student Assembly

1.2.4 The Vice-President shall preside over the Assembly, but shall have no vote unless they be equally divided.

1.2.5 The Vice-President shall serve on the committees, boards and legislative bodies of which the Vice-President is a member.

1.2.6 The Vice-President shall have the authority to assign Representatives to Graduate Student Assembly Standing Committees.

1.2.7 The Vice-President shall assist the President with assigned responsibilities.

## *1.3 Academic Affairs Director.*

1.3.1 The Academic Affairs Director shall serve as the official liaison between the Assembly and the Offices of the Provost.

1.3.2 The Academic Affairs Director shall aid the Office of the Provost in raising awareness of graduate academic affairs issues.

1.3.3 The Academic Affairs Director shall chair the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee.

1.3.4 The Academic Affairs Director shall report directly to the President.

## *1.4. Administrative Director.*

1.4.1 The Administrative Director shall coordinate with the office of the Dean of Students to maintain a record of the activities of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.4.2 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.

1.4.3 The Administrative Director shall compile reports from the executive officers.

1.4.4 The Administrative Director shall collect, update and distribute the time and location of Assembly meetings.

1.4.5 The Administrative Director shall organize rosters, nametags, copy accounts, meeting agendas, monthly calendars of Graduate Student Assembly events, and other administrative affairs.

1.4.6 The Administrative Director shall chair the Rules and Administration Committee.

1.4.7. The Administrative Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.5 Communications Director.*

1.5.1. The Communications Director shall be the official communications officer of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.5.2 The Communications Director shall serve as the official liaison between the Executive Committee and the media.

1.5.3 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.

1.5.4 The Communications Director shall manage the Assembly electronic mailing lists.

1.5.5 The Communications Director shall manage the Assembly website.

1.5.6 The Communications Director shall coordinate publication of posters, brochures, advertisements, and other Assembly publicity materials.

1.5.7 The Communications Director shall chair the Communications Committee.

1.5.8 The Communications Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.6 Financial Director.*

1.6.1 The Financial Director shall manage the finances of the Graduate Student Assembly according to University rules and regulations.

1.6.2 The Financial Director shall, in consultation with the President, develop the budget for the Legislative Session and Summer, obtaining fiscal reports from advisory staff when deemed necessary, and shall present the budgets to the appropriate university unit.

1.6.3 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.

1.6.4 The Financial Director shall investigate and suggest methods of acquiring additional sources of funding.

1.6.5 The Financial Director shall chair the Finance Committee.

1.6.6 The Financial Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.7. Legislative Affairs Director.*

1.7.1 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.

1.7.2 The Legislative Relations Director shall chair the Legislative Committee.

1.7.3 The Legislative Relations Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.8 Membership Director*

1.8.1 The Membership Director shall make an annual census of the graduate population and inform the assembly for appropriate apportionment

1.8.2 The Membership Director shall have the power to recognize Graduate Student Assembly Voting Members for special commendation.

1.8.3 The Membership director shall have the power to initiate recruitment programs

1.8.4 The Membership Director shall have the power to oversee the Voting Member electoral process

1.8.5 The Membership Director shall certify all election results.

1.8.6 The Administrative Director shall keep official attendance records and notify representatives of absences.

1.8.7 The Administrative Director shall coordinate the recruitment and recognition of Assembly representatives, committee appointees, and the graduate student body.

1.8.8 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.

1.8.9 The Membership Director 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.

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

1.8.11 The Membership Director shall chair the Membership Committee

1.8.12 The Membership Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.9 Programs Director.*

1.9.1 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.

1.9.2 The Programs Director shall assist with travel plans for visiting speakers and coordinate logistical arrangements.

1.9.3 The Programs Director shall chair the Programs and Events Committee.

1.9.4 The Programs Director shall report directly to the President.

#### *1.10 Student Affairs Director.*

1.10.1 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.

1.10.2 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.

1.10.3 The Student Affairs Director shall chair the Graduate Student Affairs Committee.

1.10.4 The Student Affairs Director shall report directly to the President.

1.11 *Ad-hoc Officers.* Other ad-hoc officers may be appointed via presidential nomination and Assembly confirmation. Their roles, titles, and compensation (if any) shall be spelled out in the nominating resolution.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Assembly**

**Section 1. Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Assembly shall be scheduled at least monthly while the assembly is in session .

**Section 2. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Graduate Student Assembly may be called upon the petition of five (5) Voting Members of the assembly or twenty (20) graduate students. Petitioners must represent at least 3 different constituencies and present the petition to the Vice-President of the Graduate Student Assembly at least seventy-two (72) hours before the requested meeting date.

**Section 3. Notification.** The Administrative Director shall post the time, duration, and location of each Regular or Special Assembly meeting and notify all Members of the Assembly seventy-two (72) hours prior to each regular and special meeting.

**Section 4. Quorum.** The quorum to conduct business shall be fifty (50) percent of the departments with voting 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 5. Chair.** The Vice-President shall 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 may, upon the recommendation of the Vice-President and majority approval of the Assembly, assume the role of Chair.

**Section 6. Secretary.** The Administrative Director shall 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 7. Parliamentarian.** The President shall be the Parliamentarian of the Assembly. In the absence of the President, another Officer may, upon the recommendation of the Vice-President and majority approval of the Assembly, assume the role of parliamentarian.

**Section 8. Resolutions and Other Motions.** All Bills, resolutions, and other motions must be submitted to the Vice-President and the Administrative Director before the posting of the meeting agenda in which the submitted item shall have its first reading. Bills, resolutions, and other motions may be considered as new business if submitted after this time only after a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) affirmative vote of the assembly.

**Section 9. 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 consideration.

**Section 10. Minutes.** The Administrative Director shall record the minutes of Assembly meetings and post the attendance and minutes within seven (7) days of each meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Committees**

**Section 1. Standing Committees.** These committees are permanently established and may be composed of voting members of the Graduate Student Assembly and graduate students at-large.

#### *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. 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. The Finance Committee shall help the Finance Director build and propose a summer budget. They shall also solicit and hear proposed allocations to student organizations, then present suggested allocations to the assembly.

1.3.2. Chair. The Financial Director.

#### *1.4. Legislative Committee*

1.4.1. Purpose. The Legislative Committee shall review the actions of the United States Congress, Texas State Legislature, Austin City Council, and other governmental bodies that affect University of Texas at Austin graduate students. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Assembly regarding a course of action the Graduate Student Assembly and its members or other graduate students may take. The Legislative Affairs Committee shall also select two of its members to serve as the Director and Co-Director of Invest in Texas

1.4.2. Chair. The Legislative Affairs 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. Rules and Administration 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 student, 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.

### 1.9 Membership Committee

1.9.1 Purpose. The Membership committee shall be responsible for maintaining the list of active voting representatives and their alternates. The Membership Committee shall also coordinate the recruitment of new members and organizations to the Graduate Student Assembly. The Membership Committee shall also be in charge of recommending the annual apportionment process.

1.9.2 Chair The Membership 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: Organization.** Each committee shall elect a vice-chair who will work with the chair to achieve the various roles of the committee

**Section 5. Documentation.** Standing and other committees shall meet at least once a month during legislative session. They shall elect a Secretary who shall keep records of the decisions made in each meeting and provide such records to the Administrative Director within seven (7) days of the conclusion of each meeting.

**Section 6. 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, Academic Affairs Director, and Membership 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 during that respective officer's term.

*1.1 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 whose constituents are served by the organization. This Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the intended application of funds to ensure that basic internal spending rules are not violated.

**Section 3. Summer Budget.** The Financial Director, in consultation with the President, shall prepare a budget for the summer months. The Executive Committee must approve this budget by an absolute majority vote.

## **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 the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

*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 shall be specified in the Internal Rules of Procedure.

### **Section 2. Rules of Referendum**

2.1 Any petition must be submitted with all signatures at least thirty days before the election in which it is considered

2.2 Petitions will be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies and signatures verified by the same. The text of the referendum must appear on any page containing signatures.

2.3 The text of a petitioned referendum may only be altered if the alteration is submitted prior to thirty (30) days before the election in which it is considered and, in the judgment of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the alteration does not substantially alter the intent and purpose of the referendum.

### **Section 3. Amendments**

3.1. Bylaws. The Graduate Student Assembly may amend the bylaws by an affirmative roll call vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting membership of the Assembly, followed by a two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Executive Committee.

3.1.1. The full text of all proposed amendments shall be provided in a notice to the Assembly and the public at least ten days before the first reading. The second reading must at least ten days after the first reading.

3.1.2. The amendment shall be transmitted to the Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice President for Student Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. of passage. The amendment will become effective upon approval by the above named offices. If the above named offices have not acted within two weeks of transmittal, the amendment will become conditionally effective, pending action by the above named offices.

3.1.3. The University of Texas at Austin chief graduate studies officer and chief student affairs officer shall have the power, when in their judgment the interests of the institution require it, to amend or repeal any provision in the bylaws of the Graduate Student Assembly, but such action shall not be effective until approved by the University of Texas at Austin President and the appropriate University of Texas System Executive Vice Chancellor. The transmission of the proposed amendment or repeal to the University of Texas System shall be accompanied by justified statement from the Assembly supporting or not supporting the proposed action (Series 50203, Section 1.3, UT Regents Rules).

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