

## **FIFTH CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION, 2008**

### **RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY, CAMPUS AT NEWARK**

#### **Article I: Name and Purpose**

- A. This body shall be known as the Rutgers University – Newark (RU-N) Graduate Student Government Association (GSGA).
- B. The GSGA Board shall be composed of officers elected by the GSGA (see Article V) and eligible student representatives (see Article III) of the Graduate School of Newark (School 26).
- C. The GSGA shall be sustained in order to represent the needs and wishes of the students of the Graduate School of Newark (School 26), henceforth referred to as graduate students.
- D. The GSGA will be responsible for the distribution of funds collected from graduate student fees and other regular and/or discretionary sources, the awarding of annual excellence awards to graduate students, the organization of the graduate student reception following the annual commencement ceremony, and the engagement of graduate students in campus activities and networking and/or career development events.
- E. The GSGA shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or sexual orientation.
- F. The GSGA shall not charge monetary dues of any graduate student, department, or activity group.

#### **Article II: GSGA Membership**

- A. All graduate students, i.e. those students enrolled in degree-granting programs in the Graduate School of Newark (School 26), shall be allowed to attend GSGA meetings.
  - a. Graduate students who are not elected GSGA Representatives shall not enjoy voting rights, petition for GSGA funds, or assume any of the responsibilities and/or duties of a GSGA Representative. They shall be allowed to participate in dialogue about GSGA-related issues and to propose future GSGA projects or events at the monthly meetings, and can participate in GSGA-sponsored programming, including volunteering at events.
  - b. Graduate students enrolled in degree-granting programs at RU-N *not* encompassed in the Graduate School of Newark (School 26) shall not enjoy voting rights, petition for GSGA funds, or assume any of the responsibilities and/or duties of a GSGA Representative. They shall be allowed to participate in GSGA-sponsored programming, including volunteering at events.
- B. No undergraduate student enrolled at RU-N shall enjoy GSGA member status, including the ability to vote or petition for GSGA funds.
- C. Any graduate student attending at least two (2) meetings per semester shall be considered a GSGA member.

### Article III: GSGA Representatives

- A. Each academic department and each graduate student activity group recognized by the Graduate School of Newark (School 26) is eligible to nominate and elect one (1) representative and one (1) alternate empowered to assume the representative's role only in his/her absence. Collectively, the representative and alternate from each department or activity group will henceforth be referred to as the GSGA Representative.
  - a. Student activity groups must be recognized by RU-N, have a regular attendance of at least 50% graduate students and must meet at least twice a semester in order to be represented at GSGA meetings by a GSGA Representative.
  - b. At their first attended meeting, a representative from the student activity group must submit an informational packet containing a copy of their constitution, a list of student members and officers (including each student's department affiliation and graduate student status), and name and contact information of the group's faculty advisor; this packet shall be reviewed and approved by the majority of GSGA Officers (see Article V) before the group is eligible to join the GSGA.
- B. Each GSGA Representative shall be nominated and elected by the students from the department or activity group that they will be representing in GSGA. When an election is not possible, the GSGA Representative can be appointed by the department chair (in the case of academic departments) or faculty advisor (in the case of student activity groups).
  - a. GSGA Representatives shall assume their seats on the GSGA board at the first official meeting of the academic year.
  - b. Graduate students within each department or activity group retain the right to recall their GSGA Representative by a majority vote of the constituent group.
  - c. GSGA Representatives shall not be allowed to represent (i.e. vote on behalf of) any other department or activity group other than the one that elected him/her.
- C. Each GSGA Representatives shall be given the following rights and responsibilities:
  - a. Attendance
    - i. Each GSGA Representative must attend all monthly GSGA meetings each semester. In the event that the GSGA Representative cannot attend, the alternative shall attend in his/her place.
    - ii. Should a GSGA Representative or his/her alternative fail to attend two (2) GSGA meetings in one semester, the GSGA Representative will be contacted by the GSGA Secretary and the represented department or student activity group will be placed on probation (revoking of voting rights and ability to submit proposals for funding). Persistent delinquency or absence by a GSGA Representative will result in the removal of GSGA voting rights for the remainder of the academic year.
  - b. Voting
    - i. Each GSGA Representative is allowed one (1) vote in each vote called by the President.

- ii. If a GSGA Representative is a member of more than one academic department or student activity group, the Representative's vote shall represent the department or group by whom he/she was elected.
  - iii. No GSGA Representative shall be allowed to vote on any matter in absentia.
- c. Proposals
- i. Each GSGA Representative may prepare and submit requests for discretionary funding from the GSGA, henceforth known as GSGA Proposals, according to the guidelines set forth in Article VII.
  - ii. In order to be awarded GSGA funds, each GSGA Representative must establish and/or confirm the existence of a monetary account maintained by the Student Accounting Office. The appropriate account information must be provided to the GSGA Treasurer at least one (1) month prior to applying for and/or receiving GSGA funding.
- d. Finances
- i. Each GSGA Representative must establish and/or confirm the existence of a monetary account maintained by the Student Accounting Office.
  - ii. Appropriate account information must be provided to the GSGA Treasurer, after which GSGA funds may be applied for and/or awarded.
  - iii. Departments and student activity groups recognized by the GSGA shall receive seed funds upon the official activation of their account and contingent upon sufficient amount of available discretionary funds. These funds may be used for any purpose deemed appropriate by the elected officers of the department or activity group. The amount of funding shall be:
    - 1. \$50.00 for groups with a membership of fewer than 40 graduate students
    - 2. \$100.00 for groups with a membership of 40 or more graduate students
  - iv. If an account is inactive (i.e. no transactions are conducted) for a period of one (1) academic year, the money may be reverted back to the GSGA.

**Article IV: GSGA Executive Board**

- A. The GSGA Executive Board will be composed of all GSGA Representatives and will be responsible for:
- a. Appointing all committees necessary for transacting GSGA business
  - b. Voting on expenditures and allotments of discretionary funds according to the guidelines set forth in Article VII.
  - c. Discuss, organize, fund, and execute graduate student programming, as suggested and voted upon by the GSGA.
  - d. Hold elections and vote on GSGA Officers and a Senator to the University Senate on an annual basis.

- e. Solicit nominations and elect recipients of annual GSGA Graduate Student Excellence Awards, based on academic achievement, research, teaching, and service.
  - i. Award applications shall be made available to the graduate student body at least two (2) months before the submission deadline.
  - ii. Applicants must be enrolled in a degree-granting graduate studies program at RU-N (School 26) for the current academic year in which applications are solicited. The program must be an active member of the GSGA; i.e. they must have a regularly attending GSGA Representative in good standing in the GSGA.
  - iii. Each award shall consist of a certificate and a cash award for the recipient, the amount of which will be determined on an annual basis based on the amount of discretionary funds available to the GSGA. Awards shall be presented to the awardees at the graduate student reception on the day of commencement.

#### **Article V: GSGA Officers**

- A. The presiding body of the GSGA shall include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Senator to the University Senate and collectively shall be referred to as GSGA Officers.
- B. All GSGA officers shall be elected during the last month of each academic year by a majority vote (over 50%). If no one candidate receives at least 50% of the total number of votes, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped from the ballot and the votes will be recast.
- C. All GSGA officers shall hold their position for the entirety of the subsequent academic year. Any GSGA officer may hold their office for more than one term but must be re-elected by the GSGA Executive Board each time.
- D. A GSGA officer may only be recalled by a two-thirds vote of the GSGA Executive Board, following official written notice of the motion to recall vote.
- E. If any office becomes vacant mid-term, a temporary replacement shall be appointed by the consent of the executive officers or by the dean of the graduate school, until an election can be held by the GSGA Executive Board.
- F. The duties of the GSGA Officers shall include but not be limited to:
  - a. President:
    - i. Shall preside over each GSGA meeting, including all votes and elections
    - ii. Shall not be allowed to vote, except in a tie-breaking situations
    - iii. Shall maintain relationships with the graduate school administrators, including the deans, graduate department chairs, and other administrators of School 26; he/she shall also effort to engage with elected student leaders, deans, and administrators from other graduate and undergraduate programs at RU-N
    - iv. Shall solicit engagement equally from all graduate programs of School 26 and shall recruit qualified representation in the GSGA Executive Board
    - v. Shall issue and sign checks and arrange for account transfers in the absence of the Treasurer

- b. Vice President:
  - i. Shall preside over GSGA meetings in the absence of the President
  - ii. Shall organize and supervise the election of officers
  - iii. Shall help the President maintain relationships with the graduate school administrators and programs
  - iv. Shall assist the President in executive matters, as needed
  - v. Shall act as the Parliamentarian of the GSGA and thus should be well-versed in the Roberts Rules of Order, the University Code, the Code of Conduct, and the GSGA Constitution
- c. Treasurer:
  - i. Shall issue and sign checks and transfer GSGA funds between accounts, as directed by votes passed by the GSGA Executive Board
  - ii. Shall present a financial report at each GSGA meeting, including current earmarks, incoming funds, etc.
  - iii. Shall retain the ability to audit represented GSGA members, i.e. graduate departments and student activity groups, if deemed necessary by GSGA Officers
- d. Secretary:
  - i. Shall notify GSGA Officers and Executive Board (i.e. Representatives) of upcoming meetings and other GSGA-related activities
  - ii. Shall maintain attendance records and contact info of GSGA Representatives
  - iii. Shall maintain the minutes of each GSGA meeting and distribute them in a timely manner to the GSGA Officers and Executive Board, and provide records to appropriate external requests
  - iv. Shall report the previous meeting's minutes at each monthly GSGA meeting
  - v. Shall maintain and update the GSGA website, including annual renewal of the site's domain name
- e. Senator:
  - i. Shall attend all University Senate meetings held in New Brunswick, and act as an ambassador to the other RU graduate programs. He/she shall be a conduit of information between the campuses and act in the stead of RU-N GSGA.
  - ii. Shall report all transactions in University Senate meetings, though all matters shall ultimately be addressed and voted upon by the GSGA Executive Board.

#### **Article VI: GSGA Meetings**

- A. The GSGA Officers and Executive Board shall hold at least one official meeting per month during the academic year.
- B. All graduate students may attend GSGA meetings, but only GSGA Representatives shall vote on matters addressed during the meetings.
- C. A quorum of 50% of the active GSGA Representatives and Officers in the current academic year shall be necessary to conduct a meeting of the GSGA.

- D. All matters brought before the GSGA to be voted upon shall be approved or denied by a simple majority (over 50%) of the members in attendance at any given meeting.

**Article VII: GSGA Proposals for Funding**

- A. Any GSGA Representative, whether from a department or activity group, may propose a distribution of funds, provided that the Representative has met all requirements outlined in Article III, above.
- B. Proposals for funding must be made in writing, using a standard GSGA form provided to all GSGA Representatives, and must be distributed to the GSGA Executive Board.
- C. No proposals will be accepted in absentia.
- D. All proposals must adhere to the following guidelines, in order to be accepted by the GSGA Executive Board and subsequently voted upon:
  - a. The GSGA will distribute funds when it can be demonstrated to the GSGA Executive Board that such expenditure would enhance the scholarship and academic environment of graduate students on the RU-N campus.
  - b. Any event or program funded (in part or in full) by a proposal approved by the GSGA must be open and accessible to any graduate student at RU-N. All events and programs must be advertised on the GSGA website at least two (2) weeks before the event. Costs or fees associated with the event, as well as RSVP dates, must be clearly outlined on the advertisement.
  - c. If event or program funded by the GSGA does not occur, or if it differs significantly from the approved GSGA proposal, the GSGA retains the right to revert the funds back to the GSGA.
  - d. Acceptable uses of GSGA funds may include but are not limited to:
    - i. Fees associated with an invited/guest speaker
    - ii. Minisymposiums, conferences, or professional development events organized or held by the department or activity group
    - iii. Networking events and professional receptions
    - iv. Community-service programming, so long as at least 50% of the organizing parties, participants, and/or attendees are current RU-N graduate students
  - e. GSGA funds may not be used for:
    - i. Computing equipment, except for equipment needed to maintain or enhance those systems that have historically been the responsibility of the GSGA.

- E. GSGA Representatives are urged to solicit matching funds from a variety of sources, including the student program department and the office of the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Article VIII: Amendments to the GSGA Constitution**

- A. Any amendment to the Constitution of the GSGA may be proposed at any meeting by any GSGA Officer or Representative. The amendment must be proposed in writing, circulated, and discussed at least one meeting prior to the vote. A two-thirds (66%) vote is required for ratification.

**Article IX: Accessibility of Old Records**

- A. Every new GSGA Secretary or Acting Secretary shall keep all old GSGA records, including the Constitution and Minutes, accessible to all GSGA Officers, Representatives, and general members for inspection.
- B. The outgoing Secretary or outgoing Acting Secretary shall provide these records to the new Secretary or new Acting Secretary within two weeks of the new appointment.
- C. Treasurers shall keep all financial documents.
- D. All Officers shall retain their personal records from all GSGA-related activities, including monthly meetings, for the entirety of their term. Once his/her term ends, each Officer is responsible for passing their records to the elected official assuming his/her elected office.
- E. All GSGA records shall be retained for at least five (5) years.