

Bylaws of the
Graduate Student Advisory Council
Of the Graduate School of Art and Sciences
Of Columbia University

Article I. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the Officers

Section 1. Steering Committee responsibilities shall include:

- A. To maintain communication with the Dean of GSAS and staff of Dean's office through actively providing input to and receiving information from the Dean during the monthly Dean meetings.
- B. To select student representatives to sit on those GSAS committees on which students serve (such as Faculty Mentoring Subcommittee).
- C. To solicit, initiate, and collect proposals for the use of GSAC funds.
- D. To evaluate the current work of the standing and *ad hoc* committees.
- E. To evaluate the creation of new and continued relevance of existing *ad hoc* committees.
- F. To set the agenda for GSAC plenary meetings.

Section 2. President responsibilities shall include:

- A. Create agendas and run Steering Committee and GSAC plenary meetings.
- B. Work with the Steering Committee to create and implement the strategic planning of the long and short term goals of GSAC.
- C. Keep abreast of issues/concerns from all GSAC committees.
- D. Oversee and ensure reasonable progress of GSAC projects from Steering Committee members and GSAC committees.
- E. Coordinate GSAC appointments to all University-wide committees and advocate for graduate student representation on any University-wide committees relevant to academic graduate students.
- F. Represent GSAC's interests and concerns to the Dean and University community;
- G. Create and distribute weekly GSAC newsletters.
- H. Serve as a student representative on GSAS's Executive Committee.

Section 3. Vice President responsibilities shall include:

- A. Assist, when necessary, with all duties of the Chair.
- B. Run meetings in the Chair's absence.
- C. Oversee and ensure reasonable progress of GSAC projects from all GSAC committees. This includes counseling and advising committee chairs on progress and presentation of progress to the council.
- D. To assist the President in planning and organizing GSAC administrative duties. She/he will also head the Group Recognition committee, ensuring that GSAC sponsored groups offer valuable and consistent services to the entire graduate school community.
- E. Coordinate and assemble information packets for incoming graduate students to distribute at GSAS Orientation.
- F. Serve as the Event Manager for venue administration/staff (e.g., Lerner Hall, Graduate Student Lounge).
- G. Serve as a student representative on GSAS's Executive Committee.

Section 4. Communications Chair responsibilities shall include:

- A. Responsible for GSAC's internal communications.
- B. Maintain and respond to inquiries in the gsac@columbia.edu email account.
- C. Maintain and update the contact list for Departmental Representatives (DRs), and departmental statuses.
- D. Contact Departmental Administrators in May and September to solicit DRs in departments lacking representation.
- E. Take minutes and attendance at the council meeting and follow up with representatives who miss monthly meetings.

- F. Maintain records of GSAC events, meetings, and activities.
- G. Maintain and update the GSAC website <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsac/>

Section 5. Budget and Finance Chair responsibilities shall include:

- A. Responsible for overseeing the budget and expenditures of GSAC.
- B. Report to GSAC at the end of each semester its financial standing.
- C. Chair the Budget and Finance Committee that reviews funding requests proposals for graduate student events and projects, which may include conference development grants, conference travel grants, interdepartmental lecture series, social activities, seed money grants for new student organizations.
- D. Present recommendations of the Budget and Finance Committee on funding requests made to the GSAC.

Section 6. Quality of Life Chair responsibilities shall include:

- A. Responsible for directing Quality of Life committee activities towards the improvement of the quality of life of students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in any and all areas relevant to graduate student life, in particular in cooperation with relevant University offices and other student bodies.
- B. Establishment of task committees within QoL each focusing on a specific area of graduate student concern, such as libraries, space, student health, transportation, public safety, housing, gym and recreation, academic affairs, family/life balance, financial affairs, etc. and assistance in connecting these task committees to the relevant offices and departments on campus.
- C. Conduct the biennial drafting and administration of the QoL survey to poll Graduate students on the above issue areas and explore student concerns and calls for action.
- D. Identify areas of immediate, mid-term and long-term action and set priorities among them as well as draft a plan for creating task groups and action plans to address them.
- E. Present QoL activities at the monthly GSAC meetings and communicate them to the GSAC Steering Committee.
- F. Maintain communication and productive relationships with all relevant university departments and offices related to QoL concerns, in particular the GSAS administration and Dean, as well as seeking out new connections for promising partnerships aimed at improving QoL for Graduate students.

Section 7. Social Chair responsibilities shall include:

- A. Organize all social events (such as monthly GSAC Mixers and End-of-the-Semester party).
- B. Publicize all GSAC events and confirm all event information on the GSAC website.
- C. Reserve dates and space for GSAC events at Event Locations (e.g., Lerner Hall, Graduate Student Lounge) during the pre-calendaring period.
- D. Order food for GSAC meetings.
- E. Assist, if and when necessary, with any special events (e.g., wine tasting, movie-night).

Section 8. Arts & Entertainment Chair responsibilities shall include:

- A. Plan all events pertaining to the arts and other forms of entertainment, such as sports.
- B. Contact other organizations pertaining to the arts and/or entertainment for potential collaborations.
- C. Maintain and update the www.arts4grads.com website, facebook page, and any other electronic platforms of communication that might have been created for promoting the Committee's events.
- D. Assist, if and when necessary, with any special events (e.g., wine tasting, movie-night).

Section 9. Alumni/PR Chair Responsibilities shall include:

- A. Serve as student representative on the GSAS Alumni Association Board.
- B. Participate as a member of the Student Outreach Committee on the Alumni Association Board.

- C. Develop and maintain the branding, visibility and outreach of GSAC to the GSAS student body.
- D. Organize and publicize all GSAC events and regular meetings through the use of, but not limited to, social networking sites, GSAC website, newsletters, and so on.

Section 10. Additional responsibilities of all Officers:

- A. Perform all duties, regulations, and restrictions as mandated by the By-Laws of this Constitution.
- B. Attend all Steering Committee meetings.
- C. Attend all GSAC plenary meetings.
- D. Volunteer in at least one other committee outside of the Officer's jurisdiction.
- E. Perform timely transitions to their successors as Officers, no later than two weeks after election. This includes, but is not limited to, the sharing of documents, processes, and methods.

Article II. Responsibilities of GSAC Plenary Meetings and Standing Committees

Section 1. GSAC plenary meetings shall serve the following purposes:

- A. To receive reports from the officers and from the standing and *ad hoc* committees.
- B. To vote on funding recommendations reported out of the committees.
- C. To receive reports from the GSAS student senators and from other representatives to external groups.
- D. To communicate with the Dean of GSAS on any topics of interest to the Dean or to GSAC.
- E. To hear comments and concerns from the student representatives and provide the opportunity for the new business to be moved.
- F. To listen to and question invited speakers.
- G. To serve as open forums in which academic graduate students can speak directly to and ask questions of GSAC officers and guest speakers.

Section 2. Once each year GSAC shall also:

- A. At the April plenary meeting, elect its officers, as described in Article IV.
- B. At the March plenary meeting, review the status of all representatives to external groups, including the GSAS Senators, and elect new representatives to replace any whose terms have expired.
- C. At the December plenary meeting, review the status of all *ad hoc* committees.

Section 3. Budget and Finance Committee:

- A. Chaired by the Budget and Finance Chair.
- B. Review the current requirements and guidelines for student initiative grants (SIGs) and identify inefficiencies and propose new and modified guidelines that prove to be more rigorous, clear, equitable, and accessible.
- C. Review, recommend, and suggest modifications to SIG applications (committee members must avoid conflicts of interest)
- D. Convene one week prior monthly GSAC plenary to develop SIG recommendations
- E. Deliver recommendations of SIGs to GSAC plenary
- F. Provide periodic review of GSAC financial performance versus planned budget

Section 4. Quality of Life Committee

- A. Chaired by the Quality of Life Chair.
- B. Establish task committees within QoL each focusing on a specific area of graduate student concern, such as libraries, space, student health, transportation, public safety, housing, gym and recreation, academic affairs, family/life balance, financial affairs, etc. and assistance in connecting these task committees to the relevant offices and departments on campus.
- C. Identify areas of immediate, mid-term and long-term action and set priorities among them as well as draft a plan for creating task groups and action plans to address them.

- D. Maintain communication and productive relationships with all relevant university departments and offices related to QoL concerns, in particular the GSAS administration and Dean, as well as seeking out new connections for promising partnerships aimed at improving QoL for graduate students.

Section 5. Alumni Relations Committee

- A. Chaired by the Alumni/Public-Relations Chair.
- B. Communicate the needs of graduate students to the Alumni Board and the Center for Career Services.

Section 6. Graduate Seminar Series Committee

- A. Chaired by the President.
- B. Plan, organize, and volunteer at all seminar series events.

Section 7. Social Events Committee

- A. Chaired by the Social Chair.
- B. Establish and use mechanisms to develop and generate social and academic events intended to build the community of academic graduate students.
- C. Initiate and submit to the plenary meetings of GSAC recommendations for events and for allocations of funds for the same.
- D. Plan, organize, and volunteer at 1/2 of all GSAC happy hours (Thursday Evening Arts & Science Events).

Section 8. Arts and Entertainment Committee

- A. Chaired by the Arts and Entertainment Chair.
- B. Plan events pertaining to the arts and other forms of entertainment, such as sports.
- C. Organize subsidized shows or other arts/entertainment events for graduate students.
- D. Produce or aid the production of projects that pertain to the interests of the committee (such as workshops, classes, theatrical or musical productions, etc.) by pointing to suitable resources, and/or production help such as direct funding and/or space to the graduate students who organize them.

Section 9. Proposal for an ad hoc committee must be submitted in writing one plenary meeting in advance of the meeting at which the vote is taken. Proposals must include:

- A. Its topic of investigation
- B. The primary purpose of its meetings
- C. Its proposed term of existence

Section 10. Creation or disbandment of an *ad hoc* committee shall require a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee. The President shall choose the chair of each ad hoc committee. The chair of each ad hoc committee shall also be a full voting member regardless of whether that individual is a member of GSAC.

Article III. Responsibilities of GSAC Representatives and GSAS Senators

Section 1. DR duties shall include:

- A. To serve as liaisons between GSAC and their respective departments.
- B. To attend and participate in all GSAC monthly plenary meetings on behalf of students in their departments.
- C. To participate in at least one of the standing committees listed in Article II.
- D. To volunteer and assist in at least one social event per semester.
- E. To perform timely transitions to their successors as DRs by the April GSAC plenary.

Section 2. Failure of a DR to meet all of the aforementioned tasks (Article III, section 1) will result in a status of bad standing of the respective department. A department in bad standing is ineligible to vote or apply to GSAC funding.

Section 3. Student representative to external groups have the following responsibilities:

- A. Represent to the best of their abilities the interest of the academic graduate students and GSAC.
- B. Report to GSAC any news from the meetings of external group, as well as any progress on relevant issues.

Section 4. GSAS Senators have the following responsibilities to GSAC:

- A. Represent to the best of their abilities the interests of the academic graduate students and GSAC.
- B. Report to GSAC any news from the Senate or its committees, as well as any progress on relevant issues.
- C. Attend and participate in all GSAC monthly plenary meetings.

Article IV. Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominees for an Officer position shall be required to complete an application. Completed applications must be submitted to the Steering Committee at least two weeks prior to the April GSAC plenary meeting.

Section 2. The order of election shall be: President, Vice-President, Communications Chair, Budget and Finance Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Social Chair, and Arts & Entertainment Chair.

Section 3. During the elections, each candidate will be given three minutes to speak on his/her behalf. A maximum of three minutes will be allotted for questions.

Section 4. If a candidate is not elected for a particular position, he/she shall be eligible to run for another position that has not yet been filled. The candidate will then have one minute to speak on his/her behalf and a maximum of two minutes will be allotted for questions.

Section 5. Prior to voting for each position, a five minute closed discussion will be held. No nominees shall be present during this time. A simple majority vote shall be by raising placards, and the results of the election disclosed immediately.

Section 6. In the event that there are no nominations for a given Steering Committee position, the members of the Steering Committee shall fill this vacant position.

Section 7. Nominations for a GSAS Senator position shall be required. Election proceedings shall follow those of an Officer election.