

# Constitution of the Northeastern University Graduate and Professional Student Association

## Article I

### **NAME**

The name of this organization will be the Northeastern University Graduate & Professional Student Association. For the purpose of this document, the organization will be referred to as the Association.

## Article II

### **OBJECT**

The object of the Association is to be the official liaison between graduate students and the University Faculty and Administration; to act in an advisory capacity to the Faculty and Administration; to strive to make the University a continually more serviceable institution; to be the means by which the graduate student body of the University communicates with the faculty, administration, and Trustees of the University; to be the approval authority for all fund drives initiated by or for any outside organizations related to graduate students; to be the approval authority for all petitions or referenda which individuals or organizations wish to circulate among graduate students; to be the means for graduate students to influence change in the educational programs, processes, and the administrative management of the University; to distribute funds from the Graduate Student Activity Fee to eligible graduate students and eligible graduate student organizations. The Association is the means by which graduate students are represented in the governance of the University. It is therefore the general interest group for graduate students on campus.

It is our hope and duty that we respect, understand and accept the differences and similarities that exist within and outside of our university community.

## Article III

### **A. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP**

1. Association Membership is open to any full-time or part-time graduate student in good standing and currently enrolled at a Graduate Program at a recognized Graduate College at Northeastern University and who pay the Graduate Student Activity Fee.
2. The Association recognizes the following graduate & professional schools at Northeastern University: Graduate Schools of Arts & Sciences, Bouve College of Health Sciences (including the School of Nursing), College of Business Administration

(including the School of Professional Accounting), College of Computer Science, College of Criminal Justice, College of Engineering and the School of Law at Northeastern University. The Association's operational activities are carried out by its two (2) active service branches that are open to all qualified students in the manner prescribed by the Constitution and Bylaws.

3. The Association was established on the basis that it would be the representative group of the entire graduate community at Northeastern University including all of its diverse view and peoples. Hence, the Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or Veteran status.

4. Any member has the right to inspect the financial and administrative records of the Association.

5. The General Membership is represented in the governance of the Association through the Senate and the Executive Board.

6. The General Membership receives reports from the Executive Board on all aspects of Association Business at scheduled monthly senate meetings.

## **B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Association shall be structured as follows:

### **I. GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

The Graduate Student Senate (hereafter referred to as the Senate) is the representative body of the Membership that governs the Association and carries out legislative process of the Association. It shall serve as a forum for the communication of graduate student concerns and needs. It shall determine the policies of the Association and shall receive proposals from the Executive Board for approval and/or implementation. Senators shall be elected or appointed by their respective organizations/schools.

### **II. Executive Board**

The Officers of the Association constitute the Executive Board of the Association. Officers are elected as outlined in the Association By-laws. The Executive Board brings proposals and suggestions before the Senate and serves as the liaison with the University administration on behalf of the Association. It shall manage and coordinate programs, projects, and activities approved by the Senate. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to ensure that all business of the Association be communicated to the Graduate Student Senate and the General Membership.

## Article IV

### **THE GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

#### **A. Eligibility and Term**

1. Members of the Senate must be currently enrolled as full-time or part-time graduate students of one of the recognized graduate colleges, in good standing, and be responsible to an identifiable constituency. Senators are responsible for maintaining an effective system of two-way communication. Senators will serve a regular term that is September 1 &ndash; April 30th. The Association President at his/her discretion could convene a special senate meeting during intercession/summer term to consider special items of business.
2. Eligible Students can become Senators by following the process outlined in the Association By-laws.

## **B. Composition and Membership**

1. The Senate shall be composed of a minimum of two representatives, hereafter referred to as Senators, from each recognized Graduate College at Northeastern University. 'Graduate College' is defined as those Northeastern University Graduate and Professional Schools mentioned in Article III.
2. Each Senator will be entitled to one vote, the number of voting members for one school may not exceed one percent of the college's total enrollment. Enrollment totals will be based upon the totals provided by the University Registrar for the previous full academic year.
3. In the event of vacancies, voting members will be voted upon or appointed by their respective graduate school. Recognized Graduate Student Organizations are eligible to obtain Senatorial Status and voting privileges through elections/appointments within their individual colleges.
4. Senators have the responsibility and duty to communicate the concerns of the constituencies to the Assembly as well as relaying Association information back to their constituencies.

## **C. Senate Meetings**

1. The Association President (or designated officer) shall chair the meetings of the Senate.
2. The Senate shall meet at least three (3) times per academic semester (except May through August) at times to be determined by the Executive Board. The Association President will give no less than three (3) weeks notice of the time and place of the meetings.
3. Special meetings may be called by the Association President, or by two (2) officers of the Executive Board, or by ten (10) graduate students, to consider a special item or items of business. The party(s) calling the special meeting, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall give no less than one (1) week notice to the Senate of the time and place of the special meeting.
4. A simple majority of the Senate shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority for voting purposes shall be determined by having at least one-third of the Senate representatives participating with a requirement that two (2) voting graduate

representatives from at least four (4) different recognized colleges or professional schools be present at the Senate meeting. In order for a matter to be voted on, there must be a quorum present.

5. Each Senator has one (1) vote. There will be no proxy votes. Members of the Executive Board enjoy privileges of a Senator and are entitled to vote, except for the Association President who may vote only in the case of a tie. All decisions must be reached by a simple majority of voting representatives present, unless otherwise specified herein.

6. Robert Rules of Order will govern the Senate Meetings in all cases in which they are applicable and where they are not in conflict with any portion of this Constitution or any rules, by-laws and/or procedures that the assembly may adopt.

#### **D. Powers and Responsibilities of the Senate**

1. Represents the voice of the graduate student body.
2. Recommends proposed legislation regarding University life, policies, and concerns of the graduate student body to the University President for his approval or rejection.
3. Approves, modifies, or rejects the budget submitted by the Executive Board.
4. Has the power to initiate and conduct referenda.
5. Has the power to override an executive veto or decision by a 2/3 majority.
6. Approves or rejects the circulation of petitions or referenda by outside individuals or organizations.
7. Has the power to impeach an Officer by a 2/3 majority vote. The Senate will follow the Impeachment Process set forth in the Association By-laws.
8. Authorizes the use of the name of the Association by any programs for sponsorship purposes.
9. Each Senator must sit on at least one Standing Committee or serve an office hour.
10. Retains all powers vested in the Association that are not specifically delegated in the Constitution and Bylaws

#### **E. Resignation and Removal**

1. If a Senator resigns, the vacancy will be filled in the manner prescribed in the by-laws.

### Article V

#### **V. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

## **A. Composition and Membership**

1. There shall be only one Association President.
2. There shall be five Association Vice Presidents: Vice President for Student Affairs/Services, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Financial Affairs, Vice President for Public/Media Relations and Membership, and Vice President for Administration and Programs
3. The Association must have a minimum of three (3) officers to be active as an organization. These shall include at least the President and the Vice President for Financial Affairs (Treasurer Role)

## **B. Eligibility and Term of Office**

1. Officers must be currently enrolled as full-time or part-time graduate students of one of the recognized graduate colleges, in good standing. Officers will serve a term that is May 1 &ndash; April 30th.
2. Each officer is elected by majority vote of the Senate
3. Officers may serve no more than three consecutive terms (3 years) in any one office and no person may hold two Association Officer positions simultaneously.
4. Each officer must maintain active residence within a one-hundred (100) mile radius of the Association office and must fulfill all duties and responsibilities throughout the term of office.

## **C. Executive Board Meetings**

1. The majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum. In order for a matter to be voted on, there must be at least a quorum present. All decisions must be reached by a majority of those present.
2. The Association President shall chair the meetings. One officer shall have one vote on all matters, except for the President who may vote only in case of a tie.
3. The Executive Board shall determine the format and frequency of meetings. Regular meetings shall be at the call of the Association President. Special meetings may be called to consider a special item or items of business.

## **D. Powers and Responsibilities**

Collectively, the Executive Board has the following powers, duties and responsibilities:

1. Has the power to create and dissolve committees that will help achieve the goals set forth by the General Assembly

2. Has the responsibility of keeping the records of the Association and making them available to any member who so requests.
3. Encourage graduate representatives to fill all seats available to them in the General Assembly and on any University committees, boards, or councils, etc..
4. Sets the date, time, place, and agenda of Senate meetings. There will not be less than three Senate Meetings a Semester during the regular Academic Year (September &dash; May)
5. Acts for the Senate when it is not possible to wait for the next Senate meeting for a decision on an issue. The Executive Board must have quorum and shall not have the authority to effect major policy changes that will affect the majority of the graduate student body. The Senate must review and ratify such major decisions. When the Executive Board acts on behalf of the graduate student body, the Senate shall be informed of such action(s) and the reasons for it at its next meeting
6. Meets periodically with the University President and with other senior University officials and sets the agenda for those meetings.
7. Develops the Association's budget proposal for the next fiscal year and submits it to the Senate.
8. Votes on questions of whether the President or any of the Vice Presidents abandoned duties thereby necessitating an election for the President, Vice President for Student Affairs/Services, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Administration and Programs, Vice President for Financial Affairs, and Vice President of Public/Media Relations and Membership.
9. In circumstances when a Standing Committee may not meet because of intersession, Summer Term, or in the event of an emergency, the Executive Board has the power to act in their name. Acting in this capacity under such circumstances, the Executive Board will make every effort to contact the members of the appropriate Committee to determine the status of the issues when the Committee last met.
10. Produces an annual written report on the activities and accomplishments in their respective areas to the Association.

### **E. Resignations and Removal**

1. If the President resigns, the Vice President for Student Affairs/Services will assume the Presidency for the remainder of the term.
2. Resignations for any other officers will be filled at a special meeting of the Senate called by the President.
3. An officer may be impeached from office by a 3/4 Vote of the Senate.

4. The process of impeachment must be initiated by any two (2) officers of the Executive Board or any five (5) Senators. The process of impeachment will be governed by the process as outlined in the Association By-laws.

## Article VI

### **VI. OFFICERS' POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. THE PRESIDENT**

1. Serves as the spokesperson and Chief Executive Officer of the Association.
2. Chairs the meetings of the Executive Board and the Senate.
3. Oversees, along with the Vice President for Financial Affairs, the management of the budget.
4. Reports Executive Board activities and actions to the Senate.
5. Oversees all standing committees as necessary as an ex officio member of each committee.
6. Approves or vetoes legislation with his or her signature within ten (10) days after passage by the Senate.
7. Acts as a liaison between the University President's Office, the Offices of the University Senior Vice Presidents and the Association.
8. Appoints Graduate Representatives to all University committees and Search Committees with a simple majority approval of the Executive Board.
9. Is responsible for forming the Association's involvement with University-wide financial planning and priorities.
10. Is responsible for administrative management of the Association along with the Vice president for Administration and Programs. The president prepares the Annual Report.
11. Reviews and recommends to the Senate on all requests for solicitations from outside groups.
12. Reviews all requests for appeals from all Graduate Students, Graduate Student Groups and Committees in all aspects of Association Business.
13. Represents the Association on the University Court, University Technological Council, the University Funding Priorities Committee and Alumni Relations Board.
14. Must perform a minimum of Fifteen (15) Hours of work per week.

#### **B. VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS/SERVICES**

1. Assumes the role of the President in his/her absence or upon resignation or removal.
2. Has the rights and privileges of a Senator
3. Chairs the Student Affairs/Services Committee
4. Serves on the 'Vice President for Student Affairs Advisory Board' and acts as a liaison between the Division of Student Affairs and the Association in all aspects of Graduate Student Life.
5. Represents the Association on the University Court.
6. Approves on behalf of the Graduate and Professional Student Association all changes to the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Assists students and student groups in the addressing of their complaints and grievances in the area of student affairs and services
8. Assists students and student groups in the addressees of their complaints and grievances with regard to the Student Center.
9. Acts as liaison to the Student Center Administration and serves on the Student Center Governing Board
10. Represents the Association on the Lane Health Center Advisory Board with the Vice President for Academic Affairs
11. Must perform a minimum of Ten (10) Hours of work a week.

### **C. VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

1. Has the rights and privileges of a Senator
2. Chairs the Academic Affairs Committee
3. Serves on the Graduate Student Council of the Office of the Provost
4. Assists the students in the addressing of their complaints and grievances in the Academic Affairs area
5. Assists Stipended Graduate Assistants in their complaints and grievances.
6. Acts as liaison with respect to all administrative and academic areas that report to the Provost.
7. Acts as liaison between the Association and the Graduate Deans/Directors Council
8. Represents the Association on the Faculty Senate

9. Represents the Association on the Lane Health Center Advisory Board with the Vice President for Student Affairs/Services.

10. Produces press releases and reports on Academic Affairs Committee activity when appropriate.

11. Must perform a minimum of Ten (10) Hours a week

#### **D. VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

1. Has the rights and privileges of a Senator

2. Responsible for the formation, management and the execution of the Budget of the Association

3. Chairs the Senate Finance Committee.

4. Possesses liaison authority in the area of Financial Affairs and works with the Student Activities Business Office.

5. Is responsible for the Finance By-laws and all administrative duties associated with its execution.

6. Reviews possible changes and revisions to the Finance Bylaws and Funding Programs as circumstance permits

7. Assists students in the address of their complaints and grievances in the Association's funding programs and initiatives.

8. Produces press releases on Financial Affairs when appropriate

9. Must perform a minimum of Ten (10) Hours a week.

#### **E. VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION & PROGRAMS**

1. Has the rights and privileges of a Senator

2. Chairs the Programs Committee.

3. Supervises the keeping of the Association's records by including minutes, attendance and eligibility records

4. Responsible for the coordinating the Association Forums with the Vice Presidents for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs and their committees

5. Responsible for coordinating the Open House for Graduate Student Services

6. Is responsible for all social and multicultural programming of the Association for the graduate student community including Senior Week

7. Represents the Association on the President's Diversity Council
8. Works as a liaison between registered graduate student groups and the Student Activities Office in all aspects of Graduate Student Group Programs
9. Must perform a minimum of Eight (8) hours a week

#### **F. VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC/MEDIA RELATIONS & MEMBERSHIP**

1. Has the rights and privileges of a Senator
2. Chairs the Public/Media Relations & Membership Committee
3. Responsible for the website of the association and all public relations efforts undertaken by the Association
4. Maintains the Membership Database
5. Issues official emails to the Association membership on behalf of the Association
6. Acts as a liaison between the Association and the Graduate Student Groups for marketing their events
7. Works with the Association President to implement the Annual Elections
8. Works with the Association to market the Association to its constituents.
9. Works with the interested individual and recognized colleges to fill senatorial seats
10. Must perform a minimum of Eight (8) Hours a week

### Article VII

#### **FACULTY ADVISORS**

There will be two (2) faculty advisors to the Association, each of whom must be from different colleges, professional schools or administrative departments and at least one of whom must be a director of a graduate program. They must be nominated by any Senator and will be approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate. New Advisors may be selected from the University community at large, provided they meet all criteria as specified above.

### Article VIII

#### **ELECTIONS AND VOTING**

Elections for the officers of the Executive Board shall take place during the month of March and will be carried out by the Senate. Elections for the Officers will follow the guidelines as stated in the Association By-laws.

## Article IX

### **REFERENDA**

The Association has the right to initiate and conduct referenda among the graduate student population. The Association has the obligation to carry out the directives established as a result of that referendum.

## Article X

### **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

Ratification of the Constitution requires a 2/3 vote of the Senate. Initiative for amendments to the Constitution can be made to the Senate either by a Senator or by the Executive Board. After this Constitution is approved by the President of the University or his/her designee, it can be amended. Amendments must be ratified by at least 2/3 vote in the Senate of those present and voting.

Constitution is amended and approved by the GPSA General Assembly on October 2, 2003.