

The Constitution of the Graduate Student Government (GradGov) of Georgetown University

Last revised: October 2016

Preamble

We, the graduate students of Georgetown University, in order to promote graduate student interests, represent graduate students before the faculty and administration of the university, and create opportunities for graduate students to develop professionally, socially, and academically, do decree and establish this constitution for the Graduate Student Government (“GradGov”).

Article I: Membership and Jurisdiction

§1. All graduate students, whether part-time or full-time, matriculated in university-sanctioned programs are members of the Graduate Student Government. This includes graduate students within the following schools: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, McDonough School of Business, School of Nursing & Health Studies, McCourt School of Public Policy, and Georgetown University Medical Center.

§2. Any matter that influences or affects any portion or whole of the graduate student body shall be considered within the competency of GradGov.

Article II: The GradGov General Assembly

§1. Composition, Privileges, and Duties.

A. The GradGov General Assembly (GA) is composed of representatives from all programs within the GradGov constituency.

B. The GA shall elect, by majority vote, a President, Vice President, Director Of Communications, Director of Technology and Web Development, Director Of Groups, Director Of Advocacy, Director Of Programming, and a Treasurer to serve as Executive Officers of GradGov. At least one member of the GradGov Executive Board must be a PhD student.

C. GA meetings shall be open to all graduate students.

D. Only members of the GA may make procedural motions and vote on matters before the GA.

E. The GA shall be responsible for enacting and administering all GradGov programs and functions.

F. The GA shall maintain standing committees: the Internal Affairs Committee, the Advocacy Committee, and the Programming Committee (see Article IV) to execute GradGov's basic operations. Officers of the Executive Board may create ad hoc committees as they see fit. If the minimum requirement of 3 members per committee is not met, then the Executive Board will assume the role of the committee.

G. The GA shall be responsible for approving GradGov's budget each year by a majority vote.

§2. Representatives.

A. Prior to the first GA meeting of the academic year, the Executive Board of GradGov shall invite the administrative secretaries of all graduate programs within the GradGov constituency to initiate the procedure for selecting GradGov GA representatives.

B. Each graduate program shall establish its own procedures for selecting their GradGov representatives.

C. GradGov representatives shall be registered students within the program they represent.

D. There will be a minimum of 1 and maximum of 3 representatives per graduate program.

1. The number of representatives will be determined at the beginning of each academic year.
2. The Graduate School will provide the GradGov Executive Board with the program enrollment statistics, and the Executive Board will notify the administrative secretaries of all graduate programs their allotted representation in the General Assembly.
3. An enrollment of 1-50 graduate students will be granted one representative.
4. An enrollment of 51-100 graduate students will be granted two representatives.
5. An enrollment of 101+ graduate students will be granted three representatives.

E. Each GradGov representative shall receive one vote on all matters that come before the GA for a vote.

F. In the case that a GradGov representative will be absent from a GA meeting, the representative shall have the power to choose a member in his/her department or program to act as a proxy for that meeting.

Article III: The Executive Board

§1. Composition, Privileges, and Duties.

A. The executive power of GradGov shall be vested in the Executive Board consisting of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and Directors Of Communications, Director of Technology and Web Development, Director Of Groups, Director Of Advocacy, Director Of Programming.

B. The President, Vice President, and Treasurer are the first, second, and third ranking officers of the GradGov Executive Board.

C. The President and Vice President may assign duties and responsibilities to subordinate officers as needed.

D. Members of the Executive Board are ex officio members of the GA and accordingly shall enjoy all the privileges of representatives with the following exceptions:

1. The President shall have no vote, unless the GA is equally divided, in which case the President shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
2. The Treasurer shall have no voting privileges in the GA.
3. The Executive Board may not assign their voting power to a proxy; any absentee votes by the Executive Board must be cast in writing.

E. The Executive Board shall have primary responsibility for the implementation and execution of programs approved by the GA, thus they are held accountable to the GA for these purposes.

F. The Executive Board is empowered to conduct the day-to-day operations of GradGov subject to review by the GA.

G. The Executive Board shall serve for terms as defined in Article VI, Section 1, with re-election permitted.

H. No Executive Board member may be a GradGov representative under Article II, Section 2, unless, upon petition by the graduate program involved, a 2/3 majority of the present GA agrees to permit an exception.

I. The Executive Board shall meet regularly for the purpose of establishing GA agendas and to ensure that the GA meetings run smoothly and efficiently.

J. Notification shall be sent to the graduate student community about upcoming votes on elections, procedures or constitutional revisions at least one week in advance.

§2. The President.

- A. The President shall serve as a liaison between GradGov and all other university and non-university bodies or representatives.
- B. The President shall appoint representatives to any university committee with graduate student seats and ensure that the GA receives regular updates on committee activities.
- C. At every scheduled meeting of the GA, the President shall be responsible for reporting any pertinent information learned in his/her official capacity.
- D. The President shall be responsible for seeing that the duties of all standing and ad-hoc committees are carried out.
- E. The President shall act as Parliamentarian of GradGov. The President may delegate this responsibility as he/she sees fit.
- F. In the event that the President is unable to fulfill his/her duties, those responsibilities shall fall to the Vice President.
- G. If any Executive Board position is unfilled during the elected Executive Board term, the President may appoint an individual to the position. This appointment should be approved by a majority vote of the GA at the next meeting.

§3. The Vice President.

- A. The Vice President shall assume the role of chairperson of the Internal Affairs Committee.
- B. In the event that the President either resigns or is removed from office, the Vice President shall become President.
- C. In the event that the Vice President, for whatever reason, is unable to fulfill their duties, those responsibilities shall fall to the Treasurer.

§4. The Treasurer.

- A. The Treasurer shall hold primary responsibility for the management of all GradGov funds.
- B. At the end of the spring semester, the Treasurer shall submit the next year's GradGov budget to GA approval by majority vote.
- C. The Treasurer shall report on the status of the GradGov budget at each scheduled meeting of the GA.

§5. Director of Communications.

- A. The Director of Communications shall serve as the focal point for information in GradGov.
- B. The Director of Communications shall have the responsibility for sending the agenda for each GA meeting to all GradGov Representatives.
- C. The Director of Communications shall be responsible for recording and distributing the minutes of the GA meetings to all representatives, and maintaining the minutes of all GradGov meetings.
- D. The Director of Communications shall keep a record of all representatives appointed to the GradGov GA.
- E. The Director of Communications shall be responsible for keeping record of attendance and notifying the GA of absences.
- F. The Director of Communications will be responsible for posting meeting minutes to the website in order to make them publicly available to the graduate student community.

§6. Director of Technology and Web Development.

- A. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for maintaining the GradGov website.
- B. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for maintaining the technology in the GradGov office.
- C. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for sitting on technology-related university Committees.

§7. Director of Advocacy.

- A. The Director of Advocacy will recruit graduate students to serve on university committees and refer them to the GradGov President for appointment.
- B. The Director of Advocacy will survey graduate students to identify advocacy issues and report the findings to the GradGov Executive Board as needed.
- C. The Director of Advocacy will draft other advocacy memoranda as needed.

§8. Director of Programming.

A. The Director of Programming will be responsible for the planning and execution of events sponsored by the GradGov GA.

B. The Director of Programming will report their expenditures to the Treasurer.

C. The Director of Programming will work with the Director of Communications to advertise events.

§8. Director of Groups.

A. The Director of Groups will act as a liaison between graduate student groups, the Center for Student Engagement, and the GradGov General Assembly.

B. The Director of Groups will bear primary responsibility regarding the creation and maintenance of graduate student groups.

Article IV: Standing Committees

§1. Programming Committee.

A. The Programming Committee shall have primary responsibility for implementing and executing the GradGov's programming goals.

B. All suggestions and formal proposals for GradGov-sponsored academic, professional, networking, and social events shall be initially referred to the Director Of Programming, the chair of the committee.

C. At the beginning of the academic year, the Programming Committee shall present a calendar of GradGov events to the GA.

D. The Programming Committee may request additional funds from the GA as the academic year progresses.

§2. The Advocacy Committee.

A. The Advocacy Committee shall have primary responsibility for implementing and executing the GradGov GA's advocacy goals.

B. Each semester the members of the Advocacy Committee will engage in formal and/or informal outreach to member of the graduate student community to identify student concerns across the spectrum of graduate student life at Georgetown University

C. The members of the Advocacy Committee will decide which issues to focus on each semester.

1. The Committee will be in consultation and work in conjunction with the General Assembly and Executive Board to select issues most pertinent to graduate students.
2. The Committee may set up sub-committees to work on particular advocacy issues, with the goal of engaging as many students as possible in advocacy efforts (as appropriate).

D. The Advocacy Committee will organize events and activities to bring graduate students' concerns to the attention of the Georgetown Administration

E. All written communication on behalf of GradGov must be approved by the GradGov Executive Board and/or GradGov GA.

F. The chair of the Advocacy Committee will be the Director of Advocacy.

§3. Internal Affairs Committee.

A. The Internal Affairs Committee shall be primarily responsible for reviewing constitutional amendments (Article IX) and managing impeachment proceedings (Article VII).

Article V: Meetings, General Assembly Voting Procedure

§1. Schedule and Frequency of Meetings.

A. The first meeting of the year shall be scheduled as early in the semester as feasible, and must be held during the month of September.

B. Meetings shall be held monthly throughout the academic year, and in any case shall not be held less than four times per academic semester.

C. A GA quorum is two-thirds of the current program representatives.

D. Meetings shall not occur during examination periods, school breaks, or summer sessions unless provided for by special resolution in each case.

§2. Voting Procedures for General Assembly Matters.

A. A simple majority is defined as half of the voting members present plus one (not to include the President).

B. Points of Order are used to call the President's attention to violations of rules and/or the Constitution. The President shall decide if the rule is valid and act accordingly.

C. Appealing a ruling of the President.

1. A motion to appeal a Presidential ruling does not require a second.
2. A statement of appeal shall be followed by a short defense by the President and a short rebuttal by the opposition.
3. The motion to appeal passes with simple majority approval.

D. Motions to table discussion or close debate.

1. Motions to table or close debate require a second.
2. A statement in favor of closing the discussion shall be followed by a short defense of the discussion and a short rebuttal.
3. A motion to table or close debate passes with simple majority approval.

E. Motion to reopen tabled issued.

1. Motions to reopen issue require a second.
2. A statement in favor of reopening the issue shall be followed by a short statement in defense of keeping the issue closed and a short rebuttal.
3. A motion to reopen a tabled issue passes with two-thirds majority approval.

F. In all other matters of procedure, the President shall follow Robert's Rules of Order to the extent possible. In the midst of consensus, the President may deviate from the set procedure as he/she sees fit.

G. If a quorum is called and quorum requirements are not met, the meeting is suspended without debate. Unless called, a quorum is assumed to exist.

Article VI: Elections, Special Elections

§1. Elections for Officers.

A. The election of the officers of the Executive Board will be declared by the President in January and take place no later than March 1. Officers will serve until the end of a two-week transition period following the election of their successors.

B. Notification of annual elections shall be publicized on campus.

C. Any registered graduate student within GradGov's constituency may nominate himself or herself for a position.

D. If candidates choose to submit a "Letter of Objectives" to the Executive Board, it shall be distributed to the entire General Assembly.

E. If any candidate wishes to present a statement prior to the General Assembly vote, the President shall grant each candidate the floor for at least five minutes.

F. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote by all voting members in the GA, the President, and the Treasurer. In the event that no one person receives a simple majority vote during the first polling, a run-off election between the two persons having the most votes shall immediately follow. The vote required to win in a run-off election will also be a simple majority.

G. If the President sees fit, he/she may appoint a Special Projects Chair at any time. This appointment will last for one semester and must be approved by a simple majority of the GA.

§2. Special Elections.

A. If one of the officers should resign, or an office otherwise becomes vacant before the annual term has expired, the President may call for a special election.

B. The GA shall elect a replacement for the remainder of the term.

C. Procedure for special elections shall follow procedure for regular elections as closely as possible, including the voting of a simple majority of the present General Assembly.

Article VII: Impeachment, Recall of Representatives

§1. Impeachment.

A. To begin impeachment proceedings, a written petition of two-thirds of GradGov representatives must be submitted to the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee.

B. In such case that the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee is the officer facing impeachment, the President shall delegate the role of Chair to another member of the GA.

C. If the Internal Affairs Committee receives an impeachment petition, the Chair of the Committee shall make the petition public. The Chair shall bring the issue up for a vote at the next GA meeting.

D. The officer facing impeachment shall have the opportunity to rebut all claims against him/her during the GA meeting.

E. Following an impeachment discussion, a simple majority of those present may remove an officer from his/her post.

F. All members of the Executive Board can be impeached.

§2. Recall of Representatives.

A. Should a department or program fail to be represented by their GradGov Representative or an alternate at two consecutive regular meetings of the GA, the Representative has effectively failed to represent his/her department and is subject to a Notice of Recall.

B. Recall Procedures.

1. When a GradGov Representative misses at least two consecutive regular meetings of the GradGov, the Director Of Communications shall bring a Notice of Recall to the attention of the President.
2. The President shall then make his/her best effort to reach the offending GradGov Representative and inform the Representative of the Notice of Recall.
3. If the President has made his/her best effort to reach the GradGov Representative, and the GradGov Representative does not attend the next scheduled meeting, the Representative shall be removed by a simple majority vote on the matter.

Article VIII: Access to GradGov Funds

§1. In General.

A. GradGov seeks to help build and maintain a graduate community that is characterized by a commitment to learning and knowledge, a celebration of diversity, and a respect for academic freedom. GradGov seeks to foster these ideals by supporting the formation of student groups and funding students and student groups to hold events.

B. Access to GradGov funds does not indicate University recognition or endorsement of the merits of any activity or objective.

C. GradGov student groups and students may access GradGov funds for events and activities that foster the academic, social, and cultural aspects of graduate student life at Georgetown.

D. Any group or individual that receives GradGov funding must comply with all relevant University policies, the policies of the Center for Student Engagement (CSE), and GradGov club funding policy.

Article IX: Constitutional Amendments

§1. Initiation of Amendment.

A. Any GradGov Executive Board member or GA representative may propose an amendment to the GradGov Constitution.

B. The initiation of an Amendment shall be handled in the following manner:

1. Any proposed Amendment shall be initially referred to the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee.
2. The Internal Affairs Committee shall review the proposed Amendment for typographical errors, procedural, or other glaring deficiencies. The Internal Affairs Committee may keep the proposal in committee until such time as those defects are remedied.
3. At such time that the Internal Affairs Committee deems the group's proposal is ready to be considered by the GA, the Internal Affairs Committee shall recommend to the President that the proposed Amendment be placed on the agenda for the next GA meeting.

§2. Ratification.

- A. The President shall give adequate time for discussion of any constitutional amendment.
- B. The Constitution shall be amended upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the GA.
- C. Any Amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Article X: Bylaws

- A. The GA may adopt bylaws to provide for additional policies and procedures not considered by this Constitution.
- B. Bylaws may be proposed by any member of the GA.
- C. The President will place them on the agenda without unreasonable delay; a vote of two-thirds of the GA or of the Executive Board may place proposed bylaws or amendments thereto on the agenda of the next GA meeting, although any such vote may not take place without time for an explanation from the President.
- D. Adoption of a bylaw or amendment of an existing bylaw will require a simple majority vote of the GA.
- E. Bylaws will be codified once adopted or amended