

# The Constitution of the Graduate Student Government (Gradgov) of Georgetown University

*Last revised: April 2019*

## 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 Senate

§1. Composition, Privileges, and Duties.

A. The GradGov Senate is composed of Senators from all programs within the GradGov constituency.

B. The Senate 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. Senate meetings shall be open to all graduate students.

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

45 E. The Senate shall be responsible for enacting and administering all GradGov programs  
46 and functions.

47

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

53

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

56

57 §2. Senators.

58

59 A. Prior to the first Senate meeting of the academic year, the Executive Board of  
60 GradGov shall invite the administrative secretaries of all graduate programs within the  
61 GradGov constituency to initiate the procedure for selecting GradGov Senators.

62

63 B. Each graduate program shall establish its own procedures for selecting their GradGov  
64 Senators.

65

66 C. GradGov Senators shall be registered students within the program they  
67 represent.

68

69 D. There will be a minimum of 1 and maximum of 3 Senators per graduate  
70 program.

71

72 1. The number of Senators will be determined at the beginning of each academic  
73 year.

74

75 2. The Graduate School will provide the GradGov Executive Board with the  
76 program enrollment statistics, and the Executive Board will notify the  
77 administrative secretaries of all graduate programs their allotted representation in  
78 the Senate.

79

80 3. An enrollment of 1-50 graduate students will be granted one Senator.

81

82 4. An enrollment of 51-100 graduate students will be granted two Senators.

83

84 5. An enrollment of 101+ graduate students will be granted three Senators.

85

86 E. Each GradGov Senator shall receive one vote on all matters that come before the  
87 Senate for a vote.

88

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

92  
93 Article III: The Executive Board

94  
95 §1. Composition, Privileges, and Duties.

96  
97 A. The executive power of GradGov shall be vested in the Executive Board consisting of  
98 a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and Directors Of Communications, Director of  
99 Technology and Web Development, Director Of Groups, Director Of Advocacy, Director  
100 Of Programming.

101  
102 B. The President, Vice President, and Treasurer are the first, second, and third ranking  
103 officers of the GradGov Executive Board.

104  
105 C. The President and Vice President may assign duties and responsibilities to subordinate  
106 officers as needed.

107  
108 D. Members of the Executive Board are ex officio members of the Senate and  
109 accordingly shall enjoy all the privileges of Senators with the following  
110 exceptions:

- 111
- 112 1. The President shall have no vote, unless the Senate is equally divided, in which  
113 case the President shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
  - 114
  - 115 2. The Treasurer shall have no voting privileges in the Senate.
  - 116
  - 117 3. The Executive Board may not assign their voting power to a proxy; any absentee  
118 votes by the Executive Board must be cast in writing.
  - 119

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

123  
124 F. The Executive Board is empowered to conduct the day-to-day operations of GradGov  
125 subject to review by the Senate.

126  
127 G. The Executive Board shall serve for terms as defined in Article VI, Section 1, with  
128 reelection permitted.

129  
130 H. No Executive Board member may be a Gradgov Senator under Article II, Section 2,  
131 unless, upon petition by the graduate program involved, a 2/3 majority of the present  
132 Senate agrees to permit an exception.

133

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

136

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

139

140 §2. The President.

141

142 A. The President shall serve as a liaison between GradGov and all other university and  
143 non-university bodies or representatives.

144

145 B. The President shall appoint Senator to any university committee with graduate student  
146 seats and ensure that the Senate receives regular updates on committee activities.

147

148 C. At every scheduled meeting of the Senate, the President shall be responsible for  
149 reporting any pertinent information learned in his/her official capacity.

150

151 D. The President shall be responsible for seeing that the duties of all standing and ad-hoc  
152 committees are carried out.

153

154 E. The President shall act as Parliamentarian of GradGov. The President may delegate  
155 this responsibility as he/she sees fit.

156

157 F. In the event that the President is unable to fulfill his/her duties, those responsibilities  
158 shall fall to the Vice President.

159

160 G. If any Executive Board position is unfilled during the elected Executive Board term,  
161 the President may appoint an individual to the position. This appointment should be  
162 approved by a majority vote of the Senate at the next meeting.

163

164 §3. The Vice President.

165

166 A. The Vice President shall assume the role of chairperson of the Internal Affairs  
167 Committee.

168

169 B. In the event that the President either resigns or is removed from office, the Vice  
170 President shall become President.

171

172 C. In the event that the Vice President, for whatever reason, is unable to fulfill their  
173 duties, those responsibilities shall fall to the Treasurer.

174

175 §4. The Treasurer.

176

177 A. The Treasurer shall hold primary responsibility for the management of all GradGov  
178 funds.

179

180 B. At the end of the spring semester, the Treasurer shall submit the next year's GradGov  
181 budget to Senate approval by majority vote.

182  
183 C. The Treasurer shall report on the status of the GradGov budget at each scheduled  
184 meeting of the Senate.

185  
186 §5. Director of Communications.

187  
188 A. The Director of Communications shall serve as the focal point for information in  
189 GradGov.

190  
191 B. The Director of Communications shall have the responsibility for sending the agenda  
192 for each Senator meeting to all GradGov Senators.

193  
194 C. The Director of Communications shall be responsible for recording and distributing  
195 the minutes of the Senate meetings to all Senators, and maintaining the minutes of all  
196 GradGov meetings.

197  
198 D. The Director of Communications shall keep a record of all Senators appointed to the  
199 GradGov Senate.

200  
201 E. The Director of Communications shall be responsible for keeping record of  
202 attendance and notifying the Senate of absences.

203  
204 F. The Director of Communications will be responsible for posting meeting minutes to  
205 the website in order to make them publicly available to the graduate student community.

206  
207 §6. Director of Technology and Web Development.

208  
209 A. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for  
210 maintaining the GradGov website.

211  
212 B. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for  
213 maintaining the technology in the GradGov office.

214  
215 C. The Director of Technology and Web Development shall be responsible for sitting on  
216 technology-related university Committees.

217  
218 §7. Director of Advocacy.

219  
220 A. The Director of Advocacy will recruit graduate students to serve on university  
221 committees and refer them to the GradGov President for appointment.

222 B. The Director of Advocacy will survey graduate students to identify advocacy issues  
223 and report the findings to the GradGov Executive Board as needed.

224  
225 C. The Director of Advocacy will draft other advocacy memoranda as needed.

226

227 §8. Director of Programming.

228

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

231

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

233

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

236

237 §8. Director of Groups.

238

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

241

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

244

245 Article IV: Standing Committees

246

247 §1. Programming Committee.

248

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

251

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

255

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

258

259 D. The Programming Committee may request additional funds from the Senate as the  
260 academic year progresses.

261

262 §2. The Advocacy Committee.

263

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

266

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

270

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

273

274 1. The Committee will be in consultation and work in conjunction with the Senate and  
275 Executive Board to select issues most pertinent to graduate students.

276

277 2. The Committee may set up sub-committees to work on particular advocacy issues,  
278 with the goal of engaging as many students as possible in advocacy efforts (as  
279 appropriate).

280

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

283

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

286

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

288

289 §3. Internal Affairs Committee.

290

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

294

295 Article V: Meetings, Senate Voting Procedure

296

297 §1. Schedule and Frequency of Meetings.

298

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

301

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

304

305 C. A Senate quorum is two-thirds of the current program Senators.

306

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

309

310 §2. Voting Procedures for Senate Matters.

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

313

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

316

317 C. Appealing a ruling of the President.

318

319 1. A motion to appeal a Presidential ruling does not require a second.

320

321 2. A statement of appeal shall be followed by a short defense by the President and a  
322 short rebuttal by the opposition.

323

324 3. The motion to appeal passes with simple majority approval.

325

326 D. Motions to table discussion or close debate.

327

328 1. Motions to table or close debate require a second.

329

330 2. A statement in favor of closing the discussion shall be followed by a short  
331 defense of the discussion and a short rebuttal.

332

333 3. A motion to table or close debate passes with simple majority approval.

334

335 E. Motion to reopen tabled issued.

336

337 1. Motions to reopen issue require a second.

338

339 2. A statement in favor of reopening the issue shall be followed by a short  
340 statement in defense of keeping the issue closed and a short rebuttal.

341

342 3. A motion to reopen a tabled issue passes with two-thirds majority approval.

343

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

347

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

350

351 Article VI: Elections, Special Elections

352

353 §1. Elections for Officers.

354

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

358

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

360

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



363

364 D. If candidates choose to submit a “Letter of Objectives” to the Executive Board, it shall  
365 be distributed to the entire Senate.

366

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

369

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

375

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

379

380 §2. Special Elections.

381

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

384

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

386

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

389

390 Article VII: Impeachment, Recall of Senators

391

392 §1. Impeachment.

393

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

396

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

400

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

404

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

407

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

410  
411 F. All members of the Executive Board can be impeached.

412  
413 §2. Recall of Senators.

414  
415 A. Should a department or program fail to be represented by their GradGov  
416 Senator or an alternate at two consecutive regular meetings of the Senate, the Senator has  
417 effectively failed to represent his/her department and is subject to a Notice of Recall.

418  
419 B. Recall Procedures.

420  
421 1. When a GradGov Senator misses at least two consecutive regular  
422 meetings of the GradGov, the Director Of Communications shall bring a  
423 Notice of Recall to the attention of the President.

424  
425 2. The President shall then make his/her best effort to reach the offending  
426 GradGov Senator and inform the Senator of the Notice of  
427 Recall.

428  
429 3. If the President has made his/her best effort to reach the GradGov  
430 Senator, and the GradGov Senator does not attend the next  
431 scheduled meeting, the Senator shall be removed by a simple majority  
432 vote on the matter.

433  
434 Article VIII: Access to GradGov Funds

435  
436 §1. In General.

437  
438 A. GradGov seeks to help build and maintain a graduate community that is characterized  
439 by a commitment to learning and knowledge, a celebration of diversity, and a respect for  
440 academic freedom. GradGov seeks to foster these ideals by supporting the formation of  
441 student groups and funding students and student groups to hold events.

442  
443 B. Access to GradGov funds does not indicate University recognition or endorsement of  
444 the merits of any activity or objective.

445  
446 C. GradGov student groups and students may access GradGov funds for events and  
447 activities that foster the academic, social, and cultural aspects of graduate student life at  
448 Georgetown.

449  
450 D. Any group or individual that receives GradGov funding must comply with all  
451 relevant University policies, the policies of the Center for Student Engagement  
452 (CSE), and GradGov club funding policy.

453

454 Article IX: Constitutional Amendments

455

456 §1. Initiation of Amendment.

457

458 A. Any GradGov Executive Board member or Senators may propose an  
459 amendment to the GradGov Constitution.

460

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

462

463 1. Any proposed Amendment shall be initially referred to the Chair of the Internal  
464 Affairs Committee.

465

466 2. The Internal Affairs Committee shall review the proposed Amendment for  
467 typographical errors, procedural, or other glaring deficiencies. The Internal  
468 Affairs Committee may keep the proposal in committee until such time as  
469 those defects are remedied.

470

471 3. At such time that the Internal Affairs Committee deems the group's proposal is  
472 ready to be considered by the Senate, the Internal Affairs Committee shall  
473 recommend to the President that the proposed Amendment be placed on the  
474 agenda for the next Senate meeting.

475

476 §2. Ratification.

477

478 A. The President shall give adequate time for discussion of any constitutional  
479 amendment.

480

481 B. The Constitution shall be amended upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the  
482 Senate.

483

484 C. Any Amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

485

486 Article X: Bylaws

487

488 A. The Senate may adopt bylaws to provide for additional policies and procedures not  
489 considered by this Constitution.

490

491 B. Bylaws may be proposed by any member of the Senate.

492

493 C. The President will place them on the agenda without unreasonable delay; a vote of  
494 two-thirds of the Senate or of the Executive Board may place proposed bylaws or  
495 amendments thereto on the agenda of the next Senate meeting, although any such vote  
496 may not take place without time for an explanation from the President.

497

498 D. Adoption of a bylaw or amendment of an existing bylaw will require a simple majority  
499 vote of the Senator.

500

501 E. Bylaws will be codified once adopted or amended