

CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA – LINCOLN

Final Draft: January 19, 2010

PREAMBLE

The graduate students of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (The “University”), recognizing the common interests, needs, goals, and perspectives of graduate students, do hereby establish the Graduate Student Association (“GSA”). As graduate students form a unique, distinctive and important segment of the population of the University, it is necessary to have such a body, which draws upon members elected from various graduate departments and programs from around the University. The GSA will work to promote the interests and welfare of graduate students, will provide input on their behalf in regards to the formation of general University policy, and will serve as a conduit of information concerning matters relevant to graduate education.

I. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

1.1 The Graduate Student Association exists to serve and represent graduate students—a unique and important population of students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Housed within the Graduate College of the University, the GSA promotes the intellectual community of graduate education; sponsors opportunities for professional development; creates opportunities for social interaction among graduate students; and advocates for issues relevant to graduate students and graduate education. The GSA works in cooperation with the University’s Office of Graduate Studies and higher University administration to create a quality educational and professional experience for graduate students.

II. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 All currently enrolled graduate students at the University shall be members of the GSA.

2.2 *Non-discrimination*

GSA shall not discriminate in the selection of members or appointments when discrimination is defined as denying individuals membership or appointment on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran’s status, national or ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, place of residence, or sexual orientation.

2.3 *Non-student participation*

A student organization shall consist of at least five currently enrolled student members. Non-students will be allowed to participate in any student organization activity, but will not be a voting member, or an elected or appointed officer of said organization. A non-student is someone who is not currently enrolled at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln for the Fall or Spring semester.

2.4 Members of GSA shall not be required to pay any dues.

III. LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE

3.1 The governing body of the GSA shall be the Legislative Assembly.

3.2 All members of the Legislative Assembly must be a University student currently enrolled in a graduate program.

3.3 *Representation*

The Legislative Assembly of the GSA shall consist of one representative from each department that offers a graduate degree, hereafter referred to as a Department Representative, and ten campus representatives split equally between City Campus and East Campus, hereafter referred to as a Campus Representative.

3.4 *Election or Appointment of Department Representatives*

Each Department Representative will be elected or appointed by their respective departments. Individuals selected to be representatives must be registered with the Vice-Chair of Information to be eligible to participate in Legislative Assembly meetings or related business.

3.5 *Election of Campus Representatives*

Each Campus representative will be elected by the Legislative Assembly at the final Legislative Assembly meeting of the academic year and will serve a one year term beginning May 1 and ending April 30 of the following year. The five candidates with the most votes for both City Campus and East Campus will become the Campus representative for the following year. A Borda Count shall be implemented for the election, if necessary. A Campus representative must be a degree seeking graduate student in a department that is located on the campus he or she serves and cannot concurrently serve as the Department representative. Individuals selected to be representatives must be registered with the Vice-Chair of Information to be eligible to participate in Legislative Assembly meetings or related business. Eligible graduate students can declare their intent to serve as a Campus Representative at the second to last Legislative Assembly meeting of the academic year.

3.6 *Term of Office*

Department Representatives shall serve two academic semesters. If a Department representative can only serve for one semester, a new representative shall be appointed or elected within the first month of the next semester. Campus representatives shall serve a full year term beginning May 1 and ending April 30 of the following year. If a Campus representative is unable to serve the entire term, the Legislative Assembly shall nominate a replacement. If the Legislative Assembly fails to nominate a replacement within 30 days of a vacancy, the Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term.

3.7 *Department Representatives Elected to Executive Committee*

In the event that a Department representative of the Legislative Assembly is elected to an Executive Officer position, the Vice-Chair of Information shall notify the representative's constituent department and request that a new representative be appointed. In the event that a Campus representative is elected to an Executive Officer position, the Legislative Assembly shall nominate a replacement and elect him or her with a plurality of votes at the following Legislative Assembly meeting.

3.8 *Department Representatives Elected to Campus Representative*

In the event that a Department representative of the Legislative Assembly is elected to a Campus Representative position during the academic year, the Vice-Chair of Information shall notify the representative's constituent department and request that a new Department Representative be appointed.

3.9 *Responsibilities of Department Representatives*

The responsibilities of each Department representative are as follows: (1) attend all Legislative Assembly meetings; (2) deliver information to their respective

department regarding issues and activities relevant to the Legislative Assembly and the GSA; and (3) provide information to the Legislative Assembly regarding suggestions and concerns originating from students within their department.

3.10 *Responsibilities of Campus Representatives*

The responsibilities of each Campus representative are as follows: (1) attend all Legislative Assembly meetings; (2) serve on a minimum of one GSA committee; (3) provide information to the Legislative Assembly regarding suggestions and concerns originating from students on his or her respective campus; (4) aid the Vice-Chair of Representation in attaining representation from all departments on the respective campus.

3.11 *Function of Legislative Assembly*

The function of the Legislative Assembly are as follows: (1) elect the Executive Officers; (2) approve the GSA annual budget; (3) make resolutions; (4) propose amendments to the GSA Constitution; (5) establish and amend the GSA By-Laws; (6) create its own procedural rules; (7) serve as a forum for graduate student interaction; and (8) take any other reasonable action it deems necessary to fulfill the stated purposes of GSA.

3.12 *Removal of representative from Legislative Assembly*

A representative who consistently fails to fulfill the duties and responsibilities required of the position may be removed. A recall petition signed by a simple majority of the Legislative Assembly and submitted to any member of the Executive Committee shall be presented at the next scheduled Legislative Assembly meeting. A vote of three-fourths of those members present shall be necessary for removal from the position.

3.13 *Withdraw, Removal or Resignation of Representatives*

In the event that a Department representative of the Legislative Assembly withdraws, resigns or is removed, for such cause as the Legislative Assembly deems proper, the Vice-Chair of Information shall notify the representative's constituent department and request that a new representative be appointed as outlined in 3.4. In the event that a Campus representative resigns or is removed, the Legislative Assembly will nominate a replacement and elect him or her with a plurality of votes at the next scheduled Legislative Assembly meeting. If the Legislative Assembly fails to nominate a replacement within 30 days of a vacancy, the Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term. The nominee would then need approval from the Legislative Assembly with a plurality of the vote.

3.14 *Committees*

The function of the GSA committees shall be to serve the stated purpose of the particular committee in order to meet the needs of graduate students. The purposes of standing GSA committees and other temporary GSA committees shall be outlined in the GSA By-Laws.

IV. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

4.1 The Executive Committee consists of the Executive Officers: the Executive Chair, the Vice-Chair of Internal Affairs, the Vice-Chair of External Affairs, the Vice-Chair of Finance, the Vice-Chair of Representation, the Vice-Chair of Social Events, the Vice-Chair of Graduate Student Appreciation Week, the Vice-Chair of Legislative Affairs, and the Vice-Chair of Information.

4.2 *Voting by Executive Committee*

Members of the Executive Committee shall be non-voting members of the Legislative Assembly, except the Executive Chair who shall vote only in the event of a tie.

4.3 Elected executive officers may not serve as a departmental Legislative Assembly

representative or a Campus representative while serving as an Executive Officer.

4.4 *Executive Officer Term of Office*

Elected Executive Officers shall serve a term of one calendar year or until the next academic year election as outlined in 6.1.

4.5 *Executive Officer Term Limits*

Executive Officers shall be able to serve an unlimited number of terms in any of the Executive Officer positions.

4.6 *Simultaneous Executive Officer Positions*

Executive Officers shall not be able to simultaneously serve in multiple Executive Officer positions.

4.7 *Executive Officer Duties*

The duties of each of the Executive Officers shall be outlined in the GSA By-Laws.

4.8 *Removal of Officer from Executive Committee*

The Executive Officers shall be subject to impeachment and removal by the Legislative Assembly. Procedure for impeachment shall require that a written statement of reason(s) for removal be distributed to all representatives of the Legislative Assembly. The statement shall be read at a regular meeting of the Legislative Assembly. A vote of three-fourths of members present will be required to remove an Executive Officer from their position. However, no vote may be taken on the issue of removal until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Legislative Assembly after the impeachment is introduced.

4.9 *Withdraw, Removal or Resignation of Elected Officer*

In the event that an officer of the Executive Committee other than the Executive Chair withdraws, resigns, or is removed, for such cause as the Legislative Assembly deems proper, the Executive Chair shall nominate member(s) of the Legislative Assembly to fill the vacant position. A nominee must then be confirmed or elected by a majority of voting members present at the next Legislative Assembly meeting. If the office of Executive Chair is vacated, the Vice-Chair of Internal Affairs shall become the Executive Chair until the next regularly scheduled Executive Officer elections. If the Vice-Chair of Internal Affairs is unable to fulfill the duty of Executive Chair, all other members of the Executive Committee will become eligible for Executive Chair. The process of determining a new Executive Chair is left up to the Executive Committee. The nominated Executive Chair will then have to be confirmed by a majority of the Legislative Assembly.

V. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

5.1 The Legislative Assembly shall meet at least once a month during the Fall and Spring academic semesters. A majority vote of either the Executive Officers or the Legislative Assembly shall be necessary to call a special meeting. With a simple majority vote, the Executive Officers or the Legislative Assembly can vote not to hold a meeting under special circumstances (e.g. scheduling conflict with finals).

5.2 The Executive Chair shall preside over all Legislative Assembly meetings.

5.3 Any Vice-Chair Executive Committee member may preside over Legislative Assembly meetings in the absence of the Executive Chair.

5.4 Legislative Assembly meetings shall be open to all graduate students; however, only elected or appointed Legislative Assembly members shall vote. Elected Legislative Assembly representatives may appoint another student in the department to serve in his or her absence. In an extenuating circumstance, the Executive Chair may allow an absentee vote, provided good cause is given by the Department representative and no substitute can be found. The absentee vote will not be allowed to count toward quorum and cannot be

the deciding vote on an amendment to the Constitution or the election of an officer.

5.5 *Quorum*

Quorum is fifteen (15) members of the Legislative Assembly and shall be necessary to transact all business except that fewer members may adjourn a meeting. A quorum must be called at a given Legislative Assembly meeting in order to affect business that may come before the Legislative Assembly.

5.6 *Voting*

A simple majority of those members present shall be sufficient to pass any resolution. A vote of two-thirds of those members present shall be necessary to pass a resolution authorizing any non-allocated expenditure in excess of \$100 (note: budget lines are considered allocated expenditures). A vote of four-fifths of those members present shall be necessary to pass a resolution to amend the Constitution.

VI. OFFICER ELECTIONS

6.1 The Executive Officers shall be elected at the second Legislative Assembly meeting of the Spring semester, and shall serve for a term of one year with an effective inaugural date of May 1 and run through April 30 of the following year.

6.2 The Vice-Chair of Legislative Affairs shall preside over officer elections, assuming there is no conflict of interest. If such a conflict exists, the Executive Chair shall preside over the elections, assuming no conflict of interest exists. If such a conflict exists for the Executive Chair, then any remaining member of the Executive Committee without a conflict of interest shall preside over the elections.

6.3 Nominated candidates running for an officer position must intend to remain a graduate student for the full term of the next academic year.

6.4 No candidate running for an officer position can take a substantive part in the election process.

6.5 The actual execution of the election process shall be outlined in the GSA By-Laws.

VII. GRADUATE COLLEGE LIAISON

7.1 The University's Office of Graduate Studies shall nominate a full-time member of the graduate faculty to serve as an advisor to the GSA and as liaison between the GSA and the University's Office of Graduate Studies.

7.2 The Graduate College Liaison must be a full-time member of the University graduate faculty.

7.2 The Office of Graduate Studies shall nominate the Graduate College Liaison for approval by the Legislative Assembly and the liaison shall serve until resignation or removal.

7.3 Removal of Graduate College Liaison

The Graduate College Liaison may be removed at the request of the GSA or the Office of Graduate Studies for any reason deemed appropriate by either GSA or the University's Office of Graduate Studies.

VIII. ADVISOR

8.1 GSA shall have one Primary Advisor, which must be a permanent Academic/Administrative or Managerial/Professional faculty/staff member of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, and may have any number of Secondary Advisors, which may be permanent Academic/Administrative, Managerial/Professional, or Office/Service staff members or Graduate Assistants of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Only the Primary Advisor may approve expenditures of funds.

- 8.2 The Primary Advisor must be a full-time member of the University graduate faculty.
- 8.3 The Executive Committee shall nominate the Primary Advisor for approval by the Legislative Assembly and the Primary Advisor shall serve until resignation or removal.
- 8.4 Removal of Primary Advisor
The Primary Advisor may be removed at the request of the GSA for any reason deemed appropriate by GSA.

IX. FINANCE

9.1 *Fundraising*

Fundraising activities shall be conducted in accordance with the University's not-for-profit status and any policies and/or procedures pertinent to fundraising activities as outlined by the University.

- 9.2 Organizational monies will be handled by Student Organizational Financial Services, regardless of source. No part of the net earning of the GSA shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered. GSA shall not engage in any activities not permitted to an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue laws).

X. AMENDMENTS

- 10.1 Amendments to the GSA Constitution may be made by petition to the Legislative Assembly.
- 10.2 Once a petition for amendment has been submitted, the amendment will be subject to review and approval by the Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs. Following this review, the amendment may then enter the mandatory thirty-day review period as documented in 10.3.
- 10.3 Prior to a vote, the Legislative Assembly must allow thirty days for review of the proposed amendment by the membership of the GSA and take steps to publicize the proposed changes to GSA members. After the mandatory thirty-day review period, the amendment may be ratified at the next Legislative Assembly meeting by a four-fifths vote of voting members present. The Legislative Assembly can vote by simple majority to table the amendment vote until a later meeting to allow for more discussion among the GSA. The Legislative Assembly can also vote by a two-thirds majority to kill the amendment. After the mandatory thirty-day review period, the proposed amendment will have a maximum of 90 days to be ratified by the Legislative Assembly. If more than 90 days has passed and ratification has not occurred, the proposed amendment is considered to be defunct.
- 10.4 All amendments must be approved by the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN).

XI. RATIFICATION

- 11.1 This constitution is subject to the review and ratification by a simple majority of the Legislative Assembly.

XII. EFFECTIVE DATE

12.1 This GSA Constitution is effective January 20, 2010.

