CONSTITUTION OF THE
GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA – LINCOLN

Approved by GSA: November 4, 2014

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 and professional students. Housed within the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN), the GSA promotes the intellectual community of graduate education, sponsors opportunities for professional development, creates opportunities for social interaction among graduate students, and advocates on behalf of 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 and professional students at the University shall be members of the GSA.
2.2 Members of GSA shall not be required to pay any dues.

2.3. *Non-discrimination*

This organization does 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, genetic information, race, color, religion, pregnancy, marital status, veteran’s status, national or ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, place of residence, political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

2.4. *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.

III. **LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE**

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

3.2. Each member of the Legislative Assembly must be a University student currently enrolled in a graduate program or professional program, hereafter referred to as graduate students.

3.3. *Representation*

The Legislative Assembly of the GSA shall consist of one representative from each department that offers a graduate or professional 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 President 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 first Legislative Assembly meeting of the academic year. The five candidates with the most votes for both City Campus and East Campus will become Campus representatives. 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 a Department representative. Individuals selected to be representatives must be registered with the Vice President 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 first Legislative Assembly meeting of the academic year.

3.5.1. Within fourteen days of the first Legislative Assembly meeting, the Executive Board reserves the right to appoint at-large Campus Representatives.

3.6. Term of Office and Term Limits

3.6.1. Department Representatives

Department Representatives shall serve for one academic year. 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.

3.6.2. Campus Representatives

Campus representatives shall serve for one academic year beginning at the first Legislative Assembly meeting and ending April 30. If a Campus representative is unable to serve his entire term, the Legislative Assembly shall nominate and elect a replacement.

3.6.3. Term Limits

Department Representatives and Campus Representatives shall be limited to four consecutive terms within a position (either Department or Campus Representative).

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 President of Information shall notify the representative’s constituent department and request that a new representative be elected or 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 President of Information shall notify the representative’s constituent department and request that a new Department Representative be elected or 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, (4) serve on a minimum of one GSA committee. If a Department Representative is unable to attend a Legislative Assembly meeting, he must e-mail the Chair of Legislative Affairs and provide the name and e-mail address of a proxy who will be attending in his place.

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 President of Representation in attaining representation from all departments on the respective campus.

3.11. Function of Legislative Assembly

The functions 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 Bylaws; (6) serve as a forum for graduate student interaction; and (7) take any other reasonable action it deems necessary to fulfill the stated purposes of GSA.

3.12. Removal of Representative from Legislative Assembly

A Department may decide to remove its Department Representative based on criteria and procedures which they establish. A Campus Representative who consistently fails to fulfill the duties and responsibilities required of the position may be removed by the Legislative Assembly. 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 two-thirds of those members present shall be necessary for removal from the position.
3.13. *Withdrawal, Removal, or Resignation of Representatives*

3.13.1. Department Representatives

In the event that a Department Representative withdraws, resigns, or is removed, the constituent department may elect or appoint a new Department Representative as outlined in section 3.4.

3.13.2 Campus Representatives

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.

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 GSA standing committees shall be outlined in the GSA Bylaws. Ad hoc committees may be formed as outlined in the GSA Bylaws.

IV. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

4.1. The Executive Committee consists of the Executive Officers: the President, the Internal Vice President, the External Vice President, the Vice President of Finance, the Vice President of Representation, the Vice President of Information, and Chair of Legislative Affairs (non-voting member of Executive Committee), Graduate Student Chief of Staff (non-voting member of Executive Committee).

4.2. *Voting by Executive Committee*

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

4.3. An Executive Officer may not serve as a Departmental Legislative Assembly Representative or a Campus Representative.

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 four 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 Bylaws.

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 provided to the Chair of Legislative Affairs (or the President in the case that the impeachment request is for the Chair of Legislative Affairs) and subsequently distributed to all representatives of the Legislative Assembly. The statement shall be read at a regular meeting of the Legislative Assembly. A vote on the impeachment will take place at the follow Legislative Assembly meeting; a vote of two-thirds of members present will be required to remove an Executive Officer from his position.

4.9. *Withdrawal, Removal or Resignation of Elected Officer*

In the event that an officer of the Executive Committee other than the President withdraws, resigns, or is removed, for such cause as the Legislative Assembly deems proper, the President 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 President is vacated, the Internal Vice President shall become the President until the next regularly scheduled Executive Officer elections. If the Internal Vice President is unable to fulfill the duties of President, the External Vice President shall fulfill the duties of President. If the External Vice President is unable to fulfill the duties of president, other members of the Executive Committee will become eligible to be President. The process of determining a new President is left up to the Executive Committee. The nominated President 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 per 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.

5.2. The Chair of Legislative Affairs shall preside over all Legislative Assembly meetings.

5.3. The President shall appoint another member of the Executive Committee to preside in Chair of Legislative Affair’s absence.

5.4. Legislative Assembly meetings shall be open to all graduate students; however, only Legislative Assembly members registered with the Chair of Information shall vote. An elected Legislative Assembly representative may appoint another student in the department to serve in his or her absence. In order to vote by proxy, the appointed representative must be registered with the Chair of Information prior to the meeting.

5.5. Quorum

Quorum is ten (10) 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 two-thirds 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 penultimate 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 Chair of Legislative Affairs shall preside over officer elections, assuming there is no conflict of interest. If such a conflict exists, the President shall preside over the elections, assuming no conflict of interest exists. If such a conflict exists for the President, 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 election process shall be outlined in the GSA Bylaws.

VII. ADVISOR

7.1. This organization shall have at least one Primary Advisor, which must be a regular 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 regular Academic/Administrative, Managerial/Professional, or Office/Service staff members or Graduate Assistants of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

7.2. The Executive Committee shall nominate any advisor for approval by the Legislative Assembly and the advisor shall serve until resignation or removal.

7.3. Any advisor may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Legislative Assembly. Procedure for removal shall require that a written statement of reason(s) for removal be provided to the Chair of Legislative Affairs and subsequently distributed to all representatives of the Legislative Assembly. The statement shall be read at a regular meeting of the Legislative Assembly. 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.

VIII. FINANCE

8.1. 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.
8.2. Organizational monies will be handled by Student Organizational Financial Services, regardless of source. No part of the net earnings 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).

8.3. This organization shall operate according to the rules and guidelines of a non-profit entity. No part of the organization’s net earnings will inure to the benefit of individuals. The RSO must establish that it will not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests, such as the creator or the creator’s family, shareholders of the organization, other designated individuals, or person controlled directly or indirectly by such private interests. The RSO shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purpose set forth in this document.

8.4. This organization will not, as a substantial part of its activities, attempt to influence legislation (unless it elects to come under the provisions allowing certain lobbying expenditures) or participate to any extent in a political campaign for or against any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution the RSO shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt Federal Income Tax under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue laws). Organizational monies will be handled by Student Organizational Financial Services, regardless of source.

IX. RESOLUTIONS

9.1. Resolutions are recommendations approved by the Graduate Student Association.

9.2. Resolutions may be brought forth to the Legislative Assembly directly by the President.

9.3. Resolutions may also be brought to a Standing Committee, where it will be reviewed. At this point, the resolution has three possible outcomes: the committee may kill the resolution, the committee may bring the resolution as written to the Legislative Assembly, or the committee may amend the resolution and then bring it forth to the Legislative Assembly. Finally, the committee may choose to ignore the resolution.
9.4. If the resolution is ignored by the committee, the writer may bring it to the Legislative Assembly. The resolution will only be considered for a vote by the Legislative Assembly if a motion to consider is passed by a two-thirds vote.

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 Executive Committee. Following this review, the amendment will then be presented to the Legislative Assembly for review via e-mail. Voting may take place at the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

10.3. Prior to a vote, the Legislative Assembly must allow 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 “between-meeting” review period, the amendment may be ratified at the next Legislative Assembly meeting by a two-thirds 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. After the mandatory 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. PROCESS FOR DISSOLUTION

11.1 Upon the dissolution of the RSO the officers and advisors shall after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the RSO, dispose of all the assets of RSO exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purpose as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization. Under section 501C of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the officers and advisors shall determine. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Office of Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, exclusively for such purposes to such organization(s), as determined by the Office of Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

XII. RATIFICATION
12.1. This constitution is subject to the review and ratification by two-thirds of the Legislative Assembly.

XIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

13.1. This Constitution shall go into effect 4 November 2014.

Executive Approval

President____________________________ Date________________

Treasurer____________________________ Date________________