

THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI





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## **Preamble**

We, the graduate students of The University of Mississippi, realizing the need for and desiring to assume certain responsibilities and privileges of self-government, to strive toward higher academic standards, to promote democratic principles, to foster close cooperation between students and faculty, to facilitate graduate inter-departmental communication, to encourage worthy projects in the interests of our student body, and to serve the general welfare of our institution, do ordain and establish this Constitution within the limits defined by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees of this institution.

## **Article I Name, Purpose, and Definitions**

### **Section 1: Name**

The name of this governing body shall be known as “The University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council,” hereafter referred to as the GSC.

### **Section 2: Purpose**

The purposes of the GSC shall be:

- A) To provide a common association among graduate students in all divisions and departments of the Graduate School and associated professional programs of the University of Mississippi;
- B) To work with the University administration and other commissions in order to improve the quality of the graduate programs, graduate research opportunities, and graduate student services;
- C) To promote the improvement of graduate student life – including academic, professional, social, cultural, and recreational programs;
- D) To represent the interests of graduate students in all University activities and to facilitate the exchange of information between the University governance structure and the graduate students;
- E) To provide a forum for discussion of issues of internal and external concern to graduate students;
- F) To facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and appropriate resources among other student groups;
- G) To co-sponsor programs with other student organizations within and outside the University of Mississippi;

H) To maintain a budget for graduate student body purposes;

### **Section 3: Technical Construction**

All provisions of this Constitution are fully severable. If any word, clause, or provision of the Constitution is found to be in violation of federal law, the laws of the State of Mississippi, or the with any rules or regulations promulgated by the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning, or of the Board's representative, the Chancellor of The University of Mississippi, it will in no way affect the validity or applicability of the remainder of this Constitution.

### **Section 4: Definitions/ Interpretations**

- A) A "quorum" shall be defined as having a simple majority (50% + 1) of Senators present of the GSCS total filled seats at the time of assembly.
- B) A "majority vote" shall be defined as collecting 50% of all votes cast plus one (1) vote.
- C) A "two-thirds (2/3) vote" shall be defined as collecting at least twice the number of votes in favour compared to votes against. Abstaining or neutral votes shall not be considered for this purpose.
- D) A senate term shall be defined as the one-year term beginning with departmental appointments/elections to the GSCS in the Fall semester and lasting no further than the subsequent appointments/elections the following Fall semester.
- E) "University" is all instances shall refer to The University of Mississippi.
- F) "Senate" in all instances shall refer to the Graduate Student Council Senate (GSCS).

### **Section 5: Abbreviations**

GSB = Graduate Student Body  
GSC = Graduate Student Council  
GSCS = Graduate Student Council Senate

### **Section 6: Membership**

The Graduate Student Body (GSB) shall comprise any student currently enrolled at the University of Mississippi in a graduate study program or professional academic program as so defined by the office of student services. Professional academic programs shall include, but are not limited to: Doctor of Pharmacy, Juris Doctorate, and LL.M.

Per the University of Mississippi's policy on Equal Opportunity (Policy No. 10000631), the GSC in its practices shall not discriminate against any student, faculty, or staff on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or genetic information. This policy extends to membership, events, legislation, promotion, employment, termination, compensation, training, benefits and all other terms and conditions of being a student and/or employed by the University of Mississippi.

### **Section 7: Structure**

The governing structure of the GSC shall be vested in two branches: Legislative, consisting of the Senate and the Committees, and the Executive, consisting of the Executive Officers. Judicial Authority shall be divided among the branches, as outlined in this Constitution.

### **Section 8: Parliamentary Procedure**

The parliamentary procedure of the GSC shall be the current version of Robert's Rules of Order. Any modifications to Robert's Rules of Order as deemed necessary shall be expressly defined in the governing documents of the GSC.

## **Article II Legislative**

### **Section 1: Legislative Powers**

Legislative powers of the GSC shall be vested in the Graduate Student Council Senate, hereafter referred to as "GSCS", and its committees.

### **Section 2: Eligibility**

- A) Membership in the GSCS is open to all members of the GSB.
- B) Any member who no longer fulfills the requirements for membership in the GSB shall immediately be removed from membership in the GSCS and forfeit all the duties and privileges thereof.

### **Section 3: Composition**

- A) Representation
  - 1) There shall be one (1) Senate seat for each graduate and professional degree program. Any degree program that exceeds 100 students shall be allocated one (1) additional Senate seat.
  - 2) There shall be one (1) alternate for each filled Senate seat.
  - 3) No person shall concurrently hold more than one (1) seat in the GSCS.

- 4) All graduate and professional degree program representatives holding a Senate seat shall be hereafter referred to as Senators. All representatives holding an alternate position shall be hereafter referred to as Alternates.
- B) Executive Branch Membership
- 1) The Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors of the standing committees, except where said Director is a Senator, shall serve as non-voting, ex-officio members of the Senate.
  - 2) The Vice President shall serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Senate except where granted voting privileges as Chair of Senate, as detailed in this Constitution.
  - 3) The President may only attend when expressly asked to by the Senate.
  - 4) Directors of standing committees who are Senators shall retain their role as a Senator, including all the duties and powers thereof.

#### **Section 4: Selection and Term of Office**

- A) Selection of Senators and Alternates
- 1) Each individual graduate and professional academic degree program shall, after informing their constituents, elect or appoint a representative to serve as Senator in the GSCS.
  - 2) Each individual graduate and professional academic degree program shall elect or appoint a representative to serve as Alternate for their respective Senator in the GSCS.
- B) Newly selected Senators and Alternates shall be installed into their office by announcement of the Chair of the Senate during the opening of the first meeting of the GSCS following the Senator or Alternate's selection.
- C) Senators and Alternates shall serve in a manner filling the balance of the senate term. If a seat is not filled by its respective degree program at the beginning of the new senate term, it shall be declared vacant. Announcement of newly vacated seats shall be made by the Chair of the Senate during the opening of the first meeting of the GSCS during which that seat is vacant.
- D) Senators and Alternates may be reelected for so long as they are eligible to be a member of the GSB.

#### **Section 5: Leadership**

- A) The Vice President of the GSC shall serve as Chair of the Senate and shall preside over all meetings of the GSCS in accordance with the Parliamentary Authority defined in this Constitution. Unless expressly asked or able to cast a vote, the Chair shall remain neutral and impartial to all business before the Senate. The Chair shall have one (1) vote on all business before the Senate, which may be cast only in the event of a tie.

- B) The Secretary of the GSC shall serve as the Recorder of the Senate and shall prepare minutes of all meetings of the GSCS, which shall be made available to all members of the GSC.
- C) A Parliamentarian of the Senate shall be elected from among the Senators by a majority vote of the Senate. In accordance with this Constitution, the Parliamentarian shall:
  - 1) Ensure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and Parliamentary Authority are adhered to in all meetings of the GSCS;
  - 2) With the assistance of any relevant committees, oversee the maintenance of all GSC governing documents;
  - 3) Maintain an archive of all statutes, resolutions, bills, and amendments passed within the GSCS; and
  - 4) Contain the power to change any part of the Constitution or By-Laws for purposes of grammar and punctuation. By no means shall the connotation of any part of the Constitution be changed for this purpose.
- D) A President Pro-Tempore of the Senate shall be elected from among the Senators by a majority vote of the Senate. In accordance with this Constitution, the President Pro-Tempore shall:
  - 1) Preside over meetings of the GSCS in the absence of the Chair and shall inherit all duties and privileges thereof for the duration of the Chair's absence;
  - 2) Serve as the chairman of the Senate Rules committee; and
  - 3) Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Executive Branch.
- E) A Clerk of the Senate shall be elected from among the Senators by a majority vote of the Senate. The Clerk shall record in the absence of the Recorder and shall inherit all duties and privileges thereof for the duration of the Recorder's absence.
- F) Chairmen of Committees shall be selected from among the Senate by majority vote, shall conduct regular meetings of their committee, and shall report their progress and findings to the GSCS.

#### **Section 6: Duties and Powers of the Senate**

In accordance with this Constitution, the GSCS shall:

- A) Conduct business only when a quorum is present;
- B) Be the legislative body of the GSC;
- C) Be the voice of the graduate student body and act in its best interests;
- D) Enforce the GSC Constitution;



- E) Enact Bylaws by a majority vote, which shall further define the internal, structural, or procedural policies of the GSCS;
- F) Enact rules and regulations necessary for the proper administration of elections of Executive Officers of the GSC;
- G) Enact bills and resolutions;
  - 1) A bill is defined as legislation detailing a procedural or structural change to the GSCS or any subset thereof and upon approval shall become a statute. Statutes shall function as the laws of the GSC, to be subordinate to this Constitution.
  - 2) A resolution is defined as legislation detailing an item upon which action must be taken outside the GSC or which shows the will of the GSC.
- H) Have the power to remove from office any member of the Executive Board or GSCS, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Constitution;
- I) Have the power to create and dissolve committees by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote;
- J) Confirm by a majority vote appointments made by the Executive Board;
- K) Approve by a majority vote the annual budget, either as presented or as amended, when presented by the Executive Board.
- L) In the instance a bill or resolution is vetoed by the President, possess the power to override said veto by a two-thirds majority vote.

### **Section 7: Duties and Powers of Senators**

In accordance with this Constitution, all Senators shall:

- A) Support the duties and powers of the GSCS;
- B) Attend all GSCS meetings or be represented by an Alternate;
- C) Attend the annual Senate Workshop;
- D) Inform his/her constituents of the GSCS proceedings;
- E) Promote GSC events and initiatives in his/her department;
- F) Communicate the concerns and issues of his/her constituents to the GSCS;
- G) Have full rights and privileges of speaking, voting, and proposing motions and legislation at all meetings of the GSCS;

H) Have the power to cast one (1) vote in all business of the GSCS.

### **Section 8: Duties and Powers of Alternates**

In accordance with this Constitution, all Alternates shall:

- A) Serve in the capacity of Senator only when the Senator is unable to attend a GSCS meeting;
- B) When serving in the place of a Senator, have all the duties and privileges of a Senator, including the right to vote, for the duration of that meeting;
- C) Vote as advised, when instructed to do so by the sitting Senator. The Alternate may choose to vote differently than directed, without penalty, but must inform the Senator as to the reasons for his/her vote.

### **Section 9: Expulsion and Vacancies of Senators and Alternates**

- A) In the event that a Senator or Alternate is found to have exhibited malfeasance or misfeasance, he/she may be considered for expulsion by the GSCS. The accused shall receive written notice of the charges within a reasonable timeframe and shall have opportunity to be heard before the Senate.
- B) Impeachment proceedings shall be conducted by the Senate. A majority vote shall be necessary to successfully impeach the accused.
- C) In the event that the accused is successfully impeached, the Senator or Alternate shall immediately vacate their office within the GSC.
- D) In the event that a Senate seat is vacated, either by expulsion or other circumstance, the Alternate shall fill the vacated seat until such time as a replacement is appointed or elected from the represented department.
- E) In the event that an Alternate seat is vacated, either by expulsion or other circumstance, the seat shall remain vacant until such time as a replacement is appointed or elected from the represented department.
- F) Any impeached Senator or Alternate will not be eligible to serve again until the next Senate term.

### **Section 10: Meetings**

- A) The first meeting of the GSCS in the fall and spring semesters shall be called by the Chair of the Senate; Senators shall be provided at least one week advance notice of the meeting.

- B) The GSCS shall convene for at least one meeting during each month of the fall and spring semesters, except where University holidays would require otherwise. Exact meeting dates for each semester shall be determined by the Executive Board prior to the first meeting of GSCS of that semester. The schedule of meetings shall take into account all holidays, secular and religious, and be distributed to all members of the GSCS.
- C) In the event of extremely time sensitive business, special sessions of the GSCS may be called at the discretion of both the President and the Chair of the Senate and shall be scheduled in a manner that allows Senators no less than one (1) week notice in advance of the meeting.
- D) Meetings of the GSCS shall be open to the public and to all GSB members. However, a motion may be made to move into a closed session, open only to GSCS members, GSC Executive Board members, and GSC advisors. Closing a meeting shall require a majority vote of the Senate.
- E) Members of the public or guests of the Senate may speak at meetings of the GSCS in any instance whereby the Senate approves of them to do so.

## **Article III**

### **Executive**

#### **Section 1: Composition**

- A) The Executive Branch of the GSC shall consist of the Executive Officers and Directors of standing ad hoc committees of GSC.
- B) The Executive Officers shall consist of:
  - 1) The President, who shall be duly elected from among the GSB in accordance with the rules and regulations of election established by the Senate.
  - 2) The Vice President, who shall be duly elected from among the GSB in accordance with the rules and regulations of election established by the Senate.
  - 3) The Secretary, who shall be duly elected from among the GSB in accordance with the rules and regulations of election established by the Senate.
  - 4) The Treasurer, who shall be duly elected from among the GSB in accordance with the rules and regulations of election established by the Senate.
- C) The Executive Officers and Directors of standing committees of the GSC shall constitute the Executive Board, with all members having full voting privileges.

**Section 2: Election and Eligibility**

- A) General Elections for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be held during a during the University's Spring Semester, no later than the first of April. Election to an Executive Council position requires a majority vote of eligible members of the GSB. If an Executive Council vote for any position does not result in a 50% plus one (1) votes cast majority, a run-off shall be conducted for the two (2) candidates of the respective position who have attained the most votes.
- B) Candidates eligible for Executive Board positions must meet the following criteria:
  - 1) Anticipate registration as a member of the GSB for the entire upcoming academic year;
  - 2) Be in "good standing" as defined by the Graduate School or respective professional program;
  - 3) Completed a minimum of seven (7) graduate or professional program hours by the time the end of the semester by which the term begins;
- C) For the offices of President or Vice President, all candidates must meet the above requirements as outlined in Article III, Section 2, Subsection B for all Executive Office positions and have formerly served or currently be serving as a GSC Executive Officer or Senator for at least one (1) semester.
- D) Any current officer may seek reelection so long as they are eligible to remain a member of GSB, with the exception of the office of President, which is limited to two terms.
- E) Any Senator or Alternate elected or appointed as an Executive Officer, immediately upon assuming their new office, vacates his/her Senate seat and all the duties and privileges thereof. The seat may then be filled in accordance with the rules and regulations for the selection of new Senators and Alternates.
- F) Directors of standing committees will be appointed through an application process directed by the President.

**Section 3: Duties and Powers of the President**

In accordance with this Constitution, the President shall:

- A) Represent the GSC at official functions and meetings as required or necessary;
- B) Attend and preside over all meetings of the Executive Board;
- C) Create the agenda of all Executive Board meetings;

- D) Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of all boards, councils, committees, and commissions of the GSC;
- E) Oversee the execution of the statutes and resolutions adopted by the GSCS;
- F) Provide information and recommendations to the Senate regarding matters of student welfare and University policy;
- G) Shall serve on Chancellor's standing committees as designated by the University, and with the assistance of the Executive Board, make further appointments to Chancellor's standing committees or University Boards;
- H) Oversee and receive reports from delegates to Chancellor's standing committees and University Boards;
- I) Possess the power to veto any Bills or Resolutions passed in the GSCS;
- J) Preside over the appointment of directors of standing executive committees;
- K) Possess the power to create and dissolve executive ad hoc committees.

#### **Section 4: Duties and Powers of the Vice President**

In accordance with this Constitution, the Vice President shall:

- A) Advise and assist the President in his/her duties;
- B) Attend all meetings of the GSCS and the Executive Board;
- C) Preside over all meetings of the GSCS;
- D) Organize and preside over the annual Senate Workshop;
- E) Create the agenda for all GSCS meetings;
- F) Provide the Secretary with all materials to be distributed at each GSCS meeting;
- G) Oversee the appointment of Senators to GSC committees;
- H) Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of all boards, councils, committees, and commissions of the GSC;
- I) Oversee and receive reports from the Committee Chairs of all GSC committees;
- J) Serve on at least one Chancellor's standing committee and send reports of all committees serving upon to the President.

**Section 5: Duties and Powers of the Secretary**

In accordance with this Constitution, the Secretary shall:

- A) Record minutes of all GSCS and Executive Board meetings;
- B) Attend all meetings of the GSCS and Executive Board;
- C) Maintain an archive of all correspondence and minutes;
- D) Prepare a preliminary agenda and distribute to all members of the GSCS no later than 7 days prior to the GSCS meeting;
- E) Prepare and organize all handouts for distribution at meetings;
- F) Assist the Vice President in organizing the annual Senate Workshop;
- G) Possess the right to form a Constitutional Reform committee, composed of members of his/her choosing, to work on legislation specifically focused on any GSC governing documents;
- H) Complete and deliver all necessary documentation to the appropriate offices;
- I) Serve on at least one Chancellor's standing committee and send reports of all committees serving upon to the President.

**Section 6: Duties and Powers of the Treasurer**

In accordance with this Constitution, the Treasurer shall:

- A) Oversee the annual budget process;
- B) Provide a Treasurer's report at each GSCS meeting;
- C) Attend all meetings of the GSCS and Executive Board;
- D) Keep records of accounts;
- E) Disburse and deposit all funds into the GSC account, as directed by the GSC annual budget;
- F) Advise the GSCS on all fundraising and monetary issues;
- G) Serve on at least one Chancellor's standing committee and send reports of all committees serving upon to the President.

**Section 7: Duties and Powers of the Executive Board**

In accordance with this Constitution, the Executive Board shall:

- A) Under the direction of the Treasurer, initiate the annual budgetary process;
- B) Oversee the general operations of the GSC and ensure compliance with the Purpose of the GSC (Article I, Section 2);
- C) Assist the President in making appointments, as outlined in the Duties and Powers of the President.
- D) Meet at least once per month, no later than seven (7) days prior to a regularly scheduled GSCS meeting.

### **Section 8: Expulsion and Vacancies of Executive Officers**

- A) In the event that an Executive Officer is found to have exhibited malfeasance or misfeasance, he/she may be considered for expulsion by a majority vote from the Executive Board. The accused must temporarily and immediately vacate their post until the matter is resolved. They shall be given written notice of the charges within a reasonable timeframe and shall have an opportunity to be heard before the Senate.
- B) Impeachment proceedings shall be initiated by the Senate. A two-thirds majority vote shall be necessary to successfully impeach the Executive Officer.
- C) In the event that an impeachment vote fails, the Executive Officer will be fully and immediately restored to his/her position and may not be considered for expulsion again during the same or the next successive formal meeting of the GSCS.
- D) In the event impeachment is passed, the Executive Officer is immediately removed from the position. A special election to fill the position shall be held thereafter by the Executive Board. The impeached Executive Officer may not seek re-election for the impeached position.
- E) In the event that the office of President is vacated, either due to expulsion or other circumstance, the Vice President shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the President until he/she returns or a special election can be held to replace the outgoing President. In the event of vacancies at the other Executive Offices, the duties of the Secretary shall be assumed by the Clerk of the Senate, the Vice President by the President Pro Tempore, and the Treasurer by the Chairman of a GSC Standing Committee. These assumptions of duty shall be temporary until such time as the respective Executive Officer returns or a special election can be held to replace the outgoing officer.

## **Article IV**

### **Judicial**

#### **Section 1: Resolution of Disputes**

All internal disputes shall be heard by the Executive Board and decided by a majority vote of its membership. Any appeals of the decision of the Executive Board and any disputes directly involving the Executive Board shall be decided by legislative action of the Senate.

#### **Section 2: Student Conduct**

Pursuant to University policy, all students shall adhere to The University of Mississippi Handbook of Standards (M-Book). Any question of student conduct shall be relegated to the University Conduct System, and any decisions from whence shall be dutifully respected.

## **Article V**

### **Amendments**

- A) All amendments to the Constitution must be proposed and voted on within meetings of the GSCS.
- B) Amendments must be voted on within one hundred (100) days of proposal. This requirement is waived in the event that an amendment is proposed at the final GSCS meeting of the spring semester, in which case the amendment must be voted upon at the first GSCS meeting of the fall semester.
- C) One (1) week written notice shall be given to all Senators before a vote may be taken on an amendment to the Constitution. At the time of notification, a verbatim copy of the amendment to be considered will be provided to all Senators.
- D) Amendments shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in the GSCS to be ratified.
- E) All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Students.
- F) The amendment shall take effect immediately upon ratification by the GSCS and approval by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Students.



## **Article VI**

### **Ratification and Replacement**

#### **Section 1: Ratification**

- A) Ratification of this Constitution shall occur upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the GSCS.
- B) At least one (1) week written notice shall be given to all Senators before a vote may be taken to ratify the Constitution. At the time of notification, a verbatim copy of the amendment to be considered will be provided to all Senators.

#### **Section 2: Replacement**

- A) This Constitution may be superseded only through a ratification process following the procedure outlined in the preceding section.

## **Article VII**

### **Adoption**

#### **Section 1**

This Constitution shall be effective immediately upon passage.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MISSISSIPPI