Original: April 27, 2018

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Constitution of Graduate Student Assembly

Article I. Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be the "Graduate Student Assembly" (herein referred to as the GSA).

Article II. Statement of Purpose:

The GSA serves as a channel to advocate for graduate students at the University of Texas at Dallas through representation to university departments and organizations, through initiatives that improve the UT Dallas graduate student experience, and through events and programming that meet graduate students' educational, professional, and social needs.

Article III. Membership

All currently enrolled graduate students of UT Dallas are considered members and eligible to participate in the Graduate Student Assembly.

Section I.

Membership shall be open to students of The University of Texas at Dallas regardless of race, color, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religion, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

Section 2.

Membership must be limited to UT Dallas students, faculty, and staff.

Section 3.

The graduate students at UT Dallas are represented in the GSA through the following types of membership:

3.1. General Members

All UT Dallas graduate students with active student status are general members of the GSA.

3.2. Other Members.

Other members as specified in the Constitution and Bylaws.

3.3. GSA Code of Conduct

GSA members shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting a representative of UT Dallas, the GSA, and the graduate student community. Verbal or physical assault and disruption of meetings and functions will not be tolerated. Furthermore, all GSA members will be held to the UT Dallas Student Code of Conduct. (UTDSP5003). Violations to the GSA code of conduct will be handled in the manner described in the Bylaws.

Article IV. Administration

Section 1. Executive Board

The GSA's Executive Board shall consist of a President, Vice President, Vice President for Administration, Vice President for Public Relations, Vice President for Programming, and Vice President for Leadership Coordination & Oversight. All positions will be entirely voluntary and without monetary compensation.

1.1. Responsibilities and Duties of the President

1.1.1. Schedule monthly GSA General Body and GSA Leadership, including Executive Board and School Representatives, meetings and provide notice of the time, date, and place of such meetings to the members of the GSA.

1.1.2. Set the agenda for all GSA meetings. Members may request inclusion of items on the agenda with at least one week prior notification to the President.

1.1.3. Serve as liaison to local organizations or recommend a representative who shall be subject to confirmation by a majority vote by the GSA Leadership.

1.1.4. Represent GSA and graduate students at various campus-wide meetings, such as Academic Council, Academic Senate, and Handbook of Operating Procedures Committee, or appoint a member of the GSA Executive board to attend as a proxy.

1.1.5. Ensure understanding of and compliance with all responsibilities and duties by GSA officers and representatives.

1.1.6. Develop relationships with key administrators within the University of Texas at Dallas as well as other student and community organizations.

1.1.7. Oversees the process of appointing school representatives in accordance with the Bylaws and Constitution.

1.1.8. Establish administrative procedures not otherwise specified in the Bylaws of the GSA.

1.1.9. Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

1.2. Responsibilities and Duties of the Vice President

1.2.1. Act as President Pro-Tempore in the absence of the President by directing any and all proceedings assigned to the President.

1.2.2. In such a case in which the President's office becomes vacant, the Vice President shall become the President automatically and will assume all powers, duties, and responsibilities associated with that position. The office of the Vice President, in such a case, will be filled by a special election called by the President.

1.2.3. Organize and oversee GSA Committee Chairs and School Representatives and schedule meetings, as necessary, to hear updates on events, initiatives, programs, or working group.

1.2.4. Represent GSA and graduate students at various campus-wide meetings as deemed appropriate by the President.

1.2.5. Maintains accurate financial records for the GSA.

1.2.6. Represent the interest of GSA to administration officials charged with overseeing GSA's budget on matters pertaining to budget and funding.

1.2.7. Prepare a budget proposal for the following academic year and submit it to the Student Fee Advisory Board Committee for approval.

1.2.8. Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

1.3. Responsibilities and Duties of the Vice President for Administration

1.3.1. Develop relationships with key administrators within the University of Texas at Dallas as well as other student and community organizations.

1.3.2.   Help connect members of GSA leadership to UTD staff, faculty, and administration when necessary.
1.3.3.   Aid School Representatives in contacting their appropriate school deans.
1.3.4.   Manage GSA email and address any questions, concerns, or comments submitted to GSA.
1.3.5.   Distribute GSA monthly reports to key administration and offices on campus.
1.3.6.   Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

1.4. Responsibilities and Duties of the Vice President for Public Relations
1.4.1.   Draft official communications of the GSA.
1.4.2.   Maintain an appropriate presence of the GSA in the media, including but not limited to, the GSA's website and social media.
1.4.3.   With the advice of the GSA Executive Board, oversee the process of specific topics related to public relations of the GSA, including marketing campaigns.
1.4.4.   Report to the general body of the GSA on all matters related to public relations of the GSA.
1.4.5.   Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

1.5. Responsibilities and Duties of the Vice President for Programming
1.5.1.   Create, plan, and schedule GSA events throughout the year.
1.5.2.   Collaborate with various offices and/or organizations on campus to plan shared events.
1.5.3.   Work with the Vice President for Public Relations to generate marketing material for events.
1.5.4.   Ensure events are properly publicized at least a week before event date.
1.5.5.   Attend all GSA events. In the event the Vice President for Programming cannot attend, appoint a member of GSA Leadership to attend in their absence.
1.5.6.   Determine what types of events and programming graduate students are interested in to aid in creation and planning.
1.5.7.   Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

1.6. Responsibilities and Duties of the Vice President for Leadership Coordination & Oversight
1.6.1.   Record minutes of all GSA General and Executive Committee meetings.
1.6.2.   Collect the minutes of committee meetings from the Committee Chair of each committee.
1.6.3.   Timely submission of the minutes of each meeting to the President and upon approval by the President, publicize the minutes using the appropriate electronic means.
1.6.4.   Keep accurate records of meeting attendance.
1.6.5.   Prepare GSA Leadership Reports and Monthly Update Reports by collating information obtained from GSA Leadership, GSA Committees, Initiatives, Working Groups, or Programs, as defined below in Section 2. School Representatives. The GSA Leadership Reports will be sent out monthly between regularly scheduled leadership meetings and should serve as an update in between meetings. The GSA Monthly Update Reports will be sent to relevant stakeholders, as deemed by the Vice President of Administration, and should be a higher overview of GSA activities.
1.6.6.   Perform other duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

Section 2. School Representatives
Each School at The University of Texas at Dallas will be represented by a single School Representative who is a current graduate student enrolled in a graduate (Master's, Doctoral, or graduate certificate) program of his/her school. All positions will be entirely voluntary and without monetary compensation.

2.1. Responsibilities and Duties of School Representatives

2.1.1.   School Representatives are responsible for bringing the concerns of graduate students in their School to the attention of the GSA Executive Board during regular GSA leadership meetings or between meetings.

2.1.2.   School Representatives are responsible for maintaining a working relationship with their respective Deans, and shall meet with their school Dean at least once per semester to receive updates of interest to graduate students, to convey student concerns to the Dean, and to coordinate work whenever appropriate.

2.1.3.   School Representatives are obligated to prioritize the interests of the graduate student body in all GSA-related activities.

2.1.4.   School Representatives shall serve on at least one GSA Initiative, Program, or other Working Group throughout their term of service.

2.1.5.   School Representatives may initiate GSA activities that relate to their own respective schools, including:

      a.   Lobbying their Dean or others in the school administration for desired improvements or redress of legitimate graduate student grievances;

      b.   Organizing GSA events for graduate students in their school;

      c.   Conducting surveys of graduate students in their school;

2.1.6.   School Representatives shall share their plans and activities with the GSA leadership at regularly held meetings.

Section 3. Election of the GSA Leadership

3.1.1.   Any eligible student, as set forth in Article III of the GSA Constitution or Bylaws, may file to run for any office in the GSA Leadership. A person running for the role of President must be at minimum in their second long semester as a graduate student at UT Dallas. A person running for a School Representative role may only run for the school in which they are a currently enrolled graduate student. A person may only run for a maximum of one position within GSA Leadership per election cycle.

3.1.2.   The election process of GSA Leadership members shall begin during April for the upcoming term. Two outgoing members of GSA Leadership who are not re-running must volunteer to serve as the Election Committee during this period. The Election Committee will assist in compiling applications and ensure the rules of the election, as outlined below, are followed properly.

3.1.3.   Officers shall be elected for a term of one year to begin immediately upon election.

3.1.4.   The Executive Board and School Representatives will be elected by secret ballot by members of the GSA. The voting period must last for a minimum of five days. Each currently enrolled graduate student of UT Dallas may submit only one ballot tied to their individual NetID. School Representative positions will only be voted on by GSA members of the respective school. No ballots cast after the voting period closes will be counted. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected.

3.1.5.   In the event of a tie in the election of any officer, a runoff shall be held between the tied candidates. If the tie is not broken after the runoff, then the selection shall be made by the outgoing President.

3.1.6.   The winning candidates shall be announced to GSA members within seven days after the voting period closes.

3.1.7.   In the event that one of the Leadership members is removed or voluntarily resigns from office, a special election will be held at a GSA general body meeting to elect the position.

3.1.8.   Following the completion of their term as Leadership, outgoing officers shall serve for at least one month as formal advisors to the newly elected Leadership for their respective roles.

Section 4. GSA Working Groups, Programs, and Initiatives

GSA Leadership shall establish Working Groups, Programs, and Initiatives, as set forth below, to determine and advance its agenda in an effective, democratic, and transparent manner. GSA Programs and Initiatives embody the agenda and priorities of GSA Leadership, including advocacy issues, recurring events, and public-facing or publicity-related activity. All Programs and Initiatives shall begin as Working Groups, whose purpose is to examine prospective GSA activities, as outlined in Section 4.1. Initiatives and Programs shall, similarly, be advanced by a standing committee, whose members shall be responsible for advancing the work in a democratic and timely manner. The committee-structure of the Working Groups, Programs, and Initiatives shall provide opportunities for organizational leadership and participation to be spread across the elected GSA Leadership.

Working Groups, Programs, and Initiatives are distinct from the regular business of the GSA Leadership, such as attending University Administration meetings, organizing and attending meetings of the GSA Leadership and Membership, and maintaining relationships with other organizations and offices.

4.1. GSA Working Groups

4.1.1 Working Groups consist of members of the GSA Leadership.

4.1.2 Working Groups must do not require authorization or approval from the remainder of GSA Leadership in order to undertake their work. Working Groups may be formed at any time.

4.1.3 Working Groups shall be formed to examine any area of interest to GSA, including prospective Programs and Initiatives.

4.1.4 Working Groups may also be formed to conduct any short-term work that requires coordination among members of the Leadership, such as drafting GSA documents, or any other *ad-hoc* activity, that has already been approved by the GSA Leadership.

4.1.5 Working Groups shall immediately notify GSA Leadership of their intent to begin work, and the purpose of their work.

4.1.6 Working Groups shall report their conclusions and findings to the GSA Leadership.

4.1.7 Working Groups are not authorized to act or speak on behalf of GSA.

4.1.8 Working Groups shall determine, by vote or consensus, which single member of the Working Group shall serve as Chair. The Chair shall be responsible for seeing that meetings are scheduled as required, that decisions are made in a democratic manner, and that each member has electronic and/or physical access to the documents or information required to effectively participate in the Working Group.

4.2. GSA Programs

4.2.1 GSA Programs shall be organized by any number of members of the GSA Leadership under the direction of the Vice President for Programming.

4.2.4 GSA Programs include one-time and recurring events or activities that are led by GSA, including collaborations with outside organizations.

4.2.3 Prior to establishing a GSA Program, a GSA Working Group shall examine the proposed Program. The Working Group shall include any number of members of the GSA Leadership who wish to participate. The Working Group shall examine the feasibility and desirability of the proposed Program.

4.2.4 The Working Group shall report its findings to GSA Leadership in a timely manner, including a recommended course of action.

4.2.5 If the Working Group is in favor of a proposed Initiative, the GSA Leadership will hold a vote to determine if the proposed Program shall be adopted as an official GSA Program. Programs require a majority vote of approval from GSA Leadership. Tied votes are not a majority and there will be no tie breaking process.

4.3. GSA Initiatives

4.3.1 GSA Initiatives consist of goal-oriented work, led by GSA Leadership, with the general aim of improving graduate student life.

4.3.2 Prior to establishing a GSA Initiative, a GSA Working Group shall examine the proposed Initiative. The Working Group shall include any number of members of the GSA Leadership who wish to participate. The Working Group shall examine the feasibility and desirability of the proposed Initiative.

4.3.3 The Working Group shall report its findings to GSA Leadership in a timely manner, including a recommended course of action.

4.3.4 If the Working Group is in favor of a proposed Initiative, the GSA Leadership will hold a vote to determine if the proposed Initiative shall be adopted as an official GSA Initiative. Initiatives require a majority vote of approval from GSA Leadership. Tied votes are not a majority and there will be no tie breaking process.

4.3.4 Any number of members of the GSA Leadership may participate in the planning and execution of GSA Initiatives.

4.3.5 GSA Initiatives shall each be planned and executed by a standing committee of GSA Leadership members. Committee work shall strive for consensus and, when necessary, decide on questions of interest by majority vote following reasonable discussion.

4.3.6 The standing committee shall determine, by vote or consensus, which single member of the Working Group shall serve as Chair. The Chair shall be responsible for seeing that meetings are scheduled as required, that decisions are made in a democratic manner, and that each member has electronic and/or physical access to the documents or information required for effective participation in the Initiative.

4.3.7 Chairs or members of each GSA Initiative shall report updates from their work to the GSA Leadership and to the GSA membership. Such updates shall be provided on a monthly basis; this requirement shall not be construed as preventing any additional, or more frequent, updates.

4.3.8 The activities and communications related to any GSA Initiative shall be subject to the supervision of the full GSA Leadership. Hence, reports to GSA Leadership should include all pertinent information regarding the tactics and strategies used to advance the GSA Initiative. Any decision regarding a GSA Initiative may be subject to the approval or denial of GSA Leadership by majority vote, provided that one member of GSA Leadership calls for such a vote, and another member seconds that call.

4.3.7 GSA Initiatives may be dissolved or suspended by a majority vote of the GSA Leadership.

Section 5. GSA Auxiliary Committees

Auxiliary Committees will be formed to address the needs of any GSA Project or Initiative. Auxiliary Committees shall provide an avenue of participation for the general membership. Each Auxiliary Committee shall consist of one or two committee head(s), who shall be members of the GSA Leadership, and a certain number of GSA members. The size of the committee shall be set by the committee head(s), who shall take into account the suggestions of GSA Leadership.

5.1. Selection of Auxiliary Committee Heads and Members

5.1.1.   A member or members of GSA Leadership shall volunteer to serve as the committee head(s).

5.1.2.   Members shall submit self-nominations to the GSA Leadership, and fill out the appropriate application.

5.1.3.   All applications shall be compiled by the committee head(s) and distributed for review by the GSA President, Vice President, and specific committee head(s).

5.1.4.   Committee head(s) shall select and propose the members of the committee to the GSA President and Vice President, who shall approve or deny the selection. Denials of proposed committee members should only be done so in limitation when the GSA President and Vice President determine the

candidate to be unfit to meet the requirements of the committee or GSA. A short, written explanation for a denial of any candidate must then be provided to the committee head(s) who will then seek to fill the remaining position(s).

5.2. Responsibilities and Duties of Auxiliary Committees

5.2.1.   If a member of GSA Leadership or GSA Committee is no longer a currently enrolled graduate student at UT Dallas, they will be eligible for removal from office.

5.2.2.   Auxiliary Committee heads are responsible for organizing and directing projects that fall under their committee's responsibilities.

5.2.3.   Committee heads shall meet with GSA Leadership once a month to discuss progress.

5.2.4.   Committee members will report directly to their committee heads for direction.

5.2.5.   Committee heads and members shall serve for a term of one year unless appointed mid-term, in which case their term shall end at the beginning of the Fall.

Section 6. Removal and Resignation from Office

Any member of GSA Leadership or GSA Committee may be removed from office if they meet certain standards outlined below.

6.1. Removal from Office

6.1.1.   If a member of GSA Leadership or GSA Committee is no longer a currently enrolled graduate student at UT Dallas, they will be eligible for removal from office.

6.1.2.   A member of GSA Leadership or GSA Committee who is grossly neglecting the responsibilities of their role, such as failing to attend multiple monthly Leadership or General meetings, they will be eligible for removal from office.

6.1.3.   Two members of GSA Leadership will collect evidence about the member in question for removal as outlined in 5.1.1. and 5.1.2. and provide it to the member in question a minimum of seven days before a vote of removal is held. The member in question will be allowed to write a paragraph response to each instance listed if they would like to counter the claim and provide the answers back within five days of notice. The compiled document, denoting responses of each relative party, will then be sent out five days before a vote of removal is held.

6.1.4.   GSA Leadership, except the member in question, will review the evidence document and then individually vote to approve or deny a removal from office. A minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of leadership most vote for approval in order for the member to be removed.

6.1.5.   The member in question will be informed of the decision of the GSA Leadership within 24 hours after the vote has closed. If the removal of the member was approved, the member will then immediately vacate their role. Additionally, the member must provide any and all work related to their duties to the GSA President and Vice President within a week of their removal. If the removal of the member was denied, no further action will take place.

6.1.6.   Any member who is removed from office will no longer be eligible to run for any position within GSA Leadership or serve on a GSA Committee for the remainder of their time as a graduate student at UT Dallas.

6.1.7.   GSA will then hold a special election to fill the vacated role that follows the bylaws outlined above in Section 3. Election of GSA Leadership.

6.2. Resignation from Office

6.2.1.   If a member of GSA Leadership of GSA Committee wishes to resign from office, they must provide their intent in writing to the GSA President and Vice President at least two week prior to their

specified end date. Either the GSA President or Vice President must write back to confirm receipt before the specified end date.

6.2.2.   Upon resignation, the member must provide any and all work related to their duties to the GSA President and Vice President within a week of their specified end date.

6.2.3.   A member who resigns from office may be eligible to run for any position within GSA Leadership or serve on a GSA Committee for the remainder of their time as a graduate student at UT Dallas.

6.2.4.   GSA will then hold a special election to fill the vacated role that follows the bylaws outlined above in Section. Election of GSA Leadership.

Article V. Advisors

Section 1. Faculty/Staff Advisor

The Graduate Student Assembly will be sponsored by an office of the university, and therefore the Faculty/Staff Advisor shall be a member of this office.

1.1.Responsibilities and Duties of the Faculty/Staff Advisor

1.1.1.   Advise the GSA Leadership on matters pertaining to procedure, planning, and execution of GSA functions as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.

1.2. Selection of a Faculty/Staff Advisor

1.2.1.   The Faculty/Staff Advisor to the GSA shall be nominated by the head of office that houses GSA and appointed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the GSA Leadership. The Faculty/Staff Advisor may be renewed every year pending a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the new, incoming GSA Leadership. If the renewal does not pass or the previous Faculty/Staff Advisor is no longer able to hold the role, GSA Leadership must inform the head of office that house GSA and appoint a new advisor promptly.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings.

Regular meetings of the GSA shall take place once per calendar month during the Fall and Spring Semesters, which shall take place at a time and location that may vary each month and is conducive to GSA Leadership, as selected by the GSA President.

Section 2. Leadership Meetings

Regular meetings of the GSA Leadership take place once per calendar month during the Fall and Spring Semesters, which shall take place at a time and location that may vary each month and is conducive to GSA Leadership, as selected by the GSA President.

Section 3. Special Meetings.

Special meetings may be called by the Executive Board and Faculty/Staff Advisor when necessary and appropriate.

Article VII. Non-GSA Committees

Section 1. Nomination Process

1.1. Nomination Committee

1.1.1.   The Nomination Committee will consist of two chairs, GSA President and GSA Vice President, and one or three additional members, depending on the size of the GSA Leadership. The remaining Nomination Committee member(s) can be any member of GSA Leadership. In case of more interest

than available spots, the Nomination Committee Chairs will be charged with selecting the remaining Nomination Committee members.

1.1.2.   In case of absence of the GSA Vice President, the GSA Vice President of Administration will serve along with the GSA President.

1.1.3.   Nomination Committee Chairs will be responsible for completing or previously have completed the University's "Conflict of Interest Training" provided by the Institutional Compliance, Equity, and Title IX Initiatives Team or the Office of Research and ensure the rest of the Committee upholds these standards.

1.2. Application Process

1.2.1.   Once a graduate student position is open or vacant in the aforementioned committees, an application form will be approved by the Nomination Committee Chairs.

1.2.2.   The application form must seek the below information –

    a.   Name, contact information, pursued degree level, name of the school, expected graduation year.

    b.   Questions specific to the nominee and their interest to join the committee, their qualities that may aid the committee, and prior leadership experiences. It must be listed on the application form that the nominees must not solicit the vote of members of the Nomination Committee or GSA Leadership. Failure to comply will lead to immediate disqualification of the nominee.

    c.   Other questions or information as deemed reasonable by the Nomination Committee Chairs may be added.

1.2.3.   Any eligible graduate student, as set forth in the GSA Constitution or Bylaws, may submit self-nominations for the aforementioned committee.

1.2.4.   If the committee charge mentions GSA President exclusively as a committee member, no nomination will be sought, and GSA President will be appointed to that committee.

1.2.5.   If the GSA President is unable to serve on the committee mentioned in section 1.2.4., a nomination will be sought from the GSA Executive Board and final appointment will be made by the GSA President.

1.3 Voting Process

1.3.1.   All applications will be compiled by the Nomination Committee Chairs. The applications will be viewable by all members of GSA Leadership and any Conflicts of Interest, as defined in Section 1.1.3., must be disclosed.

1.3.2.   Applications will be distributed to the Nomination Committee who will have a minimum of 24 hours to review the applications and submit recommendations for a maximum of three candidates per available position.

1.3.3.   A meeting will be established by the Nomination Committee Chairs to discuss the applicants with the Nomination Committee.

1.3.4.   The Nomination Committee will come to a consensus and recommend a maximum of three applicants per available representative position, as defined by a majority vote. A short description of why each applicant was selected will be written and included with the application when forwarded to the remaining GSA Leadership as outlined in Section 6.

1.3.5.   In case none of the applicants are deemed qualified for the position(s), the Nomination Committee may choose to recommend nobody and seek further applications.

1.3.6.   The GSA Leadership will have a minimum of 24 hours after the applications recommended by the GSA Nomination Committee are provided to review and make the final decision. An open voting process will be established by the Nomination Committee Chairs for the GSA Leadership following an instant runoff voting method. For each open position, each member of the elected GSA Leadership will cast a ballot in which they rank up to three candidates in order of preference (1 indicating first choice through 3 for the last choice). If a single candidate receives a majority of first place votes that candidate

will be declared the winner. Otherwise, the candidate with the *least* first-place votes is eliminated from the election, and any votes for that candidate are redistributed to the voters' next choice. This continues until a choice has a majority (over 50%). In case of a tie, the GSA President will be the deciding vote.

1.3.7.   The name of the selected candidate(s) will then be announced by the Nomination Committee Chairs to the members of GSA Leadership.

1.3.8.   The Nomination Committee Chairs will announce the name of selected candidate to the aforementioned Committee Chairs and any other relevant stakeholders, including GSA members.

Article VIII. Amendments

Section 1. Constitution

Amendments to this Constitution shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of GSA's Leadership.

1.1.1   The full text of all proposed amendments shall be provided in an electronic notice to GSA Leadership at least five days before the vote is held.

1.1.2   GSA Leadership will review the amendment and individually vote to approve or deny the amendment. The amendment will become effective immediately upon approval by two-thirds (2/3) of GSA's leadership.

1.1.3   Notice of adopted amendment(s) shall be transmitted to the Faculty/Staff Advisor and the members of GSA through appropriate electronic means within one week of its passage by the GSA's Leadership.