

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the graduate community of Wesleyan University, recognizing that the graduate students are an independent entity within the structure of Wesleyan University deserving of adequate and effective representation in appropriate University affairs, hereby establish the Graduate Student Association. This association shall operate within the framework of the University to provide said representation to the entire Wesleyan graduate community.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Wesleyan Graduate Student Association, hereinafter referred to as the GSA.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Every individual paying GSA activity fee and currently pursuing an MA or PhD degree, a foreign language teaching assistant (FLTA), or a Writing Fellow at Wesleyan University shall be considered a voting member of the GSA.

All close friends and family of GSA members shall be considered non-voting members of the GSA community.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The GSA shall serve, represent, and promote the interests and welfare of the Wesleyan graduate community. It shall encourage community representation and involvement in relevant university decision-making and shall strive to enhance the general quality of life and education for all Wesleyan graduate community members. It shall foster healthy communication between the student body, faculty, administration, trustees, alumni, the local community, and beyond. The GSA shall also sponsor, support, and be responsible for nonacademic events open to the entire graduate community.

ARTICLE IV – GSA EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

The GSA Executive Board shall be chaired by the GSA President. It shall also consist of the GSA Vice President, GSA Treasurer, and GSA Secretary.

SECTION 2: GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The general powers and responsibilities of the GSA Executive Board shall be to:

1. Represent the graduate community in accordance with the general governance of Wesleyan University.
2. Ensure that the GSA operates within the guidelines set forth by this constitution.
3. Clarify and interpret questions regarding this constitution when necessary.
4. Organize at least one GSA meeting, per semester open to all members of the GSA community.
5. Communicate the actions and decisions of the GSA to the University community.
6. Make any and all Executive Board decisions by a majority vote.
 1. In the event of a tie, the decision is to be brought forth and voted upon by the GSA Council as described in Article V, Section 3.
7. Provide support and guidance to other GSA officers and members.
8. Approve or Disapprove funding requests relating to the GSA budget.
9. Assume any and all powers not enumerated to other GSA positions in times of need.

ARTICLE V – GSA COUNCIL

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

The GSA Council shall be chaired by the GSA President. It shall also be composed of the GSA Vice President, GSA Treasurer, GSA Secretary, GSA BA/MA Liaison, the Graduate Student Educational Policy Committee Representative, International Student Liaison, Web Master, Department Representatives, and at least one liaison from each of the following committees:

1. Housing Committee
2. Benefits Committee

SECTION 2: GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The general powers and responsibilities of the GSA Council shall be to:

1. Communicate any and all business of their respective positions or committees.
2. Assist the GSA President in establishing an agenda for general GSA meetings.
3. Make any and all GSA Council decisions by majority vote where each individual, no matter the number of positions held, has one vote and is entitled to abstain from voting.
4. Act as a tie breaker for GSA Executive Board votes
5. Represent the GSA as an organization in a ceremonial capacity.
6. Provide support and guidance to the GSA Executive Board and general members.
7. Vote on changes to this constitution brought forth by the GSA Vice President as outlined in the amendments proceedings.
8. Vote on the removal or non-removal of a GSA officer from his/her position in accordance with the impeachment proceedings set forth by this constitution.

SECTION 3: GSA EXECUTIVE BOARD TIE BREAKING

The GSA Council shall break Executive Board tied votes. In the event of an Executive Board tied vote, the GSA Secretary has 48 hours to inform the GSA Council of this fact, along with a written

explanation of the issue at hand. The GSA Council must meet and vote on this issue within two weeks of receiving notice, or the decision reverts to the GSA President.

ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

SECTION 1: COUNCIL COMMITTEES

There shall be two GSA Committees regarded as Council Committees.

These Council Committees shall be the:

1. Housing Committee
2. Benefits Committee

The Housing Committee shall be composed of three individuals. If fewer than three members are elected to the Housing Committee, eligible members of the GSA may accept a secondary nomination, such as with a write-in vote or belated nomination. The GSA Executive Board will then decide by majority vote whether each secondary nomination gains a seat on the committee. The Benefits Committee shall be composed of a maximum of three individuals.

A Council Committee member cannot belong to more than one Council Committee at the same time. A minimum of one member from each Council Committee shall attend GSA Council meetings. All attending Council Committee members may vote at GSA Council meetings. The general responsibilities of a committee member attending a Council meeting shall be to:

1. Report all relevant committee information to GSA Council.
2. Report all relevant GSA Council information to their respective committee.
3. Represent the needs and views of their respective committees at GSA Council meetings.

SECTION 2: COUNCIL COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE

Each council committee has been established to serve a different purpose to the GSA community. The general purpose of each council committee is detailed below.

Subsection 1: The general purpose of the Housing Committee is to:

1. Hold regular meetings with both Physical Plant and Residential Life.
2. Report general housing issues of the GSA community to both Physical Plant and Residential Life.
3. Accept, organize, and report specific GSA community housing complaints and problems.
4. Act as liaison between the Wesleyan University Housing Administration and the GSA community.

Subsection 2: The general purpose of the Benefits Committee is to:

1. Be familiar with all information regarding GSA community benefits, including issues of stipend, health insurance, and other possible benefits.
2. Disseminate any and all information regarding changes to stipend, health insurance, and other possible benefits.
3. Accept, organize, and report specific GSA community benefit complaints and problems.
4. Meet at least once a month to assess the status of GSA community benefits.

SECTION 3: NON-COUNCIL COMMITTEES

If necessary, the GSA Executive Board may establish a committee to serve the GSA community. Any such committee will be deemed a Non-Council Committee and will not have voting power at GSA Council meetings. For these established committees, the GSA President shall appoint a chair and all members to their positions.

ARTICLE VII – NON-COMMITTEE POSITION

DESCRIPTIONS

The general roles and responsibilities for each non-committee GSA position are given as follows:

The GSA President is expected to:

1. Communicate GSA business, including the event schedule, constitutional changes, and the council roster, to the Office of Graduate Student Services
2. Chair GSA Executive Board, GSA Council, and GSA general meetings
3. Establish an agenda for GSA Council and GSA general meetings
4. Serve as a member of the University's Graduate Council
5. Arbitrate over any and all GSA Committee disputes
6. Appoint Council Representatives if none are chosen in the time allotted by this constitution
7. Break ties that may occur in GSA Council votes
8. Fill all vacant GSA positions by appointment
9. Announce open positions for Elections Committee by the end of January as per Article XI, Section 1: Elections Committee
10. Organize all non-social events for the graduate community including but not limited to: All-GSA meetings and The Graduate Student Speaker Series

The GSA Vice President is expected to:

1. Assume all powers and responsibilities of GSA President in times when the acting GSA President cannot fulfill his/her designated duties
2. Ensure that the GSA operates within the guidelines established by this constitution
3. Accept, organize, and report potential changes to this constitution to the Executive Board as outlined in the amendments proceedings
4. Head all impeachment proceedings in the case that he/she/they is not under consideration for impeachment
5. Assist and support the GSA President
6. Organize all social events for the graduate community for example: Happy Hours, Ice Cream Social, GSA BBQ, International student potluck

The GSA Treasurer is expected to:

1. Maintain an accurate and current account of GSA finances
2. Accept, organize, and present funding requests to the Executive Board as outlined in this constitution
3. Offer informed financial advice to the Executive Board members regarding the feasibility and effects of approving particular funding requests
4. Keep time at GSA general meetings

5. Sign funding reimbursement forms
6. Head any impeachment proceedings against the Vice President

The GSA Secretary is expected to:

1. Record the minutes of all GSA Executive Board, GSA Council, and GSA general meetings and send them to those who attended the meeting for approval
2. Communicate the time, date, location, and relevant details of events and GSA general meetings to members of the GSA
3. Advertise events and help with coordinating social media pages: Facebook, Instagram and coordinating with the webmaster to keep the webpage updated

The GSA BA/MA Liaison is expected to:

1. Orient incoming BA/MA students at the outset of the academic year
2. Communicate the general interests and concerns of the BA/MA community to GSA Council
3. Accept, organize, and report any particular BA/MA student complaint or problem

The Graduate Student Educational Policy Committee Representative is expected to:

1. Attend all meetings of the University's Educational Policy Committee
2. Represent the interests and concerns of the GSA community at Educational Policy Committee meetings
3. Report any and all relevant Educational Policy Committee decisions to the GSA community

The GSA International Student Liaison is expected to:

1. Orient incoming international students at the outset of the academic year
2. Organize shopping trips for incoming students at the outset of the academic year
3. Accept, organize, and report specific problems of international graduate students

The GSA Web Master is expected to:

1. Maintain and update the GSA website
2. Serve as a liaison between the GSA community and the University's Technical Support staff

The GSA Department Representatives are each expected to:

1. Serve as liaisons between the GSA and the graduate students in their department
2. Know and represent the interests of their department during GSA Council meetings
3. Assist in communicating GSA events and meetings to GSA members in their department

The Members of the GSA Community Standards Board (GCSB) are each expected to:

1. Review any case in which a graduate student has allegedly violated the Wesleyan University honor code or Wesleyan University code of non-academic of conduct
2. Follow any and all protocol for said hearings set forth by Wesleyan University
3. Serve through the summer following the academic year to which they are elected; the transition of GCSB members will occur in the fall at the GCSB orientation meeting

ARTICLE VIII – GENERAL GSA MEETINGS

The Executive Board shall hold at least one GSA meeting open to all GSA community members per semester. The agenda of this meeting shall be established by the GSA President and announced to the community at least one day prior. The GSA Treasurer shall chair this meeting and keep time.

The GSA Secretary shall record minutes at these meetings and post them on the GSA website.

There shall always be time, provided for in the meeting's agenda, for general discussion, comments, and questions.

ARTICLE IX – PROCEDURE FOR FUNDING GSA

EVENTS

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY

A GSA event is defined to be any nonacademic event that is open to the entire GSA community. Any member of the GSA may request funding for a GSA event during the academic year.

SECTION 2: REQUESTING FUNDS

Any individual requesting funds for a GSA event must submit a "Funding Request Form." These request forms can be located and submitted online at the GSA website. It is suggested that this form be submitted at least two weeks before the scheduled event.

SECTION 3: ALLOCATING FUNDS

After receiving the funding request, the Treasurer shall inform the President and Vice President of the request within 48 hours. These three elected officials will then have one week to make a decision regarding the request, by majority vote. During this time, the officers may contact the requesting party to obtain information relevant to the event. The final decision will be communicated to the requesting party by the GSA Treasurer.

An approval for funding grants funding to the event. The GSA officers may decide to grant less funding than originally requested. Even if fewer funds are allocated to the event, it will still be deemed an approval for funding. Approval for funding is given under the assumption that all members of the GSA will be contacted and informed of the event within five days of the event. If such contact is not made, the officers have the ability to deny reimbursement.

A declination does not grant funding to the event. A declination occurs by default if the individual requesting funds is ineligible, the proposed event will break the law, or the officers do not reach an agreement within one week of receiving the request from the Treasurer. In this last case, the requesting party may contact the Treasurer, obtain information regarding the decision process, and re-submit a funding request.

Possible reasons for declination include:

1. Failure to meet the eligibility requirements
2. Inappropriate event themes
3. Lack of planning
4. Insufficient GSA funds available

SECTION 4: REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

The GSA member submitting the funding request is the only individual eligible for reimbursement. To receive reimbursement, this individual must provide proof of purchase via itemized receipts. Wesleyan University will not reimburse for space rental. Reimbursement will not exceed the funding amount granted in the allocation process. A reimbursement form, which can be found on the GSA website must then be completed, signed by the GSA Treasurer, and submitted along with the receipts to the Office of Graduate Student Services.

Note: The reimbursement form along with the receipts must be turned in no later than a month after the date of the event. Failure to comply may result in no reimbursement.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: SUBMITTING AMENDMENTS

An amendment to this constitution can be submitted by any GSA member at any time throughout the academic year. Any individual wishing to submit an amendment should contact the GSA Vice President with their amendment in written form. This individual should also include adequate justification for proposing such an amendment.

SECTION 2: PROCESSING AMENDMENTS

Upon receiving a proposed amendment, the GSA Vice President shall contact other Executive Board members with all relevant details within 48 hours. The Executive Board has two weeks to discuss the proposed amendment. During this time, any member of the Executive Board may contact the party proposing the amendment to obtain information relevant to the request. At the end of this discussion period, the GSA Executive Board must decide whether or not to bring this amendment to the GSA Council.

If the Executive Board passes this amendment to Council, then it will be ratified if at least 2/3 of the Council members vote in its favor. Otherwise, the amendment does not pass, no change to the constitution is made, and the party proposing the amendment may resubmit the amendment in the following semester.

If the Executive Board does not pass this amendment to the Council, then this amendment does not pass, no change to the constitution is made, and the party proposing the amendment can resubmit the amendment in the following semester.

ARTICLE XI – ELECTIONS

SECTION 1: ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The GSA Executive Board is to form an Elections Committee from willing volunteers by the end of January following the announcement made by the GSA President (see Article VII). This committee shall be comprised of a minimum of two, maximum of three non-Council voting GSA members and shall exist only to perform the following duties:

1. Call for and manage nominations anonymously to fill the following GSA elected positions in the General Election: GSA President, GSA Vice President, GSA Treasurer, GSA Secretary, a Graduate Student Educational Policy Committee representative, BA/MA Liaison, International Student Liaison, Web Master, Liaisons for each of the Council Committees as described in Article V, and seven GCSB representatives.
2. Handle election ballots (including but not limited to preparing, printing, delivering, collecting, and absentee ballots)
3. Ensure the ballots are counted independently by at least two members of the Elections Committee
4. Publicly report the outcome of the General Election
5. Mediate post-election filling of positions as per Article VI, Section 1, and Article XI Section 2
6. Hold the filled ballots until June 1st after the General Election.

Members of the Elections Committee may not also be running for a position on the ballot.

SECTION 2: GENERAL ELECTIONS

GSA General Elections are to be held before the end of the second semester each academic year. In the event that an individual is elected to multiple positions, they default to the “highest” in the following hierarchy: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, BA/MA Liaison, Education Policy Committee representative, International Student Liaison, Housing Committee, Benefits

Committee, Web Administrator, and GSCB. Any person who is elected to a Council Committee (Housing or Benefits) may hold one other non-Executive Board, non-Committee GSA Council position. Any person who holds two positions on the GSA Council still has only one vote on the GSA Council.

Although the Elections Committee shall draw up their own process to fill positions, the following guidelines are expected to be followed:

1. Any GSA member may run for any number of generally elected offices.
2. Individuals should be elected by a majority vote through an election open to all GSA members.
3. Every GSA member is entitled to one secret paper ballot that is to be filled out at the final All-GSA meeting of the academic year.

Persons wishing to vote but unable to attend the final All-GSA meeting for legitimate reasons such as travel or illness are entitled to an absentee ballot, which they must return to the Elections Committee within 48 hours of the final All-GSA meeting or their votes will not be counted.

SECTION 3: ELECTING DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

After the results of the General Election, each department which is not represented on the GSA Council is entitled to elect within itself a representative to be a voting member of the GSA Council. The Elections Committee will reach out to the appropriate departments upon knowing the results of the General Election. Departments have until two weeks after the first general GSA meeting in September to choose their representative. If a department fails to elect a Department Representative by the deadline, they waive their right to a Department Representative for that academic year.

Although departments shall draw up their own process to fill the position of Department Representative, the following guidelines are expected to be followed:

1. Any non-Council voting GSA member in the department who will be enrolled for the next full academic year may run for Department Representative.
2. The Department Representative must be elected by a majority vote through an election open to all and only GSA members of their department.

ARTICLE XII – TRANSITION

The sitting GSA Council is expected to hold a transition meeting when all positions in the General Election have been filled. The meeting minimally requires attendance from the sitting and newly elected GSA Executive Boards, and should include all sitting and incoming GSA Council members. The first day of the new GSA Council will be June 1st. The meeting should minimally include:

1. The handoff of relevant GSA materials and documents
2. A review of the budget and events for the coming academic year
3. Clarification of roles for incoming GSA Council members

ARTICLE XIII – IMPEACHMENT

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY

Any elected GSA officer may be impeached and removed from office.

SECTION 2: IMPEACHMENT CHARGES

Any GSA member may bring impeachment charges against any elected official at any time during the academic year. To do so, this individual must contact the GSA Vice President, provide the name of the officer they wish to impeach, and include a detailed explanation as to why the named officer should be removed from office.

Provided that the charges brought against the officer are legitimate, the GSA Vice President is to call a special Impeachment GSA Council meeting. Said meeting is to happen no later than two weeks after the charges have been received by the GSA Vice President. The GSA Vice President is also to inform the officer of the impeachment charges that have been brought against them.

In the case that charges are being brought against the GSA Vice President, the GSA Treasurer shall accept the charges and chair the impeachment proceedings.

SECTION 3: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

During the special Impeachment GSA Council meeting, the GSA Vice President is to read to the entire Council the charges being brought against the officer. The officer under investigation shall then have time to respond to the charges. Any Council member is then permitted to question the officer facing removal. Once questioning has been completed, the impeached officer is to leave the meeting where the council is to vote on whether or not the officer is to be removed from office.

The officer shall be removed from office provided at least 2/3 of the Council members present vote to impeach.

SECTION 4: APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE

If a GSA official is removed from office, the President is responsible for appointing another GSA member to this office within two weeks of the original officer's removal.