

**Philosophy Graduate Student Association Constitution**  
(Ratified on December 06, 2018)

**1. Name**

1.1. The name of this organization is "The Philosophy Graduate Students Association," hereafter referred to as the "PGSA."

**2. Purposes and Responsibilities**

2.1. The purposes of the Association are:

- (1) To give philosophy graduate students a forum through which they may express their needs and their opinions.
- (2) Serve as an advocate for philosophy graduate students on issues and concerns affecting the life of philosophy graduate students in the University of Western Ontario's Philosophy Department.
- (3) Serve as representatives of philosophy graduate students to the department.
- (4) Organize events and activities for philosophy graduate students.

**3. Powers and Jurisdictions**

3.1. Authority: The jurisdiction and powers assumed by the PGSA in this Constitution and any amendments thereto arise from autonomous self-governing authority and do not require the approval of any authority other than that of the Association itself.

3.2. Government: The governing body of the PGSA is the Executive, which is responsible for government and regulation of the Association.

**4. Membership**

4.1. Membership is defined as the graduate students enrolled in the philosophy department at the University of Western Ontario (including students on official university leave).

4.2. The Following rights and privileges attach to membership:

- (1) right to attend and speak, at the discretion of the Chair, at meetings;
- (2) access to all minutes of Association meetings;
- (3) the right to run for the office of President and any other Executive Officer or committee position;
- (4) right to vote in the PGSA's elections;
- (5) the right to vote in the PGSA's referenda;
- (6) the right to obtain support from the PGSA's Executive with problems stemming from their academic program;
- (7) the right to participate in academic, social, and recreational programs sponsored by the PGSA.

**5. Government**

5.1. The PGSA strives to achieve proportional representation of MA students, PhD students as well as all races, genders, and other underrepresented groups in the Executive.

5.2. All positions are held for three terms (Fall, Winter, Summer).

5.3. Positions:

### 5.3.1. President

5.3.1.1. It is strongly recommended that there be two presidents.

5.3.1.2. It is strongly recommended that there be representation of more than one gender.

5.3.1.3. The responsibilities of the President(s) include:

- (1) Serve as treasurer for the PGSA.
- (2) Serve as a representative to the Graduate Philosophy Affairs Committee (GPAC).
- (3) Attend departmental meetings as a student representative.
- (4) Organize PGSA elections for subsequent year.
- (5) Call and chair PGSA meetings. The chair of the session is not a voting attendee of the meeting.

5.3.1.4. Where there is one President, a second Graduate Philosophy Affairs Committee (GPAC) representative must be elected (see 5.3.11).

### 5.3.2. Graduate Philosophy Affairs Committee (GPAC) Representatives

5.3.2.1. There must be two GPAC representatives.

5.3.2.2. The PGSA President(s) will serve as GPAC representatives.

Where there is one President, one GPAC representative will be elected separately.

5.3.2.3. The responsibilities of the GPAC representatives include:

- (1) Attend GPAC meetings.
- (2) Voice concerns of graduate students to the department/faculty representatives.

### 5.3.3. Secretary

5.3.3.1. There must be one Secretary and one Alternate Secretary

5.3.3.2. The responsibilities of the Secretary include:

- (1) Attend all PGSA meetings and take minutes.
- (2) Submit minutes to the President(s) for approval and distribution.
- (3) In the event of both Presidents being unable to fulfill their duties, the Secretary is responsible for organizing a new election.

5.3.3.3. The responsibility of the Alternate Secretary is to perform the duties of the Secretary should he or she be unable to attend a meeting.

#### 5.3.4. Committee for Inclusivity in Philosophy (CIP)

5.3.4.1. There shall be at least four and up to five CIP members.

- (1) Two committee members will act as co-chairs of the committee
- (2) To be eligible for the position of co-chair an individual must have actively participated in at least two semesters of the CIP reading group in the preceding school year.
- (3) In the case that an individual does not meet the criteria for a co-chair position due to extenuating circumstances but still wishes to run for a position, eligibility will be to the discretion of the outgoing co-chairs.
- (4) Two positions will be open for graduate students to act as representatives to the department Climate Committee.
- (5) A fifth (optional) position of “New Student Liaison to the CIP” will be open to a new incoming student. This position will only be filled if interest is expressed by an incoming student. In the case where no interest exists, the committee will consist of the minimum four members.
- (6) Preference will be given to members of marginalized and underrepresented groups.

5.3.4.2. The responsibilities of the CIP include:

- (1) Organize professional development activities targeted at issues relevant to the climate for underrepresented or marginalized groups in philosophy (approx. 3/academic year). These issues include, but are not limited to, concerns with race, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, ethnicity, creed, and ability.
- (2) May work with faculty members to organize department-wide professional development activities.
- (3) Hear from the groups whose concerns fall outside of the jurisdiction of the other issue-based committees.
- (4) Organize and run the CIP reading group on issues relating to underrepresented or marginalized groups in each semester.

5.3.4.3. The responsibilities of the Climate Committee Representatives include:

- (1) Attend the department Climate Committee meetings.
- (2) Serve as a liaison between the Climate Committee and CIP/PGSA.
- (3) Contribute to CIP event ideas and organization.

5.3.4.4. The responsibilities of the CIP New Student Liaison include:

- (1) Actively participate in CIP activities
- (2) Contribute to event ideas and organization
- (3) Serve as a liaison between the CIP and new students to bring relevant concerns of new students to the committee

### 5.3.5. Social and Wellness Committee

5.3.5.1. There may be between three and six members.

5.3.5.2. It is strongly recommended that there be representation of more than one gender.

5.3.5.3. The responsibilities include:

- (1) Having diverse social and wellness events for increased accessibility and inclusiveness.
  - It is recommended that there be a good balance between both wellness and social events.
- (2) Communicating with the graduate community to ensure that their needs and wants are well-reflected in the organized events.
- (3) Promoting wellness awareness by the dissemination of mental health resources.
- (4) For wellness initiatives, you may apply for SOGS' [Graduate Student Wellness Fund](#).

### 5.3.6. Welcoming Committee

5.3.6.1. There may be between three and six members of the Welcoming Committee.

5.3.6.2. It is strongly recommended that there be representation of more than one gender.

5.3.6.3. It is strongly recommended that one member of the Welcoming Committee be an international student.

5.3.6.4. It is strongly encouraged that at least one member of the Welcoming Committee be an incoming student.

5.3.6.5. The responsibilities of the Welcoming Committee include:

- (1) Serve as the first point of contact for new students.
- (2) Solicit graduate student volunteers for hosting new students.
- (3) Introduce prospective students to hosts via email.
- (4) Being present and available at the Open House in the Winter Term as student representatives.
- (5) Acquiring a list of incoming students from the Graduate Chair and sending an introductory email.
- (6) Introducing new students to the department at the beginning of the fall term.
- (7) Running the Mentor Program:
  - a) Soliciting graduate student volunteers for mentorship
  - b) Assigning mentors to new graduate students
  - c) Introducing new graduate students to their mentors

### 5.3.7. SOGS Representatives

- 5.3.7.1. The number of SOGS Representatives is stipulated by the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS).
- 5.3.7.2. It is strongly recommended that there be representation of more than one gender.
- 5.3.7.3. It is strongly encouraged that at least one member of the SOGS Representatives be an incoming student.
- 5.3.7.4. The responsibilities of the SOGS Representatives include:
  - (1) Attend meetings at the Society of Graduate Students.
  - (2) Serve as a representative of philosophy graduate students to the Society of Graduate Students.

### 5.3.8. GTA Union Representatives

- 5.3.8.1. There must be one GTA rep for every 25 UWO philosophy graduate students (or as stipulated by the GTA Union Local).
- 5.3.8.2. It is strongly encouraged that at least one GTA union representative be elected for a two-year term.
- 5.3.8.3. It is strongly recommended that there be representation of more than one gender.
- 5.3.8.4. It is also strongly encouraged that at least one member is an incoming student.
- 5.3.8.5. The responsibilities of the GTA union representatives include:
  - (1) Attend GTA union meetings.
  - (2) Serve as the representative of the union local to the PGSA.
  - (3) Serve as first point of contact for grievances and other labour issues.

### 5.3.9. Colloquium Organizers

- 5.3.9.1. There may be up to three Colloquium Organizers.
- 5.3.9.2. It is strongly encouraged that at least one member of the Colloquium Organizers be an incoming student.
- 5.3.9.3. The responsibilities of the Colloquium Organizers include:
  - (1) Planning and advertising weekly graduate student talks over the fall and winter terms.
  - (2) Organizing a “Congress Practice Session” early in the summer term (before the annual “Congress of the Humanities and the Social Sciences”).
  - (3) Organizing a works in progress series to run throughout the summer term.
  - (4) All colloquium organizers must read the abstract for each paper prior to its distribution to the members of the PGSA and the faculty.

- (5) If there is any reasonable doubt about the appropriateness of the content of the abstract received, the Colloquium Organizers are to forward the abstract to the Co-Presidents. The Co-Presidents must meet with the speaker, then make a decision and/or consult with PGSA and CIP representatives or Equity and Human Rights Services where relevant.

#### 5.3.10. Mailing List Manager

5.3.10.1. There may be One Mailing List Manager.

5.3.10.2. The responsibilities of the Mailing List Manager include:

- (1) Updating the phil-gsa@uwo.ca mailing list to include all incoming graduate students and exclude all graduated students.

#### 5.3.11. Webmasters

5.3.7.1. There may be up to three Webmasters.

5.3.7.2. The responsibilities of the Webmaster(s) include:

- (1) Maintaining the PGSA's internet presence.

#### 5.4. Ad Hoc Committees

5.4.1. Committees can be created on an ad hoc basis to address any issues the PGSA judges to be relevant.

5.4.2. The motion to create a committee must be proposed and passed in the same manner as all other collective decisions.

### **6. Finances**

6.1. All decisions regarding the use of PGSA funds must be decided upon with a vote (see Section 9).

### **7. Meetings**

7.1. The PGSA shall meet at least once per semester at the purview of the President(s).

7.2. The President(s) shall chair PGSA meetings (see Section 5.3.1.3).

7.3. All members of the PGSA may attend and participate fully (including voting privileges) in PGSA meetings (see Section 4.2).

7.4. Quorum to conduct business at the meetings requires the presence of ten percent of members, except when voting on amendments to the Constitution (see Section 10).

7.5. Non-members of the PGSA invited by the President(s) may attend meetings but shall not have voting privileges.

7.6. The President(s) shall post a call for new business to be added to the meeting agenda at least one week prior to the meeting. Members who have new business should respond to the call within forty-eight hours of it being sent. An agenda for the meeting shall be distributed to the members by the president(s) at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

7.7. Meetings shall follow Robert's Rules of Order.

- 7.8. Minutes from the meetings shall be sent by the President to the membership no later than seventy-two hours after the meeting adjourns.
- 7.9. Motions require a simple majority of members present at the meeting to pass. See Section 9 for voting procedures.

## **8. Elections**

- 8.1. Elections of the PGSA Executive will take place at the Fall semester meeting.
- 8.2. Vacant positions shall be announced at least seventy-two hours prior to the Fall semester meeting.
- 8.3. Nominations may be submitted to the current President(s) at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting, or may be submitted from the floor of the Fall semester meeting. Nominations shall be acceptable provided that the nominee meets the minimum requirements for the position and apparently intends to fulfill the duties of the position.
- 8.4. Members present at the meeting shall vote for each position by a show of hands or secret ballot, and the Chair of the meeting shall declare the person with the greatest number of votes the winner.
  
- 8.5. In the event of a tie, members at the meeting shall vote by secret ballot, in which each eligible member shall vote for only one of the tied candidates, and the Chair of the meeting shall declare the candidate receiving the greatest proportion of unspoiled ballots cast the winner.
- 8.6. Members must be present at the meeting to vote for PGSA executive positions.

## **9. Voting Procedures**

- 9.1. For voting procedures regarding the election of the PGSA executive see Section 8.
- 9.2. Constitutional amendments require a positive vote from at least twenty percent of members to pass (see Section 10).
- 9.3. Votes, excluding amendments to the Constitution, require a simple majority of voting members. See 10.4 for voting procedures regarding constitutional amendments.
- 9.4. Members who cannot be present at a vote (excluding elections for the PGSA executive) may submit their vote electronically. Within twenty-four hours prior to the meeting at which a vote is being held, members must submit their "intent to vote" to the President(s). Following the distribution of the minutes from the meeting, members must submit their vote to the President(s). The President(s) may withhold information about the passing or failing of a vote until all electronic votes have been submitted.
- 9.5. At the discretion of the President(s), votes (excluding elections of the PGSA Executive) may be held exclusively online. Forty-eight hours prior to a vote, the President(s) shall distribute a Voting Agenda. The vote shall be open for a period of at least twenty-four hours. Within seventy-two hours of the vote ending, the Secretary shall distribute Voting Minutes conveying the results of the vote. Proper measures to ensure that each member has one vote shall be taken by the president(s).

- 9.6. PGSA members who attend meetings via video conference or other real time remote communication service will be counted as ‘present’ members of the meeting for voting purposes. Remote participants may vote verbally or via text entry. Members who attend meetings under the procedures of this section do not qualify for the Intent to Vote procedure outlined in section 9.4.

## **10. Amendments to the Constitution**

- 10.1. Proposals for amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the President(s) of the PGSA.
- 10.2. Discussions of the proposals may occur at the meeting for the term, or the President(s) may call a special meeting of the PGSA to discuss proposals. Proposals may be amended at the meeting in which they are discussed.
- 10.3. Any proposal that involves the creation of a new committee must include the proposed structure of the new committee (including who shall chair the committee, the composition of the committee, how members are to be selected for the committee, the duties of the committee), the purpose of the new committee, and any relevant background material supporting the creation of the new committee. Any proposal that involves the creation of a new position must include the proposed purpose of the position, the duties of the position, how a member shall be selected to fill the office, and any relevant background material supporting the creation of the new position.
- 10.4. Proposals for amendments to the Constitution may be voted upon at the same meeting in which they are discussed. Voting procedures follow the guidelines stipulated in section 9, with the exception that ratification of an amendment requires a positive vote from twenty percent of the members in good standing.
- 10.5. Amendments to the Constitution become effective upon the adjournment of the meeting in which a successful proposal was approved, unless otherwise specified in the proposal.