**BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

**CONSTITUTION**

Revised February 2023

**PREAMBLE:**

Under the authority of the Bowling Green State University Charter, Article II, Section B, as established by the Board of Trustees, we the graduate students of Bowling Green State University, in order to represent our needs, interests, and opinions as students, to ensure our rights as members of the university community, and to promote unity, cooperation, and goodwill among all students, do ordain and establish this constitution for the Bowling Green State University Graduate Student Senate.

**ARTICLE I: STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE**

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Senate, hereafter referred to as GSS.

Section 2: The purpose of this organization shall be:

1. To act as the representative body of the graduate student community of Bowling Green State University, hereafter referred to as BGSU, bearing the responsibility of graduate student concerns at all levels of the University, and ensuring just representation and treatment of all BGSU graduate students.
2. To institute any measure or function deemed proper to the interest of the BGSU graduate student community.
3. To provide a venue for presentation and discussion of issues related to both academic and non-academic aspects related to graduate students and the broader university community. Further, to provide a space to debate such issues and issue resolutions intended to convey the sense of the Senate where the representatives deem necessary.

Section 3: Any graduate student of BGSU in good standing, as established by the BGSU Graduate College, is eligible for membership in the GSS.

Section 4: The GSS shall be composed of the General Assembly, hereafter referred to as the GA, and the Senate Executive Committee, hereafter referred to as the SEC. In addition, the BGSU graduate student Board of Trustees representative shall be an ex officio member of the GA and the SEC.

Section 5: All graduate students who are enrolled in a designated degree-granting program shall be eligible for membership in GSS.

Section 6: The seats of the GA shall be partitioned according to the bylaws of this document.

Section 7: The faculty sponsor and official advisor of the GSS shall be designated by the Board of Trustees.

Section 8: Membership in GSS shall be open to students of BGSU without regard to sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, race, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, disability, neurodivergence, political affiliation, pregnancy, military/veteran status, age, or socioeconomic status.

Section 9: The Student Organization Allocation Board (SOAB) provides the annual budget to the Graduate College for the designated use by GSS. Funds that are received by the GSS are only to be used to benefit graduate students at BGSU. Funds are not to be directly and primarily allocated to students in programs that are not in good standing with the GSS.

Section 10: GSS, as an officially recognized student organization, may plan, and conduct its own fundraising efforts to augment the funds received by the Graduate College. Any fundraising efforts by the GSS will follow the guidelines and procedures set forth by the Office of Campus Activities. The use of funds must follow the stipulations of Article 1 Section 9.

**ARTICLE II: GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Section 1: The GA shall be composed of senators, who are in good standing as defined by Article I Section 3, from graduate degree programs, hereafter referred to as GDPs. The GDPs within the GA will be defined by the GA chair.

Section 2: GSS expects that the election/appointment of GA senators shall be completed before the first GA meeting of the Fall semester.

Section 3: The GA shall meet no less than monthly during the fall and spring semester, unless holidays or other extraordinary circumstances prohibit this. The exact schedule for the GA will be determined each year by the GSS President and Vice-President. For all purposes, a GA special meeting counts as a GA meeting.

Section 4: The meetings of the GA shall be open to the public.

Section 5: The GA shall conduct its meetings according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

Section 6: A quorum of the GA must exist to conduct official business. “Quorum” shall be defined as one-half of senators from non-censured GDPs, plus one.

Section 7: Rights of Senators

1. A graduate student may serve as GSS senator for only one GDP.
2. Each senator shall possess the right to speak and make motions to the GA pertaining to the business at hand.
3. Each senator shall have one vote for each motion at hand during the GA. Senators may vote in person or virtually.
4. At the request of ten senators, through written communication to the GSS Vice President, a special meeting of the GA may be convened.
5. Any senator may request as a formal motion a vote by secret ballot for the question called.
6. Each senator has the right to draft and propose legislation and resolutions to be considered by the GA.

1. To propose legislation, a draft must be submitted to the GSS Vice President at least one week before planning on discussing it at a GA meeting. It will be reviewed with the SEC for structure and formatting.

1. Each senator shall have the right to attend an SEC meeting upon notifying the GSS President of their intent to do so.
2. Each senator shall have the right to view any past or present version of the GSS budget at any time. Senators may share the GSS budgets, but only within their programs and must do so responsibly.

Section 8: Responsibilities of Senators

1. Each senator shall attend or secure a proxy to attend every GA meeting.
2. Each senator shall remain in attendance for the duration of the GA unless they have communicated with the GSS Vice President prior to the meeting. Any exceptions will be at the discretion of the GA chair.
3. Senators shall communicate all information discussed at GA meetings with their constituencies.
4. Senators shall communicate concerns of their constituencies to the GSS Vice President.
5. Each senator should expect to serve on at least one university standing committee or GSS committee.
6. Each senator is expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner while attending GA and committee meetings and/or GA functions.
   1. Senators who are assigned to a committee as representatives of GSS must learn and adhere to the policies and procedures of said committee.

Section 9: Definition of Proxies

1. In the event a senator is unable to attend the GA, they may appoint a proxy who shall have the full rights and responsibilities of a senator for the period of time the senator has designated him/her as the proxy.
2. A proxy for a senator must be from the senator’s GDP and cannot be an elected or appointed officer of GSS.
3. If a senator is unable to attend a committee meeting for which they are expected to serve as a representative of GSS, they must notify, in writing, the chair of said committee. A senator may appoint a proxy to serve in their place for the period of time the senator has designated them as the proxy.
4. A proxy for a senator who is attending a committee meeting shall have the full rights and responsibilities of a committee member, if the chair of said committee allows it. Otherwise, the proxy shall serve in an ex officio capacity only.
5. A proxy for a senator who is attending a committee meeting is required to identify themselves as a proxy to the chair and the other members of the committee during said meeting of the committee.
6. Each proxy is expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner while attending GA and committee meetings and/or GA functions.
   1. Proxies who are asked to attend a committee as a representative of GSS must learn and adhere to the policies and procedures of said committee.

Section 10: Removal of Senators or Proxies

1. A duly elected or appointed senator or proxy may be nominated for removal, for any reason, by a letter signed by a simple majority of the graduate students in good standing from the department that the senator represents.
2. The SEC will review all nominations for removal and will discuss and vote on the nomination. A majority vote will be required for a senator or proxy to be removed.
3. If a senator is removed, it is the GDP’s responsibility to fill the vacancy before the next GA meeting.

Section 11: Censure of Graduate Degree Programs

1. If a GDP fails to have representation (by senator or proxy) for two consecutive GA meetings or three GA meetings in one semester, the membership of that GDP shall be censured from the GA.
2. Censured GDPs will immediately lose their senator’s rights, including voting and motion rights, as well as be removed from the quorum call and from standing committees.
3. If a GDP is censured from GSS, said students from that GDP will immediately, regardless of application status, lose eligibility for all GSS honors and awards until such time as that GDP is reinstated. In addition, censured GDPs lose their opportunity to apply for and receive funding for professional development.

Section 12: Reinstatement of Graduate Degree Programs

1. All senators whose GDPs are censured will need to send a formal communication to the GSS Vice President declaring their intent for the GDP to regain good standing with the GSS.
2. Censured GDPs who have submitted this communication may gain readmission to GSS by a majority vote in the SEC. If the SEC is unable to come to a decision or if they choose not to readmit the GDP, the GA will then hear the case and vote on readmission. A majority vote in the GA is needed to pass.
3. Once a GDP has been readmitted, they must complete a probationary period of maintaining GA attendance for a period of two consecutive meetings. During this probationary period, the GDP will retain full voting and participation rights, but GDPs will not be eligible for GSS funding, honors, and awards. At the end of this period, the GDP will be considered returned to good standing with the GSS and GDPs will be eligible for all GSS honors and awards once again.
4. All GDPs regain eligibility and good standing at the start of each fall semester.

**ARTICLE III: SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1: The SEC shall be composed of thirteen officers elected by the GA and the appointed officers of the GSS. In addition, the graduate student representative to the BGSU Board of Trustees shall be an ex officio member of the SEC. The SEC members are expected to fulfill all duties outlined in the “Rights and Responsibilities” document that is reviewed each year and updated by the current GSS SEC. If an appointed officer position is not filled, the GSS President is responsible for fulfilling the duties of that office.

* 1. Elected Officers
  2. President
  3. Vice President
  4. Academic Affairs Representative
  5. Student Affairs Representative
  6. Treasurer
  7. Secretary
  8. Representative-at-Large
  9. Graduate Outreach and Marketing Representative
  10. Graduate Diversity and Belonging Representative
  11. Graduate Student Professional Development Representative
  12. International Graduate Student Affairs Representative
  13. Environmental Affairs Representative
  14. Online Graduate Student Affairs Representative
  15. Recommended Appointed Officers (determined annually by the GSS President)

1. Chair for First-Year PhD Students
2. Chair for First-Year Masters Students

Section 2: The SEC shall advise in the formulation of the agenda of the GA and SEC shall also present to the GA issues and concerns relevant to the BGSU graduate student body.

Section 3: At the request of three members of the SEC to the GSS President and Vice President, a special meeting of the GA or the SEC may be convened.

Section 4: The SEC shall meet no less than on a monthly basis, unless holidays or other extraordinary circumstances prohibit this. The exact schedule for the SEC will be determined each year by the GSS President and Vice-President.

Section 5: Rights and Responsibilities of SEC members

1. All SEC officers will have speaking and motion rights in the GA.
   1. The Representative-at-Large will be the only elected SEC officers to possess voting rights.
2. SEC members will be considered separate from their home departments for all attendance, funding, and award purposes.
3. Each officer is expected to conduct themselves respectfully and in accordance with the fiduciary responsibility expected of the position while attending all functions.
   1. Officers who are assigned to a committee as representatives of GSS must learn, know, and adhere to the policies and procedures of said committee.
4. An SEC member may not miss more than three meetings they are required to attend as stated in the Rights and Responsibilities document.

Section 6: Removal of Elected Officers

1. Each elected member of the SEC is expected to perform all sound and reasonable requests from the GA, as well as serve on committees and meet regularly with individuals in accordance with the bylaws of this document.
2. A duly elected member of the SEC will be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the voting membership of the GA. This action may be brought before the GA by one of the following methods:
   1. A petition signed by no less than ten GA Senators.
   2. An action item from the SEC.

Section 7: Removal of Appointed Officers

1. The GSS President may remove an appointed officer of the SEC. If this occurs, the GA must be notified at the following meeting.

Section 8: Definition of Officer Proxies

1. If an officer is unable to attend a required committee meeting, they must notify in writing the GSS President, Vice President, and the chair of the said committee before sending a proxy
2. A proxy for an officer should be from the SEC but can be a senator of the GA if no SEC members are available.
3. A proxy for an officer who is attending a committee meeting shall have the full rights and responsibilities of a committee member, if the chair of said committee allows it. Otherwise, the proxy shall serve in an ex officio capacity only. A proxy for an officer who is attending a committee meeting is required to identify themselves as a proxy to the chair and the other members of the committee during said meeting.
4. Each proxy is expected to conduct themselves professionally while attending meetings.
   1. Proxies who are asked to attend a committee as representatives of GSS must learn and adhere to the policies and procedures of said committee.

**ARTICLE IV: ELECTIONS**

Section 1: Nominations for elections may occur beginning on the first GA of the spring semester. The election of officers that shall serve on the SEC must begin at any GA meeting between March 1 and April 15.

Section 2: The election of officers that shall serve on the SEC will be by a vote of the GA.

Section 3: The procedure used during the GSS election process will be in accordance with the bylaws of this constitution and the purpose of which shall be to ensure that the election is a fair and just process that meets the needs of GSS and the BGSU community.

Section 4: Duties of the Officers-Elect

1. The newly elected officers shall serve as assistants to the current officers until midnight of the last day of the spring semester, whereupon they will officially take office.
2. If the officer is elected during the semester in which they are expected to serve, they shall take office immediately upon being elected.

Section 5: The officers shall be elected in the following order:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Academic Affairs Representative
4. Student Affairs Representative
5. Treasurer
6. Secretary
7. Representative-at-Large
8. Graduate Outreach and Marketing Representative
9. Graduate Diversity and Belonging Representative
10. Graduate Student Professional Development Representative
11. International Graduate Student Affairs Representative
12. Environmental Affairs Representative
13. Online Graduate Student Affairs Representative

Section 6: In the event of a vacancy of an elected position, Article IV Section 5 will define the GSS order of succession for positions of the elected officers.

1. The GSS President or the next highest elected official with respect to the order of succession may appoint individuals to serve in any vacant office for an interim period until the election of the officer by the GA.
   1. An election for each office for which an interim officer is serving may be held during this time.
   2. The office will be considered vacant; thus elections will follow Article III, Section 2 of the bylaws.
   3. The interim officer is eligible for election.
   4. The length of an interim appointment is for one month
2. In the absence of a duly appointed individual, the next officer below the vacant position as defined by Section 5 will assume the rights and responsibilities of the vacant office in an interim capacity until a duly elected officer assumes the office but shall have the authority to delegate the inherited rights and responsibilities with the approval of the GSS President or interim President.

**ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS**

Section 1: Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws

1. Any article or section of this Constitution and Bylaws may be amended.
2. Each spring, the GSS Vice President will compose a committee of three GA senators and three SEC members to review the Constitution and Bylaws and propose constitutional amendments, as necessary.
3. The proposed constitutional amendments must be provided no later than a March meeting of the GA with at least four-fifths of the total voting membership of the GSS in attendance. At this reading, at least four-fifths of the total voting membership of the GSS must vote in favor of the amendments for them to be adopted.
4. Passed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws will then be approved by the GSS Advisor, the Provost of the University, the President of the University, and the Board of Trustees.
5. Passed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws will go into effect the next academic semester.

Section 2: Clerical Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws

1. Clerical amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws are defined as amendments to sections that fix any error or outdated passage in this document but preserve the spirit and intent of the passage or section.
2. The committee outlined in Article V, Section 1B will propose clerical amendments as necessary.
3. The proposed constitutional amendments must be provided no later than a March meeting of the GA with at least a quorum of the total voting membership of the GSS in attendance. At this reading, at least a majority of the total voting membership of the GSS must vote in favor of the amendments for them to be adopted.
4. Passed clerical amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws will go into effect immediately.

Section 3: GSS Emergency Clause

1. The GSS Emergency Clause is for the use of the GA and/or the GSS President to make and vote on any changes to the GSS Constitution and Bylaws that need to happen quickly.
2. Amendments or clerical fixes voted on by the GA, using the GSS Emergency Clause will take effect immediately.
3. In extreme situations, the GSS President shall have the right to edit any article or selection of the GSS Constitution and Bylaws at any time without prior approval of the SEC or the GA, using the GSS Emergency Clause.
   1. An extreme situation is defined as any changes that the University deems necessary for student organizations to include in their official documentation only.
   2. These changes can only be made when a change has to occur, and the GA is not officially in session.
   3. Any changes made to the aforementioned documents by the GSS President using the GSS Emergency Clause will be sent to the SEC and the GA in writing, as soon as possible.
   4. Changes made by the GSS President to the aforementioned documents shall take effect immediately, but only on a temporary basis.
   5. Any instance in which the GSS Emergency Clause is enacted by a GSS President, a notification must be sent out to all Senators, SEC members, and GSS Advisor within 24 hours of the implementation.
   6. Any changes made by the GSS President using the GSS Emergency Clause shall be reviewed and voted on by the GA for final approval at the next regularly scheduled session per the GSS Emergency Clause or the GSS Constitution, Article V, Sections 1-4.

**GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

**BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**CONSTITUTIONAL BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I: STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Section 1: The Awarding of Seats in the General Assembly

1. The partitioning of the seats shall be such that:
   1. Every GDP, as defined by Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution that has one graduate student as defined by the Graduate College is guaranteed a seat. The GSS President and Vice President will allocate seats annually based on communication with the Dean of the Graduate College and the graduate coordinators.

Section 2: Creation of GSS Committees

1. A committee may be formed through either of the following:
   1. Passing of a formal motion of the GA to create the committee.
   2. By the GSS President upon informing the GA.
2. The chair of any committee created by the GSS President shall be appointed by or removed by the GSS President.
3. The chair of any committee created by the GA will be selected by or removed by the GSS Vice President.
4. A specific goal will define any committee.
5. Committee chairs shall keep and post all records of committee deliberations and shall forward copies of the same to the SEC.
6. Any graduate student in good standing as defined by the graduate college may serve on a GSS-created committee.

**ARTICLE II: FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (FPD)**

Section 1: Eligibility

1. Applicants must be currently enrolled graduate students within BGSU’s Graduate College and in good standing with the Graduate College.
2. Applicants must be graduate students in academic departments in good standing, and not on probation, with GSS at the deadline for applications.
3. The following activities are eligible for funding from GSS:
   1. Attendance or presentation at an academic conference
   2. Professional Development activity as described by the GSS Vice President and professional memberships/honor societies related to the student’s field of study
4. The GSS Vice President will provide the information needed for a valid application.

Section 2: Funding Policies

1. All applications will be considered by the GSS FPD Allocation Committee for approval or denial.
2. Policies for approval of applications will be determined by the committee.
3. The GSS FPD Allocation Committee shall be composed of:
   1. Treasurer (Chair)
   2. Graduate Student Professional Development Representative
   3. Two Other SEC Members Appointed by the GSS President
4. The other SEC Members shall serve in advisory roles to the Treasurer who will communicate the decision to the applicants within one month to six weeks of the application deadline.
5. All members of the FPD committee have a vote on funding decisions. In a split decision, the Treasurer has the final say.
6. The maximum amount an individual can receive annually from the GSS shall be set by the GSS Vice President in consultation with the FPD Committee.
7. Funding will be distributed from the FPD budget for the relevant semester among all approved applications.
8. FPD requests will be considered only for expenses related to transportation, lodging, registration, memberships, and research/professional development costs excluding meals, food expenses, and other social activities.
9. FPD will only be granted as reimbursements, with original receipts, within 30 days of activity for which the award is granted. (During the Summer Session, FPD will only be granted as reimbursements, with original receipts on either an on-going basis or within 30 days of the start of Fall Semester.) Special exceptions may be granted based on an appeal to the GSS Vice President.
10. Applicants may only apply for FPD during the semester in which the activity will take place.
11. Applicants must use BGSU standards to determine expenses as determined by the Graduate College Budget Administrator.
12. Written appeals to the decision made and communicated by the FPD Allocations Committee must be received by the GSS Vice President within ten business days from the date the applicant is sent notification of the FPD decision. Final decisions will rest with the GSS Vice President.

**ARTICLE III: THE ELECTION PROCESS**

Section 1: Spring Election Process

1. The process shall be chaired by the member of the current SEC that is highest on the order of succession that is not running for any office, or by a member of GSS selected by the GA.
2. The election process will begin with nominations from the GA.
   1. There must be a quorum as defined in Article II Section 6 of the Constitution to continue with the election process.
   2. Nominations for any position must be open for no less than two meetings of the GA.
   3. The order of nominations for officers are in the order of succession as defined in Article IV Section 5 of the Constitution.
   4. Any graduate student may nominate themselves if they are eligible to run for the office.
3. For a nomination to be valid, the nominee requires the following:
   1. A second to the nomination from the GA.
   2. A completed “Graduate Student Senate Officer Application.”
      1. It is the responsibility of the SEC to provide copies of this application to all members of GSS before the GA meeting for the elections.
   3. A nominee for GSS President must meet the following criteria to be considered valid:
      1. The person must be currently serving the GSS.
      2. The person must have been a member of the GSS for no less than twenty weeks for which classes are held to be able to run.
      3. If elected, the person may not hold any other elected position in a student-run campus body.
   4. A nominee for GSS Vice President must meet the following criteria to be considered valid:
      1. The person must be currently serving the GSS.
      2. The person must have been a member of the GSS for no less than five weeks for which classes are held to be able to run.
      3. If elected, the person may not hold any other elected position in a student-run campus body.
4. When the GA closes an office to nominations, the election for that position starts immediately as follows:
   1. The order of elections is the same as the order of nominations.
   2. If the candidate is running uncontested, then the procedure will be as follows:
      1. The candidate will have five minutes to address the GA.
      2. The GA will have the opportunity to question the candidate.
      3. The GA will make a motion to close questioning.
      4. The candidate will leave the GA while the GA deliberates.
      5. The GA will vote for the candidate.
      6. A candidate running for GSS President or Vice President will be elected only if the number of votes for that person is a majority of the voting membership present.
      7. A candidate running for any position other than GSS President or Vice President will be elected if they receive more votes for than against.
      8. The candidate will be brought back to the GA and informed of the decision.
   3. If there is a contested position, then the procedure will be as follows:
      1. Each candidate will have five minutes to address the GA.
         1. The order of candidates will be selected at random.
      2. The GA may ask questions for which each candidate will have two minutes for a response.
         1. The order of candidate replies to questions will be reverse of the order in which they addressed the GA.
         2. The order of candidate replies to be questions will reverse with each round of questions.
      3. After each candidate has responded to the question, each candidate will have the opportunity to debate their opponents’ answers in a manner mediated by the chair of the election process as defined in Article III Section 1A of the Bylaws.
      4. The GA will make a motion to close questioning.
      5. The candidates will leave the GA while the GA deliberates.
      6. The GA will vote for each candidate.
      7. A candidate running for GSS President or Vice President will be elected only if the number of votes for that person is a majority.
         1. If the number of votes that a person receives is not a majority, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be removed.
         2. This process will continue until a candidate receives a majority of votes or until the candidate is running “uncontested” and will be voted upon again under the procedure of Article III Section 1D2 of the bylaws.
      8. A candidate running for any position other than GSS President or Vice President receiving the most votes among all candidates running, but not a majority, will then be considered to be running uncontested and voted upon again under the procedure of Article III Section 1D2 of the Bylaws.
      9. The candidate will be brought back to the GA and informed of the decision.
      10. If no confidence in any candidate, senators may vote to abstain. This must be explicitly stated by the election chair prior to holding a vote for an elected officer.
   4. If no candidate is elected, the office will be considered vacant and filling that office will be done in accordance with Article IV Section 6 of the Constitution.
5. An individual who loses an election may be nominated for any other remaining office.

Section 2: Filling a Vacant Office

1. An office shall be defined as vacant if it is not filled by the end of the Spring Semester.
2. There must be a quorum as defined in the Article II Section 6 of the Constitution to initiate or continue with the election process.
3. Nominations may begin and may be closed during one meeting of the GA.
4. The election process will proceed according to Article III Section 1D of the Bylaws.