AS&E GSA Constitution

The University of Rochester Arts, Sciences, and Engineering Graduate Student Association, which shall be informally known as the Graduate Student Association (GSA), exists to act as an advocate and liaison for, and to promote interaction among, the graduate students in departments of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering at the University of Rochester.

Article I. Membership
Any graduate student from the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering becomes a GSA member and will be granted access to GSA events, grants, and funding. In addition, GSA members have the opportunity to run for GSA Executive Committee positions. GSA shall be funded by the mandatory University of Rochester Graduate Student Activity Fee set by the Board of Trustees and billed automatically through the Bursar’s office. GSA Officers can recommend fee changes to the Board of Trustees through the Dean of Graduate Studies for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering.

Article II. Voting Bodies
GSA will be composed of two voting bodies: the Executive Committee and the Department Representatives. The Department Representatives shall consist of one Representative selected by the GSA members from each department of the College. The departments are free to draft their own election procedures for filling Representative positions. The members of the GSA Executive Committee will be elected following the procedures in Article IV. A GSA member cannot hold positions as a Department Representative and an Executive Committee Officer simultaneously.

Article III. Executive Committee
The Executive Committee shall include: the President, who shall lead, observe, and represent GSA and shall conduct and arrange General and Executive Committee Meetings; the Communications Officer, who shall supervise publication of a newsletter, manage GSA social media accounts, serve as a contact for the Department Representatives, and archive all Amendments, Bylaws, General and Executive Committee Meeting minutes; the Information Technology Officer, who shall assist in the publication of the newsletter, maintain the GSA website with all materials archived by the Communications Officer, maintain the GSA forum, and assist GSA members in preparing advertisements and communications as needed; the Treasurer, who shall prepare and monitor the GSA budget and review and sign off on all requests for GSA monies; the Academic Programming Officer, who shall arrange speaker forums and administer any available grants related to scholarly conferences; the Student Advocacy Officer, who shall investigate and seek to resolve issues of concern to graduate students and shall arrange issue-related and instructional seminars; the Social Programming Officer, who shall arrange social events. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to coordinate GSA functions. It may also make and approve changes to the Bylaws, change grammatical errors to the Constitution, propose changes to the Constitution to the Department Representatives, and make appointments to University committees.
Article IV.a. Elections
GSA will hold elections once a year. An election at the end of the spring academic term will serve to elect the President and remaining GSA officers for the following year. Terms for all officers shall begin and end shortly after the elections, as discussed in the Bylaws. Any GSA member at the time of an election shall be eligible for nomination, with two exceptions: 1. no member will be eligible to hold the same Executive Committee position for more than two years and 2. members must be resident graduate students for the academic year in which they will serve. In the event that no other GSA member is interested in filling the position, the first restriction shall be lifted. The Communications Officer will be in charge of maintaining a record of eligible nominees. Any eligible GSA member may nominate himself or herself or another eligible GSA member. Nominations may be sent electronically to the Communications Officer after notice for the start of the election process. The nomination period will begin at least two weeks before the election. After all nominations have been collected, nominees may prepare a brief written statement for their campaign, to be submitted, at the latest, one day before the election opens. All nominees must indicate whether they expect to be able to commit to the full twelve-month term if elected. The names of all nominated candidates and their statements shall be posted online at the same time to ensure equal exposure of candidates. These statements shall also be emailed to the GSA membership body when calling for votes. Voting shall take place using an electronic survey program. This will prevent any individual from being responsible for collecting email votes. Voters shall have a method of signing in to prevent multiple votes. Votes will not be linked to this identification method. The Dean of Graduate Studies for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering shall certify the results of the election. Voting shall begin after all of the nominees’ statements have been collected and shall remain open for a period of three days.

Article IV.b. Vacancies
In the event that an officer vacates their position before the end of their term, a special election shall be held. All GSA members shall be notified of the vacancy in a call for nominations open for at least ten days. The individual so elected shall serve until his or her replacement is duly elected at the next normally scheduled election.

Article IV.c. Expulsions
Officers may be expelled from an Executive Committee position by either a two-thirds majority in a vote of the department representatives, or by the Dean of Graduate Studies of Arts, Sciences, & Engineering together with a two-thirds majority in a vote of the Executive Committee.

Article V. General Meeting
A meeting of the Department Representatives must be held at least twice a year. The Executive Committee or one-sixth of the GSA Department Representatives may also call additional meetings. General Meetings will serve the purpose of bringing issues to the attention of the Executive Committee, challenging decisions made by the Executive Committee, expulsion from GSA-selected positions, reviewing the allocation of GSA’s budget including any use of reserve funds, ratifying Constitutional Amendments (Article IX), and discussing other proposals as needed. All decisions at a General Meeting must be declared in the presence of a simple majority of the GSA Department
Representatives. Each GSA Department Representative present, or proxy designated by the Representative in writing to the Communications Officer before the start of the General Meeting, shall cast an equal vote. Overruling of an Executive Committee decision and expulsions from GSA selected positions must be approved by two-thirds of the votes cast, while other decisions require a simple majority. An agenda of items to be discussed at the General Meeting shall be provided to all Department Representatives one week prior to the meeting. In addition, Department Representatives shall each be given a brief opportunity at the General Meeting to give feedback about GSA. Proposals may also be decided in written form, electronically, without calling a General Meeting, with all votes not returned counted as votes against the proposal.

**Article VI. Compensation**
Members of the Executive Committee will be compensated for their time in the amount of $125 for each six-month period for which they serve, as detailed in the Bylaws. GSA members are entitled to reimbursement for approved expenses incurred in the organization of GSA events and should submit these requests to the Treasurer. GSA Executive Committee members are not eligible to apply for individual conference travel awards or individual research awards.

**Article VII. Definition of Bylaws**
The GSA Executive Committee shall compose a set of Bylaws that will govern the organization and daily operation of GSA not specifically outlined in the Constitution. The bylaws should contain, but are not limited to, budgetary procedures, funding request guidelines, reimbursement procedures, policies for recognizing graduate student groups, and a risk management policy.

**Article VIII. Availability of the Constitution**
This document along with any applicable GSA Bylaws will be provided both on the GSA website and in one additional electronic or paper form to new Department Representatives at the beginning of each school year.

**Article IX. Amendments to the Constitution**
Constitutional Amendments must be passed by two-thirds of the GSA Executive Committee, and must be ratified by two-thirds of the Department Representatives. Votes may take place in the Department Representative General Meeting or electronically.