

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

### University of Houston GPSA Constitution

#### PREAMBLE

For the purposes deemed wise and good, hereinafter set forth, this organization is hereby established submitting itself to be by, and dedicating itself to uphold the mission of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) to: develop, sustain, and expand a member network that connects graduate and professional students across the University of Houston to facilitate the sharing of information, resources, and best practices, empower our members to successfully serve their constituents, and amplify graduate students' voices.

#### ARTICLE I – NAME

Section 1 – The name of this organization shall be the Graduate and Professional Student Association at the University of Houston.

#### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1 – It shall be the primary purpose(s) of this organization to:

- A. Serve as a channel for domestic and international graduate and professional students to voice concerns, resolve difficulties, and provide feedback on issues that directly affect graduate student life at the University of Houston;
- B. Promote social, diplomatic, and cultural activities for graduate and professional students;
- C. Facilitate and foster a sense of community among graduate students.

Section 2 – Additional purposes shall include but are not limited to:

- A. Fostering excellence in master's and doctoral research as well as enhancing the impact of graduate groups and students
- B. Advocating changes deemed necessary by graduate students
- C. Fostering inter-departmental cooperation and exchange
- D. Encouraging unity among the graduate and professional students as a whole
- E. Improving the academic environment for graduate students through sponsored events
- F. Providing social events and networking opportunities for graduate and professional students
- G. Amplifying and centering the lived experiences of graduate and professional students who are members of marginalized and oppressed communities

### ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1 – Membership shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.**

Section 2 – All currently enrolled graduate and professional students at the University of Houston will be considered members of the Graduate and Professional Students Association.

Section 3 - All members will be entitled to the rights described in and adhere to the rules outlined in this document and in GPSA's bylaws.

Section 4 - Members are subject to sanctions if they violate rules outlined in this document or cause severe emotional, physical, or mental harm to another person.

### ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1 – All officers shall serve for one academic year (August through May), but may be reelected for a subsequent term. Officers shall not be on academic or university probation at the time of their election and throughout their terms of office. The officers of this organization shall consist of a President, Vice President, and Programmatic Directors. All officers shall collectively be referred to as the Board of Directors. In addition, College Representatives will be selected by the Board of Directors to provide representation across all 15 colleges. The Board of Directors and College Representatives together shall be called the Executive Board.

Section 2 – The responsibilities of the President shall be as follows:

- A. To preside at meetings of this organization;
- B. To serve as the representative of this organization to University Administration, the Student Government Association, and other organizations;
- C. To execute the orders of this organization, subject to the approval of the membership;
- D. To appoint chairpersons and members of all committees, subject to the approval of the membership;
- E. To delegate Presidential responsibilities when deemed appropriate, subject to the approval of the membership;
- F. To have signature authority on all checks issued by this organization;
- G. To inform succeeding officers of their responsibilities to this organization, University Administration, the Student Government Association, and other organizations;
- H. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 3 – The responsibilities of the Vice-President shall be as follows:

- A. To assist the President in his/her duties;
- B. To preside at meetings of this organization in the absence of the President;

- C. To establish, administer, and enforce an attendance policy, subject to the approval of the membership;
- D. To assume the office of President in his/her absence, vacancy, resignation, or dismissal;
- E. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 4 – The responsibilities of the Administrative Affairs Director shall be as follows:

- A. To prepare agendas and to record minutes of meetings of this organization;
- B. To handle all correspondence of this organization not under the preview of the President;
- C. To pick up all mail received at the Center for Student Involvement at least once a week, in addition to any other location at which mail for this organization may be delivered;
- D. To update and maintain all files of this organization;
- E. To maintain an accurate list of the membership of this organization;
- F. To assume the office of Vice-President in his/her absence, vacancy, resignation, or dismissal;
- G. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 5 – The responsibilities of the Financial Director shall be as follows:

- A. To keep accurate records of the financial status and transactions of this organization.
- B. To receive and disburse all monies of this organization;
- C. To have signature authority on all checks issued by this organization;
- D. To hold personal responsibility for all organization funds in his/her possession;
- E. To represent this organization when requesting funds from the Activities Funding Board;
- F. To conduct any fundraising activity;
- G. To assume the office of Administrative Affairs Director in his/her absence, vacancy, resignation, or dismissal;
- H. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 6 – The responsibilities of the Student Relations and Communications Director shall be as follows:

- A. To organize and implement events for membership (e.g., collaborative events with Counseling and Psychological Services);
- B. To maintain an active social media presence on GPSA accounts (including posts for all events);
- C. To assist the Event Planning Chair by creating materials to advertise upcoming events;

- D. Communicate with Graduate School Staff in advertising upcoming events and initiatives.
- E. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 7 - The responsibilities of the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Director shall be as follows:

- A. To oversee reviewing and scoring grant applications coordinated with The Graduate School;
- B. Help guide discussions between graduate and professional students and the offices of the Provost and Dean of the Graduate School on matters pertaining to academic wellbeing of students that include graduate tuition, dissertation policies, research, teaching and publication.
- C. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 8 - The responsibilities of the Alumni Relations Director shall be as follows:

- A. Work closely with Programs and Events director to create programming for networking opportunities between graduate and professional students and alumni
- B. To form a collaborative relationship with the UH Alumni Association.
- C. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 9 - The responsibilities of the College Representatives shall be as follows:

- A. To represent the students from their program;
- B. To serve on one aforementioned committee;
- C. To vote on proposals introduced by whomever concerned.
- D. To perform other such duties as the membership or Constitution may specify.

Section 10 - The number of Representatives from each College is determined by proportional representation. The Board of Directors may choose to include members at large if there is a greater number of successful candidates from one college than others. More information defining and explaining this process is below.

A. Definitions

- a. "Graduate or professional student(s)": the number of Master's, Doctoral, Law, Optometry, Pharmacy, or Medical students in a given college.
- b. "Qualifying college(s)": any college at the University of Houston – Main Campus (the University) that contains at least one (1) graduate or professional student in the previous academic year, based on statistics provided by the University.
- c. "New college(s)": any college that is not included in enrollment statistics provided by the University but has been formed by the University of Houston System's Board of Regents, is located at the University, has completed all necessary steps to becoming an

officially recognized college at the University, and has at least one (1) graduate or professional student.

- B. Representation and Enrollment Counts
  - a. Each college will be represented on the Executive Committee. The number of seats on the committee that each college is entitled to is described using the below methodology.
  - b. The number of graduate or professional students in each college will be determined using the previous academic year's enrollment statistics.
- C. College Executive Member Allocations
  - a. Each college with at least one (1) Master's, Doctoral, Law, Optometry, Pharmacy, or Medical student is entitled to a base allocation of one (1) Executive Committee member.
  - b. Fifteen (15) additional seats will be shared proportionally among the qualifying colleges in addition to the base allocation. The fifteen (15) seats will be allocated by dividing the number of graduate or professional students in each college by the total number of graduate or professional students across the University. Then, this number will be multiplied by fifteen (15). The result of this computation will give the number of proportional seats that will be allocated to each college, rounding to the nearest whole number.
  - c. New colleges do not receive any proportional representation allocations until enrollment statistics are provided by the University in the next academic year.
  - d. The final allocation of seats to each college will be the addition of the base allocation and the proportional allocation.
- D. Formula for College Executive Member Allocations
  - a. Formula:  $(\text{Number of Graduate and Professional Students by College} \div \text{Total Number of Graduate and Professional Students at the University}) \times 15 + 1 = \text{Total Allocation}^*$
  - b. \*Round to nearest whole number.
  - c. College of Architecture - 1 representative
  - d. College of the Arts - 2 representatives
  - e. Bauer - 3 representatives
  - f. CLASS - 3 representatives
  - g. College of Education - 3 representatives
  - h. College of Engineering - 4 representatives
  - i. HRM - 1 representatives
  - j. Law - 3 representatives
  - k. Medicine - 1 representative
  - l. NSM - 4 representatives
  - m. Nursing - 1 representative
  - n. Optometry - 2 representatives
  - o. Pharmacy - 3 representatives
  - p. Public Affairs - 1 representative

- q. Social Work - 2 representatives
- r. Technology - 2 representatives

#### ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

Section 1 – Candidates for any office of this organization must be Regular Members (or Regular Voting Members), thus being currently enrolled graduate and professional students of the University of Houston.

Section 2 – Candidates for any office of this organization shall nominate themselves.

Section 3 - Elections shall take place on the online platform AccessUH in collaboration with The Graduate School. All graduate and professional students may only vote once using their cougar.net account and may only vote for students from their College.

Section 4 – Election of officers shall be by a majority vote.

Section 5 – In case of a tie, the Current President shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 6 – If there is only one candidate applying for an office, that candidate shall take office by default.

Section 7 – Officers may be re-elected without limitation.

#### ARTICLE VI – REMOVAL

Section 1 – Any officer may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the membership, following the notification of the officer in question. Such notification shall be provided in writing no less than seven days prior to the vote. The vote shall be conducted according to Election procedures outlined in Article V.

Section 2 – In case of a tie, the Faculty/Staff Advisor shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 3 – A vacancy of any office shall be filled by Presidential appointment, subject to the approval of the membership.

#### ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Section 1 – Meetings of this organization shall be no less than once a month during the Fall and Spring semesters, the general day and hour to be set by the voting membership at the first meeting of the Fall semester.

Section 2 – Special meetings shall be called at the discretion of the President upon the request of any five voting members of this organization.

Section 3 – The President shall have the authority to modify the meeting calendar as benefits majority of the schedules of voting members of this organization.

#### ARTICLE VIII – RULES OF PROCEDURE

Section 1 – This organization shall use Robert’s Rules of Order, current edition, as its authority on parliamentary procedure.

Section 2 – Quorum

- A. One more than half of the people present shall constitute a quorum.
- B. No business shall be conducted without the presence of a quorum.
- C. On certain matters, the Legislative Body will be the voting members.  
This body can decide whether the matter should go to a larger vote.

Section 3 – Business shall be decided by majority vote.

Section 4 – All references to voting or approval of the membership of this organization refers to voting membership except where specified.

#### ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Section 1 – One or more voting members of this organization may author an amendment to this Constitution.

Section 2 – The amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Board for review and recommendation concerning legality, punctuation, placement, and word order.

Section 3 – The Executive Board shall present the amendment at the next meeting of this organization, a copy of the amendment being given to each voting membership (refers to voting member) of this organization. This shall constitute a first reading.

Section 4 – At the next meeting following the acceptance of an amendment, updated copies of this Constitution shall be given to each voting member.

Non-discrimination clause:

As a Registered Student Organization at the University of Houston we adhere to the University of Houston’s Non-Discrimination Policy. The University of Houston is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution. The university provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status except where such distinction is required by law. Additionally, the System prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Anti-hazing clause:

This organization will not initiate, participate in, or be witness to any act that inflicts or intends to inflict physical or mental harm or discomfort or which may demean, disgrace, or degrade any person, regardless of location, intent, or consent of participant(s).

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/2021 (month/year)