

GSS Constitution

ARTICLE I. Name of the Organization

The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Senate of Texas Christian University, hereafter referred to as the GSS.

ARTICLE II. Functions and Duties

The functions and duties of the GSS are as follows:

- To serve as the official representative governing body of all TCU graduate students, Brite Divinity School graduate students excepted.
- To provide a forum for the discussion of all issues with which graduate students are concerned.
- To represent graduate student interests before the TCU faculty, administration, and Trustees.
- To organize, promote, and conduct activities beneficial to graduate student life.
- To disseminate information of interest to graduate students at TCU.
- To provide support and assistance to graduate students participating in academic and professional activities.
- To own and manage property and accounts which will assist in securing the above objectives.
- To select graduate students for appointment to faculty and university committees.
- To provide a common association among graduate students from all departments of TCU.
- To serve as an umbrella governance organization for all graduate students at TCU.

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section 1: Composition

Membership in the GSS is open to all TCU graduate students registered for at least one credit hour of graduate studies. Graduate students who are enrolled in Brite Divinity School are excluded from membership.

Section 2: Membership Waivers

All TCU graduate students enrolled in at least one credit hour of graduate studies will have the option to become members of the GSS, unless they are excluded for reasons outlined in this constitution or for nonpayment of the annual GSS fee.

Section 3: Membership functions

All members who are present at a GSS general meeting have the voting power of the Senate.

ARTICLE IV. Representatives

Section 1: Composition

Representatives serving in the GSS shall be TCU graduate students elected or appointed as representatives to the Senate by their respective graduate program departments.

Section 2: Representation

Each TCU graduate degree program is entitled to direct representation in the GSS. Each TCU graduate program is entitled to elect or appoint one representative per graduate degree offered by the graduate program. For example, if a graduate program offers one M.A. degree and one

Ph.D. degree, then that graduate program would be entitled to elect or appoint a total of two representatives. A graduate program offering one Ph.D. degree and four M.A. degrees would be entitled to elect or appoint a total of five representatives.

Section 3: Functions and Duties

Representatives shall serve a liaison to their department.

Section 4: Elections

Each graduate program shall be responsible for selecting their representative.

Article V. MEETINGS

Section 1: Schedule

Meetings of the GSS shall be held six (6) times a year while graduate classes are in session during the Fall and Spring semesters. GSS meetings are open to all TCU graduate students. Meetings may be scheduled, rescheduled, or cancelled by vote of the Senate or at the discretion of the President.

Section 2: Procedure

Meetings will follow the parliamentary procedure as defined in the By Laws. With the exception of the President, a motion may be proposed by any member of the Senate. With the exception of the President and the member proposing the action, a motion may be seconded by any member of the Senate. Upon receiving the affirmation of a majority of the members present, any duly seconded motion shall pass, and otherwise shall be defeated. Each member, with the exception of the President, may cast one vote. The President may not cast a vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall cast the tie-breaking vote.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

Section 1: Offices

The elected officers of the Graduate Student Senate shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall serve as official representatives of the Senate. Officers have the power to sign documents on behalf of the GSS.

Section 2: Duties of the President

The President shall serve as Chair of the Senate and shall preside at all of its meetings. He or she shall sit as a member of the university's Graduate Council, ex-officio. He or she shall serve as the official representative of the Senate and shall have ultimate responsibility for the proper observance of all responsibilities delegated to members of the Senate or of any committee thereof.

Section 3: Duties of the Vice President

The Vice President shall serve as acting chair of the Senate in the absence of the President and during such time assume all duties of that office. He or she shall assist the President in the proper observance of all responsibilities delegated to the members of the Senate or any committee thereof.

Section 4: Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of all Senate meetings and meetings of the officers and shall distribute copies of that record to all representatives before the next meeting of the Senate. She or he shall maintain a current file of all minutes of the Senate meetings with any additional documentation of interest to the Senate. The Secretary shall keep a current list of the membership of the GSS and its representatives to all internal and external committees and inform the chairs of such bodies following selection of those representatives.

Section 5: Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall serve as Chair of the Budget and Funding Committee. He or she shall keep a full account of money expended and received and shall make a report of such account as the Senate may desire. He or she will coordinate University-administered receipts and all expenditures and financial responsibilities of the Senate. He or she shall have charge of all accounts managed by the Senate.

ARTICLE VII. APPOINTED POSITIONS

Section 1: Positions

The Senate or Executive Committee (i.e. officers) may establish a position at any time by majority vote of either the Senate or of the Executive Committee (whichever has created the position). At the time the position is created, the GSS or Executive Committee can nominate or recommend candidates to fill the position and a vote taken. The appointment or nomination shall pass by a majority vote.

Section 2: Vacancies

If, for any reason, a vacancy occurs in an appointed or nominated position, the President shall immediately open nominations for that position, and the vacancy shall be filled at any time by majority vote of Senate members present at the next meeting.

Section 3: Officer Assistants

Each officer of the GSS may, at his or her discretion, appoint a staff to assist in the performance of his or her duties. Staff members shall not be required to be GSS members or representatives.

Section 4: Removal

Individuals serving in appointed positions may be removed from office for dereliction of duties or abuse of power by majority vote of the officers.

ARTICLE VIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Elections Committee

The Elections Committee shall be composed of the outgoing GSS Officers and the Faculty Advisor and shall have the responsibility of overseeing the election of new officers and committee representatives.

Section 2: Nominations

Nominations for officers of the GSS shall be opened on the second Monday of February and closed on the first Monday of March. Any TCU graduate student who is eligible to be a member of GSS is eligible for nomination as an officer of the GSS pending that he or she has at least a 3.0 GPA. All nominations shall be delivered to the Elections Committee via email (gss@tcu.edu). Graduate students can self-nominate or nominate another student.

Section 3: Term of Office

The term of office for GSS officers shall run from June 1 – May 30. All officers shall assume office on June 1 following the April election, with the exception of officers elected to fill vacancies existing on or after June 1, who will assume office immediately.

Section 4: Term Limits

No member may serve as President of the GSS for more than one term. No member may serve as an officer of the GSS for more than three consecutive terms.

Section 5: Procedure

Election of officers for the following year shall take place by secret ballot via my.tcu.edu. All TCU

graduate students eligible to participate in GSS may vote in the election for new officers. Candidates must submit via email (gss@tcu.edu) their full name, TCU email address, a picture, and bio/platform (300 words, maximum) to be distributed by the Elections Committee in one PDF to all graduate students at least two (2) weeks prior to the election. The Elections Committee may determine the date of the election. The election shall be held in April.

In the event of a tie, a second election shall be required for that office. All candidates appearing on the first ballot shall appear on the second. If a tie remains after the second ballot, the Elections Committee shall decide the outcome of the election.

Section 6: Vacancies in the Office of President

If, for any reason (including change in student status), a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall become the President and the office of Vice President shall be considered vacant. If the office of Vice President is also vacant, the line of succession shall follow in the order of positions as listed in Article VI.

Section 7: Vacancies in other Elected Offices

If, for any reason (including change in student status), a vacancy occurs in an elected office other than President, the President shall inform the representatives and members of the vacancy and nominations for that office shall be opened immediately. If such a vacancy would cause hardship on GSS, the officers may select an interim officer until the next GSS meeting.

ARTICLE IX. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1: Removal of Officers

An officer can be removed from office for abuse of power or dereliction of duties.

Section 2: Initiation of Recall Procedures

Any member of the GSS shall be able to initiate recall procedures by providing a petition signed by at least one-fifth of the current representatives, who shall verify the signatures. Such a petition must specify the reasons for the recall.

Section 3: Response

The subject of the recall shall have the opportunity to be notified of the charges and have the right to defend himself/herself before the GSS. He or she may further include a written defense to accompany the validated recall petition when it is distributed to the representatives.

Section 4: Recall Vote

At the next meeting of the GSS, the petition will be presented by those initiating it (or their designate(s)) and the subject of the recall given the opportunity to defend himself/herself. After a period of questions, the Elections Committee shall hold a recall election in which each representative present is afforded one vote. If two-thirds of those representatives present vote for recall, the office will be declared vacant.

Section 5: Exclusion

The subject of a recall shall lose his/her vote as an officer while the recall procedures are pending. If the President is the subject, he or she shall pass the role of Chair of the GSS to the Vice President while the recall procedures are pending.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

Section 1: Ad Hoc Committees

The Senate may establish ad hoc committees at any time by majority vote of the Senate or of the Executive Committee. Ad Hoc committees shall have the same legitimacy of standing

committees, but may be disbanded by majority vote of the Senate or of the Executive Committee or upon completion of duties.

ARTICLE XI: SELECTION OF COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1: External Committees

The Graduate Student Senate shall make recommendations for representatives to external Faculty and University committees and to the GSS committees as outlined in Article X. Specifically, the GSS shall recommend representatives to the University Council and the Graduate Council.

Section 2: Eligibility

All elected representatives are eligible to serve on external committees.

Section 3: Election

Members must communicate their interest in serving on an external committee when nominations are opened and/or a vacancy occurs. Committee representatives will be elected by majority vote of the Council. Interim committee representatives may be approved by the Executive Committee under the recommendation of the President and subject to the approval of the Senate.

Section 4: Responsibilities

Representatives to committees shall report to the Senate on the activities of their committee and represent the concerns of the GSS students to that committee. Representatives must attend all meetings of their committee. All absences must be reported to and approved in advance by the President of the Senate.

Section 5: Removal from Office

Representatives who do not uphold their duties are subject to recall by majority vote of the Senate or Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XII. FINANCES

Section 1: Preparation of a Budget

The Budget and Funding Committee shall be responsible for preparing the budget for all GSS activities preceding the academic year in which the budget shall take effect. All proposed budgets must be balanced.

Section 2: Financial Records

The Treasurer shall keep a record of all receipts and expenditures of the Senate over the course of the year and present financial reports to the Senate each month.

Section 3: Cost of Operations

The Budget and Funding Committee shall be further charged with providing support for the basic operating and programming expenses of the Graduate Student Senate.

Section 4: Collection of Fees

The University will be responsible for collection of GSS fees each semester. The amount of fees collected from students will be subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

Section 1

This constitution may be amended in the following manner. Any representative to the Senate may propose, as a duly seconded motion, an amendment. If the majority of Senate members present pass the motion, the secretary shall then submit a text of the proposed amendment to all members of the Senate. To be adopted, one-half of the representatives in attendance must ratify the amendment. Ratification shall be in writing, and shall be completed at the next meeting of the Senate.

ARTICLE XIV. ADOPTION**Section 1**

This Constitution shall be effective immediately upon passage by acceptance of a majority of members at the first meeting.

As of 04/13/2015