GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
University of Vermont

BYLAWS
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**Article I - Senators**

Section A  
**Eligibility and Nominations**

Clause 1  
A program is defined as a graduate degree of study as recognized by the Graduate College of the University of Vermont. Only programs recognized by the Graduate College are eligible for representation in the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 2  
Each program is permitted a maximum of three (3) Senators.

Clause 3  
Senators must be either full-time or part-time graduate students enrolled at the University of Vermont and maintain good academic standing while holding office.

Clause 4  
The nomination of Senators shall be the responsibility of the graduate students enrolled in or the coordinator of the program seeking representation. Graduate students seeking to represent their program may self-nominate. Nominations must be written and submitted via email to the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 5  
Annual nominations shall take place in April for the following academic year. The Vice President shall send a written “Call For Senators” notification to all graduate students a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the deadline for nominations.

Clause 6  
If three (3) or fewer nominees are submitted, the nominees will be confirmed without holding elections.

Clause 6  
In the event that more than three (3) nominees are submitted, it shall be the responsibility of the graduate students enrolled in or the coordinator of the program to confirm the three (3) graduate students selected for representation.

Clause 7  
Vacancies remaining after annual nominations and confirmations or due to Senator resignations can be filled at any time during the academic year. Nominees may self-nominate for these vacancies. Confirmation in this manner shall require a unanimous vote of the Executive Council.

Section B  
**Senator Duties**

Clause 1  
Senators should strive to serve on at least one committee, group, or organization where graduate student representation is necessary, useful, or requested.

Clause 2  
Senators shall oversee the activities and actions of the Executive Council.

Clause 3  
Senators shall inform the graduate students and other interested parties of the program they represent of the actions and plans of the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 4  
Senators shall hold office until the end of the academic year during which they were confirmed or appointed.
Clause 5 Senators must attend Senate meetings regularly. If a Senator misses two (2) consecutive meetings, their absence is no longer considered when determining quorum, and they may be removed from office as outlined in Article I, Section C.

Clause 6 Senators that are unable to attend a Senate meeting may designate a proxy member to attend with all rights and privileges delegated to the Senator. Proxy representation must be designated in writing to the President before the scheduled meeting and shall be limited to two (2) meetings per semester.

Clause 7 Senators shall abide by all University of Vermont policies and by all local, state, and federal laws at Graduate Student Senate events.

Section C Removal from Office

Clause 1 Senators with two (2) consecutive absences from Senate meetings may be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the Executive Council.

Clause 2 For violations of Article I, Section B, Senators may also be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate. Any Senator or Executive Council member may initiate impeachment proceedings by petitioning the President in writing with a description of the violation. Discussion of impeachment charges and voting by the Senate shall occur at the regularly scheduled Senate meeting immediately following the petition to the President.

Article II - Executive Council Elections

Section A Eligibility

Clause 1 Executive Council members must fulfill all eligibility requirements of Senators as described in Article I, Section A.

Section B Elections

Clause 1 An outgoing member of the current Executive Council not running for re-election in the following academic year will serve as Chair of the Election Committee and organize nominations and elections for the following academic year’s Executive Council with the assistance of appointed Senators as needed. If every member of the Executive Council is running for re-election, a Senator will be chosen to serve as Chair by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate. The Chair of the Election Committee shall not be a candidate for any Graduate Student Senate office for the following academic year.

Clause 2 The Chair of the Election Committee shall only vote in case of a tie and will serve as tiebreaker for election of Executive Council positions.

Clause 3 The elections for all Executive Council positions for the academic year shall take place in April of the preceding Spring semester. The Chair of the Election
Committee shall send a written advertisement of elections and call for candidates to all graduate students by April 1st.

Clause 4  The deadline for nominations shall be a minimum of one (1) week prior to elections. Nominations must be submitted via email to the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 5  Each candidate must be a full time or part time graduate student for the entire academic year during which they would hold office.

Clause 6  Each candidate (opposed or unopposed) shall submit a statement of purpose for the position for which they are campaigning. Statements of purpose should explain the candidate’s abilities, ideas, and experience for the position and shall be posted online to the Graduate Student Senate website.

Clause 7  The Chair of the Election Committee shall organize a voting process that is anonymous and accessible to all graduate students.

Clause 8  Elections will be determined by a simple majority count.

Clause 9  The newly elected officers shall take office on the day of commencement.

**Article III - Executive Council Duties**

**Section A  Executive Council as a Whole**

Clause 1  The Graduate Student Senate Executive Council shall consist of the following five (5) offices: (i) President, (ii) Vice President, (iii) Secretary, (iv) Treasurer, and (v) Communications Director.

Clause 2  The Executive Council shall adhere to procedures of the Constitution and Bylaws.

Clause 3  The Executive Council shall meet weekly or as deemed necessary by the President.

Clause 4  The Executive Council members shall be equally responsible for planning and implementing all events and meetings of the GSS.

**Section B  Duties of the President**

Clause 1  The President shall be responsible for overseeing that the functions of the Graduate Student Senate and the Executive Council are carried out in a manner prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws as well as deemed appropriate by the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 2  The President shall act as liaison between University of Vermont administrators and the Graduate Student Senate.
Clause 3  The President shall represent the graduate students on the Graduate College Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees Executive Committee.

Clause 4  The President shall represent the graduate students or appoint graduate student representatives for all other committees requiring or requesting representation.

Clause 5  The President shall meet with the Dean of the Graduate College and the President of the University on a regular basis.

Clause 6  The President shall not vote during Senate meetings but may advise the Senate as needed.

Clause 7  The President shall preside over meetings of the Executive Council.

Section C  Duties of the Vice President

Clause 1  The Vice President shall act in the capacity of the President in any meeting or event where the President is unable to attend or participate.

Clause 2  The Vice President shall preside over Senate meetings and set the agenda with the assistance of the Executive Council.

Clause 2  The Vice President shall only vote at Senate meetings in case of a tie and will serve as tiebreaker.

Clause 3  The Vice President shall maintain the current list of Senators as well as all records of Senate meeting attendance. The Vice President shall inform the Executive Council of Senators violating the absence policy.

Clause 4  The Vice President is responsible for organizing the Graduate Student Orientation that occurs annually at the beginning of the fall semester with assistance from the Graduate College and the Executive Council.

Section D  Duties of the Treasurer

Clause 1  The Treasurer shall maintain all financial records of the Graduate Student Senate and shall be responsible for all financial planning and operations. The Treasurer shall make all financial information available to the Executive Council and Senate upon request.

Clause 2  The Treasurer shall serve as Chair of the Finance Committee and Mini-Grant Committee.

Clause 3  The Treasurer is responsible for the purchasing card linked to the Graduate Student Senate chart string.
Clause 4  The Treasurer is responsible for all purchases and allocations of funds made by the Graduate Student Senate. The Treasurer is responsible for keeping records of all receipts and proofs of purchase.

Clause 5  The Treasurer is responsible for reporting all expenses to the Administrative and Business Service Center before the deadline for journal reallocations every month.

Clause 6  At the end of the fall and spring semesters, the Treasurer shall submit a detailed report to the Senate reporting all funds spent on social, professional development, outreach, and training activities.

Clause 7  The Treasurer shall present a proposed budget for the following academic year at the final Senate meeting. The budget shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Section E  Duties of the Communications Director

Clause 1  The Communications Director shall be responsible for all communications to and from graduate students from the Graduate Student Senate.

Clause 2  The Communications Director shall monitor the Graduate Student Senate email account. Email communication shall be forwarded to the appropriate Executive Council member as needed.

Clause 3  The Communications Director shall send a weekly email summarizing upcoming events and news of the Graduate Student Senate to all graduate students using the Graduate Student Senate email account. Notices may include press releases, advertisements for events, grant funding activities, professional development, outreach, and/or training courses offered.

Clause 4  The Communications Director shall maintain the social media accounts of the Graduate Student Senate and be responsible for posting and uploading appropriate content as needed.

Section F  Duties of the Secretary

Clause 1  The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining all records of the Graduate Student Senate that are not required of the Treasurer.

Clause 2  The Secretary shall keep good and true minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Student Senate. The minutes shall be typed and submitted to the Senate at the following Senate meeting. Minutes approved by the Senate shall be made available to all graduate students within one (1) week of the meeting at which they were approved. The minutes shall also include a copy of all materials handed out at the Senate meeting.
Clause 3  The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the Graduate Student Senate website.

Section G  Removal from Office

Clause 1  A member of the Executive Council may be removed from office by the following procedure:

(1) Upon receipt of a petition for removal of an officer signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the Senate, a special Senate meeting shall be called within two regularly scheduled meetings to hear the charges. The Senate shall designate a special chair by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to preside at this meeting.

(2) The Executive Committee member whose removal is sought shall not participate in any Graduate Student Senate function between the receipt of the petition for removal and the hearing of the charges before the Senate, which shall be a period no longer than six (6) weeks.

(3) A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Senate shall be required to remove the Executive Council member from office.

(4) Following the removal of any Executive Committee member, a successor will be chosen immediately under the designated procedure for succession.

Clause 2  Any member of the Graduate Student Senate may start a petition to remove a Senator. Senators may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate, provided that notice of the impending removal has been placed upon the agenda of the meeting and circulated to all program representatives. The Senator facing removal shall be allowed an opportunity to defend themselves before a full meeting of the Senate.

Clause 3  A Senator or member of the Executive Council may resign by submitting a written resignation to the Executive Council.

Article IV - Use of Graduate Student Fees

Section A  Executive Council Stipends

Clause 1  Each member of the Executive Council shall receive a stipend for the Fall and Spring semester in which they hold office. The President and Vice President shall receive $1000, and the Treasurer, Secretary, and Communications Director shall receive $750. The stipends are to be paid in bimonthly installments over the semester (twice per month) in the same manner as paychecks for teaching and research assistantships for graduate students. If a member of the Executive Council resigns or is removed from office, the balance of the stipend shall be forfeited effective immediately upon their resignation.
Clause 2  For the strict use for administrative business (meetings of the Board of Trustees, Graduate College, etc.), a parking pass for the academic year may be allocated through Transportation and Parking services to the President and Vice President.

Section B  Graduate Student Senate Events

Clause 1  The Executive Council may use the funds from graduate student fees as determined by the yearly budget to host Graduate Student Senate events.

Clause 2  The Executive Council will have discretion over purchases or allocations of less than $500. For purchases exceeding $500, a two-thirds (2/3) majority approval must be sought from the Senate.

Section C  Funding Affiliated Groups

Clause 1  Funds may be provided to recognized University organizations to fund events and activities provided they are open to or hosted by graduate students.

**Article V - Standing Committees**

Section A  Finance Committee

Clause 1  A Finance Committee shall be established at the beginning of each Fall semester and be comprised of two (2) Senators and the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall serve as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Clause 2  The Finance Committee shall be responsible for providing guidance to the Executive Council and Senate on budgetary spending.

Clause 3  The Finance Committee shall review all applications for Mini Grants and make recommendations of funding to the Graduate College.

Section B  Student Affairs Committee

Clause 1  A Student Affairs Committee shall be established at the beginning of each Fall semester and shall be comprised of two (2) Senators and the President. The President shall serve as Chair of the Student Affairs Committee.

Clause 2  The Student Affairs Committee shall be responsible for documenting and providing guidance for grievances and concerns affecting graduate students that are submitted to the Graduate Student Senate.

**Article VI - Graduate Student Club Recognition**

Section A  Eligibility

Clause 1  The graduate student club must be an official student organization recognized by the University of Vermont.
Clause 2  The graduate student club membership must be comprised of at least seventy-five percent (75%) graduate students.

Clause 2  The graduate student club must provide a mission statement and/or constitution to be presented to the Senate.

Section B  Recognition and Representation Requirements

Clause 1  If the graduate student club only has members from one graduate program, the Senator of that program may represent the club at Senate meetings. If the program does not have a Senator, the club must nominate a graduate student to represent the program and club.

Clause 2  If the graduate student club spans multiple programs, a representative may attend Senate meetings to represent the club.

Clause 3  Recognition and approval of a graduate student club requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Clause 4  Recognition of graduate student clubs expires at the end of the academic year in which it was granted. Graduate student clubs may re-apply for recognition in the following year by providing an updated list of current members. Renewal of recognition requires unanimous approval of the Executive Council. Renewal may also be granted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Section C  Benefits of Recognition

Clause 1  Recognized graduate student clubs may request funding from the Graduate Student Senate. Approval of requests up to $500 is at the discretion of the Executive Council. Approval of requests exceeding $500 requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Clause 2  Recognized graduate student clubs may request the Graduate Student Senate book rooms or other venues on campus for club events. If the graduate student club has a separate chartstring from the Graduate Student Senate, the club must provide the chartstring for the booking request.

Article VII - Succession

Section A  Executive Council Resignation

Clause 1  In the event of a resignation of an Executive Council member, the President shall appoint a candidate, subject to the eligibility guidelines in Article IV of the Constitution. The candidate shall be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate. If the candidate is not confirmed, the process begins anew under the same guidelines until a candidate is confirmed.
Clause 2  If the resignation happens during the summer, the President shall appoint an interim Executive Council member to fulfill the responsibilities of the position until the first meeting of the Fall semester. At this point, the candidate is subject to the confirmation procedures of Clause 1.

Clause 3  If the President resigns, the Vice President immediately assumes the role of President and then appoints a candidate for Vice President as described above.

Section B  Senator Resignation

Clause 1  If a Senator resigns, then the Executive Council shall appoint a new Senator in the same manner as vacancies described in Article I, Section A, Clause 7.

Article VIII - Discussion Protocol

The Graduate Student Senate shall use “Robert’s Rules of Order” as a guide to parliamentary procedure for orderly discussion at meetings. The intent of any discussion should be to reach a solution and promote open debate by all members of a group.

Section A  Terms of Parliamentary Procedure

Clause 1  Order. Actions are to be performed at certain times during meetings. Actions allowed are “in order,” and those that are not allowed are “out of order.”

Clause 2  Quorum. A quorum is the number of Senators that need to be present at Senate meetings sufficient to pass official business. Quorum shall be one third (1/3) of the Senate. Senators in violation of the absence policy shall not be counted when determining quorum. The Treasurer, Secretary, and Communications Director shall be counted when determining quorum.

Clause 3  Motion. A motion is a suggestion to the Senate to take a specific action. Any member of the GSS may propose a motion. Only one motion can be considered at a time. To be discussed, a motion must be seconded.

Clause 4  Second. Motions proposed by a Senator to the Senate require that at least one other Senator supports consideration of the action. The second is made verbally after a motion is proposed.

Clause 5  Floor. Any person who has been granted the floor by the Vice President has the right to speak without being interrupted. The person with the floor may entertain questions asked by others without yielding the floor. The Vice President always determines who has the floor. One must have the floor to make a motion, but not to second one.
Clause 6 
Bill. A bill is a detailed statement of action that defines a specific course of action for the Senate or the Graduate Student Senate as a whole. The bill may contain many “whereas” clauses that outline the reasons for the action and one or more “enacted” clauses that outline the course of action to be taken. Any Senator or Executive Council member may write and/or sponsor a bill. Authors of bills are expected to read or paraphrase the bill and answer questions concerning its content or purpose to the Senate.

Clause 7 
Resolution. A resolution is a detailed statement of sentiment that expresses the opinion, support, or opposition of the Graduate Student Senate. The resolution may contain many “whereas” clauses that outline the reasons and one or more “resolved” clauses that outline the course of action to be taken. Any Senator or Executive Council member may write and/or sponsor a resolution. Authors of resolutions are expected to read or paraphrase the bill and answer questions concerning its content or purpose to the Senate.

Section B 
Order of Business for Senate Meetings

Clause 1 
Call to Order. The Vice President calls the meeting to order. Parliamentary procedure begins.

Clause 2 
Approval of Minutes. The Vice President shall ask if anyone is opposed to approval of the minutes of the previous Senate meeting as written. If no one objects, the minutes are approved by a vote of General Consent. If objection exists, a motion can be made to amend the minutes.

Clause 3 
Presidents Remark’s. The President may address the Senate and make any pertinent announcements regarding the meeting. Questions may be directed to the President, but any discussion at this point is out of order.

Clause 4 
Reports from Executive Council Members and Committee Representatives. Executive Council Members and Committee Representatives in turn may briefly announce any current business of their respective position. Questions may be directed to the speaker, but any discussion at this point is out of order.

Clause 5 
Old Business. Any business from the last meeting that was unresolved can be addressed at this point.

Clause 6 
New Business. Here the Senate may consider motions for new business. The agenda shall list any scheduled bills or resolutions to be treated separately in the order they are listed. After any scheduled New Business, the Vice President shall call for additional new business. After a motion is read or paraphrased aloud and seconded, the Vice President opens the floor for debate. Any person present may request the floor to discuss the motion at hand. The person holding the floor shall be decided by the Vice President.
Clause 7  General Announcements. Here any Senator or guest can request the floor to make general announcements or inquiries. Questions can be addressed to the speaker, but debate ended with New Business and any new issues must wait until Old Business is discussed at the next Senate meeting.

Clause 8  Adjourn. The Vice President shall announce the meeting adjourned. A motion may be made if there are any objections to adjourning.

Section C  Making Motions

Clause 1  An Executive Council member or Senator must obtain the floor in order to make a motion.

Clause 2  Motions must be receive a verbal second in order to be considered. The Vice President shall call for a second if needed. If no second is obtained, the motion is no longer considered for discussion.

Clause 3  The Vice President shall repeat the motion if a second is obtained and open the floor for discussion of the motion at hand.

Clause 4  During discussion, one of the following motions can be called:

(1) Call the Question. The Vice President or person granted the floor may call the question to end the discussion. After a verbal second to call the question is made, the Senate votes whether to call the question. A vote of General Consent or a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to call the question. If the call carries, a vote can be made on the original motion at hand. If the call fails to carry, discussion continues.

(2) Table the Motion. If an Executive Council member or a Senator wishes the motion to be set aside to conduct further business, a motion can be made to table the motion at hand. A vote of General Consent or a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to table the motion. If the motion to table carries, the discussion, bill, or resolution can be reintroduced later as Old Business.

(3) Amend the Motion. If an Executive Council member or Senator wishes the main motion to be carried in a modified form, a “friendly amendment” can be suggested and accepted by the author and/or sponsor of the main motion. Otherwise, a motion must be made to amend the original motion at hand.

(4) Refer to Committee. If an Executive Council member or a Senator judges that the motion should be further investigated before being considered by the Senate, a motion to refer to committee may be made. A vote of General Consent or a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to refer the motion to committee. If the motion to refer to committee passes, the business is sent to the appropriate standing committee or an ad hoc committee may be established, which shall be determined by the President.
Clause 5  If discussion ceases, the Vice President shall ask for any further discussion. If so, discussion continues. If not, the Vice President shall initiate a vote on the motion.

Section D  Voting

Passage of motions, bills, resolutions, or other business shall be by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate, unless otherwise specified by the Graduate Student Senate Constitution. The Vice President shall decide on the voting method to be used upon initiation of a vote during Senate meetings. The Vice President shall announce the result of a vote when completed. The four (4) voting methods that shall be used are vote by (i) show of hands, (ii) general consent, (iii) roll call, and (iv) secret ballot.

Clause 1  Show of Hands. The Vice President asks the voting representatives to show by their hand in turn if in favor, opposed, or in abstention. Votes are counted and verified by the Secretary.

Clause 2  General Consent. If a motion is not likely to be opposed, the President may ask for any objection before stating that the motion carries. The membership shows agreement by their silence. If any member with voting privileges objects, a different voting method shall be used.

Clause 3  Roll Call. If a record of each voter is desired, each voter verbally answers the vote when called by the Secretary. Individual votes by persons with voting privileges shall be recorded in the minutes.

Clause 4  Secret Ballot. If voting secrecy is desired, voters shall write their vote on a piece of paper to be collected and tallied by the Secretary. Individual votes shall remain anonymous.

Article IX - Ratification of the Constitution and Bylaws

Section A  Administrative Approval

Section B  Referendum Vote by the Graduate Student Body