

# UCSC Graduate Student Association Constitution & Bylaws

## Constitution

### Introduction

(amended ~~xxxx~~, 2017)

We, the graduate students of the University of California, Santa Cruz, in order to represent the interests of the graduate students, form a permanent association of graduate students, according to the rules of the University of California.

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### Article I. Name

A. The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Association of the University of California, Santa Cruz, hereinafter referred to as the GSA.

### Article II. Purpose

A. The Graduate Student Association shall exist to serve the collective interests of the graduate students of UCSC by promoting cooperation among graduate students of various boards of study at UCSC, representing their interests to the faculty, administration and staff of UCSC, providing a vehicle for and promoting cooperation with other graduate student organizations on this campus and system wide, and by providing services to the graduate student body which they cannot provide for themselves as individuals.

B. All UCSC graduate students, including both full-and part-time students, shall be members of the GSA.

C. Membership fees, if levied, shall be collected by the University, along with registration fees. Any assessment, or subsequent change in the event of assessment, must be approved by both:

-2/3 of the entire Council; and

-A majority of those voting in a referendum **via electronic ballot** among UCSC graduate students at large.

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## Article III. Officers

A. The GSA shall have an Executive **Board**. The Executive **Board** shall **be composed of the following** positions elected from the GSA membership: President, **Chair of the Council**, External Vice President, **Vice-President of Shared Governance**, Secretary, **Treasurer, and Solidarity Officer**. The President shall be chief executive officer and official representative of the GSA. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for recommending policy to the GSA Council and carrying on official GSA business between GSA Council meetings, to be approved by the GSA Council at the Council's next meeting.

B. The order of succession for the GSA officers shall be: President, **Chair of the Council**, **Vice-President of Shared Governance**, External Vice-President, Secretary, **Treasurer, and Solidarity Officer**. In the absence of the President, the duties of the President follow the order of succession.

C. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of participating graduate students through UCSC online elections. Potential candidates must nominate themselves via a candidate statement (300 words) by UCSC election deadline (determined yearly by Student Services).

D. The officers may not serve as both an officer and a department representative.

**E. Students wishing to nominate themselves for President, External Vice President, or Vice President of Shared Governance shall have served the GSA in some capacity for at least three months prior to nomination, unless they receive exemption by a majority vote of the Council.**

## Article IV. Council

A. The governing body of the GSA shall be the GSA Council. **The voting members of the Council shall be the Council Representatives and Executive Board members, excepting the Chair. In the case of a tie, the Chair may vote.**

**B. Each department that offers a graduate degree may send a representative to the Council. Each Council Representative must be voted in by the existing Council by a majority vote. Council**

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**Representatives may be removed by the graduate students of their department via petition to the Council,**

**C.** The **Council** representatives shall represent their boards at all Council meetings and inform their **department's** graduate students of GSA activities. Any **Council** representative may be recalled by graduate students of his or her **department**.

**D.** A quorum shall exist when at least 1/3 of the **Council** representatives are present. No GSA Council meeting may proceed without a quorum.

F. Council members must be present at the meetings to cast votes.

G. The council may, by 2/3 vote, remove an Executive Committee member for cause.

H. The Council shall meet at least three times per quarter, and shall establish a regular meeting time and place.

I. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Executive **Board** or at the written request of a quorum of Council members. A special meeting must be held on a week-day and must be publicized at least two days before the meeting is to occur. Official notification, including time, place and agenda should be posted in each of the graduate boards of study by the Executive Committee or the Council members calling the meeting.

J. All graduate students are guaranteed the right to attend and to address Council meetings.

K. By a 2/3 vote of the Council, an issue may be declared "open" for the following meeting. An "open" issue must be clearly specified as "open." An "open" issue is one **that** can be voted upon by all graduate students.

L. The parliamentary authority for Council meetings shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, except as otherwise **voted on at the first Council meeting of the school year**.

## Article V. Committees

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A. The Council shall have the power to create ad hoc and standing committees, and appoint GSA members to other campus committees.

B. The President and Vice-President **of Shared Governance** shall nominate GSA representatives to serve on a campus committee at a Council meeting, subject to approval by a majority vote of the Council members present.

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C. Any graduate student shall be eligible to serve as a GSA representative on a campus committee. **Committee representatives are responsible for reporting back to the Council any significant issues on the agenda of their committee.**

D. The president shall be ex-officio member of all GSA committees.

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## Article VI. **Sponsorship and Council Positions**

A. **Those seeking sponsorship of the GSA Council for referenda involving graduate students, including proposals to raise student fees, must follow the guidelines laid out in the UCSC Policy and Procedure on Campus Elections. Those who seek sponsorship via resolution of the GSA, must be graduate students, must request time on the GSA Council agenda, and must receive approval via majority vote of the Council.**

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B. **The Council may vote to take positions on public issues, following the guidelines laid out in the Campus Policy on Student Governments (63.00), and by majority vote of the Council.**

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## Article VII. Constitutional Amendments And Bylaws

A. The Constitution may be amended only by referenda, **following the policy laid out in the UCSC Policy and Procedures on Campus Elections.**

B. Bylaws conforming to this constitution may be adopted, amended, or deleted by a majority vote of the entire Council.

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## Article VIII.

This Constitution supersedes all previous GSA Constitutions of UCSC. This constitution will describe the only UCSC organization permitted to use the appellation Graduate Student Association.

# Bylaws

## I. Tax Exemption

(This Bylaw is required to qualify for Federal Income Tax exemption under IRC (c) (3) and should not be changed except to conform with changes in the Internal Revenue Law)

A. No part of the net earnings of the Graduate Student Association shall inure to private shareholders or individual members.

B. In the event of the dissolution of this GSA, the assets of the GSA shall be transferred to the UCSC Graduate Division, for providing financial aid to UCSC graduate students.

## II. Council Meetings

A. **Council meetings will be run on Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, unless otherwise voted on at the first meeting of the school year or otherwise changed by a majority vote of the Council (in reference to Constitution Article IV, Section L).**

**B. The Secretary will circulate a draft agenda at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Any graduate student may request an agenda item be added to the agenda up to 48 hours prior to the meeting. Timely items will be prioritized given time constraints, and less timely items may be moved to following meeting agenda.**

**C. A final copy of the agenda will be available 24 hours prior to the meeting.**

**D. Items not on the agenda at a Council meeting may be added to the agenda if so voted by a majority of Council members present. A separate vote is required for each new item. Recall of council members and changes in bylaws are exceptions and may not be added to the agenda in this fashion.**

**E. No business shall be voted upon at a Council meeting unless it has been placed on the agenda according to Bylaw II.B or II.D.**

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### III. Department Representation

A. There shall be one primary representative from each department that has a graduate program, or has students on limited status pending confirmation of the graduate program in their department, with the exception of the department furnishing the GSA representative to the Committee on Planning and Budget. That department is entitled to two primary representatives if one of them is the GSA representative to the Committee on Planning and Budget.

B. Each department's graduate students may establish a valid organization or vote to select a representative to the GSA. It is the duty of each department representative to keep a copy of the email or other evidence documenting the selection by his or her department members. Department representatives obtain the right to vote after their approval by a majority vote of the Council.

C. Departments that are entitled to a primary representative pursuant to bylaw III.A may elect one alternate representative in the same manner as the primary representative. The alternate takes on the role of the primary representative and has the right to vote on Council business only in the absence of the primary representative. If a department has two representatives in keeping with bylaw III.A, the alternate can only vote in place of the board representative who is not the GSA representative to the Committee on Planning and Budget.

D. Each department representative will receive a **nominal** stipend if he or she attends at least three Council meetings per quarter.

**E. Representatives to committees that require a significant time commitment will be considered for a greater stipend.**

F. The validity of a department's representative may be challenged by the students of that department by pursuant to bylaw III.B, and current documentation shall override any previous documentation.

G. The Executive Committee of the GSA may invalidate a department representative if he or she is not present at three consecutive GSA meetings. An invalidated representative forfeits his or her right to the stipend stipulated

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H. Each department representative is responsible for contacting their constituency by email or other means, once per quarter, or additionally upon request of the Executive officers.

## IV. Election, Succession, and Duties Of Executive Officers

A. **Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of participating graduate students through UCSC online elections.**

B. In the event of a vacancy in the **position of President** (due to resignation, recall, etc.,) the Officer next in line for that office will assume the responsibilities according to the following order of succession: **Chair of the Council, Vice President of Shared Governance, External Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Solidarity Officer, until the position can be filled through an interim election (see below).**

C. Upon a two-week written notice from the Executive Committee to the Council, the Council may vote to remove any GSA officer from office. The two-week written notice must contain an exhaustive justification for the recommendation for removal from office. Upon a majority vote of the Council, the officer is removed.

D. The GSA officers will receive stipends **based on estimated hourly work.** Such stipends will be part of the GSA budget and get paid from Membership fees. **The GSA Council will vote on the following year stipends by the last meeting of the spring quarter.**

### E. Officer Duties

**1** The President shall be the chief executive officer and official representative of the GSA, and act as prime point of contact between the Council and the campus administration, **including the Grad Division and the Graduate Dean. The President shall coordinate Executive Board meetings.** The President is expected to attend meetings of the Academic Senate Committee and the Graduate Council as a GSA representative. **If the President is unable to attend these meetings, they may**

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President: \$2300.00; in the event of co-presidents the stipend shall be split.  
External Vice-President: \$2400.00; Internal Vice-President: \$800.00; Secretary and Webmaster: \$800.00; Treasurer: \$800.00; Solidarity Officer: \$800

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**appoint representatives and is expected to consult with these representatives on a regular basis.** The President is expected to implement various policies and decisions made by the GSA Council, and may make recommendations to the Council for necessary actions. **The President shall also serve on the UC Council of Presidents.**

2 **The Chair of the Council shall coordinate and facilitate Council meetings, and recruit and serve as the main point of contact for Council representatives. The Chair shall coordinate Council action regarding the Constitution, the bylaws, and operating procedures. The Chair is the primary person responsible for coordinating referenda elections, when elections are necessary.**

3 The Vice-President for **Shared Governance** shall be the liaison officer for the GSA **and administrative** committees, **especially Academic Senate committees. The VPSG shall recruit, appoint, train and serve as the main point of contact for representatives for these committees. The VPSG shall track attendance and participation of committee representatives. The VPSG shall ensure that committee representatives report back information to the Council. The VPSG shall serve on the Committee for Planning and Budget, or appoint a representative in their place.**

4 The Vice-President for External Affairs (also called External Vice-President) shall act as prime point of contact between the Council and the systemwide administration and Regents. The External Vice-President shall be the graduate representative to the University of California Student Association (UCSA).

5 The Secretary shall be the recorder of all GSA meeting minutes and shall be responsible for preparing and distributing the GSA Council meeting notices, agendas, and minutes. The Secretary also maintains the information about GSA activities appearing on the campus calendar and the GSA website, holding the position of GSA webmaster.

6 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the GSA finances and oversees preparation and execution of the budget, including the disbursement of funds according to Council decisions.

7 **The Solidarity Officer shall serve as the point of contact between units on campus that serve students from historically marginalized backgrounds, and provide support to diverse**

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F. Procedures for Elections of Officers

- 1 Potential candidates for all offices will have the opportunity to address the Council before discussion. The Council reserves the right to discuss the candidate's qualifications privately (without candidates present). The Council may ask the candidate(s) to readdress potential concerns and questions following Council discussion. In this event, the current board of officers will inform candidates of the additional questions from the Council.
- 2 Elections for all officer positions will be **by online ballot in Spring quarter, except for interim elections as described below.**
- 3 **Interim elections for vacant positions will be held at the next GSA Council meeting by paper ballot.**
  - A. **The remaining Board should establish a neutral point of contact for students who wish to nominate themselves. An open call for self-nomination should be circulated widely. Interested candidates will be given the opportunity to address the Council prior to the vote.**
  - B. **2/3 of the Council must be present for an interim election to proceed.** Ballots will be tallied by Executive officers immediately following the voting.
  - C. Results will be posted and formally announced at the end of the meeting.
  - D. A majority, more than 50% of voting Council members, is required for the **interim** election of an officer. A run-off election can be held at the next meeting in the event of a tie or lack of quorum. This decision will be made at the discretion of the current board of officers by a majority vote.
  - E. Open positions may be filled with newly elected candidates after the first ballot tally. If any positions remain vacant, a second ballot will be issued at the following meeting and counted following the procedure above.

**G. Outgoing Executive Board members are expected to pass on relevant documents and to train incoming Board members. Outgoing Board members are encouraged to be available for questions during the Fall**

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**quarter of the incoming Board.**

## V. Fiscal Accountability

A. By the **second to** last Council meeting in the Spring Quarter, the Treasurer shall present a budget to the Council, with all line items displayed for the following year. **Executive Board stipends and Council representative stipends shall also be approved via this budget process.**

B. The Treasurer shall explain all budgetary items to the Council.

C. Upon approval of the Council **by the last Council meeting of Spring quarter**, the budget becomes GSA policy.

D. Any changes in the budget shall be approved by the Council.

E. The Council may subject the GSA to an audit.

## VI. Passage Of Special Legislation

A. In calculating percentage needed for passage of special legislation, e.g., bylaws, amendments, and placing items on the ballot, the base for the percentage shall be the number of department representatives as stipulated by Bylaw III.B.

B. The term "entire Council" is understood to mean more than 50% of the UCSC board representatives to the Council.

## VII. Campus-Wide Committees

A. The GSA shall be responsible for officially nominating all graduate student representatives to all campus-wide committees; including all Administrative and all Academic Senate Committees which call for graduate student representatives.

B. The President and Vice-President **of Shared Governance** shall nominate campus-wide representatives at a Council meeting, subject to approval by a majority vote of the Council members present. Committee members shall be reconfirmed every year by the President, Vice-President **of Shared**

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**Governance**, and a majority of the Council.

C. The various GSA campus-wide committee members shall be responsible for:

- 1 Voicing the official GSA position to their committees, where the official GSA position is determined by majority vote at any Council meeting.
- 2 Attending Council Meetings, at the request of any GSA Council member
- 3 Reporting all essentials of each committee meeting at the immediately subsequent Council Meeting, **or via additional reportback mechanisms the Executive Board has devised.**

D. Failure to uphold any of the above-listed responsibilities constitutes just cause for removal from the committee. A representative shall be notified in which ways they are not performing their duties adequately at least one week before their removal will be discussed and voted on at the next GSA Council meeting. Representatives are invited to attend the GSA meeting to defend their appointment and demonstrate their ability to rectify the concerns. The Executive Committee will recommend to the Council a committee representative's removal from office (and may also recommend a replacement). The Council must ratify this recommendation by a majority vote. The Vice-President **of Shared Governance** shall be responsible for monitoring the GSA Academic Senate Committee appointments.

E. Anyone serving as the GSA Council representative on an (additional) Academic Senate, UCSC Administrative, or UCSC Campus committee is eligible for **a nominal stipend** per term per committee.

- 1 The representative must attend at least 3 committee meetings per quarter. For committees that do not meet this often, serving on three different committees that meet quarterly also satisfies this requirement.
- 2 For a GSA Department Representative receiving an additional stipend, the committee for III.D. must also meet the criteria in this section and subsection 1.
- 3 In the event that the committee itself compensates the representative or the GSA has set up a separate stipend, the stipend paid by as per this section shall be decreased by the amount compensated.

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## VIII. Annual Power And Privilege Training

A. The GSA shall be responsible for holding an annual power and privilege training, mandatory for all GSA representatives

B. This training shall be led by an external facilitator who has the training and capacity to address issues of systems of oppression and lead trainees in conversations about action steps and resources to make concrete changes and impacts

C. Organization and implementation of this training shall be led by the Solidarity Officer. Collaboration with the GSC Program Coordinator is also available.

D. Training should take place towards the start of Fall quarter, ideally during the same time, but an off-week, as the regular GSA meeting.

E. Key goals of the training must include an analysis of how systemic oppression operates and a discussion of strategies and tools that can be used to combat oppression and create a supportive and safe environment for all students.

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