

Constitution of the UCSB Graduate Student Association

Terminology

“GSA Member”: any UCSB graduate student; all UCSB graduate students are members of the GSA

“GSA Assembly Member”: an official UCSB Graduate Degree Program representative to the UCSB GSA, who has voting power in the GSA Assembly

“GSA Assembly”: the total of all GSA Assembly Members, including the GSA Co-Presidents and all other GSA Officers

“GSA Assembly Meeting”: the routine meeting of the GSA Assembly, consisting of all available GSA Assembly Members

“GSA Executive Board”: a standing committee comprised of the GSA Co-Presidents and all other GSA Officers

Preamble

We, the graduate students of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), in order to represent the opinions and interests of UCSB graduate students, hereby form a permanent association of graduate students, according to the rules of the University of California, whose constitution is outlined in the following ten articles and their subsequent sections.

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ARTICLE I: NAME AND MEMBERSHIP

A. Name

- a. The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Association of the University of California, Santa Barbara, hereafter abbreviated and referred to as "UCSB GSA" or "the GSA."

B. Authority and Powers

- a. The GSA derives its authority from the Regents of the University of California through the Chancellor of UCSB.
- b. The GSA shall be the officially authorized student government of UCSB Graduate Students and, as such, shall represent the interests of UCSB Graduate Students.

C. GSA Members

- a. All UCSB Graduate Students, as defined by University and UCSB campus regulations, shall be GSA members.

ARTICLE II: GSA ASSEMBLY

A. GSA Assembly Powers

- a. The governing body of the GSA shall be the GSA Assembly, which shall conduct the business of the GSA.
- b. GSA Assembly Members include the following individuals:
 - i. GSA Assembly Members selected by the GSA members of Graduate Degree Programs; and
 - ii. the GSA Co-Presidents External and Internal; and
 - iii. All other GSA Officers; and
 - iv. The Immediate Past GSA Co-Presidents External and Internal.
 1. If still a GSA member, the Immediate Past GSA Co-Presidents External and Internal shall be a GSA Assembly Member for the UC academic year following their co-presidency.
- c. Each GSA Assembly Member shall have one vote.
 - i. The GSA Officer who presides at a GSA Assembly Meeting shall not vote except to break a tie.

B. GSA Assembly Member(s)

1. The GSA members of each academic department with at least one graduate degree program, as defined by the UCSB Graduate Division, shall be entitled to select one GSA Assembly Member for every fifty (50) GSA members in that academic department, or fraction thereof, according to the most recent ~~UC~~ UCSB

Fall Quarter census prior to the third GSA Assembly Meeting of the academic year.

- a. GSA Assembly Members selected by GSA Members of an academic department shall:
 - i. Represent the GSA members of the academic department at all GSA Assembly Meetings; and
 - ii. Inform the GSA members of the academic department of GSA activities; and
 - iii. Serve a one-year term.
 - b. GSA Assembly Members must be present at a GSA Assembly Meeting to cast votes, except in cases, as stated in this Constitution, where the entire GSA Membership must vote.
 - c. The GSA Assembly, by a two-thirds (66%) vote, and following a presentation to the GSA Assembly regarding the request for removal, may remove a GSA Officer or a GSA Assembly Member selected by an academic department.
 - i. The GSA members of an academic department may also recall their GSA Assembly Member(s) by a two-thirds (66%) vote and following a presentation to the GSA Assembly of the request for recall.
 - d. The GSA Assembly, by a simple majority (50% plus 1) vote, may resolve disputes concerning official academic department representation.
- C. GSA Assembly Meeting(s)
- a. The GSA Assembly shall meet at least three times per academic quarter, excluding Summer Quarter, and the GSA Assembly shall establish a routine time and place for its meetings.
 - b. The GSA Co-Presidents or designee shall be responsible for preparing the agenda for each GSA Assembly Meeting.
 - c. A quorum to conduct business must meet both of the following requirements:
 - i. At least fifteen (15) GSA Assembly Members shall be present; and
 - ii. At least one-half (50%) of the total number of GSA Assembly Members shall be present.
 - d. A Special Meeting of the GSA Assembly shall be called if a quorum of GSA Assembly Members submits a written request and a proposed agenda to the GSA Co-Presidents.
 - i. The GSA Executive Board may also call a Special Meeting.
 - ii. A Special Meeting shall be held on a weekday and shall be publicized at least five (5) UC business days in advance.
 - e. Any GSA member shall have the right to attend a GSA Assembly Meeting and to address the GSA Assembly.
- D. GSA Assembly Powers and Interpretations

- a. If a simple majority (50% plus 1) of the GSA members of a Graduate Degree Program object to a GSA Assembly decision, the name of the academic department and the nature of the objection shall be recorded along with the GSA Assembly decision.
- b. The GSA Assembly shall have the power to create GSA ad hoc and standing committees.
 - i. The GSA Co-Presidents shall be ex-officio members of all GSA committees.

ARTICLE III: GSA OFFICERS

A. GSA Executive Board

- a. There shall be a GSA Executive Board, which is comprised of all GSA Officers.
- b. The Executive Board shall be the executive body of the GSA and, as such, shall:
 - i. Conduct official GSA business, on behalf of the GSA Assembly, between each GSA Assembly Meeting, as consistent with established GSA policies;
 - ii. Report routinely to the GSA Assembly;
 - iii. Appoint GSA Committee Representatives;
 - iv. Make policy recommendations to the GSA Assembly;
 - v. Administer the assets and liabilities of the GSA and recommend funding allocations, subject to confirmation by the GSA Assembly;
 - vi. Make all decisions regarding GSA employment procedures and GSA employees.

B. GSA Officers and Duties

- a. GSA Officers shall represent and promote GSA opinions and positions to other organizations at UCSB and elsewhere.
- b. GSA Officers shall not simultaneously serve as GSA Assembly Members selected by an academic department.
- c. The GSA shall have seven (7) elected GSA Officers who shall serve a thirteen-month term, from June 1 through June 30. The month of June shall serve as a transition period between successive officers.
 - i. The GSA Co-Presidents shall be the chief executive and operating officers of the GSA and the presiding officers of the GSA Assembly.
 - ii. The Co-Presidents may designate presiding responsibilities to other GSA Officers upon agreement of the Executive Board.
 - iii. The Co-Presidents shall be the official representatives and spokespersons for the GSA.

- d. The GSA Co-President (External) shall be the chief executive and operating officer of the GSA.
 - i. The GSA Co-President (External) shall also:
 - 1. Represent GSA interests in all matters external to operations of the GSA.
 - e. The GSA Co-President (Internal) shall be the chief executive and operating officer of the GSA, and the presiding officer of the GSA Assembly and each GSA Assembly Meeting in coordination with the Co-President (External).
 - i. The GSA Co-President (Internal) shall also:
 - 1. Lead the administration of the internal operations of the GSA.
 - 2. Assign and coordinate representatives to campus committees and internal GSA committees.
 - f. The GSA Vice President of Financial Affairs shall be the chief financial officer of the GSA and shall assist the Co-Presidents in representing GSA interests in the area of campus budget and financial planning.
 - i. The GSA Vice President of Financial Affairs shall also:
 - 1. Prepare an annual budget;
 - 2. Present monthly financial reports to the GSA Assembly;
 - 3. Keep financial records;
 - 4. Maintain an inventory of GSA assets.
 - 5. Assist the GSA Co-Presidents in promoting a diverse population of GSA Committee Representatives to UCSB committees
 - g. The GSA Vice President of Communications shall be the chief information officer of the GSA and shall serve as public relations office and archivist.
 - i. The GSA Vice President of Communications shall also:
 - 1. Ensure that GSA Assembly Meeting minutes are recorded and published;
 - 2. Ensure that copies of the GSA Constitution, Bylaws, and enacted resolutions are available to all GSA members.
 - h. The GSA Vice President of Events shall serve as events planner and, in coordination with the Vice President of Communications, shall publicize them.
 - i. The GSA Vice President of Campus Affairs shall assist the GSA Co-Presidents in representing graduate students in matters of UCSB campus policy.
 - j. The GSA Vice President of External Affairs shall assist the GSA Co-Presidents in representing UCSB Graduate Student interests within the UC system and shall serve as the chief delegate of the GSA in matters external to the UC system.
- C. GSA Officer Elections

- a. Any GSA member who is enrolled at UCSB during the entire term of office shall be eligible to serve as an elected GSA Officer, provided they disclose any conflict of interest that may exist.
- b. Routine elections for GSA Officers shall be held each year during the Spring Quarter.
 - i. The GSA Co-Presidents shall announce the time, place, and manner of routine elections on or before the first day of the Spring Quarter.
 - ii. All GSA members shall have the right to nominate candidates for office and to vote in routine GSA Officer elections.
- c. A Special Election shall be held to fill any vacancy in an elected GSA Officer position.
 - i. Vacancies shall be announced within three (3) UC business days of the vacancy.
 - ii. All special elections shall be publicized at least five (5) business days in advance of the election.
 - iii. If one of the GSA Co-Presidency officer positions becomes vacant, the Vice President of Campus Affairs shall become the Acting Co-President. Subsequently, a Special Election for Co-President shall be held at the next regularly scheduled GSA Assembly Meeting that is more than five (5) business days after the announcement of the vacancy.
 - iv. If both officer positions of the GSA Co-Presidency become vacant, the GSA Vice President of Campus Affairs shall become Acting Co-President (Internal) and the GSA Vice President of External Affairs shall become Acting Co-President (External).
 - v. If neither the GSA Vice-President of Campus Affairs nor the GSA Vice-President of External Affairs is able to assume the duties of Acting Co-President, then a GSA Assembly Special Meeting shall be called to elect the Co-Presidents.
 - vi. If any other elected GSA Officer position becomes vacant, then a Special Election for that GSA Officer position shall take place at the next GSA Assembly Meeting that is more than five (5) business days after the announcement of the vacancy, and, if necessary, at each subsequent GSA Assembly Meeting until the position is filled.
 - vii. The Executive Board may appoint a GSA member to serve as an Acting GSA Officer until the position is filled, subject to approval of the GSA Assembly.
- D. Ad hoc and pro tempore Officers
 - a. The GSA Assembly, by a two-thirds (66%) vote, may establish ad hoc Officer positions.

- i. The term of office for an ad hoc Officer position shall not exceed one (1) academic quarter. The GSA Assembly, by a simple majority (50% plus 1) vote, may appoint a GSA member to fill an ad hoc Officer position.
- b. The GSA Assembly, by a two-thirds (66%) vote, may grant a leave of absence to an elected GSA Officer.
 - i. The leave of absence shall not exceed one (1) academic quarter.
 - ii. The GSA Assembly, by a simple majority (50% plus 1) vote, may appoint a GSA member to serve as a pro tempore Officer during the leave of absence.

ARTICLE IV: GSA FINANCES

A. Mandatory Membership and Other Mandatory Fee(s)

- a. The GSA may establish mandatory membership fees and other mandatory fees.
 - i. If levied, the Regents of the University of California shall collect fees on behalf of the GSA for transfer to the GSA.
- b. The establishment of a mandatory fee, or a subsequent change in a mandatory fee, shall be consistent with University and UCSB campus regulations, and shall be:
 - i. Discussed at two (2) GSA Assembly Meetings; and
 - ii. Approved for inclusion in the spring election ballot by two-thirds (66%) of the entire GSA Assembly; and
 - iii. Approved by a majority of those voting among the GSA members at large, provided that the number of GSA members casting valid votes in favor of the fee exceeds one-tenth (10%) of the number of all GSA members; and
 - iv. At least one-fifth (20%) of all GSA members must cast valid votes on the ballot on which the fee measure appears in order for the results of the vote on the fee measure to be valid.
 - 1. As a clarifying example, if there were 1,000 GSA members, then at least 101 valid votes in favor must be cast, out of a total of at least 200 valid votes cast overall.
- c. All mandatory fee measures must specify the date after which the proposed fee will no longer be assessed.
- d. If the proposed fee will continue indefinitely, then the fee measure language must specify that there is no expiration date for the fee.
- e. If the proposed fee will be subject to renewal, then the fee measure language must specify the interval of time before renewal will occur.

B. GSA Payments

- a. GSA earnings can be paid to GSA members in the following ways:
 - i. The GSA Executive Board may provide stipends and/or honoraria for GSA Officers, GSA Committee Representatives, and recipients of established GSA awards and grants.
 - ii. The GSA Executive Board may provide compensation to GSA members who are also GSA employees.
 - b. The GSA Executive Board and GSA Assembly may provide funds for events and activities that enhance graduate student life at UCSB.
- C. Voluntary Fees
- a. The GSA may establish or modify voluntary fees, as consistent with regulations of the University of California system, the UCSB campus, and the UCSB GSA.
- D. Dissolution of the GSA
- a. In the event of the dissolution of the GSA, the assets of the GSA shall be temporarily held by the UCSB Graduate Division and overseen by the outgoing officers of the GSA for the purpose of benefitting graduate students.
 - b. In the event of the dissolution of the GSA, the assets of the GSA shall be held in trust and stewardship by the Graduate Division until the creation of a successor legislative organization for Graduate Students. Upon the creation of said successor organization the assets held by the Graduate Division shall be transferred to the new legislative body.

ARTICLE V: GSA COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

- A. GSA Committee Representative Appointments
- a. The GSA shall be the only organization officially authorized to appoint graduate student members to UCSB campus-wide councils, committees, governance boards, and all other UCSB campus-wide, University of California, and external bodies on which UCSB Graduate Students are to be represented.
 - b. Such graduate student members shall be called GSA Committee Representatives.
 - c. Any GSA member will be eligible for consideration for committee appointment.
 - i. When applicable, vacancies will be announced at a GA meeting and members will nominate (or self-nominate) for consideration as Committee Representative.
 - ii. From there, Committee Representatives will be appointed by the GSA Executive Board. After appointment, a GSA Committee Representative shall immediately begin service.

- d. New GSA Committee Representative(s) shall be announced at the next GSA Assembly Meeting following the appointment.
 - e. Once appointed, the GSA website will be updated with the name and contact information of the new GSA Committee Representative along with the name of the Committee on which they will serve.
 - f. The GSA Executive Board, by a two-thirds (at least 66%) vote, may remove a GSA Committee Representative.
- B. GSA Committee Representative Duties
- a. Each GSA Committee Representative shall:
 - i. Attend all meetings of the bodies on which they represent the GSA; and
 - ii. Consult with and report to GSA Officers and the GSA Assembly, by filling out a post-committee meeting report; and
 - iii. Inform the bodies on which they serve of positions on relevant issues taken by the GSA.

ARTICLE VI: GRADUATE STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

- A. GSA Graduate Student Health Insurance Powers
- a. The UCSB Graduate Students shall have a University of California or UCSB campus Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan available to them.
 - b. The GSA shall have official representation on any committee overseeing the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan.
 - c. The GSA shall make recommendations to any such committee.

ARTICLE VII: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND POWERS

- A. GSA Constitutional Amendments
- a. Any GSA member may propose an amendment to this Constitution.
 - b. To be ratified, an amendment shall be consistent with University and UCSB campus regulations and shall be:
 - i. Discussed at two (2) GSA Assembly Meetings; and
 - ii. Approved by the following voting measures:
 - 1. Two-thirds (66%) of the entire GSA Assembly; and
 - 2. A majority of those voting among the GSA members at large, provided that the number of GSA members casting valid votes in favor of the Constitutional amendment exceeds ten percent (10%) of the number of all GSA members.
 - 3. At least twenty percent (20%) of all GSA members must cast valid votes on the ballot on which the Constitutional amendment

appears in order for the results of the vote on the Constitutional amendment to be valid.

- c. Upon ratification of an amendment, the amended Constitution immediately supersedes this GSA Constitution, which shall be archived and publicly accessible.
- B. GSA Executive Board Constitutional Interpretations
 - a. The GSA Executive Board, by a two-thirds (at least 66%) vote of its members, may interpret provisions of this Constitution.
 - b. The GSA Assembly may override any such interpretation by a two-thirds (66%) vote.
- C. GSA Assembly Constitutional Powers and Interpretations
 - a. The GSA Assembly may assume any power not reserved or prohibited by the University of California or UCSB campus regulations, or not prohibited by this Constitution.
 - b. This Constitution, and any Bylaw, resolution, or other decision taken pursuant to its authority shall be subject to all federal, state, local, University of California, and UCSB campus statutes and regulations.

ARTICLE VIII: BYLAWS

- A. GSA Bylaws Powers and Interpretations
 - a. The GSA Assembly, by a two-thirds (66%) vote, may establish, amend, or repeal Bylaws implementing the provisions of this Constitution.
 - b. Enacted Bylaws shall be valid indefinitely.
 - c. Any Bylaw found to conflict with this Constitution shall immediately and thereafter cease to be valid, and it shall be stricken from the Bylaws.
 - d. All new Bylaws shall be published within five (5) UC business days of enactment.
 - e. The Executive Board, by a two-thirds (66%) vote of its members, may interpret Bylaws and other acts of the GSA Assembly.
 - i. The GSA Assembly may override any such interpretation by a two-thirds (66%) vote.

ARTICLE XI: ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, MISCONDUCT, & DISCRIMINATION

It is important to note that Registered Campus Organization (RCO) leaders are not permitted to prohibit individual students from participating in their organization, in adherence to the University's non-discrimination policy.

If an officer becomes aware of a potential case of misconduct involving a member or

prospective member of the registered campus organization, it is strongly recommended that RCO leaders first seek counsel from Student Engagement and Leadership (SEAL) Professional Staff for guidance on specific cases.

The officer can also seek guidance from the Title IX Compliance and Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Office ("TIX/DHP Office") and/or the Office of Student Conduct for a case consultation.

ARTICLE X: NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

As a Registered Campus Organization, in accordance with applicable Federal and State Laws and University policy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related), ancestry, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran.

ADDENDUM I: NOTES AND REVISIONS

- A. This document was previously revised and approved by the UCSB GSA in April 2014.
- B. This document was previously revised and approved by the UCSB GSA in May 2016.
- C. This document was previously revised and approved by the UCSB GSA in May 2020.
- D. This document was previously revised and approved by the UCSB GSA in May 2023.
- E. This document in its current form was revised and approved by the UCSB GSA in May 2025.