



Supreme Constitution



Clarkson University Graduate Student Association

Ratified: 11th May, 2020

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Preamble

We, the Clarkson University Graduate Student Association, in order to unify interests, welfare, and concerns of the graduate students across all Clarkson University Campuses, thereby establish this Constitution that sets forth a joint platform for ideas and collaboration between Campuses. The principles enshrined in this document shall govern the interactions of self-organizing graduate student government's encompassed at Clarkson University.

Article I - Definitions

Section 1. GSA: The name of this organization shall be Clarkson University Graduate Student Association (CUGSA), hereafter referred to as the "Graduate Student Association" or "GSA". It is the supreme governing body of all graduate students at Clarkson University.

Section 2. General Body: All persons enrolled as a degree-seeking graduate student at Clarkson University, regardless of their specific campus.

Section 3. Department: A group of faculty and graduate students in a field of study, organized under a department chairperson and recognized by Clarkson University as having a graduate program.

Section 4. Administration: All managerial staff of Clarkson University in its entirety, above and beyond the departmental chairpersons and faculty.

Section 5. Campus Community: A distinct general body associated with Clarkson University campus, that resides under the dean of the graduate school.

Section 6. Minor-GSA: The governing structure for the graduate students of a particular Campus Community, with jurisdiction and authority below that of the GSA.

Section 7. Graduate Representative: A member of the Graduate Council appointed by the respective Minor-GSA.

Section 8. Quorum: Is based on the total numbers of Graduate Representatives in the Graduate Council

Article II - Purpose

Section 1.

The purpose of the GSA shall be to advocate on behalf of the General Body and provide a connection to the administration on behalf of the General Body, especially in reference to the development of policy.

Section 2.

The GSA shall provide a secure space for the General Body to voice opinions, and raise problems and concerns associated with departments, graduate school, and Clarkson University as a whole.

Section 3.

The GSA shall organize programs and events which strengthen and enhance the community experience amongst the General Body.

Section 4.

The GSA shall encourage and facilitate multi-disciplinary collaboration across all departments in order to foster a vast network amongst the General Body in all disciplines.

Article III - Membership

Section 1. All individuals of the General Body shall automatically be considered members of the GSA.

Section 2. Membership may only be revoked upon completion of a member's degree program or removal from the graduate school, in accordance with Article 1 section 2.

Article IV - Graduate Council

Section 1. - Composition: Shall be composed of the Executive Board and voting Representatives from all campus communities.

Subsection I. Members of the Graduate Council cannot simultaneously be members of the administration.

Section 2. - Representatives: Shall be voting members of the Graduate Council sent forth from the Minor-GSAs.

Subsection I. Minor GSAs may appoint as many Representatives as they desire.

Subsection II. The voting power of the Representatives shall be determined at the beginning of the academic year by a weighted average. A representative vote shall be the Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) of their campus community divided by the total number of Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) between all recognized campus communities then divided by the total number of representatives from the campus community.

$$\text{Equivalent Vote} = \frac{\text{Vote} \times \text{FTE of Campus}}{\text{Total FTE of Clarkson University} \times \text{Total Representative of Particular Campus}}$$

Subsection III. Any Graduate Council member, being absent from a Graduate Council meeting, would forfeit the voting right for the meeting and the voting weight would be assigned to the present members.

Section 3. - Executive Board: The Executive Board shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. Due to geographical constraints and the organizational structure of Clarkson University, the Executive Board shall be made of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Parliamentarian of the Potsdam Campus Minor-GSA.

Subsection I. Officers on the Executive Board shall be referred to as Executive Officers.

Subsection II. The executive board cannot vote unless a tie occurs.

Section 4. - Powers: The graduate Council shall review and settle all policies or initiatives presented to them by the Executive Board, Representatives, or the general body that will only affect all campus communities.

Section 5. - Quorum: Shall be considered to be two-thirds of the voting Representatives if all the Minor-GSAs adhere to Section 6 of Article IV of this document.

Section 6. - Meeting Requirements: The Graduate Council shall meet at least once a month and be attended by at least one representative member from each Minor-GSA.

Section 7. - Standards of the Graduate Council: Any member of the Graduate Council can be impeached for venturing in any of the following grounds:

1. Deliberately acting contrary to the constitutions, its amendments and By-laws.
2. Partaking in or committing embezzlement, fraud or other felonies and serious crimes.
3. Failing to adhere to the Clarkson University Graduate Students' Code of Conduct.
4. Repeated failure to uphold the values and follow the formal etiquette of the CUGSA.
5. Repeated occurrence of uncivilized or unethical actions as a member of the CUGSA.

Article V - Executive Board

Section 1. - Terms: Terms in office shall be for one (1) academic year, from the day of May commencement to the next May commencement as defined in the University academic calendar, regardless of whether commencement occurs or not.

Section 2. - Roles and Responsibilities:

President

- The President shall act as the chief executive of the GSA, its chief spokesperson, and its liaison to the administration.
- The President shall be responsible for developing meeting agendas in conjunction with all interested parties.
- The President shall preside over the agenda in consultation with the Parliamentarian and all other interested parties for all meetings, and manage the general business of GSA.
- The President shall delegate duties to other GSA Executive Officers, and other Minor-GSA members as needed, beyond the defined responsibilities in the constitution.

Vice President

- The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the absence of the President.
- Shall keep order and speaking times as determined by the agenda.
- The Vice President shall act as a point of contact with the General Body and deal with the affairs of the General Body.

Treasurer

- The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the GSA in accordance with the financial By-Laws, shall keep accounts current, and shall submit a financial update at Graduate Council meetings.
- The Treasurer shall prepare the GSA's budget for the Academic year in conjunction with all interested parties.
- The Treasurer shall be responsible for collecting and updating all budget expenditures throughout the term.

Secretary

- The Secretary shall be the custodian of all meeting minutes, new and old business of the GSA Graduate Council, shall record meeting attendance, and shall execute all communications crafted in collaboration with the GSA.
- The Secretary shall be in charge of all forms of media and communication, in conjunction with the president, in order to keep the General Body informed and to manage the day-to-day duties of the GSA.
- The secretary shall serve as administrator in conjunction with the President for all GSA electronic communication accounts and shall receive any correspondence intended for GSA.
- The secretary shall not infringe upon the role and responsibilities of the Parliamentarian.

Parliamentarian

- The Parliamentarian shall advise the GSA, and all interested parties, on procedural questions and interpretations of the GSA Supreme Constitution, GSA Supreme By-Laws, and GSA Supreme precedents.
- The Parliamentarian shall ensure that the Constitution, By-Laws, and Precedents are followed during all meeting and activities of the GSA
- The Parliamentarian shall carry out, record, and present the results of all votes.
- The Parliamentarian shall maintain all records, organize all records, and transfer all information into archives at the end of the term.
- The Parliamentarian shall maintain all records of all GSA minor officials, noting their names and positions, past and present.
- The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for updating the Constitution, By-Laws, and precedents of all GSA organizations, including Minor-GSA's.
- The Parliamentarian shall keep all event pictures organized and tagged, as well as make a document detailing how the event was created, and how the event can be improved upon in the future.
- The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for managing the final form of the GSA Website.

Section 3. No Executive officers are allowed to be absent for two consecutive Graduate Council meetings unless there is an absolute emergency. In case of emergency it is the Executive Officer's responsibility to notify CUGSA as soon as possible.

Article VI - Committees

Section 1. - Standing Committees: This can consist of Executive Officers, Representatives, any interested members of the general body, and an advisor if necessary.

Subsection I. The GSA shall consist of two standing committees that cannot be disbanded. The two committees are The Financial Affairs committee and The Administrative Committee.

Subsection II. The Financial Affairs Committee shall be run by the Treasurer and consist of at least the Treasurer and the President. This committee shall be responsible for aiding the Treasurer in the fulfillment of his/her duties.

SubSection III. The Administrative Committee shall be run by the President and consist of at least the Secretary, and the President. This committee is responsible for aiding the President in the fulfillment of his/her duties. This committee is responsible for representing the interests of the GSA to all the Clarkson University entities.

Section 2. Ad-Hoc Committees: The President, in consultation with the Graduate Council, shall form Ad-Hoc committees as the Graduate Council deems necessary, by a two-third ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority.

Section 3. Duration of Committees: Standing committees shall serve the lifetime of the Graduate Council. Ad-Hoc committees shall serve until the Graduate Council determines the purpose for their creation is complete or May commencement occurs - whichever is shorter.

Article VII - Meetings and Procedures

Section 1. Regular Meetings of the Graduate Council shall be conducted at least once per month during a semester and shall be open to all members of the General Body within the limits of the fire code of the meeting room.

Subsection I: The general body members, being present in the graduate council may observe the meeting procedure and can speak up in the comment step of section 5 of this article.

Subsection II: Any issues of the general body would need to be officially communicated via email in advance or be brought to the attention of any graduate council member before the graduate council meeting.

Section 2. Departments, Faculty, and Administration would only attend the CUGSA meetings as guest speakers.

Section 3. Any guest speaker would leave the meeting after presenting their agenda unless the Executive board agrees otherwise unanimously.

Section 4. The date, time, shall be posted at least twenty four (24) hours in advance of the meeting and agenda for meetings shall be posted at least twelve (12) hours in advance of the meetings so that the Secretary can convey this information to this to the general body as the Executive Board sees fit.

Section 5. Meetings shall be organized as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Reading, Correction, and Approval of Minutes
4. Guest Speakers
5. Officer Reports
6. Committee Reports
7. Old Business

8. New Business
9. Comments
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment

Section 6. Only a Graduate Council member can request a motion for discussion in the new business section of the graduate council meeting.

Section 7. Special meetings may be called at the request of any member of the Executive Board, and each member of the Graduate Council shall be contacted and informed by the Secretary at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance if deemed necessary. Attendance would only include the Graduate Council Members and any necessary individuals.

Subsection I. Special meetings may be off the record upon a majority vote of the Graduate Council.

Article VIII - Elections, Appointments, and Removal

Section 1. - Election, Appointment Graduate Council Representatives: Electing, Appointing, and Removing of Representatives shall be in accordance with the Minor-GSA's Electing, Appointing, and Removal procedures.

Subsection I. The Minor-GSAs can remove and replace any members of the Graduate Council Representatives whenever they choose in compliance with Section 3 of this Article.

Subsection II: If a Graduate Council Representative is in violation of Article IV, Section 7, the Executive Board will make a request to the respective Minor-GSA for their removal. The voting right of said representative can be suspended by the Executive Board until the removal process is completed.

Section 2. - Removal of Executive Officers: Removal of Executive Officers shall be enacted should they fail to perform the roles and responsibilities outlined in Article V, Section 2, and for the following grounds mentioned in Article IV Section 7 of this document.

Subsection I. A Graduate Council representative or an Executive Board Officer who has suspicion that an Executive Officer has failed to perform his/her roles and responsibilities and they must inform the Parliamentarian. If the Parliamentarian agrees that an Executive Officer has failed to perform his/her roles and responsibilities then the Parliamentarian would notify the President. The President would act as a

peacekeeper/mediator between/among the parties to find a suitable solution of the complaint for everyone involved. If the President or Parliamentarian is in question, other Executive Board officers would take over this responsibility.

Subsection II. If the mediation process as mentioned in the subsection I fails, the Graduate Council representative or Executive Board Officer must make a request to both Advisors in order to initiate the removal of an Executive Officer. If the advisors deem the reason(s) for removal legitimate, a motion for removal will be initiated by the requesting person in the new business section of the Graduate Council meeting.

Subsection III. If the motion passes, a special off the record meeting of the Graduate Council must be scheduled by the advisors and the person at fault would be temporarily suspended from his/her position by the majority vote in the Graduate Council until a definite verdict is reached.

Subsection IV. The person who requested removal shall give their reasoning for removal followed by a statement from the approving advisors. Then the accused officer shall be given the ability to defend. After this, questioning of the initiator and the accused officer will begin. The two individuals shall leave the room for debate to commence.

Subsection V. A removal will occur by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) blind vote of all Representatives and Executive Officers, excluding the initiator and accused officer.

Section 3. - Notice of Appointment or Removal: Removal of the said individual will take effect once the Secretary receives the notice. A replacement must be appointed by the particular Minor-GSA within two (2) weeks of action taking effect to complete the term.

Article IX - Financials

Section 1. - Annual Budget: The Financial Affairs Committee shall prepare an itemized annual budget listing all projected income and expenditures for the GSA, in accordance with the financial Bylaws.

Section 2. - Expenditures by Minor-GSAs: Minor-GSAs may, at their discretion, spend those funds granted to them by the GSA budget. Records and receipts of all expenditures and incomes must be submitted to the Treasurer of the GSA within two (2) weeks of the event.

Section 3. - Monthly Account Statements: Statements are to be kept on file by the Treasurer of GSA and the files must be available for inspection by any governing members of the GSA.

This statement must be made available before and presented at the scheduled meeting of the GSA-Graduate Council.

Section 4. - Semester Budget Review: A semester budget review shall be conducted by the Financial Affairs Committee to ensure excess or deficit funds are allocated and reallocated accordingly. The new budget must be presented to the Graduate Council.

Subsection I. - The CUGSA shall publish the semester budget review for the general body from the financial year 2021-22.

Section 5. - Grant Funding: All individuals, departments, and groups which receive GSA funding must distribute and record said funds in accordance with finance Bylaws.

Article X. Advisors & Associate

Section 1. - Requirement: The Advisors of the CUGSA are to be the current Dean of the Clarkson University Graduate School, an administrator of Student Affairs & International Relations, and one faculty selected by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Graduate Council.

Subsection I. Any advisors should not have any conflict of interest and should not be associated with any other student governments of Clarkson University.

Section 2. - Selection: The advisor from Student Affairs & International Relations shall be appointed yearly by the GSA Executive Board in consultation with the dean of the graduate school, and approved by the GSA Graduate Council.

Subsection I. Minor-GSAs have the ability to appoint a local advisor(s) as they see fit.

Section 3. - Duties: The responsibilities of the advisor shall be to:

- Explain and clarify all the campus policies and procedures that apply to the organization.
- Maintain contact with the school administration regarding matters concerning the GSA.
- Provide direction in the area of parliamentary procedure, meeting facilitation, team-building, goal setting, and program planning.
- Maintain an awareness of the activities and programs sponsored by the GSA.
- Attend at least one GSA Graduate Council meeting once a month.
- Meet on a regular basis with the President and Vice-president to discuss upcoming meetings, long-range plans, goals, problems, feedback, and honest opinions on all GSA initiatives.
- Assist the Treasurer in monitoring expenditures, fundraising activities, and corporate sponsorship to maintain an accurate and up-to-date account ledger.

- Assist in the orientation of new officers.
- Issue certificates of achievements for Graduate Council representatives and Executive Board Officers who have served at least six months successfully.
- Serve as the chair of the GSA's Judicial body; as mentioned in Article XI.
- The advisors must conduct individualized exit interviews upon completion of the executive board officers' terms, to help determine best practices for future GSA leadership.

Section 4. Duties of the Associate: CUGSA may choose to employ one person from the administration or unfunded graduate students on a part-time basis for up to 20 hours per month to help maintain CUGSA website, send out regular communications to all the graduate students, and act as an associate to the CUGSA secretary.

Subsection I. The associate would not have voting right in the Graduate Council or Executive Board.

Subsection II. The associate will be chosen on an annual basis in consultation with the CUGSA advisors

Article XI - Judicial Board & Review

Section 1. - Motion Review: The Advisors of the GSA are required to review motions passed by the GSA and provide their honest feedback on any decision or initiative of the GSA.

Section 2. - Procedural Review: The Judicial Board shall resolve procedural failures and interpretation disagreements with regards to any GSA Constitution and Bylaws.

Subsection I. When a procedural failure or interpretation disagreement is presented to one (1) of the GSA's advisors, the Judicial Board must be initiated by the advisor and exist for the duration of the case. The Judicial Board shall meet within one (1) week of the initial presentation and alert all affected parties via a formal notice.

Subsection II. The Judicial Board shall be composed of three members, at least one of the advisors, at least one of the former members of CUGSA. All members must familiarize themselves with all GSA Constitution, Bylaws, and operating documents relevant to the case. Any member of the Judicial Board with a conflict of interest must step aside from the procedural review process. The chair of the Judicial Board will appoint the former CUGSA member/s. If any former CUGSA members are not available the chair of the Judicial Board would appoint anyone they see fit.

Subsection III. The person or party which presented the procedural failure or interpretation disagreement must meet with the Judicial Board in person and provide an explanation. This is followed by comments and explanations from all affected parties. All parties involved can request to produce any witness during the procedural review with an advanced notice to the chair of the Judicial board. Judicial board shall have the authority to call or present any witness during the hearing process. Any witness cannot be part of the Judicial Board.

Subsection IV. The Judicial Board shall resolve the dispute within two (2) weeks from the initial presentation to the advisor, but should be resolved expeditiously. Final verdict would be reached by the unanimous vote of the Judicial board members.

Subsection V. By failing to comply or attend the procedural review process at the agreed upon time, the party shall forfeit the right to defend their position or case and accept any judgement provided by the Judicial Board. Judgement provided by the Judicial board would be considered the final verdict of the case.

Article XII - Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1. A proposed amendment(s) of this Constitution may be initiated by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote of the Graduate Council, after which a Constitutional Amendment Committee shall be formed and members appointed by the President.

Section 2. The Constitutional Amendment Committee shall be composed of Parliamentarian, one Graduate Representative, and one (1) member of the General Body who are not currently a voting member of the Graduate Council or any Minor-GSA governing body.

Section 3. The Constitutional Amendment Committee shall be tasked with writing the final form of the amendment and holding open forums with the General body (however they see fit), with regards to their thoughts, opinions, and comments on the amendment.

Section 4. The Constitutional Amendment Committee shall present the final form of the amendment to the Graduate Council, which must approve it unanimously in order to move to the ratification stage.

Section 5. The final amendment shall then be presented to the GSA advisors for review. Advisors shall have the ability to approve or veto the amendment.

Subsection I. If the amendment is approved by both advisors, it shall then be added to the Constitution by the Parliamentarian. If the amendment is vetoed by either advisor, it shall return to the Constitutional amendment committee with an explanation for the veto. The process shall then recommence at Section 3.

Subsection II. Article XII, Section 5 shall cease to be enforced two years after the ratification of this Constitution.

Section 6. In order for the amendment to be ratified, a university-wide vote with the general body must be held. Ratification must occur with at least 10% participation of the general body, and with 75% of the votes in favor of the amendment. However, the vote is administered and run by the Constitutional Amendment Committee.

Subsection I. Article XII, Section 6 shall come into effect two years after the ratification of this Constitution in such a manner that it will replace Article XII, Section 5 in operations.

Article XIII. Ratification

Section 1. This Constitution shall be ratified by a unanimous vote of all Minor-GSA Presidents and advisors to the Graduate Council from the academic year 2019-2020.

Postamble

With this document, we, the members of the Clarkson University Graduate Student Association (GSA) establish a bridge for representation across all Clarkson University campuses. From henceforth, we declare a new era of cooperation for the graduate body, in the history of this great learning institution.