

The Graduate Student Assembly  
The University of Texas at Austin

Resolution: G.B 14 (F) 6 Sponsor(s): Rules and Administration Committee

Action Taken: Passed

Certified:



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President, Graduate Student Assembly

**Approval of Changes to the Bylaws of the Graduate Student Assembly**

Summary: A bill approving the changes to the Bylaws of the Graduate Student Assembly

Whereas:

The Committee on Constitutional Clarity and Reform was tasked with correcting the governing documents of the Graduate Student Assembly to make them consistent and enforceable

Whereas:

The Bylaws were not consistent with other governing documents and needed to be rewritten to facilitate the efficient operation of the Graduate Student Assembly

Whereas:

The Constitutional Reform Committee has dutifully reviewed and updated the Bylaws to meet the above stated goals; then,

Therefore let it be resolved (1):  
that Art II read

**ARTICLE II  
Departmental Representation**

**Section 1. Apportionment.** The Graduate Student Assembly divides graduate students into constituencies based on their field of Study. The list of the fields of study will be given by the roster kept by the Graduate School as of the first of May.

**1.1 List of Constituencies.** A current list of graduate student constituencies shall be maintained by the Membership Director and published on the GSA website.

**1.2 Affiliation.** Graduate students are considered affiliated with the constituency to which their graduate program belongs. Students enrolled in interdisciplinary or intercollegial programs may be considered members of multiple constituencies, but can represent only one constituency to the Graduate Student Assembly.

**1.3 Minimum Requirements.** Constituencies shall be determined such that each graduate program, as defined in the most recent Graduate Catalog and Law School Catalog, is included within a constituency. Each constituency shall receive, at minimum, one representative seat and one alternate seat.

**1.4 Annual Reapportionment.** The Graduate Student Assembly shall reapportion itself yearly by no later than one (1) month before the end of the legislative session. If the body fails to pass a resolution to this effect by that time, the body shall revert to the previous year's representational apportionment.

**1.4.1 Additional Seats.**

Additional seats can be allocated to a constituency with the goal of seeking approximately equal numbers of students represented by each seat.

**1.4.2 Notification.** The Membership Director shall notify all affected Graduate Programs of any changes in apportionment.

**1.5 Apportionment Authority.** Apportionment recommendations shall be the responsibility of the Membership Director and the Membership Committee.

**1.5.1 Relevant Statistics.** For purposes of determining additional seats, the registration report published by the Office of Information Management and Analysis should be considered the primary authority. Additional or more in depth registration numbers from other sources may be used if these data are not able to be procured from the Office of Information Management and Analysis.

**Section 2. Elections.** General elections for departmental and alternate representatives shall be held by the second week of the fall semester. Each graduate student constituency shall elect its representatives at its own discretion, following the subsequent guidelines:

**2.1 Voting.** Each graduate student may cast one (1) vote for their respective departmental representative(s), and one (1) vote for their respective alternate representative(s) in the Graduate Student Assembly.

**2.2 Certification.** The candidate for each departmental representative or alternate representative receiving the highest number of votes for the Assembly seat shall be certified in the respective position.

**Section 3. Vacancies.** Voting Member positions that are not filled during general elections may remain open through the term and may be filled by nominations, at the discretion of the Membership Director and Membership Committee.

and

Be it further resolved (2):

That Art III read

### **ARTICLE III Representative Responsibilities**

**Section 1. Faithful Representation.** Members of the Graduate Student Assembly shall be responsible for representing faithfully, to the organizations to which they are elected or appointed, the interests of their graduate student constituents, rather than their personal or departmental interests.

**Section 2. Conflicts of Interest.** Representatives shall be responsible for ensuring that the scope of their participation in other organizations shall not conflict with the scope of their responsibilities as Graduate Student Assembly members.

#### **Section 3. Voting Member Responsibilities.**

**3.1 Attendance** Departmental Representatives shall attend regular and special meetings of the Assembly.

**3.2.1. Absence.** If a Departmental Representative cannot attend an Assembly meeting, (s)he shall notify the Administrative Director prior to the meeting and make arrangements for the Alternate Representative to Attend.

**3.2 Communication.** Representatives shall report on meetings in a timely fashion to constituents and communicate with their constituents to maintain knowledge of Graduate student needs and desires. The Graduate Student Assembly, through Rules of Order, may specify appropriate methods of communication.

**3.3 Participation.** Voting Members shall participate in GSA functions, events and committees, and encourage constituents to participate.

**3.4 Resignation.** If a Voting Member is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities, (s)he shall make a diligent effort to find a replacement to fill his or her position.

Be it further resolved (3):

That Art IV Sec 1 read "Section 1. Broad Representation. Based on a recommendation from the President, the Assembly shall select and sponsor graduate students to university governance and advisory groups so that the selected graduate students are broadly representative of the graduate student body." and

Be it further resolved (4):

That Art V Sec 1 be renamed "Powers and Duties of the Executive Officers" and the section be re-organized to remove the "duty" subheadings; and

Be it further resolved (5):

That Art V Sec 1.1.1 b read "1.1.2 The President shall faithfully execute all acts of the Assembly in accordance with the Governing Documents"; and

Be it further resolved (6):

That Art V Sec 1.1.1 k be inserted before Art V Sec 1.1.1 b; and

Be it further resolved (7):

That a new section, Art V Sec 1.1.9 be inserted, reading  
Sec 1.1.9. The President shall have the authority to nominate ad-hoc officers, with the advice and consent of the Assembly

Be it further resolved (8):

That Art V Sec 1.2.1 c read "The Vice-President, upon request of the President or appropriate petition, shall call and make known any Special Meeting of the Graduate Student Assembly" and

Be it further resolved (9):

That Art V Sec 1.4 read

*1.4. Administrative Director.*

1.4.1 The Administrative Director shall coordinate with the office of the Dean of Students to maintain a record of the activities of the Graduate Student Assembly.

1.4.2 The Administrative Director shall record the minutes of each meeting of the Assembly and the Executive Committee, file them, and make them available for public review.

1.4.3 The Administrative Director shall compile reports from the executive officers.

1.4.4 The Administrative Director shall collect, update and distribute the time and location of Assembly meetings.

1.4.5 The Administrative Director shall organize rosters, nametags, copy accounts, meeting agendas, monthly calendars of Graduate Student Assembly events, and other administrative affairs.

1.4.6 The Administrative Director shall chair the Rules and Administration Committee.

1.4.7. The Administrative Director shall report directly to the President.

and

Be it further resolved (10):

That Art V Sec 1.7 read

*1.7. Legislative Affairs Director.*

1.7 a The Legislative Affairs Director is responsible for representing the interests of graduate students to the State Legislature, Governor, City Council, Mayor, White House, Department of Education, and Congress.

1.7 b The Legislative Affairs Director shall chair the Legislative Committee.

1.7 c The Legislative Affairs Director shall report directly to the President

and;

Be it further resolved (11):

That Art V Sec 1.10 read

*1.10 Membership Director*

1.10.a The Membership Director shall make an annual census of the graduate population and inform the assembly for appropriate apportionment

1.10.b The Membership Director shall have the power to recognize Graduate Student Assembly Voting Members for special commendation.

1.10.c The Membership director shall have the power to initiate recruitment programs

1.10.d The Membership Director shall have the power to oversee the Voting Member electoral process

1.10.e The Membership Director shall certify all election results.

1.10.f The Membership Director shall keep official attendance records and notify representatives of absences.

1.10.g The Membership Director shall coordinate the recruitment and recognition of Assembly representatives, committee appointees, and the graduate student body.

1.10.h The Membership Director shall be responsible for keeping track of the accomplishments of the members of the Graduate Student Assembly throughout their term in office.

1.10.i The Membership Director shall work with the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) to be sure each member remains in good standing and continues to meet

other criteria specified in the Constitution during their terms of membership and shall automatically recall the membership of any member who does not.

1.10.j The Membership Director and the Membership Committee shall notify all affected organizations of any changes in Graduate Student Assembly members or participants and keep membership information current.

1.10.k The Membership Director shall chair the Membership Committee

1.10.l The Membership Director shall report directly to the President.

and;

Be it further resolved (12):

That Art VI Sec 11 read

Section 11. Ad-hoc Officers. Other ad-hoc officers may be appointed via presidential nomination and Assembly confirmation. Their roles, titles, and compensation (if any) shall be spelled out in the nominating resolution.

Be it further resolved (13):

That Art VI Sec 1 read "Section 1. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Assembly shall be scheduled at at least monthly while the assembly is in session."; and

Be it further resolved (14):

That Art VI Sec 2 read "Special meetings of the Graduate Student Assembly may be called upon the petition of five (5) Voting Members of the assembly or twenty (20) graduate students. Petitioners must represent at least 3 different constituencies and present the petition to the Vice-President of the Graduate Student Assembly at least seventy-two (72) hours before the requested meeting date."; and

Be it further resolved (15):

That Art V Sec 1.2.1 c read "The Vice-President, upon request of the President or appropriate petition, shall call and make known any Special Meeting of the Graduate Student Assembly"

Be it further resolved (16):

That Art VI Sec 2.1 and Art VI Sec 3 be deleted

Be it further resolved (17):

That Art VI Sec 4 read "Section 3. Notification. The Administrative Director shall post the time, duration, and location of each Regular or Special Assembly meeting and notify all Members of the Assembly seventy-two (72) hours prior to each regular and special meeting."

Be it further resolved (18):

That Art VI Sec 6 read "Section 6. Chair. The Vice-President shall normally be the presiding officer or Chair of Assembly meetings. In the absence of the Vice-President or if the Vice-President wishes to participate in the deliberations of the

Assembly, another Officer may, upon the recommendation of the Vice-President and majority approval of the Assembly, assume the role of Chair."; and

Be it further resolved (19):

That Art VI Sec 9 read "Section 9. Resolutions and Other Motions. All Bills, resolutions, and other motions must be submitted to the Vice-President and the Administrative Director before the posting of the meeting agenda in which the submitted item shall have its first reading. Bills, resolutions, and other motions may be considered as new business if submitted after this time only after a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) affirmative vote of the assembly."; and

Be it further resolved (20):

That Art VI Sec 10 be deleted; and

Be it further resolved (21):

That Art VI Sec 11 read "Section 11. Agenda. The Administrative Director shall post the agenda for each meeting at least 72 hours prior to each regular and special meeting. The agenda shall include all resolutions scheduled for consideration."; and

Be it further resolved (22):

That Art VI Sec 13 and Sec 14 be deleted; and

Be it further resolved (23):

That Art VII Sec 1 read

**Section 1. Standing Committees.** These committees are permanently established and may be composed of voting members of the Graduate Student Assembly and graduate students at-large.

and

Be it further resolved (24):

That Art VII Sec 1.1.1 read

1.1.1. Purpose. The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Assembly when the Assembly is not in session. It shall also coordinate the work of and provide guidance to graduate student members of university governance committees and to committees of the Graduate Student Assembly.

and

Be it further resolved (25):

That Art VII Sec 1.3.1 read

1.3.1. Purpose. The Finance Committee shall develop and propose financial procedures, Assembly budgets, track Graduate Student Assembly expenses, and make financial recommendations to the Assembly and the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee shall also identify funding sources for the Assembly and make recommendations to the Assembly and Executive Committee for utilizing those sources. Financial procedures shall be documented in the Bylaws or Rules of Order.

and

Be it further resolved (26):

That Art VII Sec 1.4.1 read "The Legislative Committee shall review the actions of the United States Congress, Texas State Legislature, Austin City Council, and other governmental bodies that affect University of Texas at Austin graduate students. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Assembly regarding a course of action the Graduate Student Assembly and its members or other graduate students may take."; and

Be it further resolved (27):

That Art VII Sec 1.6.1 read

1.6.1. Purpose. The Administrative Committee shall assist the Administrative Director in developing, recommending, and interpreting Graduate Student Assembly rules embodied in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules of Order. The committee shall review Graduate Student Assembly rules to ensure they are consistent with United States federal law, Texas state law, University of Texas System rules, and University of Texas at Austin policy and procedures. The committee shall develop and recommend accounting procedures for membership that balance the need for public information on the members and respect for their privacy. The committee shall assist the President and Vice-President in recruiting graduate students to fill vacant positions in the Graduate Student Assembly.

and

Be it further resolved (28):

That Art VII Sec 1.9 read

#### 1.9 Membership Committee

1.9.1 Purpose. The Membership committee shall be responsible for maintaining the list of active voting representatives and their alternates. The Membership Committee shall also coordinate the recruitment of new members and organizations to the Graduate Student Assembly. The Membership Committee shall also be in charge of recommending the annual apportionment process.

1.9.2 Chair .The Membership Director

and

Be it further resolved (29):

That Art VII Sec 4 read, "Section 4: Organization. Each committee shall elect a vice-chair who will work with the chair to achieve the various roles of the committee"; and

Be it further resolved (30):

That Art VII Sec 5 read "Documentation. Standing and other committees shall meet at least once a month during legislative session. They shall elect a Secretary who shall keep records of the decisions made in each meeting and provide such records to the Administrative Director within seven (7) days of the conclusion of each meeting."



Be it further resolved (31):

That Art VIII read

## **ARTICLE VIII Financial Management**

**Section 1. Officer Compensation.** The President, Vice-President, Administrative Director, Communications Director, Programs Director, Financial Director, Legislative Affairs Director, Student Affairs Director, Academic Affairs Director, and Membership Director shall each receive financial compensation as budgeted during the period for which he or she shall be serving as an executive officer, and the amount of financial compensation shall be neither increased nor decreased after election or while in office.

1.1. *Performance.* All officers receiving stipends shall be responsible for demonstrating adequate work each month as defined by Rules of Order before the Financial Director may release payment.

1.2. *Adjustments.* The Assembly may with, just cause, adjust the stipend of any officer at any time during the year. This shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote.

1.3. *Budget Requirements.* The President and Financial Director shall be responsible for designating the amount of each stipend per year when preparing the budget, subject to the approval by the Assembly.

1.4. *Budget Percentage.* The sum of stipends paid to officers is not to exceed forty percent (40%) of the entire GSA budget. If the recommendations set out in Sections 1.3.1 through 1.3.3 above exceed this percentage for an expected fiscal year, the stipends must be revised down for that year, following the scheme that President is eligible for the largest stipend, Vice President for the second largest, and the remaining officers for third largest and of equal amounts to each other. Salaries will be automatically reduced down, proportionally, until such time as they constitute no more than 40% of the operating budget.

**Section 2. Appropriation of Assembly Funds.** No individual organization or group may submit a request for funds to the Graduate Student Assembly without sponsorship from a voting member of the Assembly whose constituents are served by the organization. This Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the intended application of funds to ensure that basic internal spending rules are not violated.

and

Be it further resolved (32):

That Art IX Sec 1.3 be deleted and Art IX Sec 1.2 read "1.2. Special Rules of Order. Graduate Student Assembly may supplement and amend the Main Rules

of Order by Special Rules of Order. These rules shall be specified in the Internal Rules of Procedure."; and

Be it further resolved (33):

All articles and section of the Bylaws be renumbered consistent with the changes made in this bill; and,

Be it further resolved (34):

This legislation be filed with the Office of the Dean of Students; and,

Be it further resolved (35):

The relevant departments across the University of Texas at Austin be notified of these changes.