

# **GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISHING AND WRITING A CONSTITUTION FOR GRADUATE STUDENT GROUPS**

Constitutions are written instruments that state the purpose and aims of a group as well as describing the way a group proposes to function. They should specify the basic principles of a group that determine the powers and laws of the group and the duties, rights, and privileges of those belonging to the group. Please formulate your group's Constitution after a discussion of these general points.

Constitutions are required for all departments, programs, and groups applying for recognition and funding by the Graduate Student Association. Constitutions are to be submitted every year. Copies of Constitutions are kept on file at the Graduate Student Association office and are referred to frequently to answer queries about the group.

## **I: IDENTIFY THE ORGANIZATION**

### *A. STATE THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT, PROGRAM, OR ORGANIZATION*

suggestions:

- keep the name of your group as short and easily recognizable as possible

For example: This (organization/club/society) shall be known as the (name of group, e. g. Physics Graduate Student Association.).

### *B. STATE THE PURPOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT, PROGRAM, OR ORGANIZATION S*

suggestions:

- state the purpose of your group in a manner that reflects the identity of the department, program, or group

For example: The purpose of this organization shall be to further the social, cultural and academic interests of the students in the graduate program in (name of program).

## **II: MEMBERSHIP**

suggestions:

- state your membership guidelines (who can qualifies as a member)

For example: For graduate program organizations - all currently enrolled students in the graduate program in shall be members.

## **III: MEETINGS**

### *A: REQUIRES ONE REGULAR MEETING PER SEMESTER*

suggestions:

- the time and place of the first meeting to be determined by the President of the group

### *B: ESTABLISHING REGULAR MEETING TIME*

suggestions:

- at the group's first meeting, the organization shall establish a regular meeting time, date and place for the academic year

### *C: SPECIAL MEETINGS*

suggestions:

- special meetings may be called by the President upon written request of members of the organization

### *D: ESTABLISHING A QUORAM AT ALL MEETINGS*

suggestions:

- all regular and special meetings shall consist of members.

### *E: CONSIDERATION OF HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED*

suggestions:

• any situation not provided for in this constitution shall be decided according to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised

#### **IV: ESTABLISHING OFFICERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS**

(Titles of officers may vary, but group must have officers)

##### *A: CITING ELECTED OFFICERS FOR THE GROUP.*

suggestions:

- a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer

##### *B: ESTABLISHING THE POSITIONS AS VOLUNTARY.*

suggestions:

- specify that officers to serve without salary or financial remuneration

##### *C: DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT*

suggestions:

- preside at all meetings of the organization;
- call special meetings when requested under Article III, Section C;
- list any other specific duties, if appropriate)
- perform other such duties as customarily pertain to the office of President

##### *D: DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT*

suggestions:

- be an aide to the President, and, in case of the absence or disability of the President, pro tempore assume and perform the duties of the President.
- list any other specific duties, if appropriate)

##### *E: DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY*

suggestions:

- keep the record of the proceedings of all meetings;
- conduct the correspondence of the organization.
- list any other specific duties, if appropriate)

##### *F: DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE TREASURER*

suggestions:

- maintain the financial records of the organization;
- be responsible for receiving all revenue of the organization;
- pay all authorized bills for the organization;
- render an account at each meeting, or more often if required, of all receipts and expenditures;
- submit, at the last regular meeting of the Spring term, a written, detailed annual report of the income and expenditures of the organization.
- list any other specific duties, if appropriate

#### **V: COMMITTEES**

##### *A: DEFINING COMMITTEES*

suggestions:

- describe the functions and responsibilities of each committee, beginning each section with the wording "The Committee shall..." etc.
- list the names of all committees, as appropriate

*B: ESTABLISHING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS*

suggestions:

- be responsible for all activities of that committee;
- be responsible for all proper financial accounting of that committee, under the supervision of the Treasurer;
- submit a written report of the activities of that committee at the last regular meeting of the Spring term and be prepared to report orally at each meeting;
- carry out all directions of the organization;
- serve without salary or financial remuneration.

*C. ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE*

suggestions:

- may be established by the President or by a vote of the organization;
- shall report to the organization.

**VI: ELECTIONS AND VACANCIES**

*A: Election of Officers (and Committee Chairpersons, if appropriate)*

suggestions:

- shall be elected by a majority of the legal votes cast by the members of the organization at its - (specify which meeting) meeting of the academic year; they shall take office (specify when) and shall serve for a period of (specify how long)
- Vacancies: If any elective office (or Committee Chair, if appropriate) *shall* become vacant, the President shall order at the earliest possible date a special meeting of the organization for the purpose of filling such office. The member thus elected shall immediately enter upon his/her duties and shall remain -i-n office until the next regular election.

**VII: AMENDMENT**

A: The proposed amendment must be submitted to the Secretary in writing by no fewer than \_\_\_\_ members of the organization

B: The proposed amendment shall be discussed at the next regular meeting after the meeting at which it was submitted, provided that all members of the organization have been previously informed of its contents.

C: Two-thirds *of the legal votes cast* shall be required to pass the amendment.

**VIII: ADVISOR**

A member of the faculty of the graduate program shall serve as advisor to the organization.

**IX: UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS**

This organization shall be in full compliance with all pertinent University Regulations and any other rules, regulations, and policies of Rutgers University that may be relevant to its activities.

(Attach a list of current members to the constitution. AT LEAST FIVE (5) graduate students must be members for the organization to be recognized by GSA.)