

Constitution of The Graduate Student Organization of Brooklyn College (City University of New York)

The Executive Board of the Brooklyn College Graduate Student Organization, in accordance with the Executive Council, in order to provide representative government to the graduate community of Brooklyn College, agrees to abide by the following by-laws.

NAME

- The name of the organization shall be the Brooklyn College Graduate Student Organization henceforth referred to as *G.S.O.*
- The organization derives its authority and functions consistent with the Board of Higher Education by-laws, Article 15.2.

PURPOSES

The Graduate Student Organization shall have purposes as follows:

1. To create and maintain a graduate student community to further the quality of education of graduate students.
2. To further the cause of academic freedom and formulate college and University-wide policy relating to the academic freedoms of graduate students, and to seek reciprocal channels of communication between students, faculty, and administration of Brooklyn College, the City University of New York, and the State of New York.
3. To be the sole granting and allocating agent for all graduate student funds derived from graduate student fees and the Brooklyn College Association and to undertake additional fiduciary responsibility for campus organizations upon agreement with the appropriate college and corporate authority.
4. To organize and hold colloquia, seminars, and other functions on subjects of professional and/or academic interests to its members.
5. To gather opinions from its membership on issues and interests of its student body and to make known these opinions.
6. To approve all student members of the Joint Student-Faculty departments, College-Wide committees, and University-Wide Committees.
7. Will appoint any and all student delegates to committees.
8. To speak and act publicly in the name of the graduate student body on issues affecting their careers as graduate students and/or of interest to them as citizens after due process and public debate.
9. Will be consistent with the authority of the Board of Higher Education (BHE), in accordance with the education law and the by-laws of the BHE and this charter. The Graduate Student Organization shall make its own by-laws providing for elections of its officers, establishment of its own rules and procedures for its internal administration, or such other matters as are necessary for its existence. The Graduate Student Organization, as central student government for graduate students, shall have the full rights, privileges and responsibilities accorded other student governments on campus.
10. To make appropriate procedural adjustments as it affects graduate students in the governance of Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and the State of New York.

MEMBERSHIP

All graduate students registered at Brooklyn College upon payment of the Graduate Student Organization student activity fee or matriculation fee shall be eligible for membership in the Graduate Student Organization.

Eligibility for holding office in GSO and Associations:

Only matriculated graduate students, registered at Brooklyn College in a degree program that maintains a 3.0 GPA, shall be eligible to hold office on the Executive Board.

GSO Associations' officers shall be elected and serve according to the terms and guidelines of the charter set forth by the academic area. These guidelines must comply with the guidelines set forth by the City University of New York office of the General Council and the Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs.

Once elected to serve, the officer of either the Association or the Executive Board must complete his/her elected term of office as long as compliance with the academic credit load requirement is met. Officers of the Associations shall be ineligible to hold office on the Executive Board and vice-versa. The Executive Board will decide conflict of interest and questions of ineligibility.

Two people from the same department shall not hold positions of treasurer and president of the Executive Board.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Pursuant to section 15.2 (d) of the University by-laws, election shall be held in the spring term of each academic year, no earlier than March 15 and no later than April 30.

The elected officers of the Graduate Student Organization shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer/Business Manager. These officers shall be known as the Executive Board of the Graduate Student Organization.

In order to be eligible to run for office, nominations **must** be made by two (2) graduate students. The nomination period will run for no less than 10 days and at least 15 days prior to the start of election. The Dean of Students' Activities and/or the Dean of Student Life will certify these nominations. After the nominee is notified that he/she will be placed on the ballot for the upcoming election, an acceptance statement from the candidate must be submitted to the GSO's Executive Board at least two (2) days prior to the election.

During election period, voting will be electronic done on computers stationed at designated areas on campus during times best advertised by the Elections Commissioner.

The election commissioner (s) shall oversee the election process from the time of its inception to the tallying of the votes. In pursuant of these goals, the election results shall be forwarded to the College Wide Election Review Committee (CWERC) for certification, no later than 5 business days after the end of the election. The Executive Board and the student associations may have authority in establishing procedures and a committee for the conduct of student elections, and the establishment of an Election Review Committee (ERC). ERC is intended to provide a mechanism for review of those procedures to insure that the election procedures, the voting and the certification of these results are appropriate. This committee will also insure that an impartial review panel will oversee officers of the perspective student governments running for re-election, or who may have an interest in the outcome. Any student(s) who feels that he/she has been disempowered or adversely affected by a decision of the Election Review Committee may file an appeal with the president of the college.

Candidates for the University Student Senate will assume the position from October through September. In the event a student who has been elected into such a position cannot complete the term of his/her position, due to graduation or work restrictions, or falls outside of the criteria for eligibility, the current Executive Board in governance will hold a special election to assure a continuity of representation of the CUNY-wide University Student Senate. This special election will supersede any election of delegates prior to the time deemed necessary for such implementation. The Dean of Students' Activities and/or the Office of Student Life will conduct the semester-by-semester certification of University Senate Delegates and Alternates. The criterion for eligibility is the maintenance of matriculation in a degree-bearing program, a 3.0 GPA, a consistent and continuous attendance of the senate meetings. Absenteeism at two consecutive senate meetings will result in de-certification of the delegate or alternate and the necessity for a special election.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

All decisions on matters of policy of the Executive Board shall be reached by plurality. Each officer shall have one vote.

The Executive Board shall have final responsibility for:

- Hiring all personnel in the Executive office and setting up operational guidelines.
- Voting on all disbursements, modifications, transfers, and credits except where authorized in an approved budget of the Graduate Student Organization.
- Certifying all affiliate associations and chapters of the Graduate Student Organization of Brooklyn College.
- Propose review and approve the total operating budget of the Graduate Student Organization for the fiscal year with the approval of the Executive Board.
- Shall have the responsibility of approving Associations' operating budget requests for the year and special fiscal requests not contained within the Association's budget.
- Must approve line transfers that exceed the amounts prescribed by Central Depository.
- The Executive Board, particularly the president, shall take any steps deemed necessary to correct any violations of the Graduate Student Organization, Brooklyn College, or the Brooklyn College Association rules and regulations. This may include freezing of an Association's funds, removing the Association's Executive Board, or any of its members, or imposing a fine or penalty upon that Association.
- Shall have the authority to interpret any by-laws included herewith, or in any other Association's constitution. This "**elastic clause**" shall make this constitution flexible for future interpretation.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

All elected officers are charged with representing the organization at its public functions and promoting its purposes.

The President shall:

- Perform all administrative duties usually associated with an efficient office and maintain public contact.
- He/she shall supervise the Graduate Student Organization's Executive office; maintain proper functioning of all bills, ordering of proper supplies and preparing all forms and questionnaires.
- Preside at annual meetings, special meetings and member-at-large meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Council.
- Shall have the tie-breaking or tie-making vote at all meetings, which he/she presides over.
- Enforce the charter of the associations and their policies, procedures, bylaws and mandates established by the Executive Board and the Executive Council.
- Call special meetings of the Executive Council when the situation warrants, or when $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members of the Executive Council request it.

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- Prepare an agenda for the Executive Board and Executive Council meetings with the assistance of the other officers and participants.
- Appoint committee members for University, divisional and college wide committees.
- Co-sign financial documents for processing along with the treasurer.
- Recommend/appoint/re-appoint and hire all staff positions in accordance with the prescribed search guidelines and in concurrence with the Executive Board.

The Vice-President shall:

- Assist the president in his/her duties and assume any additional duties assigned to him/her by the president or the Executive Board.
- At the request of the president, the vice-president shall assume the duties or responsibilities of any officers unable to fill their term until a special election is held.
- Is a member of every committee established by the Executive Council.

The Treasurer shall:

- Be responsible for co-signing with the president all expenditures, financial documents, and commitment of the Graduate Student Organization.
- Submit a proposed budget to the Brooklyn College Association after consultation with the Executive Board.
- Co-sign and approve all Associations' budgets with the president of the Graduate Student Organization.
- Submit financial records to Central Depository if requested.
- Keep records of all receipts and expenditures for his/her term of office.
- Collect and present to the Executive Board, all budget requests for certified Associations, chartered clubs, and chapters that are consistent with procedures of the Brooklyn College Association.
- Shall be responsible for all financial details of contract purchases of merchandise or equipment, guarantees and other responsibilities congruent with that of a business manager.

The Secretary shall:

- Be responsible for maintaining all records, files, correspondence, and reports.
- Ensure the maintenance of the lists of all committee members, Executive Council members, and Association officers.
- Ensure the maintenance of address lists of all Brooklyn College graduate students, lists of all faculty members, administrative and faculty/administrative/student committees.
- Take, organize, maintain and provide the minutes of all Graduate Student Organization Executive Board and Executive Council meetings.
- The secretary is the office manager and oversees the office's day-to-day functioning and smooth running.

In addition to the prescribed duties detailed above, all officers shall be conversant in procedures dealing with the disbursement payment of funds for services rendered on behalf of the Graduate Student Organization, or for the purchase of equipment. During the absence of the president or treasurer due to conflicting schedules, personal matters, or any other valid reasons which the Executive Board is made aware of, at the president's or treasurer's request, all officers should be capable of initiating the payment process through the auspices of Central Depository. This should be done providing the president and treasurer have signed all necessary forms previously and that the Executive Board has already approved said payment.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- Shall consist of the elected officers of the Executive Board, all members from each certified association and any graduate student who sits on a college-wide committee on behalf of the graduate community. Each member of the Executive Council will count as one vote.
- Shall be responsible for review and approval of the Graduate Student Organization's operating budget, and the articulation of policy not expressly reserved to the Executive Council in attendance.
- Quorum shall consist of two officers of the Executive Board and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the certified associations or three members of the Executive Council in attendance.
- The council may elect to hold a meeting in executive session, in accordance with the City University by-laws that would exclude non-official members and/or visitors of the graduate community from attending. A visitor may be permitted to speak on matters before the committee at large with the permission of the president or presiding officer of the Executive Board. A visitor or member who is disruptive during a meeting will be asked to leave.
- Will codify its own operating procedures except where such procedures are inconsistent with the provisions of these by-laws or the by-laws of the City University of New York.
- Each chartered group in the association must prepare a tentative schedule of events, programs and/or plans for the semester at hand and the school year in question. A predominant focus on academic, pre-professional or developmental events and programming should be undertaken. Associations shall not exist with the sole purpose of providing a social outlet for the students of any areas. Though, this may be a smaller part of the mission, the funding allocated in future budget years will be allocated based on this criteria, with each association being required to justify their funding requests to the Executive Board. Associations shall **not** sponsor departmental events that are the responsibilities of the department, however, they can co-sponsor such events. All expenditures must meet the guidelines set forth in the handbook of the City University of New York. All room reservations, requests for catering, and payment orders must be filled out to reflect the accountably parties. Any problems in processing incurred by any association should be brought to the immediate attention of the allocating body for intervention.
- Each chartered group will maintain a binder in the Graduate Student Organization's Executive office for perusal by the Brooklyn College community at large. This binder will be updated with news, budgeting, election events, and programming pertaining to the chartered group.
- Each chartered group will be responsible for attending the executive council meetings, to date and discuss issues pertinent to the Brooklyn College community at large and to communicate with the Executive Board. Failure to attend or be represented at any or all Executive Council meetings **may** result in reduced funding for subsequent academic years.
- Each chartered group will be responsible for promoting their events to as broad an audience as possible through the campus media and the Graduate Student Organization's newsletter, so that students outside a particular department or discipline will be aware of all scheduled events.
- Each chartered group will provide the Graduate Student Organization's Executive Board with a detailed cost breakdown and an event summary, which will include event title, date held, number of people in attendance, and a general overview of the event - this should be included in the Graduate Student Organization's newsletter.

The president and treasurer of each Association are personally responsible for any unpaid bills, unauthorized or illegal contract for services or goods. They may face disciplinary action by the college (including prevention of graduation or non - processing of transcript requests) if they neglect their responsibilities. In addition, associations with a history of mismanagement, or improper use of funds may be not receive funds, or reduced funding for subsequent academic years.

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Each degree program area in the graduate division of Brooklyn College is eligible for participation in the graduate student association. The procedures for establishing an association in any given academic area are as follows:

- Fifteen interested graduate students from within any department may petition the GSO's Executive Board for inclusion in the Executive Council. The Executive Board and the Executive Council must approve exceptions to the number of petitioners, and/or the area of charter.

- A constitution, indicating the specific mission of the group, its constituency, the rules and regulations set forth by the elected officers must be submitted to GSO for approval, then filed with Central Depository along with other necessary documents.
- Each chartered group will be responsible for maintaining its own records and financial documents, as well as filing payment orders with Central Depository. All expenditures must be reconciled with the allocation for that year. All expenses in excess of club's allocation, or any amount forwarded to GSO for collection during or after the fiscal year in question (not discussed by GSO), will be considered mismanagement, and the amount paid by GSO will be deducted from the club's allocation for the next fiscal year, after the notification of this to the budgetary and college officials. Officers of the chartered groups are responsible for officers' training with Central Depository and Student Development. They are also responsible for signing of signature cards and securing a mailbox on the 1st floor of SUBO.

All budget allocations will be frozen until such time when this pre-requisite and training are arranged. The allocating body as well as the Brooklyn College Association must approve budget modification. All equipments purchased with student activity fees **must** be made accessible to all students in pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the City University by-laws. All fees collected at functions of this nature must be returned to the general fund account in Central Depository.

ELECTION OF ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Officers' elections will take place in accordance with their respective constitutions. They may take place between February and May of the spring semester. Results must be forwarded to Central Depository and the Graduate Student Organization's office. A member of the GSO's Executive Board may be requested to witness the election counts. Every member of a particular association must be notified by public notice on the door of the department or association's office, by phone or mail, of the date, time and place of the election. Every member of the graduate community is eligible to vote. An officer may not cede their office to another member; an election must be held. An ad **must** be placed in the school newspaper and minutes of an election meeting, listing the number of votes cast and process that occurred. All proper forms and signature cards must be filed in Central Depository prior to GSO acknowledging new officers in an official capacity.

SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

Suspension and expulsion may be preceded against a member or members of the organization by:

- The president of the Executive Board under conditions of violation of the rules and regulations of the Graduate Student Organization, Brooklyn College, or the Brooklyn College Association shall have the right to suspend or expel any member Association or deny that association a voting privilege.
- A member or member Association may be suspended or expelled by the Disciplinary Committee of Brooklyn College. If a disciplinary action has been taken against a graduate student, that student cannot be an officer of his/her organization.
- A member or member association may be suspended or expelled after a 2/3 votes of the members present of the Executive Council.

REFERENDA

The Executive Board, with the approval of the Executive Council, may call for a referendum to be placed on the ballot. Prior to placing a referendum on the ballot, 10 percent (10%) of the entire graduate body must approve. A majority of those voting will assure passage of the amendment or referendum.

SPECIAL POWERS

- In the time of crisis or emergency, in order to keep the Graduate Student Organization a viable and effective representative organization, the Executive Board may conduct any business, make any necessary decisions, hold any elections, make budget modifications, reductions or sign any legislation. Furthermore, the president may, with due cause and with prior notification of, and discussion with the Executive Council and the Dean of Student Activities/Student Development, suspend any member of the Executive Board for improper conduct or lack of interest in the Graduate Student Organization. Whenever possible, contact will be made with the Executive Council and the Council **must** approve any emergency action taken by the president. In the absence of the Executive Board, the Executive Council assumes these powers.
- The president, with the approval of the Executive Board will determine the manner in which any special election shall be held. The Executive Council must also approve the election procedures.
- If only one candidate has been nominated to hold office in a special or emergency election, that candidate will automatically assume that office as no competition has been offered. The current president, or duly empowered representative when it is the office of the president being filled, shall approve and certify his/her election.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

- The Graduate Student Newsletter (GSN) shall be the "official" graduate student publication of Brooklyn College, and is responsible for promoting the interests of the Executive Board, Executive Council, and all graduate students.
- The Graduate Student Newsletter is published under the auspices of the Graduate Student Organization, and it is the Graduate Student Organization, which is ultimately responsible for its production and content. GSO is not an autonomous entity or association.
- The Graduate Student Organization is responsible for funding the publication of the GSN, for providing all necessary supplies, space and resources for engaging an Editor-in-Chief or Editorial Coordinator, and all necessary staff to oversee its production. Salaries for member of the GSN staff must be discussed and approved by the Executive Board in accordance with college policy and governing by-laws.
- The Editor-in-Chief or Editorial Coordinator, serves at the discretion of the Graduate Student Organization's president, with approval of the Executive Board, and may be removed with due cause. Any ancillary staff shall serve at the Editor-in-Chief or Editorial Coordinator's discretion. approval of a particular issue of the GSN, and its contents, is to be given by the Graduate Student Organization's president.
- The president of the Graduate Student Organization shall supervise the Editor-in-Chief or Editorial Coordinator. Final approval of a particular issue of the GSN, and its contents, is to be given by the Graduate Student Organization's president with approval of the Executive Board.
- The GSO's president with approval of the Executive Board may set guidelines, both general and specific, for GSN's content. Materials for possible publication should be solicited from the graduate and undergraduate population, academic departments, and member associations.
- A disclaimer must appear on any "letters to the editors" section which states that "these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Graduate Student Newsletter, the Graduate Student Organization, the Executive Council, the Brooklyn College student body-at-large, or the Brooklyn College's administration.
- Frequency of the publication to be determined at the beginning of the academic year, with necessary changes scheduled, shall be implemented at any time thereafter, by approval of the Executive Board. Items to determine frequency include, but are not limited to: student's interest, funding resources, wealth of information and material available.
- In circumstances where this constitution is lacking an unforeseen aspect of operation and function, the power and experience of the Executive Board shall be called upon to act on behalf of the GSN.

AMENDMENTS

- Amendments of these by-laws may be introduced by a member of the Executive Council at any meeting of the Executive Council provided that at least 2/3 membership is present.
- The proposed amendment, meeting this procedure, shall be read at two (2) consecutive Executive Council's meetings and voted on at the third meeting.
- 2/3 affirmative votes of the total membership of the Executive Council, plus 2 members of the Executive Board shall be required for passage.
- That an award for a graduate student who is actively involved in student life while maintaining a 3.0 GPA index and awarded by either the Graduate Student Organization's Executive Board or other bodies as approved by GSO. The award will be \$250 per year per student. Interested parties will apply to the deciding body for evaluation. This fund will be credited to either the allocation 2nd department (scholarship office via Brooklyn College Foundation) or through the Graduate Student Organization's operating budget by way of the award's line. Let it be known that \$250 per student will be allocated effective July 01, 1998 to the GSO's overall budget for this purpose.
- That any student(s) applying or being nominated for an executive position on the GSO's Executive Board will be considered not valid if that student(s) has not served as an active committee or chartered club member for a period no less than one academic year. This amendment can only be waived or modified by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Council of the Graduate Student Organization.
- The election commissioner/s shall have the sole right to allow the elected students to serve the positions if a conflict with the constitution exists.