

# **Constitution of the Graduate Student Association of the School of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary**

**Amended: July 26, 2013**

**Approved: December 07, 2012**

## **Article I. Mission Statement**

The organization described herein shall be called the Graduate Student Association of the School of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary (hereafter GSA). Its purpose shall be:

- (1) To provide a forum where matters of concern to graduate students are discussed, where opinions on actions and proposals of the administration and campus departments may be expressed, and where proposals of the administration, departments and graduate groups may be initiated;**
- (2) To advance the academic and social interests of graduate students of the college;**
- (3) To assist in governing matters of honor violations within the graduate school;**
- (4) To provide programs and services of special interest to graduate students.**

## **Article II. Membership**

All persons enrolled in a College of William and Mary School of Marine Science degree program, either full-time or part-time, are members of the GSA.

## **Article III. Governance**

The GSA shall be governed by the Graduate Student Association Executive Board:

- A. The Executive Board shall consist of six (6) elected Officers comprised of two (2) Co-Presidents, one (1) Vice-President, one (1) Secretary, one (1) Treasurer, and one (1) First Year Representative.**
- B. Elections for Executive Board Officers, with the exception of the First Year Representative, shall occur each May, and the newly elected (and returning or re-elected) Officers shall begin serving the following academic year. The First Year Representative will be elected in September or October. See Article VII, Section B concerning term durations for each Officer.**
- C. The purposes of the GSA Executive Board shall be:**
  - 1. To act as a forum for discussion and organization of GSA activities, i.e. academic and social projects.**
  - 2. To respond to concerns raised by the GSA.**
  - 3. To assist in the preparation of the GSA budget for the coming academic year.**
  - 4. To represent the interests and concerns of the GSA to the Administration, the Student Assembly, and other college-wide policy organizations through the**

Executive Board Officers or their delegates, and through the appointed committee representatives.

5. To announce and conduct GSA All-Hands meetings, as described in Article IV, Section B.

#### **Article IV. Meetings and Quorum**

- A. The Executive Board shall meet as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board.

Typically, Executive Board meetings occur every two (2) weeks during Fall and Spring semesters, but meeting schedules/frequency may be altered based on need, large upcoming events, or Executive Board member schedules. Executive Board meetings are open only to Executive Board members.

1. Each Executive Board member has one vote with a two-thirds majority needed to carry any resolution.
2. A copy of the meeting minutes for every Executive Board meeting will be posted publicly online within one week of the meeting.

- B. GSA All-Hands meetings are open to all GSA members. At least three (3) All-Hands meetings will occur throughout academic year.

1. The first meeting will occur no later than the fourth week of the fall semester, to organize standing committees.
2. The second meeting will occur before the end of fall semester, and the third meeting will occur during spring semester. These meetings will allow the committees and the Executive Board to provide updates to the GSA.

- C. Quorum shall be defined as two-thirds (2/3) of the GSA. In order for any vote regarding amendments, repeals, or alterations to the bylaws, or removal of an Officer to take place, quorum of the GSA must be met. Quorum of the GSA may be met by the summation of in-person voters and online votes, in the case where an online poll is offered. In case of votes held only by the Executive Board, quorum shall be defined as two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board.

#### **Article V. Officers' and Representatives' Duties**

- A. The duties of the *Co-Presidents* shall be:

1. To preside over all meetings of the GSA Executive Board and All-Hands.
2. Serve as the main contact for VIMS students surrounding issues regarding the larger VIMS community and the W&M community.
3. Coordinate with the Associate Dean of Academic Studies surrounding issues involving the graduate student community.
4. To appoint a representative body of GSA members to serve as an Honor Council to investigate and try cases involving VIMS students. This includes a Chief Justice and an Associate Chief Justice of the Honor Council.
5. To appoint a Representative to the Student Senate in the event that position is vacant (see Article IV, Section E).

6. To call special meetings of the GSA as deemed necessary.

**B. The duties of the *Vice President* shall be:**

1. To act as the primary point of contact for issues concerning graduate students at VIMS only (i.e. those that do not involve the broader W&M graduate student body, VIMS community, or W&M community).
2. To perform the duties of the Co-Presidents in the absence of one or both Co-Presidents or in the event that one or both Co-Presidents resign, are incapacitated, or otherwise fail to fulfill the Co-Presidential duties.
3. To organize and direct social functions of the GSA/entire VIMS community, and appoint students for help with the events, which includes assistance with publicizing, planning, maintaining, and supervising the events. These events may include (but are not limited to): VIMS Community Yard Sale (August), VIMS Community Fall Party (October), Silent Auction (VIMS Community Holiday Party, December), VIMS Community Chili Cook-Off (February), VIMS Community Spring Party (March/April). This also includes off campus parties for GSA members, which may include (but are not limited to) Halloween, Winter Formal, and St. Patrick's Day.
4. To work with party planners or event planners to help keep them within budget, and bring requests for additional event funds to the Executive Board as needed.

**C. The duties of the *Secretary* shall be:**

1. To keep minutes of the GSA Executive Board meetings and to assure their timely publication on the GSA website.
2. To maintain the list of GSA student positions and the corresponding faculty/administrative contacts for those positions.

**D. The duties of the *Treasurer* shall be:**

1. To coordinate proper spending procedures with assigned GSA student representatives, ensuring that current state, college, and GSA spending guidelines are followed.
2. To coordinate with VIMS GSA Mini-Grant and Travel Grant Chair Persons to acquire and distribute funds for awards.
3. To prepare, in consultation with the other Executive Board members, the GSA budget for the coming academic year.
4. To provide a statement on finances at each meeting of the Executive Board.
5. To handle reimbursements for students who purchased pre-approved items for GSA events.
6. To coordinate with the Fundraising Committee Chair Person regarding the raising and allocation of money from fundraising events.

**E. The duties of the *First Year Representative* shall be:**

1. To serve as the liaison between the Executive Board and First Year class.

2. To attend all Executive Board and All-Hands meetings.
3. To bring any questions or concerns of the First Year class to the attention of the Executive Board.

#### **Article VI. Amendments**

This constitution may be amended, repealed, or altered in whole or in part by:

1. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Executive Board. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the GSA and must be submitted in writing to a member of the Executive Board at least 72 hours prior to the next GSA Executive Board meeting.
2. By a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at any of the All-Hands meetings or at a special meeting of the GSA where notice of the meeting and the proposed amendments have been distributed to the GSA at least ten (10) days in advance of said meeting. The Executive Board will arrange for an absentee ballot system for members of the GSA that are not able to make the meeting, using the College of William and Mary's online voting system.
3. Should an amendment not be approved by a (2/3) majority vote at the All-Hands meeting, a member of the GSA may appeal such decision by a petition, which contains signatures of three-quarters (3/4) of the entire membership of the VIMS GSA.

#### **Article VII. Election Procedure**

A. As stated in Article III, Section A, the Officers of the GSA Executive Board consist of six (6) elected Officers comprised of two (2) Co-Presidents, one (1) Vice President, one (1) Secretary, one (1) Treasurer, and one (1) First Year Representative.

B. The officers will serve for the following terms:

1. Co-President: two (2) year terms, with elections held every year in May such that the newly-appointed Co-President always serves with a returning Co-President.
2. Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer: one (1) year term, beginning in May.
3. First Year Representative: eight-to-nine (8-9) month term, beginning in September or October after the first-year trip to Wachapreague and lasting until elections in May.

C. The Co-President approaching the end of his/her term will serve as the Election Coordinator of the election.

D. The election procedure shall be as follows:

1. Nominations:

- a. A call for nominations will be distributed to all members of the GSA by mid-Spring.
- b. Any graduate student in the GSA can nominate any graduate student in the GSA, including self-nominations, for any position.

- c. A nomination must be made in writing (either hardcopy or electronically via email) to the Election Coordinator prior to the deadline.
  - d. Candidates will be required to submit written statements no more than 250 words to be distributed to the members of the GSA prior to the election.
2. Voting Procedure:
- a. Quorum does not have to be met for the election of officers.
  - b. Every GSA member may cast one electronic ballot in each race for which they are eligible to vote. Only First Years are eligible to vote for the First Year Representative.
  - c. Elections will take place online using the College of William and Mary's online voting system.
  - d. Voters have the choice of voting for any of the candidates or abstaining from voting.
  - e. A simple majority of votes is needed to win an election. In the event that a simple majority is not reached because there are more than two candidates, there will be a run-off election between the two candidates with the most votes.
  - f. All members of the GSA will be notified of the date of the election at least one week prior to the opening of the electronic poll.
  - g. Elections will last five (5) days, and must take place on a weekday from Monday to Friday in the month of May for the election of the Co-President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, and September or October for the election of the First Year Representative.
  - h. The Election Coordinator shall verify the election results and notify the winners of each race.
  - i. The Election Coordinator shall announce the results of the election of the Co-President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary before the end of the spring semester, and the results of the First Year Representative by the end of October.
3. Installation: The newly elected Co-President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary will be installed in June during a special transition meeting of the Executive Board, and the newly elected First Year Representative will assume his/her duties at the next scheduled Executive Board meeting.
4. All materials or information pertinent to a position that are possessed by the former Officer must be given to the new Officer. Upon request of the new Officer, the former Officer is obligated to advise the new Officer on information necessary for the position (to ensure a smooth transition) and answer any questions about the position. This obligatory meeting is not to exceed two hours, however the former Officer may agree to voluntarily provide advice to the new Officer upon request.

#### **Article VIII.        Executive Board Vacancies**

- A. Resignation: An Officer may resign from the Executive Board by delivering a written resignation to the Co-Presidents. Then that office is thereupon deemed vacant.

**B. Removal: An Officer may be removed from the Executive Board by:**

- 1. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Executive Board;**
- 2. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at any of the general student All-Hands meetings or at a special meeting of the GSA where notice of the meeting has been distributed to all members of the GSA at least ten (10) days in advance of said meeting. The Executive Board will arrange for an absentee ballot system for members of the GSA that are not able to make the meeting;**
- 3. In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met before said removal can take place:**
  - a. Appropriate grounds leading to the termination of that Officer due to an unexcused absence from more than four (4) Executive Board meetings within either the fall or the spring semester will cite that Officer for removal, and that office becomes vacant upon said removal; or**
  - b. Appropriate grounds leading to the termination of that Officer due to a blatant disregard of one or more of the provisions of these bylaws, or of a blatant disregard for said office characterized by a lack of "good faith" effort to carry out the necessary and appropriate duties and responsibilities of said office, will cite that Officer for removal, and that office becomes vacant upon said removal.**

**C. Filling Vacancies**

- 1. Any vacancies not filled by the elections process will be appointed and approved by a majority vote of the incoming GSA Executive Board no later than the September All-Hands meeting.**
- 2. Any vacancies that may arise during the term of an Officer will be filled by a general election as described in Article VII Section D with the exception that the election may be held any time of the year.**

**Article IX. Committee Representatives**

**A. Committee representatives are defined in the VIMS Graduate Student Leadership Catalog.**

**B. Committee representatives are responsible for holding a one (1) year position from date of designation to a committee. All materials or information pertinent to a position that are possessed by the former representative must be given to the new representative. Upon request of the new representative, the former representative is obligated to advise the new representative on information necessary for the position (to ensure a smooth transition) and answer any questions about the position. This obligatory meeting is not to exceed two hours, however the former representative may agree to voluntarily provide advice to the new representative upon request.**

**B. Resignation: A committee representative must submit a written notice of resignation to the Executive Board at least 60 days prior to the date of resignation. This advanced**

notification is necessary for the Executive Board to find a replacement representative and allow that individual to meet with the resigning representative to acquire any documents or information required for a smooth transition.

**Article X. Amendments**

**A. GSA Spending Rule (added July 26, 2013):**

1. If a purchase on a single item exceeds \$400.00, the matter will be brought to a vote of the student body. The vote may be online, or at an All-Hands meeting, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board. In order for the vote to count, quorum must be met. If quorum is not met the issue may be decided by a vote of the Executive Board.