

CONSTITUTION



Ratified February 2002

Amendments approved by GSA Council, April 2010

CONSTITUTION
OF THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Article I – Title

The official title of the Association is “The Graduate Students Association of The University of Lethbridge,” hereinafter referred to as the “Graduate Students’ Association” or the “GSA”.

Article II – Objectives

The objectives of the Graduate Students’ Association are to provide for the administration of the affairs of graduate students and for the promotion of the general welfare of graduate students consistent with the purposes of The University of Lethbridge, including:

- A. the development and management of graduate student institutions;
- B. the development and enforcement of a system of a graduate student law;
- C. the promotion of the general welfare of graduate students and the furtherance of graduate education at the University of Lethbridge; and
- D. the protection of the joint and several rights of Graduate Students’ Association members.

Article III – Graduate Students’ Association Membership

Membership in the Graduate Students’ Association consists of:

- A. any person registered for the current term in graduate studies at The University of Lethbridge paying Graduate Students’ Association membership fees; and,
- B. any person registered for the current term in graduate studies at the University of Lethbridge who is sixty-five (65) years of age and older.

Article IV – Graduate Students’ Association Council

1. Graduate Students’ Association Council is a body that shall manage the business and affairs of the Graduate Students’ Association as provided in the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act, and shall be hereinafter referred to as “GSA Council” or “GSAC”.
2. The members of the Graduate Students’ Association shall elect the Graduate Students’ Association Council annually from the members of the Graduate Students’ Association, as governed by the Bylaws of the GSA.
3. The term of office for members of Graduate Students’ Association Council shall be defined in the Bylaws.
4. A member of the Graduate Students’ Association Council may be removed from Council upon:
 - A. a three-fourths (3/4) vote of GSA Council in each of two subsequent regular meetings Council; or,

- B. the receipt by GSA Council of a valid petition calling for the removal of such member from the Graduate Student Association Executive. In order for a petition to be valid, the petition must be:
 - i. signed by at least five (5) percent of the members of the Graduate Students' Association; and,
 - ii. approved by a majority of GSA Council at the subsequent GSAC meeting.
5. A member of the Graduate Students' Association Council shall vacate his/her position within two (2) weeks of:
 - A. failing to register in graduate studies at the University of Lethbridge; or,
 - B. no longer being a member of the Graduate Students' Association.
6. With the exception of the Officers of the GSA, the Graduate Students' Association Council shall determine to fill a vacancy on the Graduate Students' Association Council by:
 - A. appointment for all of the remaining term of office; or,
 - B. appointment for part of the remaining term of office; or,
 - C. election.
7. In the case of a vacancy in the position of an Officer of the Graduate Students' Association, a by-election shall be held as soon as reasonably possible, in accordance with the Bylaws.
8. A vacancy of any position or positions on the GSAC will not serve to disallow action of the GSAC, nor will it nullify any actions taken while such vacancy exists.

Article V – Amendatory Process

1. Amendments to the Constitution of the Graduate Students' Association may be made provided that:
 - A. two thirds (2/3) of the Graduate Students' Association Council vote in favour of the proposed amendment(s); and,
 - B. the proposed Constitutional amendment(s) are presented to a Town Hall meeting for discussion; and,
 - C. the proposed amendment(s) are approved by a referendum of GSA members, in which:
 - i. the proposed amendment is reproduced in full in the question posed in the referendum; and,
 - ii. the proposed amendment is supported by a minimum of one half (1/2) of all ballots cast; and,
 - iii. a minimum of five (5) percent of all members of the Graduate Students' Association cast ballots.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws or Policies of the Graduate Students' Association may be made by the Graduate Students' Association Council except when:
 - A. the proposed amendment affects Graduate Students' Association fees by an increase of more than ten percent (10%) per annum; or,
 - B. a motion of the proposed amendment is not approved by a minimum of two thirds (2/3) of the Graduate Students' Association Council; or,
 - C. the proposed amendment amends a Bylaw or Policy made by referendum.

3. If any of the conditions described in Section 2 exist, the proposed amendment must be approved by a referendum of the GSA membership, as described in Article V.1.C. Any amendment to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Policies by referendum will be noted as such in the Master Constitution, Bylaws and Policies, with a reference to the date the amendment was enacted or effective or both.
4. Any proposed Constitutional, Bylaw, or Policy amendment must be posted for at least two (2) weeks, in a manner accessible to members of the Graduate Students' Association, before any vote on the amendment may take place.

Article VIII – Finance

Graduate Students' Association Council has authority to deal with all Graduate Students' Association property and finances, including, but not restricted to:

- A. Graduate Students' Association fees;
- B. All monies received from any committee of the Graduate Students' Association;
- C. All monies received in the conduct of graduate student affairs, or donated to, or otherwise received by the Graduate Students' Association; and,
- D. All monies received through business operations and/or ventures on behalf of the Graduate Students' Association.

Article IX – Quorum

1. Quorum for meetings of the Graduate Students' Association Council shall be established in the Bylaws.
2. Quorum for all decisions regarding Constitutional, Bylaw, or Policy amendments is two thirds (2/3) plus one (1) member of the Graduate Students' Association Council.

Article X – Town Hall Meetings of the Graduate Students' Association

1. Town Hall Meetings shall be held in accordance with the Bylaws of the GSA. One Town Hall Meeting shall always be held prior to the annual GSA General Elections, for the purpose of presenting to the members of the GSA the candidates for GSA Council.
2. Notice of a Town Hall Meeting must be publicly posted in a manner accessible to all members, and must include an agenda of the Meeting and an explanation of the issues to be presented at the meeting.
3. All Town Hall Meetings will be chaired by the President of the Graduate Students' Association, excepting the Town Hall Meeting presenting the GSA Council candidates to the Graduate Students Association, if the President is a candidate for any position on GSA Council.
4. Within three (3) weeks following receipt by GSA Council of a petition signed by at least five (5) percent of members of the GSA, the GSA Council shall serve notice of a Town Hall Meeting to be held to discuss the petition.

5. A Town Hall Meeting may not be held:
 - A. within two (2) weeks of the Spring and Fall semester final examination period; or,
 - B. during Reading Week.

Article XI – Conflicts of Interest

1. Members of GSA Council shall not vote on motions relating to student groups, clubs, organizations or committees of which they are a member, excepting their faculty or school association.
2. No member of the GSA Council may hold a remunerated position with the GSA during his/her term of office or for one year thereafter.
3. GSA Council shall not enter into a contract with any entity in which a member of Graduate Students' Association Council or their family has a material interest.

Article XII – Master Copy of Constitution and of Bylaws

1. The Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies shall be kept in a loose-leaf binder labelled Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies. Each page of the Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies shall be initialled by two Officers of the GSA at the date of insertion into the Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies and shall be encased in a plastic cover.
2. The Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies must be stored in a secure place in a sealed envelope. At each resealing of the envelope the envelope must be signed by three members of GSA Council, two of whom must be Officers of the GSA.
3. A Duplicate Master Copy of the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies must be maintained and updated at the end of every term of office of a Graduate Students' Association Council. The Duplicate Master Copy of the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies is to be kept in a secure location authorized by GSA Council.
4. In the event that the Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies be destroyed or lost, a new copy of the Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies shall be produced. In the event that a lost Master Constitution and Master Bylaws and Policies be located after the production of a new Master Constitution and Master Bylaws Policies, the President and two other members of GSA Council shall destroy the older copy.

Article XIII – Individual Rights

The Graduate Students' Association shall adhere to the provisions of the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act and of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Article XIV – Graduate Students’ Association Members’ Rights to Information

1. Every document, record, or other instrument recording the actions or operations of the Graduate Students’ Association, which is the property of Graduate Students’ Association or was once the property of Graduate Students’ Association and has been relinquished to the University Archives or other such depository, and is not designated classified or confidential as per section 2 of this Article, must be opened for inspection, in an unaltered state, to any member of the Graduate Students’ Association upon request to review such information. This information will be made available as soon as possible after the request.
2. The following items are exempted from the provisions of Section 1:
 - A. Classified information, to be divulged only to those persons who are trusted specifically with the collection, maintenance, or review of such information as an integral part of their job description. Information in this category consists of:
 - a. personnel, client, and volunteer files and evaluations; or,
 - b. personal communications and files that do not bind the GSA to a course of action.
 - B. Confidential information, to be divulged only to those persons or bodies that require such information to operate or govern the Graduate Students’ Association. This includes individual members of GSA Council and individual members of Boards and Committees created under the auspices of the GSA. Information in this category consists of:
 - a. items under negotiation or litigation; or,
 - b. business operation records; or,
 - c. contract terms; or,
 - d. preliminary research results; or,
 - e. closed session minutes.
 - C. Closed session minutes of GSA Council or of bodies created under its auspices, which may only be reviewed by GSA Council or some person designated by the GSAC.
3. Every Member of the Graduate Students’ Association has the right to witness the proceedings of GSA Council and of any body created under the auspices of the GSA, provided that their presence is not unduly disruptive and that the body has not moved into closed session, as per the GSA Confidentiality Policy.
4. No part of this article shall be construed to allow any person to confidentially bind the Graduate Students’ Association to a course of action. Nor will any part of this article compel any member or employee of the GSA to violate an external commitment of confidentiality.

Article XV – Robert’s Rules of Order

All meetings of the Graduate Students’ Association Council will adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order, wherever those Rules are not contradicted by any part of the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies of the GSA.