

**CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

*Established December 2, 2009*

**Preamble:** The purpose of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the Department of Communication shall be to represent graduate student interests, primarily the educational and career goals of its membership, through collaborative efforts with departmental faculty, staff, and alumni intended to promote and support excellence in graduate student teaching, research, service, and learning.

**Article I. Graduate Student Association**

*Section 1.* This organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Association for the Department of Communication at Wayne State University.

- A. Throughout this document, this organization shall be referred to as the Graduate Student Association of the Department of Communication, Graduate Student Association, the Association, or GSA.

**Article II. Purpose**

*Section 1.* Purpose of the Association

- A. The Association shall work to maximize the scholarly potential of its graduate student membership in order to produce competitive and competent individuals who are able to obtain their educational and career goals while being enrolled in the graduate program and following the completion of their degree at Wayne State University.

*Section 2.* Business of the Association

- A. The Association shall support graduate students, who should be considered a community of developing scholars within the Communication field (journalism, communication studies, and media arts and studies), in completing their degrees for the MA/PhD program in a timely and efficient manner.
- B. The Association shall sponsor and plan colloquia that are timely and beneficial to the graduate student membership.
- C. The Association shall provide input into decisions that affect the graduate program (e.g., hiring decisions).
- D. The Association shall speak for the graduate community and act as liaison between the graduate community and the faculty/administration of the Department of Communication.
- E. The Association shall advocate for a member(s) to address concerns of departmental policy or procedure or to navigate conflict or explain the benefit of the policy.

*Section 3.* Values of the Association

- A. The Association values exchange of ideas, thoughts, and research between and among graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni who enhance the progress and potential of the program as well as the future scholars of the field.

### **Article III. Organizational Powers**

#### *Section 1. Purpose through Action*

- A. The Association shall live out its purpose by following the guidelines created in this document and the *Department of Communication Graduate Student Association: Membership Roles and Responsibilities* (2009) bylaws document.
- B. The Association shall work to find ways to collaborate with departmental faculty and staff; however, officers of the Association should not be asked and/or required to use their own money, vehicle, personal items, etc. without official reimbursement by the Department of Communication for their time and/or belongings.

### **Article IV. Membership**

#### *Section 1. Eligibility*

- A. Graduate Student Association membership shall be limited to graduate students of the Wayne State University Department of Communication.

#### *Section 2. Types of Membership*

- A. Active members of the Association shall be current graduate students of the Wayne State University Department of Communication.
- B. Alumni may be granted honorary membership to the Association; however, alumni do not have the power to vote or appoint officers.

#### *Section 3. Revoking Membership*

- A. Graduate students may lose their membership status if their grade point average falls below a certain level as described in the Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Student Handbook, Article IV, Section E, or the Master of Arts Graduate Student Handbook, Article IV, Section H.
- B. The Association may also revoke students' membership for failure to meet responsibilities and/or adhere to the student code of conduct.
- C. The Association shall vote during a general meeting to revoke a member. A two-thirds majority voting in favor of revocation of a member's membership status is needed in order to revoke a membership.

#### *Section 4. Non-discrimination*

- A. The Association shall adhere to Wayne State University's official policy of non-discrimination, which prohibits discriminating against any person due to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, religion, or disability.

### **Article V. Offices**

#### *Section 1. Graduate Student Association Membership*

- A. The officers of this Association, in order of succession, shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Colloquia Director.

#### *Section 2. Qualifications for Membership of the Graduate Student Association*

- A. The qualifications for officers in this Association shall be a Wayne State University full-time graduate student in good standing according to the Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Student Handbook, Article IV, Section E, or the Master of Arts Graduate Student Handbook, Article IV, Section H.

*Section 3. Term of Office*

- A. The length of term for the officers described above shall not exceed one calendar year. Specifically, the beginning of the term shall be in the month of April and the end of the term shall be in the following April.

*Section 4. Nominations and Elections*

- A. Nomination for officer status to the Association requires that an individual meet the *Qualifications for Membership* requirements.
- B. Candidates for offices shall be nominated by the Association, a member of the Association, a graduate student of the Wayne State University Department of Communication, and/or self-nominated. Faculty are prohibited from nominating graduate students for the Graduate Student Association offices.
- C. Elections shall be held yearly during the month of April. Elections shall be conducted by casting ballots during a pre-established time, determined at least a month in advance of the election date. Votes shall be cast by secret ballot and open to the entire Wayne State University Department of Communication graduate student body, full and part-time graduate students. Those candidates who receive a majority of the votes for a given officer position will be declared the winner. In the case where two candidates receive the same number of votes the incoming President will appoint a winner to join the Association as an officer for the contested position. If the office of the President receives the same number of votes the incoming members of the Association shall vote to determine who will assume the office of the President. If either or both members are part of the outgoing administration those members are prohibited from voting to determine the President for the Association. Since the incoming officers will only occupy four offices a split or tie in the votes may occur. If the incoming officers are not able to resolve this equal division to determine who the next President shall be within 72 hours the Vice President shall assume the position of President and appoint an individual to the vacant position of the Vice Presidency.
- D. Transitioning of the officers shall begin during the final meeting of the outgoing Association officers. This meeting should take place no later than one week following the elections in the month of April. Newly elected officers will attend the meeting for orientation and ensure transition of duties and official powers of the Graduate Student Association for the Department of Communication at the conclusion of the meeting of the Association.

*Section 4. Duties*

- A. Duties of officers in this Association are outlined in the *Department of Communication Graduate Student Association: Membership Roles and Responsibilities* (2009) bylaws document.

*Section 5. Faculty Advisor*

- A. The President shall select the GSA Advisor within the first month of ascending to office. The Advisor should indicate acceptance of the role to the Association. The President would be wise to select his or her academic

advisor, but is not required to do so. Following acceptance by the Advisor the President will inform the Vice President of the Association who the Advisor will be during the President's tenure.

- B. The Advisor shall advise the Association but not have power to vote or appoint officers. The Advisor must be a full-time faculty member of the Wayne State University Department of Communication.

## **Article VI. Legislative Process**

### *Section 1. Meetings*

- A. The President of the Association shall determine the type, frequency, and occurrences of the meeting dates and times during his/her term in office. In establishing a meeting schedule it is recommended that the President hold, at least, one meeting during the fall and winter semesters, and that the majority of the officers be able to attend this meeting in order to the meet the quorum requirements.

### *Section 2. Attendance*

- A. As an officer of the Association one should make every effort to attend all meetings set by the President.
- B. Records of officer attendance shall be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary at every meeting and become an official part of the record for the Association.

### *Section 3. Quorum*

- A. A quorum for this Association shall be, for conducting official business, at least one high-ranking officer (i.e., President, Vice President, or Secretary) and a majority of the members (viz., "majority" means more than half).
- B. Any substantive action taken in the absence of a quorum is invalid.

### *Section 4. Minutes*

- A. A record of the Association meetings shall be documented by the Secretary during each meeting. Specific guidelines for recording the minutes are described in *Department of Communication Graduate Student Association: Membership Roles and Responsibilities* (2009) bylaws document, Article III, Section B, Subsection 1.

### *Section 5. Parliamentary Procedure*

- A. The rules for conducting Association business in meetings shall follow the guidelines set-forth in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (2000). A copy of this book shall be purchased, owned, and passed down from the Association's current President to the incoming President.

## **Article VII. Standing Committees**

### *Section 1. Association Representation and the Department of Communication*

- A. The President shall preside over the appointment of Association members to standing committees internally (i.e., Department of Communication) and externally (i.e., Wayne State University).
- B. Requests for internal representation from the Association membership should be communicated from the Chair of the Department and/or Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Communication to the

Graduate Student Association President. The President will then determine the selection and appointment of officers to the committee(s).

## **Article VIII. Resignation/Impeachment/Censorship**

### *Section 1. Resignation*

- A. If an officer resigns his or her position in the Association the President shall appoint a current officer to the vacant position or appoint an individual from the membership to occupy the vacant position.
- B. If the President resigns the Vice President shall become President of the Association and shall appoint current officer to the vacant position or appoint an individual from the membership to occupy the vacant position.

### *Section 2. Grounds for Removal*

- A. An Association officer shall be removed from office if he/she does not meet the *Qualifications for Membership* requirements, demonstrates an inability to perform officer duties as described in the *Department of Communication Graduate Student Association: Membership Roles and Responsibilities* (2009) bylaws document, and/or dereliction of duty.
- B. If an officer is not satisfactorily fulfilling the duties of her/his position a high-ranking officer may petition for removal. The petition must have the majority of officers' signatures and the Association Faculty Advisor's consent to begin impeachment. The officer is notified and has seven working days to respond to the petition or to request a formal hearing. If the officer in question issues no response the other officers will vote, with a simple majority needed to remove the officer in question. Should the officer in question request a hearing, he or she will have the chance to meet with the other officers, hear the alleged reason(s) for the petition, and respond to each issue on the petition prior to the officer vote. A simple majority vote is needed to remove the officer in question.
- C. The highest ranking officer, if not the President (i.e., President has been removed from office), shall assume the office of the President and appoint a new officer to the vacant position from the graduate student body of the Department of Communication to serve out the remainder of the term for the Association.

## **Article IX. Amendments**

### *Section 1. Amendment Proposals*

- A. An amendment to the Constitution must be submitted by a current officer in writing to the President five working days prior to submitting the amendment proposal to the remaining officers of the Association. Only a current officer has the privilege to propose an amendment to the Association Constitution.

### *Section 2. Process and Timeframe for Constitutional Review*

- A. An amendment proposal shall have at least a two-week review by all other officers of the Association.

- B. The amendment proposal shall come to the Association as a motion, requiring a vote. Two thirds of the membership (not the quorum) must approve constitutional changes.

**Article X. The Constitution and the Association**

*Section 1. Constitutional Member Responsibility*

- A. Officers of the Graduate Student Association shall be bound by the Constitution and the powers and limitations described in the document.
- B. Officers of the Graduate Student Association shall review the Constitution upon assuming office. Each member is responsible for understanding her or his roles and responsibilities, as well as the Association's purpose to the graduate students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Communication at Wayne State University.

**Department of Communication  
Graduate Student Association:  
Membership Roles and Responsibilities**

Graduate Student Association (GSA) officers have important duties and responsibilities among themselves and to the rest of the graduate student body of the Department of Communication at Wayne State University. This document establishes the official roles and responsibilities for each position in the Association and should guide present and future membership to provide the highest quality service for the betterment of doctoral and master students working toward degree completion in the field of communication.

The remainder of this document outlines the specific duties of each position for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Colloquia Director of the Graduate Student Association.

**I. The President**

**A. Leadership**

1. Establish and govern a thematic direction for administration throughout the academic year or duration of appointment.
  - a. Set specific goals for the academic year with input from other officers.
  - b. Keep the membership apprised of the goals and objectives of the Association.
2. Encourage professionalism through personal actions and conduct.
3. Operate as a member of an administrative team as well as lead that administrative team.
4. Communicate with officers to ensure membership speak with a unified voice, vision, and strategic plan.

**B. General Officer Duties**

1. Oversee the training of new officers for a smooth transition.
2. Clarify and facilitate job descriptions and duties for the execution of responsibilities of officers.
3. Delegate duties outside the ordinary function of officers.
4. Coordinate and guide the work and efforts of officers.
5. Assist officers in the execution of their duties.
6. Conduct selection and appointment of officers to committees outside the Association (i.e., departmental, university, and/or community).
7. Ensures the Association is recognized by the Dean of Students Office and oversees that the Treasurer completes appropriate financial and student organization forms to be current and in accordance with the provisions set-forth by the Dean of Students Office for financial support throughout the academic year.
8. Serves as secondary signatory on financial accounts.
9. Facilitate the management of internal conflict or member concerns in a timely, diplomatic, and fair manner.
  - a. Seek assistance internally and/or externally to resolve disputes.

**C. Officer Support**

1. Approve all constitutional revisions undertaken by the Vice President.
2. Approve all expenditures and financial transactions undertaken by the Association.
3. Provide information and encourage membership attendance at affiliated colloquia, seminars, and/or workshops.

4. Represent the Association at official functions or coordinate with membership to ensure representation at official functions.
  5. Follow-up with officers on organizational tasks to offer assistance and ensure completion.
- D. Agenda Setting
1. Determine order of business for meetings incorporating suggestions from officers serving on committees as representatives for the Association.
  2. Specify usual order of business and basic headings.
- E. Meetings
1. Schedule meetings of any type (i.e., general, special, impromptu, etc.) for the Association.
  2. Preside over all meetings of the Association using a written agenda or other relevant materials (i.e., additional reports or documentation) provided to the officers, at least one week in advance of the meeting date and in accordance with accepted parliamentary procedure prescribed in *Robert's Rules of Order*.
    - a. Possess a basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure and employ it at the meetings.
    - b. See that officers observe time limits.
    - c. Keep discussions on the task and subject.
    - d. Facilitate a fair decision-making processes.
- F. Department
1. Consult regularly with Association Advisor<sup>1</sup> on issues and progress of the Association.
  2. Maintain regular contact with the Departmental Chair and/or Graduate Director.
    - a. Obtain a list of Departmental committees where Association membership is required for selection and appointment.
    - b. Oversee the facilitation of membership nomination to Departmental committees.
- G. Electoral Transitions
1. Ensure the inclusion of the newly elected Association officials at the final meeting.
  2. Forward necessary information and documentation to the ensuing Association officers, particularly the incoming President.

## II. **The Vice President**

### A. Leadership

1. Work with the President to coordinate planning and leadership.
2. Encourage professionalism through personal actions and conduct.
3. Facilitate planning and implementation of programs to meet Association goals or objectives.
  - a. Assist the President in clarifying action plans for goal accomplishment.
  - b. Provide leadership for the strategic execution and actualization of Association goals or objectives.
4. Assume full duties and responsibilities of the President if the position is vacated or the President is absent.

### B. General Officer Duties

1. Function as liaison for the Association at Departmental meetings.
  - a. Report<sup>2</sup> to the President, within 48-hours following the meeting, of relevant information and/or documentation described and/or discussed in the meetings.

- b. Debrief the Association at meetings of relevant information described and/or discussed in the meetings.
    - 2. Responsible for relations with the graduate student body, in its entirety.
      - a. Nominate a non-voting, first-year liaison to attend Association meetings from the COM 7000 and/or COM 8000.
    - 3. Introduce guests (i.e., non-voting members) to other membership prior and during the meeting should he or she wish to speak.
    - 4. Review constitution and make any necessary recommendations, updating, and revisions.
  - C. Officer Support
    - 1. Provide information and encourage membership attendance at affiliated colloquia, seminars, and/or workshops.
    - 2. Represent the Association at official functions or coordinate with membership to ensure representation at official functions.
    - 3. Follow-up with officers on organizational tasks to offer assistance and ensure completion.
  - D. Meetings
    - 1. Preside at all meetings when the President is absent.
    - 2. Possess a basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure.
    - 3. Report to the membership, if serving on Departmental committee(s) as a representative for the Association, on relevant information and/or documentation described and/or discussed in the meetings.
  - E. Electoral Transitions
    - 1. Organize yearly election of officers for the Association.
    - 2. Ensure the results are reported of those elections in a timely manner to the current officers, newly elected officers, Department Chair, Graduate Director, and Association Advisor.
    - 3. Forward necessary information and documentation to the ensuing Association officers, particularly the incoming Vice President.
- III. The Secretary**
- A. Leadership
    - 1. Function with the President and Vice President to coordinate planning and leadership.
    - 2. Encourage professionalism through personal actions and conduct.
    - 3. Assume full duties and responsibilities of the President when the President and Vice President are absent.
  - B. General Officer Duties
    - 1. Record the minutes of all Associate meetings.
      - a. Minutes should be typed, brief, omitting descriptions, recording what was done, not what was stated, and reported in the order in which the business was presented at the meeting.
      - b. Motions should be specified, including final wording and any motion to reconsider; also whether each was adopted, lost, or temporarily tabled.
      - c. Motions recorded usually include: all notices of motions, all points of order and appeals— noting whether sustained or lost along with the President's (or presiding officer) reasons for the ruling—and the maker (but not the seconder) of important motions.
      - d. Note bylaws, amendments or revisions accurately with dates of the adoption.

- e. Ensure that minutes are a permanent record of the Association and are preserved in an organized and readable form for future officers.
  - f. Coordinate with the President to ensure accuracy of minutes, and then distribute to body for approval at the next meeting.
  - g. Forward to the President any information about unfinished business or any new business that is before the Association at least 72-hours prior to meeting.
2. Maintain Blackboard website for the Association.
    - a. Manage officers' pages for current and up-to-date information.
    - b. Post meeting agendas and meeting minutes.
- C. Officer Support
1. Provide information and encourage membership attendance at affiliated colloquia, seminars, and/or workshops.
  2. Represent the Association at official functions or coordinate with membership to ensure representation at official functions.
  3. Follow-up with officers on organizational tasks to offer assistance.
  4. Update Blackboard to include the most relevant and necessary information is available to graduate students of the Department.
- D. Meetings
1. Distribute minutes of previous meeting to all officers 48-hours prior to next meetings.
  2. Available at Association meetings and prepared with minutes of previous meetings, a copy of the Constitution and bylaws that govern the Association.
  3. Preside at all meetings when the President and Vice President are absent.
  4. Report to the membership, if serving on Departmental committee(s) as a representative for the Association, on relevant information and/or documentation described and/or discussed in the meetings.
- E. Electoral Transitions
1. Ensure all necessary information and documentation is passed onto the incoming Association officers, particularly the Secretary.
  2. Provide access information to Blackboard to the incoming President and Secretary.
- IV. The Treasurer**
- A. Leadership
1. Provide leadership in budgeting for the Association.
  2. Encourage professionalism through personal actions and conduct.
  3. Coordinate fundraising activities for Association.
- B. General Officer Duties
1. Knowledgeable of accounting procedures and policies of the Association and Dean of Students Office.
    - a. Familiar with the policies and information provided by the Dean of Students Office for obtaining financial support for the Association.
    - b. Maintain and update Association information for continuing recognition of the Association to ensure financial support for the Association during an academic year.
  2. Serve as primary signatory on financial accounts.

3. Establish annual budget for the Association.
  4. Responsible for obtaining budget approval, in consultation with the President, that supports and reflects specific goals for the academic year.
  5. Arrange for a monthly annual audit.
  6. Ensure all expenditures are authorized, documented, explained, and reported.
    - a. Manage day-to-day financial transactions.
    - b. Prepare purchase orders for Association.
    - c. Ensure two copies of all receipts from purchases are created and distributed to appropriate personnel: file a copy with appropriate Departmental financial officer and retain a copy for the Association records.
    - d. Record payments, reimbursements, deposits, withdraws, and accrued interest of funds.
    - e. Maintain a financial history of the Association.
    - f. Submit financial records to the Association and/or University.
    - g. Coordinates Food Services for colloquia in cooperation with the Colloquia Director.
    - h. Prepare purchase orders, requisition forms, and/or supply requests.
    - i. Keep financial records organized, accurate, and up-to-date by preparing monthly statement of receipts and expenditures.
    - j. Maintain an inventory of all equipment and its condition owned by the Association.
    - k. File report on all stolen or lost equipment.
  7. Responsible in coordination with the President for the procurement of any gifts or honorariums granted by the Association.
- C. Officer Support
1. Represent the Association at official functions or coordinate with membership to ensure representation at official functions.
  2. Follow-up with officers on organizational tasks to offer assistance.
- D. Meetings
1. Present financial report at each meeting of the balance in all accounts related to the Association.
  2. Report to the membership, if serving on Departmental committee(s) as a representative for the Association, on relevant information and/or documentation described and/or discussed in the meetings.
- E. Electoral Transitions
1. Ensure all necessary information and documentation is passed onto the incoming Association officers, particularly the Treasurer.
- V. **The Colloquia Director**
- A. Leadership
1. Provide leadership in planning and implementing colloquia for the Association.
  2. Encourage professionalism through personal actions and conduct.
- B. General Officer Duties
1. Contact each faculty member (i.e., mass email) prior to each colloquium asking them to strongly encourage their advisees and students to attend – providing the date and time along with benefits of attending the event.

2. Coordinate colloquia activities for graduate students to enhance academic knowledge, values, and/or engagement.
  2. Provide information and encourages graduate students attend Departmental colloquia hosted by the Association.
  3. Coordinate with the Treasurer to ensure refreshments and supplies are available at Association functions.
  4. Host colloquium and introduce all participants assisting or speaking at the colloquium event.
- C. Officer Support
1. Represent the Association at official functions or coordinate with membership to ensure representation at official functions.
  2. Follow-up with officers on organizational tasks to offer assistance.
- D. Meetings
1. Present plans for upcoming colloquia to the Association.
  2. Report to the membership, if serving on Departmental committee(s) as a representative for the Association, on relevant information and/or documentation described and/or discussed in the meetings.
- E. Electoral Transitions
1. Ensure all necessary information and documentation is passed onto the incoming Association officers, particularly the Colloquia Director.

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<sup>1</sup> The President will select the GSA Advisor within the first month of ascending to office. The Advisor should indicate acceptance of the role to the Association. The President would be wise to select his or her academic advisor, but is not required to do so. Following acceptance by the Advisor the President will inform the Vice President of the Association who the Advisor will be during the President's tenure.

<sup>2</sup> For any member who may serve on a committee in the Department of Communication as a representative of GSA he or she is required to provide the President the following information no later than 48-hours after the conclusion of the meeting: (1) standard summary and (2) suggestions for chairperson.

The first section, "Standard Summary," should include three parts: (a) summary of main points of discussion, (b) issues discussed related to GSA, and (c) action items related to GSA.

The second section, "Suggestions for the President," should, if needed, make a recommendation for action to the chairperson on relevant items. An example of a recommendation would be, "Due to the number of issues discussed related to GSA during the Promotion and Tenure meeting, described above, I recommend we hold a meeting within the next two weeks to discuss these issues in detail and form action plans to present to the faculty/committee in the next month."

This process will allow the President to determine if additional meeting times should be scheduled or if issues should be discussed via email or some other channel of communication. Also, this will allow the Association to maximize its time and efforts as a committee to create opportunities to discuss and strategize our goals and work together.