Bylaws of the Graduate Student Assembly: Revised Oct 2014

1. Structure.

1.A. Officers. All officers of the Graduate Student Assembly must also be elected as Representatives for their term of office.

1.A.1. Chair. The Chair attends the Executive Committee of the Graduate School. If neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair can attend the Chair can appoint a proxy, preferably a Steering Committee member. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chair has signing authority in budgetary matters.

1.A.2. Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair chairs meetings in the absence of the Chair, or when requested to do so by the Chair, or by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. The Vice-Chair is a member of every standing committee, although she/he may not vote or make formal motions in this capacity. The Vice-Chair attends the Executive Committee of the Graduate School.

1.A.3. Secretary. The Secretary maintains records of Assembly business, accurate lists of Representatives, and attendance. Each meeting the Secretary provides the Assembly with an agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. The Secretary should also circulate the agenda electronically in advance of the meeting. The Secretary acquires department enrollment figures for election purposes. In the case of a resignation, the Secretary should inform the Elections Committee of the vacancy.

1.A.4. Treasurer. The Treasurer maintains financial records, has signing authority in budgetary matters, and shall report on the budget at the beginning of each semester. The Treasurer will not deny expenditures except in unusual circumstances where it is deemed prudent to obtain Assembly approval.

1.A.5. Conference Travel Fund Director. The CTF Director handles all issues related to the organization and implementation of the CTF. The CTF Director publicizes the rules and deadlines, collects all applications, and verifies that they are valid. The CTF Director distributes applications to appropriate readers without conflict of interest. The CTF Director then convenes a meeting to determine CTF recipients, conveys decisions to the applicants, and transmits all award decisions to the financial aid office for the distribution of funds. The CTF Director assembles relevant statistics and reports to the Assembly following each cycle.

1.A.6. Publicity Chair. The Publicity Chair contributes to the GSAS Newsletter, deals with PR issues such as interviews and relations with the press, heads any advertising campaigns, and chairs the Publicity Committee.

1.A.7. Webmaster. The Webmaster is in charge of maintaining the GSA website, ensuring that all links function, information is up-to-date, minutes are posted, etc. The Webmaster will be assisted in updating information by the Secretary, as needed, and by any other student(s) she/he appoints.
1.B. Committees.

1.B.1. Composition. The Assembly divides into six Standing Committees. The Assembly may also create and populate Ad Hoc Committees.

1.B.1.a. All committees select a Chair and a Secretary. The Chair convenes meetings regularly and runs meetings. The Secretary keeps a record of committee transactions and prepares documents for Assembly review. The Chair presents a report to the full Assembly in accordance with the Order of Business.

1.B.1.b. Except where otherwise specified in these Bylaws or the Charter, any student in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences may be a member of a Standing or Ad Hoc Committee. However, only a Representative may chair a Standing or Ad Hoc Committee.

1.B.1.c. The Assembly retains the right to add or remove committee members throughout the year by simple majority vote. At least one meeting’s notice must be given before voting to remove a committee member.


1.B.2.a. Mandates (1.B.3) delegate responsibility for overseeing general principles or exercising specific powers to a Committee.

1.B.2.b. The Committee has spending authority for any funds allocated to it in the budget approved by the Assembly, but the Treasurer or Chair must sign all expenditures. All communications from, and actions of, any Committee should be presented or reported to the Assembly prior to their release.

1.B.2.c. The Assembly must approve proposed actions that have not been established explicitly by the mandate of the Committee. Any Committee communication or action may be overturned by a vote of the Assembly. Committee members shall not make statements in the name of the Committee or the Assembly in the absence of express consent from the respective bodies.

1.B.3. Standing Committees. Standing Committees operate according to their mandate unless removed from the bylaws.

1.B.3.a. Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is appointed at the first meeting of the academic year. In accordance with sections D, E, and 1.C.3 of the Charter, the Steering Committee meets on a biweekly basis with the Dean of the Graduate School. The Steering Committee sets the agenda for these meetings.

1.B.3.b. Summer Steering Committee. The Summer Steering Committee is appointed at the Transitional Meeting. Summer Steering notifies Representatives of important developments in graduate school policy and sets the date and agenda for the first meeting each fall. Any Representative
from the outgoing or incoming Assembly may serve on the Summer Steering Committee.

1.B.3.c. **Elections Committee.** The Elections Committee administers all elections as specified in the Charter and these Bylaws. The Elections Committee must be appointed by the end of September. Before the end of March, the Elections Committee should present its election plan to the Assembly. The Assembly Vice-Chair serves as Chair of the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee will be composed of no less than one representative from each division, but no more than six representatives in total.

1.B.3.d. **Publicity Committee.** The Publicity Committee handles issues of publicity, public relations, and printed material. The Publicity Committee approves GSA-related press releases and advertising.

1.B.3.e. **Other Standing Committees.** The other standing committees are: Academics and Professional Development Committee, Facilities and Healthcare Committee, and Transit and Security Committee. These committees are authorized to act according to their title and any mandates passed as bills by the Assembly.

1.B.4. **Ad Hoc Committees.** Ad Hoc Committees can be constituted or dissolved by a bill passed in the Assembly. When establishing an Ad Hoc Committee, the Assembly specifies its termination date. If no date is specified, the Ad Hoc Committee dissolves upon the Transition Meeting.

2. **Membership.**

2.A. **Assembly Representatives.**

2.A.1. **Number of Representatives.** The number of representatives elected in a given Spring is calculated from the previous Fall registration numbers. In cases in which no such numbers exist, such as the creation of new departments, the number of representatives will correspond to the most recent registration numbers available.

2.A.2. **Duties.** Representatives are responsible for attending meetings, communicating Assembly business to their constituencies, and communicating the concerns of their constituencies to the Assembly.

2.A.3. **Resignation.** A Representative resigns by informing the Secretary in writing of her/his intent to resign. The Secretary shall then forward the resignation announcement to the Chair and inform the Assembly. The Representative shall be considered resigned from the Assembly immediately upon submission of the resignation.

2.A.4. **Dismissal.** A Representative is subject to automatic dismissal if:

2.A.4.a. A Representative misses three consecutive meetings, whether excused or unexcused.
2.A.4.b. A Representative misses two meetings over the course of a semester without notifying the Secretary prior to being absent.

2.A.5. **Reinstatement.** Dismissed Representatives may appeal in person at the Steering Committee meeting following dismissal. A majority vote of the Steering Committee shall be sufficient to reinstate a dismissed Representative. Rescheduling due to conflict is at the discretion of the Chair.

2.A.6. **Replacement.** In case of a vacancy in the Assembly, the Elections Committee will contact the department concerned and conduct a by-election as specified in these Bylaws. No vacancies will be filled between the end of the Spring term and one week into the Fall term.

2.B. Elections.

2.B.1. **Annual Elections.** Annual Elections shall be held in the Spring and the Fall. The Annual Election is divided into two phases, Nomination and Election, each of which will last a minimum of one week.

2.B.1.a. **Nomination Phase.** During the Nomination Phase, the Elections Committee gathers nominations from departments and publishes them provisionally, at least two days in advance of the Election Phase, and then publishes a final list of nominations at the conclusion of the Nomination Phase.

2.B.1.b. **Election Phase.** Elections may be conducted in any manner according to the discretion of the Elections Committee. The Election Committee counts the votes.

2.B.1.c. **Timing.** The Spring Annual Election shall be finished two weeks before the exam period, so that the Transitional Meeting may be held the week before exams. The Fall Annual Election shall be finished before the 1st of October.

2.B.2. **By-elections.** If, after the Fall Annual Election, but before the Spring Annual Election, a graduate student wishes to run for an empty Assembly seat, the Elections Committee will survey his or her department for objections, allowing at least one week for responses.

2.B.2.a. If there are no objections, the student will occupy the vacant seat.

2.B.2.b. If any student in the department objects then the Elections Committee will hold a by-election, allowing a suitable amount of time for other candidates to step forward.

2.B.2.c. Representatives for one-year master’s degree programs that constitute their own programs will be elected in the Fall Annual Election.

3. **Procedures.**

3.A. **Meetings.**

3.A.1.a.Approval of minutes. The minutes of the previous Assembly meeting are approved unless objections or amendments are raised.

3.A.1.b.Approval of Agenda. The Agenda is approved. Amendments to the Agenda may be raised and voted on prior to approval of the Agenda.

3.A.1.c.New Business from the floor. The Chair asks for any issues from the floor. Representatives may raise issues not on the Agenda and place them under New Business.

3.A.1.d.Reports from Committees. Reports from the following committees will be given at the discretion of the Steering Committee: Steering Committee, Graduate School Standing Committees, Assembly Standing Committees, Graduate School Ad Hoc Committees, Assembly Ad Hoc Committees, and Departmental Meetings. At the Chair's discretion, motions may be moved to the New Business section of the agenda. If a committee foresees substantial discussion of an issue, they should notify the Steering Committee in advance.

3.A.1.e.Appointments/Nominations, Old and New Business. The meeting should move from Appointments and Nominations to Old Business to New Business. The Steering Committee may change the order of these three parts of the Agenda.

3.A.1.f.Anouncements. Any member may make an announcement. Announcements are for informational purposes only.

3.A.1.g.Adjournment. A motion to adjourn must be seconded and accepted without objections.


3.A.2.a.Setting the Agenda. Any student in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences may ask any Representative to place items on the General Assembly meeting Agenda. Representatives are strongly encouraged to place these requested items on the Agenda.

3.A.2.b.Sequence of Duties. If an officer is unable or unwilling to perform one of his/her duties, those duties will fall on the next officer in this order: Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Steering Committee member chosen at the Chair's discretion.

3.A.2.c.Motions. All motions from the floor must be seconded before a vote is taken. Only one motion may be on the floor at any given time.

3.A.2.c.1.Any Representative may suggest amendments to a motion. If the motion's original sponsor agrees, the amendment is automatically included in the main motion as a friendly amendment. If the motion's
original sponsor does not agree to the amendment, a vote must first be taken on whether or not to accept the amendment before the main motion can be accepted or rejected.

3.A.2.c.2. The Chair may decide to call a vote on a motion at her/his discretion. If a Representative on the floor objects, a vote must be taken on whether to call the motion to a vote. Any Representative may also move that a vote be taken.

3.A.2.c.3. Representatives may vote in the affirmative, vote in the negative, or abstain on a motion. A motion passes on a simple majority, with abstentions not counted. If abstentions outnumber affirmative votes, however, the Chair must reopen discussion of the motion on the floor.

3.A.2.d. **Opposition Views.** After the Assembly passes a motion, any Representative or Representatives may express opposition to the vote just taken from the floor. The opposing Representative(s) will briefly state the nature of the objection, which will be entered into the minutes. Alternatively, the opposing Representative(s) may compose a written explanation of their objection following the meeting, which will be appended to the minutes by the Secretary.

3.A.2.e. **Speaking Sequence and Time Limits.** The Chair may run the meeting either by calling on Representatives at his/her discretion or by keeping a speaking order. Any Representative may request that the Chair keep a speaking order, subject to approval by a majority of the Assembly. The Chair may impose a time limit at her/his discretion. Alternatively, a time limit may be proposed from the floor and agreed upon by a majority of the Assembly. Normally, speakers from the floor should limit their time to one minute.

3.A.2.f. **Absence of Quorum.** If quorum has not been reached Assembly business may still go forward normally. However, votes are not binding. When quorum is reached, whether at the same meeting or at a subsequent meeting, all motions approved without quorum shall be read out. The Assembly may then vote on these motions together or individually.

3.A.2.g. **Removal of Officers.** Officers may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all Assembly Representatives. Failing two-thirds of all Representatives at a meeting, two-thirds of quorum may remove an officer provided notice of the motion to remove is disseminated to all Representatives at least one week prior to the meeting.

3.A.2.h. **Robert’s Rules.** Except where otherwise specified in these Bylaws or the Charter, General Assembly meetings shall be governed according to the most recent official edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. Robert’s Rules may be suspended by a majority vote of the Assembly.
3.A.3. **Transitional Meeting.** The first meeting after the Spring Annual Election shall be called the Transitional Meeting. The outgoing Steering Committee sets the Agenda for this meeting, which is chaired by the outgoing Chair. Outgoing Representatives are invited to the Transitional Meeting and may speak from the floor, but they do not vote or make motions. The Summer Steering Committee is appointed at the Transitional Meeting.

3.B. **Legislation.**

3.B.1. **Types of Legislation.**

3.B.1.a. **Referendum.** Any Representative may propose that the Assembly hold a referendum as specified in section 1.C.6 of the charter. If a referendum is approved, an Ad Hoc Committee is appointed to administrate it. To the extent that a referendum is binding on Assembly action, the outcome will be determined by a simple majority of voting students.

3.B.1.b. **Bill.** A bill is any action internal to the GSA including but not limited to forming an ad hoc committee, passing or revising the budget, and changing the bylaws. Except where otherwise specified, a bill passes with a simple majority.

3.B.1.b.1. **Amendment to Bylaws.** The Bylaws can be amended by a two-thirds vote of all Representatives. The full text of a proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be submitted to the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall have two weeks to consider the proposed amendment before voting on it. Standing Committees - except for Steering, Summer Steering, and Elections - will be asked to report their views on the proposed amendment prior to the General Assembly voting.

3.B.1.b.2. **Communication with the Graduate Student Body.** The Assembly may compose and send emails or other communications to the graduate student body, or any portion thereof. The Chair is responsible for sending these communications, but can delegate this responsibility to the Publicity Chair.

3.B.1.c. **Resolution.** A resolution states the opinion of General Assembly on an issue. It should be addressed to a recipient and state the Assembly’s reasons for its position on an issue. Recipients can include, but are not limited to, university administrators, academic departments, and the graduate student body. Except where otherwise specified, a resolution passes with a simple majority.

3.B.1.d. **Nominations.** Except where otherwise specified in these Bylaws or the Charter, the General Assembly recommends nominations to the Dean for appointment to external committees. Standing Committees shall nominate the Assembly’s representatives to the following external committees:
3.B.1.d.1. **Academics and Professional Development:** Library Committee, Graduate Teaching Center Advocate, Career Services, Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

3.B.1.d.2. **Facilities and Healthcare:** Health Plan Member Advisory Committee, Student Coverage Task Force, Housing Committee.

3.B.1.d.3. **Transportation and Safety:** Transportation Committee.

3.B.2. **Rules for Legislation**

3.B.2.a. **Eligibility to Submit Legislation.** Only Representatives may introduce pieces of legislation.

3.B.2.b. **Submission of Legislation to the Chair.** All pieces of legislation must be presented to the Chair in final form at least seventy-two hours before a regular meeting so that they may be placed on the Agenda and distributed to all Representatives beforehand. Exceptions to this rule shall be permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

3.B.2.c. **Title and Sponsor.** All pieces of legislation shall have a title and at least one sponsor, both of which must be listed at the top of the bill. At the discretion of the sponsor(s), a bill may be designated as being “on behalf of” one or more individuals or committees of the Assembly.

3.B.2.d. **Record of Bills.** Copies of all bills and a record of the votes on each bill, regardless of the outcome, shall be posted on the Assembly website.

3.B.2.e. **Amendment and Debate of Legislation.** A bill may not be amended or debated until it is eligible to be put to a vote. Until this time, only questions of a factual nature may be directed towards the bill’s sponsor(s).

3.B.2.f. **Numbering System.** All legislation shall be numbered according to its semester, year, and sequence of introduction in the following format.

3.B.2.f.1. **Semester:** “F” or “S” to indicate the fall or spring semester.

3.B.2.f.2. **Year:** The last two digits of the calendar year, followed by a dash.

3.B.2.f.3. **Sequence:** The order in which the bill was introduced during this semester.