

**CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL OF
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Approved May 2015

Guiding Principles

The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism hereby establishes the Student Government of the student body in accordance with Article XV and Article XVI of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, which enumerates the principles and procedures governing the rights, conduct, and organizations of students. As formulators of this constitution, we impose our intention upon all officers charged with its enforcement: That they shall govern impartially and grant funds and services equitably to all qualified students under the aegis of the Graduate School of Journalism.

Article I. NAME

The name of the elected body that represents the student body at the Graduate School of Journalism (hereafter, "GSJ") shall be Graduate Student Council (hereafter, "GSC").

Article II. PURPOSES

The purpose of the GSC shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Promoting an atmosphere of community and sociability for the students at the GSJ;
- b. Promoting the democratization of the City University of New York (hereafter, "CUNY") in order to enable its students, faculty, and staff to participate in the important social, political, and economic decisions that affect the quality of their lives and their community;
- c. Promoting transparency and facilitating political participation by making its documents and bylaws publicly accessible;
- d. Representing the interests of and establishing and enacting policy for all GSJ students;
- e. Seeking reciprocal channels of communication among all GSJ students, faculty, staff, and administration;
- f. Securing voting participation in the decision-making entities (the Governance Council and its various committees) that impact GSJ students;
- g. Serving as the allocating body for Student Activity Fees;
- h. Organizing and funding GSJ student activities, organizations, services, and other functions of general, professional, cultural, and social interest at the GSJ.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

III.1. Constituency

All students registered at the Graduate School of Journalism are part of the body represented by the GSC.

III. 2. Council Representatives:

- a. **Chairperson.** Presides over meetings, keeps meetings on task, circulates agenda prior to meetings. Delegates who will take meeting minutes at each meeting. Serves as voting member on GSJ's Governance Council and its Executive committee, plus one GSC committee.

- b. **Technology Editor.** (Internal Affairs) Maintains council website and creates surveys / collects data from surveys. Posts meeting minutes, bylaws, and other policies enacted by the GSC. Serves as voting member on one GSJ committee and one GSC committee.
- c. **Treasurer.** Maintains accurate records of student fees collected, use of funds, and oversees budget. Collects documentation when needed and files with the Assistant Director of Student Services. Serves as voting member on one GSJ committee and one GSC committee.
- d. **University Student Senate.** Represents interests of GSC at USS meetings. Reports relevant activities of USS. Serves as voting member(s) on the GSJ Strategic Planning committee. One representative selected in September and one selected in January. Term September – June (serves as alternate Sept-Dec; serves as representative Jan.-June). Term January – December (serves as alternate Jan.-June; serves as representative July – Dec.)
- e. **Public Editor.** (External Affairs) Produces formal notices to wider student population and responds to all email inquiries on behalf of the GSC. This position will have monthly rotation of At-Large Steering officers to be decided at the beginning of each semester.
- f. **At-Large Steering Officers.** Serves as voting members on at least one GSJ committee and at least two GSC committees. Serves as Public Editor on rotating basis.
- g. **GSC Liaison.** Serves as a non-voting, liaison for the Certificate program students in the spring term. May serve on GSC committee.

III.3. Nomination and Election of GSC members

There will be ten (10) council members serving a one-year term. Members of the student body can self-nominate themselves or encourage classmates to run.

Due to the unique calendar of the GSJ, elections run twice in the fall semester and once at the start of the spring semester. At the start of each fall semester, two (2) students will be elected from and by the incoming class to serve through August. At the end of each fall semester, seven (7) additional students from the regular Master's program will be elected by the student body to serve on the GSC through December. At the start of each spring semester one (1) student will be elected from and by the incoming class to serve through December and one (1) student from the Certificate program will have the option to serve as liaison on the GSC for the spring term.

When elections are to be held, the Assistant Director of Student Services will charge the Student Elections Review Committee (SERC) to begin the process. The SERC committee will facilitate a call for nominations and review of election results.

Council Members serve on various school committees to represent student opinion. The members serving on each committee as noted below are voting members of that committee. All voting members serving on each GSJ Governance Committee will be elected via interest and vote within the GSC. All other council members are welcome to attend any committee meetings. In order to comply with New York State Open Meetings Law, all GSC meetings will be publicly shared and open to the entire GSJ community.

GSC members must be in good academic standing (3.0 GPA or better) at all times while serving on the council. If a member is put on academic probation in any given semester, s/he will no longer be eligible to continue serving on the council and will be replaced by a student determined by the Cabinet.

III.4. Relationship of the Council

Each council member shall be primarily responsible for the position to which he or she has been elected; however, these positions do not have exclusive domains but are rather a division of labor in a cooperative effort.

Although the council roles are intended to act in a balanced and cooperative manner, it is recognized that unusual circumstances may arise which would make a more rigidly hierarchical organization preferable. To that end, the GSC retains the option to establish clearly delineated duties and functions for each of the council roles in such hierarchical organization as the GSC shall consider necessary. This option may only be invoked at a GSC meeting with quorum present. Quorum must be counted before the option is invoked and the motion to invoke this option shall only be open for discussion if moved by at least three members of the GSC, only one of whom may be a member of the Cabinet. Both the option itself and any reorganization decided upon by discussion of GSC must pass by at least three-fifths majority vote; any such reorganization shall expire June 30.

Article IV. COMMITTEES

IV.1. Cabinet Committee

IV.1.1. Membership

The Cabinet Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Technical Editor, Treasurer, and USS representative and USS alternate. All positions are decided via vote based on interest internally within the GSC.

IV.1.2. Duties of the Cabinet Committee

The Cabinet Committee shall;

- a. Make decisions on a day-to-day basis for the GSC as per the policies established and actions taken by the Steering committee and the GSC and be subject to review by these bodies;
- b. Consult and seek the advice of the Steering committee on the Cabinet committee members' duties;
- c. Establish or disestablish whatever ad-hoc committees are deemed necessary to discharge its responsibilities;
- d. Interface with faculty, staff, and administration;
- e. Prepare agendas for meetings and maintain Council website

IV.2. Steering Committee

IV.2.1. Membership

The Steering Committee shall have ten members, consisting of the Cabinet Committee members, and the five At-Large Steering Officers.

IV.2.2. Duties of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall:

- a. Provide a forum for discussion of school related issues and matters of particular concern to the student body;
- b. Serve as Public Editor in monthly rotation;
- c. Have oversight of registered students clubs/organizations, to allocate funds from Student Activity Fees to those clubs organizations, and to coordinate activities of the clubs/organizations. The GSC has the authority to suspend clubs/organizations, should they become inactive or violate policies of the GSC or GSJ.

IV.3. Standing Committees

The GSC shall have other standing committees as established in its Bylaws, which shall specify the purposes, membership, and duties of each committee. All standing committees must report activities, meetings, and proposals for policy changes to the Steering Committee at least once a semester.

IV.4. Ad-Hoc Committees

The purposes and membership of ad-hoc committees shall be specified at the time of their formation as well as the person to convene the first meeting and submit reports to GSC. All ad-hoc committees shall expire on June 30 unless otherwise renewed.

IV.5. Sub-Committees

Each standing and ad-hoc committee shall have the power to create sub-committees for investigation, advocacy, and policy-making pertaining to any issue within the committee's purview. Membership in sub-committees shall be limited to the members of the committee that establishes them. All sub-committees shall expire on June 30 unless renewed. Sub-committees and their members shall be subject to all provisions of the committees that create them. Each sub-committee shall submit a report to the respective committee at least ten business days before the meeting to which the committee is on the agenda.

Article V. TENURE, VACANCY, AND RECALL

V.1. Tenure

The tenure of members of the GSC shall be a one (1) year term.

V.2. Replacement Due to Vacancy

Whenever a position is vacated due to reasons other than the natural end of a term, the Cabinet Committee shall appoint a replacement, which appointment shall lapse at the time when elections are regularly held. The Cabinet shall make all efforts to appoint the next person in line from the previous elections held.

V.3. Recall

All GSC members may be recalled from office on an individual basis by a two-thirds

majority vote of the GSC. A recall motion for a particular office shall not be voted upon until seconded by at least two GSC members from the floor. A representative cannot move to recall a member unless he or she notifies that member in writing, copied the Cabinet Committee, at least five business days before the meeting at which the motion may be entertained.

Article VI. MEETINGS

VI.1. Regular Meetings

The GSC shall hold meetings every two weeks in the Fall semester (September – December) and every three weeks in the Spring semester (January – May).

VI.1. Standing and Ad-Hoc Committees

Standing and ad-hoc committees shall hold at least two meetings each semester.

VI.2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the GSC or any of its committees may be called by a written petition presented to a member of the Cabinet Committee stating the issue to be discussed.

A member of the Cabinet Committee shall convene the special meeting within ten business days of receipt of the petition. Within seven calendar days, that member shall both send an agenda to each member of the respective body for which the meeting has been called and make public notice of the meeting through the Technology Editor.

VI.3. Compliance with the New York State Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Law

The GSC shall comply with New York State Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Law, including but not limited to having those in charge of calling each meeting send an agenda and draft minutes of the previous meeting to each member of the respective body and the Technology Editor at least seven calendar days before the meeting. Agendas shall be made public through the Technology Editor at least seven calendar days before each meeting. Draft minutes shall, likewise, be sent to each member of the respective body and the Technology Editor and made public through the Technology Editor no more than seven calendar days after the meeting takes place. These minutes shall indicate, but not be limited to, those voting members present and absent, the time the meeting was called to order, and the time the meeting was adjourned, and the minutes shall also chronicle each passing or failing motion, the person who made the motion, the person who seconded the motion if the motion was seconded, and the outcome of the vote on the motion if a vote was taken. All members of the GSJ community may attend any meeting of the GSC without vote and also without voice unless so recognized to speak by the chair. Members of the public may not attend portions of meetings conducted in a legitimate executive session unless so authorized by the chair.

VI.4. Quorum

At any meeting of the GSC, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the voting seats including one cabinet member.

Article VII. REFERENDA

It is the right of the members of the student body to call a referendum vote on any issue or legislation that the members deem appropriate. An issue will be placed on the next regular GSO election ballot if a petition bearing the valid signatures of 5% of the membership of the student body or 10% of the student body if the referendum is on the Student Activity Fee. If the petition states that an immediate vote is necessary, a special referendum ballot will be sent to all members of the student body within 20 business days of receipt of any petition calling both for a referendum and for an immediate vote. Such a request for an immediate vote must be clearly specified in the required petition. Approval of a referendum will require a majority affirmative vote with not less than 10% of the members of the student body voting within 20 business days.

Article VIII. FINANCIAL AUTHORITY AND POLICIES

VIII.1. Financial Accountability

The financial actions of the GSC shall abide by *The City University Handbook for the Control and Accountability of Student Activity Fees*.

VIII.2. Authorization

Meeting minutes with budget approval or formal submission of vote must be submitted to the Assistant Director of Student Services for processing of payment from the Finance Office.

VIII.3. Student Activity Fee

It is the right of members of the student body to request changes in the level of the Student Activity Fee by means of a referendum.

VIII.4. Budgeting

The fiscal year of the GSJ shall run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. After consulting relevant affiliates and committees of the GSC, the Treasurer shall present a budget proposal at the start of each semester. The GSC shall review and approve a budget by the 3rd week of the semester. The current budget shall be in effect until the new budget is passed. Budgeted expenditures may not exceed estimated income.

Article IX. AMENDMENTS

IX.1. Amendments to the Constitution

A proposed amendment to this constitution may be considered by the GSC upon written presentation to it by any member thereof. Written notice of the proposed amendment shall be sent to every member of the GSC at least ten business days before the meeting at which it is to be considered. An amendment may be passed by a two-thirds majority vote at a GSC meeting. Any changes to permanent overall structure of the GSC must also be presented and passed within the GSJ Governance committee.

IX.1. Amendments to the Bylaws

A proposed amendment to the GSC Bylaws shall first be read at a GSC meeting. At the following meeting, the proposed amendment shall be considered and may be ratified by a simple majority vote.