



Graduate Student Senate

University of Connecticut

Bylaws of the Graduate Student Senate

Ratified by the Graduate Student Senate on April 25, 2006

Bylaw I. Scope

The Bylaws of the Graduate Student Senate at the University of Connecticut shall not conflict with the Constitution of the Graduate Student Senate of the University of Connecticut, University of Connecticut policies, or any applicable laws.

Bylaw II. Executive Committee

Section 1. Membership

The Executive Committee of the Graduate Student Senate shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Activities Director.

Section 2. Responsibilities

As a coordinating and policy-recommending body for the Senate, the committee shall:

- A. recommend a budget to the Senate
- B. prepare an agenda for Senate meetings
- C. present a statement concerning the general state of the Graduate Student Senate, including but not limited to reports on all standing committees of the Senate, and the graduate student community on the second Senate meeting of each semester
- D. appoint individuals to committees and posts outside of the Graduate Student Senate, subject to approval of the Senate
- E. facilitate communication among Senators and between Senators and their constituencies.

Section 3. Authority

According to its role as an executive body for the Senate, the committee may:

- A. request reports from other Senate committees and appointees to outside committees or posts on their activities
- B. appropriate expenditures as necessary between Senate meetings, subject to a three-fifths majority vote, consistent with the Finance Policies and Procedures
- C. voice its opinion on motions before the Senate
- D. exercise jurisdictional authority over all disputes that cannot be settled at a lower level, including disputes between committees.

- Section 4. Committee Meetings
 - A. The President shall prepare an agenda for and preside over all meetings.
 - B. The Secretary shall record and sign minutes of all meetings and shall communicate those minutes to the Senate.
 - C. Any vote taken by the Committee shall require a three-fifths majority for passage.
 - D. Meetings shall occur at least once per month, including the summer months.
 - E. If circumstances preclude a meeting, the President may solicit a written vote from the individual members on issues that call for immediate action.
 - F. Quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the Executive Committee.
- Section 5. All Officers
 - A. Each officer shall be required to hold regular office hours in the Senate office.
 - B. Each officer shall be required to report to the Senate at each Senate meeting.
 - C. Each officer shall be required to participate as a full Executive Committee member.
 - D. Each officer shall attend the regular meetings of the Executive Committee and the Senate.
 - E. Each officer shall not be an officer of any other graduate student organization.
- Section 6. Transition of Officers
 - A. To ensure an effective transition of Executive Committee duties, each officer and officer-elect shall document that a comprehensive transition plan has been developed and agreed to by both the incumbent and the officer-elect. The plan will terminate when both parties have attested to the accomplishment of the goals set forth in the plan by way of their signatures.
 - B. The final stipend for each officer, as approved by the Senate, shall not be issued until the transition plan is submitted to and approved by both the incumbent and incoming President.

Bylaw III. Apportionment of the Senate

- Section 1. Establishing Constituencies
 - A. Academic constituencies based upon fields of study recognized by the Graduate School and/or academic departments of the University having graduate degree programs shall form the basis of the Senate.
 - B. Non-academic constituencies of graduate students may be recognized by the Senate upon the recommendation of the Procedures Committee.
- Section 2. Apportionment of the Senate based upon Constituencies
 - A. At least every two years, the Procedures Committee shall determine the constituencies to be represented in the Senate and the apportionment of seats among those constituencies.

- B. The apportionment of academic constituencies shall be based upon the enrollment figures found in the most recent Graduate School Enrollment Report.
- C. Apportionment shall meet the following conditions:
 - i) The minimum number of graduate students in any constituency is 1.
 - ii) All academic constituencies shall be entitled to at least 1 seat.
 - iii) The GSS officers shall not count as a Senator against their constituency's apportionment, nor shall they count against the apportionment of at-large Senators.
 - iv) Academic constituencies shall be apportioned at least three-fourths of the total number of seats apportioned, including at-large seats but not including the GSS officers.
 - v) Academic and non-academic constituencies shall be apportioned separately.
- D. While the Procedures Committee shall have flexibility in apportioning seats in the Senate amongst the academic constituencies, the following guidelines should be used:
 - i) Dividing lines between the enrollments required for each level of representation (1, 2, 3, or more seats per constituency) should correspond to natural breaks in the distribution of constituency enrollments.
 - ii) Constituencies within roughly the 30rd-40th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 1 seat.
 - iii) Constituencies within roughly the 65th-75th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 2 seats.
 - iv) Constituencies above roughly the 65th-75th percentile of the distribution of constituency enrollments should receive 3 seats.
 - v) Constituencies having enrollments well above the rest of the constituencies should receive 4 seats.
- E. The Senate shall approve the apportionment of the Senate by majority vote.
- F. Once the Senate has approved the apportionment, the representation of each constituency shall remain set, regardless of changes in enrollment, until the Senate approves a new apportionment.
- G. The procedures for electing or appointing constituency Senators and setting their term lengths shall be at the individual discretion of the constituencies.
- H. Changes in Apportionment
 - i) Should an unrecognized constituency emerge after apportionment and petition for representation, the Procedures committee shall review the petition and recommend to the Senate how the apportionment of the Senate should be changed, if at all.
 - ii) Should a recognized constituency petition for changes in its representation, the Procedures committee shall review the petition

and recommend to the Senate how the apportionment of the Senate should be changed, if at all.

- Section 3. At-Large Senators
 - A. At least one-twentieth of the apportioned seats shall be at-large.
 - B. At-large Senator terms shall end with the end of each academic year.
 - C. Elections shall occur by either of the following procedures:
 - i) At-large elections shall take place between April 1 and April 15, inclusive. Voting shall take place by closed ballot at designated polling stations on campus on two consecutive days with hours extended enough to accommodate the varied schedules of members of the graduate community.
 - ii) Should the Executive Committee deem at-large Senator elections infeasible, the Senate may elect at-large Senators by a majority vote at any time as seats become available.

Bylaw IV. Recall Procedure

- Section 1. Initiation of Recall Procedure
 - A. A Senator shall move to initiate recall procedures against a specific individual for specific violations of Article VI, Section 4, Subsection B of the Constitution.
 - B. Senators may motion to add, remove, or change specific charges.
 - C. Debate shall be limited to the sufficient specificity of the charges and validity of those charges as a violation of Article VI, Section 4, Subsection B of the Constitution.
- Section 2. Notification of Recall
 - A. The individual charged must receive written notification of the specific charges outlined in the motion to initiate recall against said individual within one day of the motion and at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the hearing will take place.
 - B. All Senators and officers shall be notified at the same time as the accused.
- Section 3. Recall Hearing
 - A. The Senate shall consider only those charges made in the initiation of the recall procedure.
 - B. The individual charged shall have the right to present a defense before the Senate.

Bylaw V. Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund

- Section 1. The Graduate Student Senate Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund, hereafter referred to as the Loan Fund, has been designed to meet the immediate financial obligations that may confront graduate students. Loans made through the Loan Fund are for emergency purposes only.
- Section 2. Standard operating procedures are designed to meet State statutes and University regulations.
- Section 3. Eligibility

- A. Any graduate student who is enrolled at the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus, shall be eligible for a loan from the Loan Fund, provided they have no University financial hold and satisfy all other eligibility requirements.
 - B. Eligibility for a Loan is limited to one per semester (fall, spring, and summer) and two per academic year, as determined by the date of loan application.
 - C. Eligibility during intersession and summer sessions shall be determined in accordance with Bursar policies.
 - D. There is a thirty-day waiting period between the full payment of a loan and eligibility to apply for a new loan.
 - E. Eligibility for a Loan shall be permanently revoked if any two prior loans made through the Loan Fund had been 15 days or more past due.
 - F. Any student with a current loan with the Dean of Students shall be ineligible for a loan through the Loan Fund.
 - G. Any student who has had loan eligibility revoked by the Dean of Students, shall have Loan Fund eligibility revoked by the Graduate Student Senate.
- Section 4. The maximum amount one individual may borrow at any one time is \$500. The Administrative Assistant, may, in consultation with the Executive Committee lower this maximum if the loan fund is in danger of default.
- Section 5. Each loan shall be for a period of 60 days and may be extended once, for up to 30 additional days, upon application to the Senate Office and approval by the Administrative Assistant, in consultation with the Executive Committee. Applications for extension must be submitted before the initial due date, but may not be submitted prior to 15 days before the initial due date.
- Section 6. If a loan through the Loan Fund is approved, funds will be disbursed via check from the Office of the Bursar in accordance with the Bursar policies and procedures.
- Section 7. Loans not picked up within 30 days of the date of application will be automatically cancelled.
- Section 8. All loans made through the Loan Fund shall be interest free, with the exception of late payment penalties.
- Section 9. Repayment of a loan made through the Loan Fund is made at the Office of the Bursar.
- Section 10. Any loan not paid by the due date shall result in instructions being sent to the Office of the Bursar for a hold to be placed on the account of the person involved; therefore, restricting future enrollment, student benefits, and eligibility for academic transcripts from the University.
- Section 11. Any loan not paid by the due date shall be charged a \$25 late fee, except when an extension is granted. In the case of an extension, any loan not paid by the extension due date shall be charged a \$25 late fee.
- Section 12. Any loan originally paid on time that is subsequently overdue as a result of financial aid being rescinded shall be given an automatic 30-day

extension from the date funds are rescinded. Following this 30-day period, all penalties shall apply as normal.

- Section 13. All interest and late fees earned by the Loan Fund will be added to the principle of the fund.
- Section 14. Any loan that is 12 months past due shall result in instructions for collection being sent to the Office of the Bursar.
- Section 15. The Administrative Assistant shall prepare a written report on the Loan Fund by the 10th day of each month. This report shall be presented to the Executive Committee with the Administrative Assistant's recommendations on what action, if any, should be taken.
- Section 16. Standard Operating Procedures for the Loan Fund shall be outlined in the Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund Guidebook, which shall remain in the Senate Office at all times, with copies maintained by the Secretary, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant.

Bylaw VI. Stipends

- Section 1. The GSS may award sums of money to its officers as stipends, in recognition of contributions made to the GSS and its work by the individuals holding those offices, subject to a majority closed ballot vote of the Senate.
- Section 2. Stipends awarded to officers for the execution of duties as defined in this Constitution or its Bylaws shall be limited to the following totals for each office, regardless of the number of individuals serving in each office:
 - A. President
 - i) up to \$3000 paid in 9 equal monthly installments from September through May
 - ii) up to \$600 paid in 3 equal monthly installments from June through August
 - B. Vice President
 - i) up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall Semester
 - ii) up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester
 - C. Secretary
 - i) up to \$400 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall Semester
 - ii) up to \$400 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester
 - D. Treasurer
 - i) up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall Semester
 - ii) up to \$500 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester
 - iii) up to \$200 awarded for the Summer at the first Senate meeting of the following Fall Semester
 - E. Activities Director
 - i) up to \$400 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall Semester

- ii) up to \$400 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester
 - iii) up to \$200 awarded for the Summer at the first Senate meeting of the following Fall Semester
 - F. Parliamentarian
 - i) up to \$300 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Fall Semester
 - ii) up to \$300 awarded at the last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester
- Section 3. In addition, stipends up to \$250 per graduate student per semester may be specifically awarded for the organization of any substantial undertaking involving duties beyond those specifically defined in this Constitution and the Bylaws subject to a majority closed ballot vote of the Senate. No more than \$750 in total per semester may be awarded for this purpose from the Graduate Student Senate budget.
- Section 4. As the President is paid monthly, the Senate may withhold any portion or all of said monthly stipend by majority closed ballot vote.
- Section 5. Summer Duties and Stipends
 - A. The President, the Activities Director, and the Treasurer shall play an active role over the summer, coordinating summer events, overseeing GSS finances, and preparing for the coming year, including but not limited to the pre-planning of Fall activities.
 - B. During the summer months, the Executive Committee may withhold any portion or all of the monthly stipend paid to the President by majority vote. At the first Senate meeting of the Fall Semester, the Senate shall vote to award any portion or all of the funds withheld by Executive Committee vote.
 - C. In the case that officers are unable or unwilling to fill their summer roles, the Senate may appoint individuals to do so in their place.
 - D. In the event that officers or their appointed substitutes become unwilling or unable to continue in this role over the summer, the Executive Committee may appoint by a three-fifths majority vote a substitute to serve the role for the remainder of the summer.
- Section 6. The individuals being considered for stipends shall abstain from voting on their own awards.

Bylaw VII. Procedures Committee

- Section 1. The Procedures Committee shall oversee all GSS elections.
- Section 2. The Procedures Committee shall oversee the membership and verify credentials of both the membership and other graduate student organizations.
- Section 3. The Procedures Committee shall oversee all procedures through which Senators are elected/appointed to the Senate.
- Section 4. The Procedures Committee shall report any election and membership violations to the Senate for action.

- Section 5. The Procedures Committee shall deliver a recommendation on disputes concerning the interpretation of the Constitution and its Bylaws.
- Section 6. The Procedures Committee shall periodically review and recommend changes to the Constitution and Bylaws in light of operational exigencies of the Senate. The contents of this update shall be subject to approval of the Senate.

Bylaw VIII. Activities Committee

- Section 1. The Activities Committee shall be responsible for scheduling and carrying out events applicable to graduate student enrichment, subject to approval by the Senate.
- Section 2. The Activities Committee shall be responsible for the planning, scheduling, organizing, and advertising of GSS-sponsored events under the fiscal constraints imposed by the Senate.

Bylaw IX. Student Life Committee

- Section 1. The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for addressing any major graduate student life issue which is brought to the attention of the Senate and is delegated to the Student Life Committee by the Executive Committee.
- Section 2. The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for identifying graduate student life issues. The Committee shall bring them to the focus of the Senate along with as much information as possible and shall be involved in as much of the communication on this problem as necessary.
- Section 3. The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for creating and organizing projects that will be directed towards or will improve graduate student life, especially those directed towards issues pertinent to graduate students.

Bylaw X. Public Relations Committee

- Section 1. The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for promoting and advertising the Graduate Student Senate, Senate sponsored events, and any information that is pertinent to the graduate student body.
- Section 2. The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for publishing the Senate newsletter.

Bylaw XI. External Committee Representatives

- Section 1. External Committee Representatives shall accurately represent to the best of their abilities the interests of the graduate student body with limited personal bias.
- Section 2. External Committee Representatives shall attend formal committee meetings and notify the Executive Committee if unable to attend committee meetings.

- Section 3. External Committee Representatives shall provide information concerning the organization, activity, and mandate of their committees.
- Section 4. External Committee Representatives shall provide written reports of committee meetings to the Executive Committee within seven days of each meeting, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Executive Committee and the External Committee Representative. These reports shall be provided to the Senate at the next Senate meeting.

Bylaw XII. Administrative Assistant

- Section 1. Eligibility
- A. The Administrative Assistant must be a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus.
 - B. The Administrative Assistant shall not be either a member of the Executive Committee or a Senator.
- Section 2. Application and Hiring
- A. The application process shall be designed and administered by the Executive Committee.
 - B. The hiring decision shall be made by the President, a second member of the Executive Committee, and at least one Senator.
 - C. The Senate shall then approve the chosen Administrative Assistant by majority vote.
- Section 3. The Administrative Assistant shall receive at least a half graduate assistantship with all of the accompanying benefits during the Fall and Spring Semesters.
- Section 4. Responsibilities
- A. The Administrative Assistant shall manage the short-term emergency loan fund.
 - B. The Administrative Assistant shall fulfill assistantship time commitments in the Senate office at regularly scheduled and posted times.
 - C. The Administrative Assistant shall provide a monthly report to the Executive Committee.
 - D. The Administrative Assistant shall complete any administrative duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

Bylaw XIII. Alcoholic Beverage Policy

Events sponsored by the Graduate Student Senate at which alcohol is to be served must encourage responsible consumption of alcohol in the publicity, promotion, and execution of the event. There is to be no reference or publicity regarding the amount of alcohol that is available.