

University of Regina Graduate Students' Association (URGSA)

Constitution



University of Regina Graduate Students' Association

Ratified on April 13, 2017

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ARTICLE I – ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

- 1.1 The name of the organization shall be the University of Regina Graduate Students' Association hereinafter referred to as the URGSA.
- 1.2 The purpose of the URGSA is to:
 - 1.2.1 Promote graduate student representation at all levels of decision making within the University of Regina and all other municipal, provincial, or federal agencies that deliberate on the affairs of graduate students;
 - 1.2.2 Advocate for the unique needs of graduate students to enhance their experience at the University of Regina;
 - 1.2.3 Serve as a centre for communication among graduate students at the University of Regina.
- 1.3 The URGSA shall strive to be free of all forms of discrimination in all endeavors:
 - 1.3.1 The URGSA recognizes that every member has the right to equal treatment without discrimination due to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, disability, or the receipt of public assistance;
 - 1.3.2 The URGSA further recognizes that some members have been historically and systematically disadvantaged on the above grounds with resultant underrepresentation in academic institutions.
- 1.4 The URGSA maintains status with the Government of Saskatchewan under the *Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995*.
- 1.5 The URGSA Constitution, URGSA Bylaws, and Policies of the URGSA shall not be interpreted in any way as limiting the powers conferred upon the Directors of the Corporation, as specified in Article 3.3.1, as per the Government of Saskatchewan's *Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995*.
- 1.6 The URGSA Constitution takes precedence over the URGSA Bylaws which, in turn, take precedence over the Policies of the URGSA.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 All graduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) at the University of Regina are members of the URGSA;
- 2.2 All members of the URGSA are members with full democratic rights without distinctions made between graduate students who are of full-time, part-time, or program maintenance status as defined by FGSR;

- 2.3** Students who do not wish to be members of the URGSA may make a written request to the Executive, as defined in Article 3.1, for their membership with the URGSA terminated.

ARTICLE III – EXECUTIVE

3.1 Composition of the Executive

The Executive shall include the following officers:

- (1) President;
- (2) Vice President Academic Affairs;
- (3) Vice President External Relations;
- (4) Vice President Student Life;
- (5) Vice President Finance.

3.2 Executive Eligibility

- 3.2.1** Any member of the URGSA, as outlined in Article 2.1 and 2.2, is eligible to seek or hold any Executive position or office;
- 3.2.2** URGSA members who are not in good standing, as per FGSR’s graduate calendar, are not eligible to seek or hold any Executive position or office.

3.3 Powers of the Executive

- 3.3.1** All members of the Executive shall act as Directors of the Corporation as per the Government of Saskatchewan’s *Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995*;
- 3.3.2** The Executive is responsible for the actions of the URGSA under the purview of Council;
- 3.3.3** The Executive is empowered to act in place of Council in dealing with routine business;
- 3.3.4** The Executive shall be elected annually as per Article VII;
- 3.3.5** All Executive terms shall last one (1) calendar year starting on May 1 after the annual election and ending on April 30 of the following year;
- 3.3.6** There is no specified limit as to how many terms any member may serve on the Executive.

ARTICLE IV – COUNCIL

4.1 Composition of the Council

- 4.1.1** The Executive officers as defined in Article 3.1;

4.1.2 One (1) representative from each Faculty representing graduate students at the University of Regina with the exception of FGSR:

- Arts;
- Education;
- Engineering & Applied Science;
- Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy;
- Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business;
- Kinesiology & Health Studies;
- Media, Art, & Performance;
- Nursing;
- Science;
- Social Work;

4.1.3 The Executive may additionally include one (1) or more ex officio Council members.

4.2 Council Eligibility

4.2.1 Any member of the URGSA, as outlined in Article 2.1 and 2.2, is eligible to seek or hold any Council position or office;

4.2.2 URGSA members who are not in good standing, as per FGSR's graduate calendar, are not eligible to seek or hold any Council position or office.

4.3 Powers of the Council

4.3.1 The Council is responsible for overseeing the actions of the URGSA as carried out by the Executive;

3.3.3 The Council shall be elected annually as per Article VII;

3.3.4 All Council terms shall last one (1) calendar year starting on May 1 after the annual election and ending on April 30 of the following year;

3.3.5 There is no specified limit as to how many terms any member may serve on the Council.

ARTICLE V – FINANCES

5.1 Fiscal Year

5.1.1 The fiscal year of the URGSA shall be from May 1 to April 30.

5.2 General Meeting

5.2.1 At the General Meeting, the Vice President Finance will present a financial report from the previous year and, in consultation with the other Executive officers, a proposed budget for the members to vote on;

- 5.2.2 In the case that quorum is not met, the previous year's budget will be used until Council can meet in the Fall to vote on the proposed budget.

5.3 Expenditures

- 5.3.1 URGSA funds will be spent for valid purposes;
- 5.3.2 Any single expenditure larger than one thousand (1000) dollars (CAD) needs approval by Council and any single expenditure larger than ten thousand (10000) dollars (CAD) needs approval by the general membership at a General Meeting;
- 5.3.2 Notwithstanding Subsection 5.2.1, expenditure is authorized by a budget approved by general membership vote or, in the case that Article 5.2.2 is in effect, by Council vote;
- 5.3.3 Notwithstanding Subsection 5.2.1 or 5.2.2, expenditure is authorized where the URGSA Constitution or URGSA Bylaws approve the expenditure.

5.4 Honoraria

- 5.4.1 The honoraria paid to Executive officers and other Council members shall be based on requirements outlined in the URGSA Bylaws;
- 5.4.2 The proposed honoraria amount for the following fiscal year shall be voted on at a General Meeting as part of the proposed budget;
- 5.4.3 In the case that quorum is not met, the previous year's honoraria will be used until Council can meet in the Fall to vote on the proposed honoraria amount;
- 5.4.4 The total proposed honoraria amount for Executive officers cannot exceed 10% of the URGSA's proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- 5.4.5 The total proposed honoraria amount for Council members, excluding Executive officers, cannot exceed 2% of the URGSA's proposed budget for the fiscal year.

5.5 Graduate Student Group Funding

- 5.5.1 Eligibility for graduate student group funding will be determined in accordance with the URGSA Bylaws;
- 5.5.2 The URGSA will provide funding to ratified graduate student groups during the Fall and Winter semesters;
- 5.5.3 The URGSA may authorize special event funding to any graduate student group, subject to the approval of the Vice President Finance, based on funding availability;
- 5.5.4 If deemed appropriate by the Executive, the URGSA will pursue other possible avenues of assistance (e.g., sponsorship, voluntarism, publicity) for graduate student groups;

- 5.5.5** The funding received from the URGSA must be used in its entirety for activities aimed at graduate students and, in case of financial misappropriation, the offending graduate student group will be banned from receiving funding from the URGSA—at the discretion of the Council—for a period of up to three years.

ARTICLE VI – GENERAL MEETINGS

6.1 Requirements of General Meetings

- 6.1.1** The Executive is required to hold at least one (1) General Meeting per academic year where the President’s report and a financial report must be presented;
- 6.1.2** The Executive can elect to hold a General Meeting at any point during the academic year if no less than fifteen (15) days notice is given prior to the General Meeting;
- 6.1.3** A list of motions for the General Meeting can be brought forward by any member and must be advertised by the Executive no less than eight (8) days prior to the General Meeting;
- 6.1.4** All members of the URGSA, as defined in Articles 2.1 and 2.1, shall be entitled to one vote at any General Meeting in which they are present;
- 6.1.5** The President, or a designate appointed by the President, shall be Chair of the General Meeting;
- 6.1.6** The Vice President External Relations, or a designate appointed by the President, shall be the Recording Secretary who will record the minutes of the General Meeting.

6.2 General Meeting Quorum

- 6.2.1** The General Meeting can come to order if quorum is established with sixty (65) members present;
- 6.2.2** If the Meeting does not reach quorum within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled start time, the Chair may elect to lower quorum by five (5) members every five (5) minutes until quorum is established or, after thirty (30) minutes from the scheduled start time passes, the General Meeting is adjourned without coming to order;
- 6.2.3** If the Chair elects to lower quorum, and the General Meeting does reach this lower quorum, the first order of business automatically becomes a motion from the Chair to proceed with the General Meeting that must be approved by two thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present or the General Meeting is adjourned without coming to order.

6.3 Proxy Voting

- 6.3.1** Proxy votes will be counted as present for the purposes of establishing quorum and voting within the General Meeting provided that proxy votes are not in excess of representing more than half (1/2) of the membership considered present;
 - 6.3.2** Proxy votes may involve paper or electronic votes submitted to the Chair on each motion presented in the list of motions for the General Meeting;
 - 6.3.3** Paper votes will be accepted by the Chair up until the scheduled start time of the General Meeting and electronic votes will be accepted by the Chair up until twenty-four (24) hours prior to the General Meeting;
 - 6.3.4** Paper and electronic votes will be considered invalid for voting on all motions made from the floor during a General Meeting.
- 6.4** In the case of a procedural dispute or a request for clarification on any matter relevant to General Meeting conduct, the members shall consult a recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTIONS

7.1 General Requirements

- 7.1.1** Elections must be scheduled by the Executive;
- 7.1.2** Elections should be completed annually by March 31.

7.2 Appointment of the Chief Returning Officer

- 7.2.1** Under direction of the Executive, the Council will determine if one of the Council members will act as Chief Returning Officer (CRO), contact a previous CRO, or post the position to the general membership;
- 7.2.2** The CRO must be a member of the URGSA as defined by Article 2.1, not be a member of the current Executive, and not be a candidate for the upcoming Executive;
- 7.2.3** The CRO may appoint members of the Election Committee who also meet criteria specified in Article 7.2.2;
- 7.2.4** Communications concerning the Election must be managed by the CRO and members of the Election Committee.

7.3 Nominations

- 7.3.1** All members of the URGSA as defined by Article 2.1 are eligible to make nominations;

- 7.3.2 All members of the URGSA as defined by Article 2.1, except for those members who meet the criteria outlined in Article 3.2.2, are eligible to be nominated;
- 7.3.3 The call for nominations will be advertised for at least fourteen (14) days prior to advertising the slate of nominees;
- 7.3.4 The slate of nominees will be advertised for at least fourteen (14) days prior to voting.

7.4 Voting

- 7.4.1 All members of the URGSA as defined by Article 2.1 are eligible to vote in the election process;
- 7.4.2 All votes are cast anonymously; however, student identification numbers may be recorded separately to prevent fraudulent voting from occurring;
- 7.4.3 Each position or office is voted on separately;
- 7.4.4 No fees can be charged to eligible voters to participate in the election process;
- 7.4.5 Voting will take place over two (2) days.

7.5 Results

- 7.5.1 If a position or office is contested, the nominee receiving the largest share of ‘yes’ votes for each position or office is elected;
- 7.5.2 If a position or office is uncontested, the nominee is elected if they receive more ‘yes’ than ‘no’ votes for that position or office;
- 7.5.3 Results of the election will be recorded by the CRO and the Election Committee;
- 7.3.4 Results of the election should be advertised by the URGSA within five (5) days of the end of the voting period to increase electoral transparency and promote organizational legitimacy.

7.6 By-Elections

- 7.6.1 By-elections will follow Articles 7.1 through 7.5 with the following exceptions:
 - 1. By-elections should be completed annually by September 30;
 - 2. The appointment to positions or offices will be effective immediately following the end of the voting period;
 - 3. Nominations will only be accepted for vacated positions or offices.

ARTICLE VIII – REFERENDA

- 8.1 The Executive, Council, or general membership can initiate a referendum;

- 8.2 A referendum may be called by a motion in Council passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, by unanimous decision of the Executive, or by submission to the Council of a petition signed by five (5) percent of the general membership of the URGSA;
- 8.3 The Executive must initiate a referendum within four (4) weeks of it being called; give public notice of the referendum at least two (2) weeks prior to the voting date; and distribute information relevant to the referendum at least seven (7) days prior to the voting date;
- 8.4 The question under consideration through the referendum shall be framed to ensure that the question is capable of being answered in the form of a “yes” or “no” response;
- 8.5 A referendum shall be conducted by the CRO with the assistance of a non-Executive scrutineer;
- 8.6 Voting will follow Article 7.4 with the exception of Article 7.4.3;
- 8.7 The referendum shall pass if the question under consideration receives more ‘yes’ than ‘no’ votes;
- 8.8 Results of the referendum will be recorded by the CRO and scrutineer;
- 8.9 Results of the referendum will be advertised by the URGSA within five (5) days of the end of the voting period;
- 8.10 Any result of a referendum shall be binding on the URGSA.

ARTICLE IV – GRIEVANCES

9.1 Process of Grievance

- 9.1.1 Any member of the URGSA may enter a motion to discipline, recall, or expel a Council member, including Executive officers;
- 9.1.2 The member making the motion to discipline, recall, or expel must present, in writing, the charge for the Council member to Council at least one (1) week prior to a Council meeting;
- 9.1.3 In all cases, the Council member, including Executive officers, under investigation has the right to address the Council in person to present their defense;
- 9.1.4 The Council may then act in accordance with Article 9.2, 9.3, or 9.4.

9.2 Discipline

- 9.2.1 Excepting recall and expulsion, the form of disciplinary action is at the Council’s discretion and should be stated in the motion to discipline;
- 9.2.2 A motion to discipline any Council member – including any Executive officer – shall be subject to a simple majority (1/2) vote (excluding the Council member

being disciplined) at a Council meeting where half (1/2) of the voting members are present.

9.3 Recall

9.3.1 A motion to recall any Council member – including any Executive officer – shall be subject to a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote (excluding the Council member being recalled or expelled) at a Council meeting where two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members are present;

9.3.2 Any Council member that is recalled must resign from their position or office within the URGSA and is eligible to hold further positions or offices within the URGSA only through re-election.

9.4 Expulsion

9.4.1 A motion to recall any Council member – including any Executive officer – shall be subject to a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote (excluding the Council member being recalled or expelled) at a Council meeting where two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members are present;

9.4.2 Any Council member that is expelled must resign from their position or office within the URGSA and is ineligible to hold further positions or offices within the URGSA.

9.5 Abandonment

9.5.1 Any Executive officer absent from at least three (3) consecutive meetings of the Executive or Council without valid reason (i.e., due to illness, accident, or death in the family), as determined by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Council, shall be deemed to have abandoned their office and to have delivered their resignation.

9.6 Resignation

9.6.1 Upon the resignation of an Executive officer, a Council meeting will be called, at its earliest convenience, to fill the position by appointing a Council member or, in the case of the President, to appoint an acting President, as stipulated in the URGSA Bylaws, until an Election is held.

ARTICLE X – GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

10.1 Constitution

10.1.1 The Executive, Council, or general membership can initiate a special resolution to make amendments, additions, removals, or temporary suspensions to the URGSA Constitution;

10.1.2 A special resolution may be called by a motion in Council passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, by unanimous decision of the Executive, or by submission to

the Council of a petition signed by five (5) percent of the general membership of the URGSA;

10.1.3 Proposed amendments, additions, removals, or temporary suspensions to the URGSA Constitution must be presented, in writing, at least fifteen (15) days before voting at a General Meeting;

10.1.4 Proposed amendments, additions, removals, or temporary suspensions will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the general membership at a General Meeting for it to become active.

10.2 Bylaws

10.2.1 Council can make amendments, additions, removals, or temporary suspensions to the URGSA Bylaws;

10.2.2 Proposed amendments, additions, removals, or temporary suspensions to the URGSA Bylaws must be presented, in writing, at least fifteen (15) days before voting at a Council meeting;

10.2.3 Proposed amendments will require a simple majority (1/2) vote of Council for it to become active;

10.2.4 Proposed additions, removals, or temporary suspensions will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Council for it to become active.

ARTICLE XI – DISSOLUTION

11.1 Upon dissolution of the URGSA, all assets shall be divided equally among any organization(s), other than the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU), which can demonstrate they represent the educational, physical, political and social needs of all graduate students;

11.2 If no such organization(s) exist, all assets shall be converted into a monetary form and be divided on a pro rata basis to each graduate student group ratified with the URGSA at the time of dissolution;

11.3 Dissolution can only occur after a referendum, as specified in Article IX, is voted on and passed;

11.4 Once dissolution is voted on and passed, the Executive has six (6) months to complete dissolution from the date of the referendum;

11.5 At the time of dissolution, the Executive shall be empowered to evaluate all matters affecting the URGSA with respect to dissolution until all assets have been dispersed.

Certified by the undersigned to be a True Copy of the Constitution as ratified by the general membership on April 13, 2017.

President:

Vice President Academic Affairs:
