**BYLAWS FOR THE GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION OF**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE**

**SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL**

Department representatives elected to the Council shall be encouraged to attend all general meetings. Excessive absences (more than two per semester) by a representative shall be reported to the department which the individual represents. After such notification, the Council may expel the representative by a majority vote. Selection of a new representative shall be made by the standard election procedure within the department. The specific penalties which shall be in force in the event of a representative's absence are: Upon failure to attend a meeting, no applications for funds from that representative's department will be considered during that meeting.

Any member or executive officer of the Council who is found to be in violation of the University Code of Conduct, placed on disciplinary or academic probation, or censured by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Council for improper conduct, shall be recalled and replaced by normal procedures of election.

Any and all vacancies among the department representatives shall be filled by a vote of the majority of graduate students within that department, or by appointment by the department head or graduate coordinator. All vacancies shall be announced and open to all qualified individuals without discrimination.

**SECTION II: OFFICERS**

The duties of the executive officers of the Council, in addition to those specified in the Constitution, shall be:

1. President: Shall ensure that the GSO records are properly maintained. The President shall be in a position to discuss GSO activities, make recommendations to the University Administration, and serve on and make appointments to any University committees affecting graduate student affairs. The GSO President shall forward all communications and requests approved by the GSO to the Director of the Graduate School, or through appropriate University channels, as needed.
2. Vice President: Shall serve in the absence of the President, assist the President with assigned responsibilities, and serve as the chair and ex-officio member of the Advocacy Committee formed under the provision of Section IV.
3. Secretary-Treasurer: Shall take and record the minutes of the Council meetings, maintain the file of approved minutes, report on the status of the GSO account at each meeting, and serve as the chair and ex-officio member of the Funding Committee formed under the provision of Section IV.

The requirements for eligibility for service on the Executive Council shall be:

1. In order to be eligible for election to the Executive Council, an individual must have a history of at least one semester (excluding summer semesters) of service experience on the General Council of the GSO. The Council can bypass the bylaw for any special situation where no candidate meets the requirement with a two-thirds (⅔) majority vote.
2. In order to be eligible for election to the position of President of the Executive Council, an individual must have a history of one semester’s service experience on the Executive Council. In the event that no member of the Executive Council intends to run for President, or if only one member chooses to run, Representatives with a minimum of two semesters of service on the General Council (excluding summer semesters) will then be included in those eligible for the position.
3. In order to be eligible candidate for the executive council, a member must be in good standing according to the Graduate School guidelines and carry a minimum 3.0 GPA.
4. There will be a non-executive officer position known as the Public Relations (PR) officer. The PR officer shall serve as the chair and ex-officio member of the Communication Committee formed under the provision of Section IV.

**SECTION III: COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Direct guidelines for all Council meetings are set forth in the Constitution of the Graduate Student Organization.

For purposes of meetings, a "Quorum" shall be defined as a minimum of 51% of the current number of representatives, plus a minimum of one (1) member of the Executive Branch presiding.

The Council shall meet three times during the fall and spring semesters and once during the summer semester to consider funding requests.

Council meetings shall be held in an order and location determined by the Council President.

**SECTION IV: COMMITTEES**

The Graduate Student Organization will have the following three committees:

1. Advocacy Committee
2. Funding Committee
3. Communication committee

Each of the committees will report to the GSO President and communicate to the council and the President. The committees are expected to follow the GSO Bylaws. In the event of a conflict of the committee’s and the GSO’s Bylaws, the GSO’s Bylaws shall usurp the Committee’s Bylaws.

Any committee can recommend to the GSO Executive Council to form Ad-hoc Committees and task forces for particular tasks as needed that are subject to approval by the GSO Council.

Each committee will have its own set of guidelines. Committees can amend their guidelines, but amendments must be approved by a two-thirds (⅔) majority vote of the council. Furthermore, no decision made by any committee will be effective until it is approved by the majority vote of the council.

The constitutional language for each of the committees is under SECTION X: APPENDIX.

**SECTION V: APPROPRIATIONS**

Graduate students may request financial support from the Graduate Student Organization. Council-determined funding limits should be in line with the anticipated budget for that semester. A graduate student is allotted a $400.00 maximum limit in funding per semester enrolled ($500.00 if traveling to a Tier IV city). This limit may be used for travel or split between travel and research.

1. Funding Requests:
   1. All requests shall be properly completed by the student(s) on the appropriate, approved form for that type of request. Requests for assistance with transportation-associated fees (airfare, car rental/travel) shall be made on the standard Request for Official Travel form, per University/State regulation. Other requests shall be made on the GSO's Application for Financial Support form. Each request must be accompanied by an itemized list of expected expenses.
   2. All requests must be accompanied by the following:
      1. A cover letter from the student to the GSO verifying the request. If the request is for research support, this letter should briefly explain the nature of the student's research project, how it applies toward their graduation requirement, and an itemized list with the expenses involved. If the request involves attending a conference or convention, the letter should verify that event as a valid professional function in the student's field. If the student will be presenting an original work at a conference, the letter should verify this.
      2. A letter of support from the student's project director, advisor, or department head. This letter should be on University letterhead (not a photocopy), should state why the request for GSO funding is supported, and should verify that event as a valid profession function in the student's field.
      3. A funding request for participation in a conference or for presentation of original work at a conference must also be accompanied by a letter from a conference official specifying that the applicant will have duties or that the applicant’s original work has been accepted for presentation. The funding request will not be released by the President of the GSO to the proper funding channels until the confirmation is received. Confirmation may be in the form of a letter or copy of the meeting schedule showing the date and time of presentation. The confirmation must be received in the semester of travel or the application will be deemed void.
   3. Funding requests will be referred to individual Department Representative and subsequently submitted to the Council President by the designated deadline set by the Council President prior to each meeting.
   4. Incomplete applications will only be conditionally approved at the third meeting or the summer meeting, and the applicant will have two weeks to get the missing materials to the GSO President. Any incomplete applications submitted to the first or second meeting will be returned to the student and must be completed and re-submitted to the following meeting to be eligible for funding. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances for a conditional approval, you *must* contact the GSO President at least eight (8) days before the funding meeting: gso@louisiana.edu
2. Funding up to $400.00 will be considered for the following ($500.00 for traveling to a Tier IV city).
   1. Expenses incurred while attending a professional conference or workshop at which a student is presenting or participating in a research paper or an original work, or at which a student is receiving an award for their scholarship.
   2. Expenses incurred while attending a conference or workshop at which a student is participating in a capacity deemed by the Funding Committee as an academic duty followed by a majority vote of the General Council. It is left to the discretion of the Funding Committee to consider the academic activities of all graduate departments as they are made known, with an optional appeal to the General Council. It is the responsibility of the department representative to bring individual cases to the attention of the Council.
3. Funding up to $160.00 will be considered for the following:
   1. Expenses directly related to thesis or dissertation research.
   2. Expenses directly related to comprehensive exam preparation. This is to include testing fees and the purchase of texts for exam preparation, provided a letter of faculty support is included, specifying that these fees/texts are necessary, and are not required for general coursework (including independent study). When applying for funding to offset the cost of text resources, the applicant must also provide a document providing proof that the library does not carry these materials in any form (print or electronic).
   3. Project expenses incurred by those students in non-thesis degrees. Expenses must be related to a project that is a requirement for graduation. The term does not include research papers for courses (including independent study).
   4. Funding for interlibrary loan requests limited to information needed for classes in a particular discipline. Funding is limited to interlibrary loan costs that have been incurred by the student and for which receipts (in compliance with university policies) for such costs are included with the application. These requests will not be considered until the second meeting of a semester (should the meeting take place in the summer semester; these requests will be heard after research and travel request by individuals with scheduled academic duties).
4. Funding requests up to $100.00 will be considered for reimbursement of expenses incurred in physically producing a thesis, dissertation, or graduation project.
   1. This funding will only be considered for approval after funding applications falling under categories two and three are considered for approval.
   2. These are one-time grants that will not be considered for funding prior to the second meeting of a semester (or, after all travel and research funding has been heard at a summer meeting).
   3. This grant will be allowed only once during a student’s tenure in said program.
5. Funding requests up to $100.00 will be considered for reimbursement of expenses associated with attending conferences without academic duties as defined in the GSO constitution. The Council considers these types of funding requests as a last priority.
   1. Volunteering at a conference is considered attendance *without* duties as a student is representing the conference and not the university.
6. The GSO shall have the right to sponsor or co-sponsor various programs it deems necessary. These programs should benefit graduate students in their pursuit of academic achievement and excellence and should be accessible to all graduate students. Upon application by any departmental representative, and approval by a simple majority of the Council representatives, programs may be funded up to an amount of $500.00.
7. Funding will not be considered for the following:
   1. Basic supplies and equipment which should be provided by the University academic department for students' use (such as pencils, printer ink, furniture, standard computer hardware and computer software, etc.).
   2. This is ultimately left up to the discretion of the Executive Council.
8. Travel Funding – Detailed
   1. Tiers I-IV will be established by the most recent publishing of Louisiana’s Policy and Procedure Memoranda (PPM):
      1. Travel with academic duties to locations in Tier I shall be funded up to $200.
      2. Travel with academic duties to locations in Tier II shall be funded up to $300.
      3. Travel with academic duties to locations in Tier III shall be funded up to $400.
      4. Travel with academic duties to locations in Tier IV shall be funded up to $500.
   2. Transportation costs by public carrier.
   3. Mileage at the University's standard rates for travel by personal or rental vehicle, provided that the student provides a photocopy of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance with their application.
   4. Lodging costs at the rates for a stay of reasonable duration.
   5. Registration fees.
   6. Expenses related to visa applications, provided a visa is essential for travel to the conference.
   7. Cost of meals associated with attending a conference only, up to a maximum of $30.00 per day without receipts.
9. Procedures for Requests for Funds:
   1. Requests from students whose departments do not have representatives on the GSO Council shall not be funded until a departmental representative is elected. The Council shall not consider any request for funding unless the department is represented at the Council Meeting.
   2. Graduate students not enrolled during the summer semester are not eligible to receive funds at a summer meeting. These applications may be heard in the subsequent fall semester and treated as a regular fall application. All funds received in the fall, regardless of the semester (FA or SU) in which the receipts were generated, will count toward the student's Council Determined Funding Limit of $400 ($500 if international). Any funds remaining at the end of the summer semester will be rolled into the following fall's budget. Students enrolled in the summer should continue to submit applications for summer funding at the summer meeting. Extenuating circumstances because of extended leave and difficulty of obtaining materials or proxy will be considered. Student must email GSO President or have their department rep email president a minimum of eight (8) days before the minimum.
   3. The student making a request for funding must make every effort to be present at the Council Meeting. If the student cannot be present, he or she must arrange for a proxy to act as a representative before the Council, and fill out a "Register an Applicant Proxy" form on the GSO website at least 24 hours before the meeting.
   4. Prior to the Council Meeting, the student making a request for funds shall deliver the written request to his or her departmental representative for initial review. The departmental representative shall review the application/request for funds and assure that all required letters, signatures and information necessary are present. The representative forwards the application/ request to the President for review and scheduling on the Council agenda.
   5. The Funding Committee will review each application on a first-come, first-served basis and make a preliminary decision. The Funding Committee will create a funding allocation report with the details of each application and the committee’s decisions. The funding allocation report will be submitted to the Council for approval.
   6. Requests may be denied if it is determined to be unreasonable by the Council or by the University Administration. Students are encouraged to accurately and reasonably estimate the expenses that will be incurred.
   7. The President, with specifying grounds, may veto a specific application/request that has been approved by the Council.
   8. By notification to the President, the student whose request for funds has been denied by the Council may appeal the Council's decision to the GSO Council. The President shall affix that appeal on the agenda of the next scheduled GSO Council meeting, or call an additional meeting, whichever is deemed necessary or appropriate by the President. The veto may be overturned by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Council membership.
10. GSO appropriations are subject to approval by the GSO appropriate University officials, including (but not limited to) the GSO faculty advisor, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Vice President for Student Affairs.
11. Requesting Checks:
    1. When GSO applications are returned to students, student must fill out attached Check Request Form.
    2. Any and all receipts required for purchase or expenditures shall be the sole responsibility of the students requesting funds, and shall be turned in to the office of the Dean of Graduate School. Receipts (accompanied by a Check Request form) shall be turned in to the Dean of Graduate School no later than the second week of the semester after funds were approved. (If the council approved funds for the Spring semester, the receipts must be turned in by the second week of the Summer semester.). A request for funds from any student who has previously failed to turn in receipts in a timely manner may be rejected. Any unused amounts of any appropriation shall be repaid to the GSO account.
    3. Student will submit Check Request Form, receipts, and copy of GSO application to Dean of the Graduate School in Martin Hall.
    4. In the case of any appropriation or expenditure of funds, it shall be the responsibility of the student requesting funds to be aware of and comply with GSO regulations.

**SECTION VI: BUDGET**

Budgeting for the Council shall be determined on the basis of graduate student enrollment. The GSO Council shall budget a discretionary fund to cover the costs of the operation of the organization as well as for general programs or events approved by the GSO Council. This fund will cover incidental operating expenses incurred by the GSO Council, such as document copying and printing costs, postage and mailings, brochures, etc. Records and/or receipts for such expenditures shall be recorded and maintained by the Secretary-Treasurer.

After the predetermined amount has been deposited toward the discretionary fund, the remainder of a given semester’s budget will be divided into travel funding and research funding, with the Council-determined allocation being 70/30, respectively.

**SECTION VII: RECORDS**

Minutes shall be taken at each GSO meeting by the Secretary-Treasurer. A file of said minutes shall be kept for each academic year. Minutes will be posted to the GSO website for information and archive purposes. To this file shall be added all reports from Council Committees, pertinent correspondence, expenditure receipts and copies of all requests for funds which have been denied or otherwise not funded.

Separate files may be kept each academic year, with the preceding year’s files being sent to the office of the GSO Advisor for retention for a period of a minimum of three years. All records of the Council proceedings shall be open for review and inspection by concerned individuals.

All equipment paid for by GSO funds and not consumed by the specific project shall remain the property of the GSO under the applicant’s respective laboratory (or the University Library, subjected to approval). All research supplies that are partially funded by the GSO will be property of the GSO on a case-by-case basis. Said equipment or items shall be maintained by the applicant’s respective laboratory (or the University Library, subjected to approval).

A roster of departmental representatives shall be maintained and updated each semester. It shall include pertinent information (name, address, telephone/office, and telephone/home) of each representative to GSO.

**SECTION VIII: DISSOLUTION**

Should the GSO ever dissolve, all surplus funds and physical assets belonging to the GSO shall be turned over to the University Graduate School for the benefit of existing programs for graduate students and the maintenance of any GSO projects which may require supervision.

**SECTION IX: BYLAW AMENDMENT**

Bylaws of the GSO may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Council.

**SECTION X: APPENDIX**

1. General rules for Committees
   1. Eligibility for Membership - The council shall elect the members of the council as the members of the committee. The total member will not exceed 40% of the total number of current council members.
   2. Rights of Members - Each member shall be eligible to appoint one voting representative to cast the member’s vote in committee elections.
   3. Resignation and Termination - Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the chair. A member can have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the council membership.
   4. Regular Meetings - Regular meetings of the members shall be held at least once before each council meeting, at a time and place designated by the chair.
   5. Special Meetings - Special meetings may be called by the chair or the president with the petition signed by /3rd of the council members.
   6. Quorum - A quorum for a meeting of the members shall consist of at least Fifty percent (50%) plus 1 of the committee membership.
   7. Voting - All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of those present at the meeting in which the vote takes place.
   8. Approval - All the decisions made by the committee will be executable only when it is approved by the majority of council votes.

**Advocacy Committee**

**Specific Purpose.** The Advocacy Committee is responsible for the advocacy of graduate student’s issues at University of Louisiana at Lafayette and work with official University channels to resolve the problems affecting graduate students personal and academic achievements at UL Lafayette

**Objectives:**

1. To effectively communicate to graduate students, UL Lafayette, and the community at large and bring their concerns and voices to the council.
2. To advocate the students’ concerns in the council meeting and recommend policies or actions to resolve them.
3. To write to Official University channels and work with them for the resolution of any affairs affecting the graduate student’s life and academic achievements.

**General Responsibilities**

1. The Advocacy Committee will continue to keep members of the GSO council and the graduate student body informed about the important and upcoming policies.
2. The committee will be solely responsible to survey graduate students for issues that may affect a graduate student’s life and academic progress and to take appropriate action.
3. The Advocacy Committee will study and make recommendations to the council and the president about all the legislative matters including: drafting legislation with the Graduate Student Representatives in the Student Government Association, writing letters to University of Louisiana system officials, working with the Dean of the Graduate School, writing letters to the Louisiana legislature.
4. The Advocacy Committee will create a report of its activities to be presented by the chair at the general meeting of the Council.
5. The Advocacy Committee will have regularly meetings as set by the committee each semester. These meetings will be held one week before each GSO meeting.
6. The Advocacy Committee shall vote to change its purpose, objectives, deliverables, and committee bylaws at any time by committee vote with approval of the GSO council by vote.
7. The Advocacy Committee is expected to follow the GSO bylaws. In the event of a conflict of the committee’s and the GSO’s bylaws, the GSO’s bylaws shall surpass the Committee’s Bylaw.
8. The process of dissolution of the Advocacy Committee can be started by any active member of the GSO council by letter, electronic or typed, to the Advocacy Committee chair and GSO executive council. A meeting will then be held within five business days of the letter being received to discuss if the committee should be dissolved. At this meeting, any active member of the GSO council may speak for or against the dissolution. If the quorum is present, a vote of two thirds majority (⅔) will dissolve the committee. The Advocacy Committee chair will be responsible to giving all relevant information to the GSO President.

**Deliverables:**

1. A maintained and updated GSO advocacy report.
2. Active and effective graduate student’s forums and taskforces.
3. A report of all the committee’s actions at every GSO meeting.
4. Recommendation of any policy change or any legislative matter to the council.
5. Write any official and legislative document for the GSO Council.

**Funding Committee**

**Specific Purpose.** The Funding Committee is responsible for the processing all funding requests, maintenance of the finance of GSO appropriately and to make suggestions for the GSO to find alternative revenue solutions and work with the university channel for the financial activities under the president of the council.

**Objectives:**

1. To effectively maintain and update GSO finances.
2. To create and maintain the GSO Financial spreadsheet and all other financial document.
3. To update the council about current financial situations and recommend decisions related to funding allocations and other financial matters.
4. To make suggestions to the GSO on finding alternative revenue solutions.

**General Responsibilities**

1. The Funding Committee will suggest appropriate methods for applying the GSO funds and process the applications to the council. The funding process will be as explained below:
   1. Each applicant will submit a completed request for funding with all the appropriate documentation to the Funding Committee via the Graduate School Office by the assigned deadline.
   2. The Funding Committee will review each application on a first come, first serve basis, and make a preliminary recommendation.
   3. The Funding Committee will notify each applicant of the Funding Committee’s recommendation on each application at least five days before the general meeting. Any applicant may advocate for their own application to the Council in the general meeting if the Funding Committee's recommendation is not acceptable to the student.
   4. The Funding Committee will create a funding allocation report with the details of each application and the committee’s decision. The funding allocation report will be submitted to the Council for approval, thereby approving all funding allocation decisions.
   5. After the Council votes on final approval of the funding allocation report, the President will sign it along with each application, and then submit to the Graduate School for final approval.
   6. By notification to the President, the student whose request for funds has been denied by the Council may appeal the Council’s decision to the Council. The President shall affix that appeal on the agenda of the next scheduled Council meeting, or call an additional meeting, whichever is deemed necessary or appropriate by the President. The veto may be overturned by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Council.
2. The Funding Committee will be solely responsible to maintain the GSO financial spreadsheet and all other financial documents.
3. The Funding Committee will maintain the contact between GSO and official University channel for financial and related activities.
4. The Funding Committee will work for new funding opportunities, new funding areas for the graduate students, and other opportunities to increase the revenue of GSO.
5. The Funding Committee will create a report to be presented to the Council by the chair of the Funding Committee at the general meeting.
6. The Funding Committee will have regularly meetings as set by the committee each semester. These meetings will be held one week before each GSO meeting.
7. The Funding Committee shall vote to change its purpose, objectives, deliverables, and committee bylaws at any time by committee vote with approval of the GSO council by vote.
8. The process of dissolution of the Funding Committee can be started by any active member of the GSO council by letter, electronic or typed, to the Funding Committee chair and GSO executive council. A meeting will then be held within five business days of the letter being received to discuss if the committee should be dissolved. At this meeting, any active member of the GSO council may speak for or against the dissolution. If the quorum is present, a vote of two thirds majority (⅔) will dissolve the committee. The Funding Committee hair will be responsible to giving all relevant information to the GSO President.

**Deliverables:**

1. A maintained and updated GSO Financial spreadsheet
2. An updated census of the budget every semester
3. A report of all the committee’s actions at every GSO meeting
4. An updated and shareable record of the GSO finances.

**Communications Committee**

**Specific Purpose.** The Communications Committee is responsible for updating the membership of the graduate school through various real life and electronic means.

**Objectives:**

1. To effectively communicate to graduate students, the university, and the community at large.
2. To create and maintain various social media platforms with up to date information relevant to the GSO.
3. To create and distribute reminders of the GSO meetings two weeks before the meetings, one week before the meetings, and on the day of the meetings.

**General Responsibilities:**

1. The Communications Committee will continue to keep members of GSO informed about the important and upcoming issues through a wide variety of channels such as the GSO website, OrgSync, and social media platforms as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
2. The Communications Committee will be solely responsible for maintaining the GSO website to notify graduate students of funding opportunities, application procedures, required documents to submit the application, and deadlines, etc.
3. The Communications Committee will maintain the contact information for all current and past representatives by the way of a census at the beginning of every semester.
4. The Communications Committee will work to foster the GSO in any capacity it determines as appropriate to reach out to more members of its community, which may include but not limited to its existence, new funding opportunities, important events with relevance to the graduate students’ need.
5. The Communications Committee will create a report of its activities to be presented by the chair at the general meeting of the Council.
6. The Communications Committee will have regular meetings held one week before each GSO meeting.
7. The Communications committee will create and maintain a record of the usernames and passwords to all platforms that will be passed on to future Communications Committees.
8. The Communications Committee shall vote to change its purpose, objectives, deliverables, and committee bylaws at any time by committee vote with approval of the GSO council by two-thirds (⅔) vote.
9. The process of dissolution of the Communications Committee can be started by any active member of the GSO council by letter, electronic or typed, to the Communications Committee chair and GSO executive council. A meeting will then be held within five business days of the letter being received to discuss if the committee should be dissolved. At this meeting, any active member of the GSO council may speak for or against the dissolution. If the quorum is present, a vote of two-thirds (⅔) majority will dissolve the committee. The Communications Committee chair will be responsible for giving all relevant information to the GSO President.

**Deliverables:**

1. A maintained and updated GSO website
2. An updated census of representatives every semester
3. A report of all the committee’s actions at every GSO meeting
4. An updated and shareable record of the login information

**Roles and Responsibilities of Departmental Representatives**

1. Representatives must attend all meetings.
   1. The GSO meets three times during each of the Fall and Spring Semesters and once during the Summer Semester.
   2. If a representative misses a meeting, no one from his or her department can be considered for GSO funding at that meeting, or at the following meetings per bylaws Section I.
   3. Representatives may enlist a proxy representative to fill in for them if they are unable to attend a meeting.
2. Representatives are responsible for ensuring that applications from their departments are complete prior to submission.
3. Representatives are responsible for keeping the graduate students in his or her department up to date on GSO matters, as well as university matters that pertain to or involve graduate students.
4. Representatives should be familiar with application procedures in order to assist students in the application process and to ensure that submitted applications meet all of the listed requirements.
5. Representatives are responsible for finding a successor and ensuring that they understand all of the above requirements.
6. Representatives are responsible to serve at least one of the committees mentioned in Section IV and follow the duties explained in the corresponding committee guidelines as explained in Section X.

**Adopted by the GSO Council April 13th, 2005.**

**Updated in December of 2015 by Jane Heels, GSO President**

**Updated in July of 2016 by Sarah Gawronski, GSO President**

**Updated in September of 2017 by Subhash Subedi, GSO President.**