

**BYLAWS FOR THE GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE**

SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

Department representatives elected to the General Council shall be encouraged to attend all general meetings. Absenteeism that exceeds twice per semester without due notification shall be reported to the department which the individual represents. After such notification, the General Council may choose to expel the representative by a majority vote. Selection of a new representative shall be made by the standard election procedure within the department. In the event that any representative fails to attend a meeting without a proxy, applications for funds from that representative's department will not be considered during that meeting.

Any member of the General 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 General Council for improper conduct, shall be recalled and replaced by normal procedures of election.

Any/all vacancies among the department representatives shall be filled by any organized majority vote counts 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.

The Council refers to all the Representatives. The Executive Board refers to the Officers. The General Council refers to both the Council and Executive Board.

SECTION II: OFFICERS

The duties of the Executive Board Officers of the General 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. The president shall provide a report, either oral or in writing, of any and all meetings the president has in which they are acting in their official capacity.

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.
4. Public Relations Chair: Shall take responsibility of all social media accounts, assist the Secretary in communicating all GSO activities and events and serve as the chair and ex-officio member of the Communication Committee formed under the provision of Section IV.
 - a. In the case of no PR officer, the duties of that officer shall fall to the Secretary or Treasurer primarily as aided by the rest of the executive officers.

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

1. In order to be eligible for election to the Executive Board, an individual must have a history of at least one semester (excluding summer semesters) of service experience on the Council of the GSO. The General Council can bypass the bylaw for any special situation where no candidate meets the requirement with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote.
2. In order to be eligible for election to the position of President, an individual must have a history of one semester's service experience on the Executive Board. In the event that no member of the Executive Board intends to run for President, or if only one Council member chooses to run, Representatives with a minimum of two semesters of service on the Council (excluding summer semesters) will then be included in those eligible for the position.
3. In order to be eligible candidate for the Executive Board, a member must be in good standing according to the Graduate School guidelines and carry a minimum 3.0 GPA.

If the Council decides by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote, the role of Secretary-Treasurer may be divided into two separate roles of Secretary and Treasurer. Their divided duties, in addition to those specified in the Constitution, shall be:

1. Secretary: Shall take and record the minutes of the General Council meetings, maintain the file of approved minutes, and aid the other executive officers in their duties.
2. Treasurer: Shall 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.

SECTION III: COUNCIL MEETINGS

Direct guidelines for all General 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 General Council shall meet three times during the Fall and Spring semesters and once during the Summer semester to consider funding requests. Meeting dates will be posted on the GSO website.

General Council meetings shall be held in an order and location determined by the Executive Board.

SECTION IV: COMMITTEES

The Graduate Student Organization will have the following three committees: Advocacy Committee, Funding Committee, Communication committee

Each of the committees will report to the Council and Executive Board. 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 supersede the Committee's Bylaws.

Any representative or Executive Board member can recommend, to the General Council, the formation of any Ad-Hoc committee and/or task force for particular tasks or issues as needed, subject to approval by the General Council.

Each committee will have its own set of guidelines. Committees can amend their guidelines, but amendments must be approved by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote of the General Council. Furthermore, no decision made by any committee will be effective until it is approved by the majority vote of the General 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. The General 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:

- a. All requests shall be properly completed by the student(s) on the appropriate, approved form for that type of request. Requests for assistance shall be made on the GSO's Application for Financial Support form. Each request must be accompanied by an itemized list of expected expenses.
- b. All requests must be accompanied by the following:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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, should verify that event as a valid professional engagement in the student's field, and must be physically signed by the author.
 - iii. A funding request for participation in a professional engagement with academic duties must also be accompanied by confirmation. Confirmation options include: a

letter from the organizers of the professional engagement or a copy of the schedule. Confirmation should include the applicant name as presenter, date, and time along with the academic duty being performed. The funding request will not be released by the President to the proper funding channels until the confirmation is received. The confirmation must be received no later than one week before the third meeting of the semester of travel. Failure to receive confirmation of duties before this deadline will result in the application being voided. Funds coming available as a result will be used to fund applications from the waiting list in a first come, first serve manner based on the order they were received. If you cannot produce confirmation of duties before the aforementioned deadline, please contact the Executive Board; the Executive Board reserves the right to extend this deadline for applicants deemed to have extenuating circumstances.

- c. Funding requests will be referred to individual Department Representative and subsequently submitted to the President by the designated deadline set by the President prior to each meeting. Department representatives may only sign applications for funding when all sections delineated in Section V: 1b i-iii have been completed.
 - d. 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 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 President at least eight (8) days before the 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).
 - a. Expenses incurred during a professional engagement in which a student is presenting original materials that have been vetted and either accepted or invited by organizers of the engagement.
 - b. 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 General Council.

3. Funding up to \$160.00 will be considered for the following:
 - a. Expenses directly related to thesis or dissertation research.
 - b. 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).
 - c. 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).
 - d. 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).
 - e. Funding for professional certification or licensure exams for professional or academic development that are related to thesis or dissertation research, required for degree fulfillment or partial degree fulfillment, or provide demonstrated enrichment of a student's degree program.
 - i. These requests will not be considered for funding prior to the second meeting of a semester (or, after all travel and other research funding has been heard at a summer meeting).
 - ii. Requests for a specific exam will be allowed only once during a student's tenure in said graduate program.
 - f. Funding requests up to an additional \$100.00 will be considered for reimbursement of expenses incurred in physically producing a thesis, dissertation, or graduation project.

- i. 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).
 - ii. This grant will be allowed only once during a student's tenure in said program.
4. 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. These applications will not be heard until the 2nd meeting of the semester.
 - a. Volunteering at a conference is considered attendance *without* duties as a student is representing the conference and not the University.
5. 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 General Council, programs may be funded up to an amount of \$500.00.
6. Funding will not be considered for the following:
 - a. 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.).
 - b. This is ultimately left up to the discretion of the General Council.
7. Travel Funding – Detailed
 - a. Tiers I-IV will be established by the most recent publishing of Louisiana's Policy and Procedure Memoranda (PPM):
 - i. Travel with academic duties to and within a 30 mile radius of locations in Tier I shall be funded up to \$200.
 - ii. Travel with academic duties to and within a 30 mile radius of locations in Tier II shall be funded up to \$300.
 - iii. Travel with academic duties to and within a 30 mile radius of locations in Tier III shall be funded up to \$400.
 - iv. Travel with academic duties to and within a 30 mile radius of locations in Tier IV shall be funded up to \$500.
 - b. Transportation costs by public carrier.

- c. 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.
 - d. Lodging costs at the rates for a stay of reasonable duration.
 - e. Registration fees.
 - f. Expenses related to visa applications, provided a visa is essential for travel to the conference.
 - g. Cost of meals associated with attending a conference only, up to a maximum of \$30.00 per day without receipts.
8. Procedures for Requests for Funds:
- a. Requests from students whose departments do not have representatives on the General Council shall not be funded until a departmental representative is elected.
 - b. Graduate students not enrolled during the summer semester are not eligible to receive funds at a summer meeting
 - i. These applications may be heard in the subsequent fall semester and treated as a regular fall application.
 - ii. All funds received in the fall, regardless of the semester (Fall or Summer) in which the receipts were generated, will count toward the student's GSO determined funding limit of \$400 (\$500 if international).
 - iii. Graduate students with professional engagements taking place in between semesters can apply for funds in the prior semester or the following semester.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. Extenuating circumstances because of extended leave and difficulty of obtaining materials or proxy will be considered. Student must email President or have their Department Representative email the President a minimum of eight (8) days before the meeting.
 - c. Students making a request for funding with applications with issues, questions, or that have been preliminarily denied by the Funding Committee must be present at the General Council Meeting. If the student cannot be present, he or she must arrange for a proxy to act as a

representative before the General Council and fill out a "Register an Applicant Proxy" form on the GSO website at least 24 hours before the meeting.

- d. Prior to the General 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 Treasurer/Funding Committee for review and scheduling on the Council agenda.
 - e. 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 General Council for approval.
 - f. Requests may be denied if it is determined to be unreasonable by the General Council or by the University Administration. Students are encouraged to accurately and reasonably estimate the expenses that will be incurred.
 - g. The President, with specifying grounds, may veto a specific application/request that has been approved by the General Council.
 - h. By notification to the President, the student whose request for funds has been denied may appeal the decision to the 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.
9. 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.
10. Requesting Checks:
- a. When GSO applications are returned to students, student must fill out attached Check Request Form.
 - b. 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.
- c. 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.
 - d. In case of any challenges or delays in submission, students are advised to communicate such appropriately in due time with their GSO Representative and the Executive Board for proper deliberation by the General Council. Upon receiving this, the Council will decide by voting the approval of such in a subsequent meeting.
 - i. Should the student not receive their Check Request Form within a month after the meeting they were approved, they should immediately contact their Representative, Executive Board, and the Graduate School.
 - e. 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 General Council shall be determined on the basis of graduate student enrollment. The General 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 GSO. This fund will cover incidental operating expenses incurred by GSO, 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, or just the Treasurer if the position has been split.

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/printing cost, with the Council-determined allocation being 70/30, respectively.

SECTION VII: RECORDS

Minutes shall be taken at each GSO meeting by the Secretary-Treasurer, or just the Secretary if the position has been split. In the absence of the Secretary, the minutes shall be taken on appointment by any executive or council member. A file of said minutes shall be kept for each academic year. Minutes will be posted on 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 General 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

- a. Eligibility for Membership - All representatives are required to be on a committee. Any current Graduate student may join any committee, pending approval of the committee chair.
- b. Rights of Members - Each committee member has the right to one vote on committee issues.

- c. 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 General Council membership. The recommendation to termination committee membership shall be presented to the GSO by the chair after majority of committee members have voted in favor of the termination.
- d. Regular Meetings - Regular meetings of the committee shall be held at least once before each council meeting, at a time and place designated by the chair.
- e. Special Meetings - Special meetings may be called by the chair or the president with the petition signed by 2/3rds of the Council members.
- f. Quorum - A quorum for a meeting of the committee shall consist of at least Fifty percent (50%) plus 1 of the committee membership.
- g. 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.
- h. Approval - All the decisions made by the committee will be executable only when it is approved by the majority of the General Council votes.
- i. Reporting - Each committee chair shall create a report of its activities to be presented at the meeting of the General Council.
- j. Changing - Each 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.
- k. Dissolving - The process of dissolution can be started by any active member of the General Council by letter, electronic or typed, to the Committee chair and GSO Executive Board. 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 GSO may speak for or against the dissolution. If the quorum is present, a vote of two thirds majority ($\frac{2}{3}$) will dissolve the committee. The Committee chair will be responsible to giving all relevant information, documents, and physical items to the GSO President.

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 General 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 Advocacy Committee will be 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 General Council 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.

Deliverables:

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

Funding Committee

Specific Purpose. The Funding Committee is responsible for the processing all funding requests, maintaining the finances of GSO appropriately, making suggestions for the GSO to find alternative revenue solutions, and working with official University channels for the financial activities.

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 General 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.
2. The Funding Committee will be 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 channels 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.

Deliverables:

1. A maintained and updated GSO Financial spreadsheet.
2. An updated budget every semester.
3. A report of all the committee's actions at every General Council 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. This includes but is not limited to GSO General Council meetings, Graduate School events, and special issues facing graduate students.

Objectives:

1. To effectively communicate to graduate students, UL Lafayette, 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.

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 responsible for maintaining the GSO website, OrgSync, and social media platforms as Facebook, Twitter, etc. 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 and maintain a record of the usernames and passwords to all platforms that will be passed on to future Communications Committees.

Deliverables:

1. A maintained and updated GSO website, OrgSync, and social media platforms as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
2. An updated census of representatives every semester
3. A report of all the committee's actions at every General Council meeting
4. An updated and shareable record of the login information

Roles and Responsibilities of Departmental Representatives

1. Representatives must attend all meetings.
 - a. The GSO meets three times during each of the Fall and Spring Semesters and once during the Summer Semester.
 - b. If a representative misses a meeting, no one from his or her department can be considered for funding at that meeting, per bylaws Section I.
 - c. 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

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