



## ***Graduate Council By-Laws***

### ***Article VII (of the Constitution of the Student Association): BY-LAWS***

- 1. The Assembly shall adopt and amend By-Laws of this Constitution by a two-thirds vote. Each Council shall adopt By-Laws of its own by a two-thirds vote, without contradicting the Assembly By-Laws.*
- 2. The Student Association may amend the By-Laws by a three-fifths majority of votes cast at the next scheduled election or at a special referendum.*
- 3. In no case shall the By-Laws be enacted or amended to contradict this Constitution.*

Pursuant to Article VII of the Constitution of the Student Association, the Graduate Council hereby establishes these Council By-Laws.

### **Preamble**

The purpose of the Graduate Council (GC or Council) is to effectively represent the graduate student body and to foster the interaction among graduate students from diverse disciplines. This shall be accomplished through activities including, but not limited to, correspondence with the university administration, sponsorship of social events, and participation in the Student Government (SG) Assembly.

### **Article I: THE GRADUATE COUNCIL AND MEMBERSHIP**

- For purposes of these By-Laws, a Graduate Student is a student who is enrolled in a degree- or non-degree-seeking graduate program and is a member of the Student Association.
- Graduate Students shall have the right to speak in front of the Council and to participate in GC meetings, including those of its committees.
- Voting membership on the Council shall be divided among each of the University's Graduate Divisions and Professional Schools. Seats shall be allocated according to enrollment figures, provided by the Office of the Registrar, for the previous Autumn Quarter for each division/school.
  - All divisions shall have at least one (1) seat.
  - Those with greater than 500 graduate students enrolled shall have two (2) seats.
  - All voting members must be Graduate Students.
  - At no time shall a student who is eligible to sit on College Council be eligible to vote on or for GC.
- Voting Members** shall have the following responsibilities:
  - Attending GC meetings and SG Assembly Meetings.
  - Voting conscientiously on issues reflecting the interests of one's constituents.
  - Disseminating information to students in one's respective Division or School.
  - Being an active member of SG and/or GC Committees.
  - Representing the graduate student community by bringing graduate concerns to the attention of the Council.
- Proxies and Vacancies**



- a. A Voting Member may assign their vote to a proxy from within their Division or School by notifying the Chair or Co-Chair prior to the meeting.
  - b. If a member voluntarily vacates their seat or fails to assign a proxy to or attend two (2) consecutive meetings, the seat shall be considered vacant. The respective Divisional or School Council shall be notified and responsible for filling the seat.
  - c. If no Graduate Student from a Division or School is present at a meeting and able and willing to serve as a Voting Member or proxy, the Chair or Co-Chair may designate a Graduate Student from a different Division or School to serve as a proxy at that meeting for the absent Division or School. If one or more Graduate Students are present from a Division or School for which an insufficient number of proxies has been assigned, and are able and willing to serve as a proxy, the Chair or Co-Chair must designate the proxy or proxies from among those students. At no point may Graduate Students from one Division or School constitute a majority of the Voting Members and proxies at a meeting.
6. Graduate Council shall be governed accordingly under Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except when they conflict with these By-Laws or the Constitution of the Student Association.
  7. The right of Graduate Students to speak before the Assembly or Council shall not be construed so as to include the right to make motions, object to motions on the floor of the Assembly or Council, vote on motions in front of the Assembly or Council, or impede the Assembly or Council in its business.

## Article II: COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. The Purpose of the Council shall be to legislate for the betterment of the graduate student body of the University of Chicago and bring the concerns of individual constituencies to the attention of the entire Assembly.
2. Each voting member of the Council shall have one vote on all official matters in GC and SG Assembly.
3. Quorum, required to conduct official business, shall be at least one half (1/2) of the voting members of GC or proxies.
4. There shall be no fewer than four (4) GC meetings each Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarter. The Chair shall convene extraordinary meetings of the GC at the will of the Chair, or upon the petition to the Chair of seven (7) members of GC.
5. The Council shall have the power to elect the Officers of the Council. The Officers must include a Chair and a Vice-Chair, or two Co-Chairs.
6. The Council shall have the power to approve appointments by the GC Chair of the Chairs of Standing Committees.
7. The Council shall have five (5) Standing Committees; Graduate Issues, Events, Graduate Aid, Finance and Summer Committee
8. Consistent with the Constitution of the Student Association, the Council shall have the power to veto the decisions of the Student Government Finance Committee (SGFC) by a 2/3 vote. This power may be delegated to the GC Finance Committee for any period of time, up to the first meeting of the Autumn Quarter. If the decision is vetoed, the Assembly may;



- a. take no action
  - b. ask SGFC to reconsider the decision
  - c. allocate a different amount by a simple majority vote
9. GC shall administer a portion of Student Activity Fee monies. GC may allocate this money by a majority vote. Funds for events open to only Graduate Students shall take priority over campus-wide events, to ensure optimal return on activity fee monies paid by students.

### **Article III: THE OFFICERS**

1. The Officers of the Council shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the Council, no later than the eighth week of Spring Quarter.
  - a. If there is no candidate for the position of Chair, the election shall be postponed until the first meeting of the Autumn Quarter.
  - b. The Vice-Chair and additional officers, (secretary, treasurer, etc) may be elected either at the same time as the Chair, or at the first meeting of the Autumn Quarter.
  - c. In lieu of a Chair and Vice Chair, two individuals may serve as Co-Chairs who, each in consultation with the other, assume all the Roles and Duties of the Chair and Vice Chair. Such individuals must run together as prospective Co-Chairs during the Chair elections described above.
2. Elections shall be facilitated by the sitting Chair, unless the Chair is running for re-election, in which the Chair shall designate an officer who is not a candidate to facilitate the election. The Chair shall take nominations and conduct the election. If no candidate, for a given position, receives a majority in the first ballot, a run-off between the two leading candidates shall be used to determine the officer.
3. **The Chair:**
  - a. Shall be the Executive Officer for GC, which includes:
    - i. Serving as an ex officio & non-voting member of all GC committees
    - ii. Responsibility for the execution of all decisions of the Graduate Council.
  - b. Shall appoint the chairs of the standing committees and non-elected officers with the consent of the Council.
  - c. Shall consult with and advise the Administration on matters of concern to the graduate student body.
  - d. Shall supervise the financial situation of the money allocated to GC.
  - e. Shall schedule and chair no fewer than four (4) meetings per quarter.
  - f. Shall create an agenda in cooperation with GC members and other parties for each meeting.
  - g. Shall ensure all vacant graduate student positions on Student Government Committees are filled.
  - h. Shall meet once during the Autumn Quarter with all divisional and professional school councils with the intent to recruit new participants and to increase familiarity with GC on campus.
  - i. Shall contact all Divisional and School Councils prior to the end of the Spring Quarter so they may select their representative(s). By the end of the first week of



Autumn Quarter, the Chair shall contact all selected GC members and schedule the first meeting no later than the second week of the Autumn Quarter

4. **The Vice-Chair:**
  - a. Shall assume the duties of the Chair of GC in the event of the absence of the Chair.
  - b. Shall prepare and distribute, or delegate the task of taking and keeping, minutes at each GC meeting.
  - c. Shall monitor the enforcement of the GC by-laws.
  - d. Shall verify quorum at each meeting and notify the Chair when quorum is reached, or lost.
5. **The Chairs of each Standing Committee:**
  - a. Shall schedule meetings for the committee.
  - b. Shall create, keep and distribute a written record of all committee business.
  - c. Shall have the power to create subcommittees to focus on special topics, with the consent of either the Chair and/or Council.
  - d. Shall attend all GC meetings.
6. The Graduate Student Liaison to the Board of Trustees shall be encouraged to
  - a. Attend GC meetings regularly
  - b. At GC meetings, report on information relevant for Graduate Students from contact with Trustees
  - c. Utilize GC as a resource to collect Graduate Student input on issues of importance to the Board of Trustees
7. **Impeachment of an Officer:** Any voting member or officer of GC may charge an officer with neglect of duties or disrespecting the office by presenting a formal charge before GC. A majority vote shall determine whether a hearing will occur.
  - a. This call for a Hearing shall constitute impeachment, and the accused shall be notified expeditiously.
  - b. The Hearing shall be closed, or public, at the wishes of the accused.
  - c. The Hearing shall take place at an emergency GC meeting with in seven (7) days.
  - d. The voting member or officer will have five (5) minutes to present the charges and the accused officer shall have five (5) minutes to present their defense.
  - e. GC shall have fifteen (15) minutes for debate, at the end of which a secret-ballot vote shall immediately occur to determine if the officer is to be removed from office.
    - i. A simple majority is required to remove the officer from office.
    - ii. An officer, other than the accused, shall oversee the counting of the ballots and summarily destroy the ballots after the result is announced and accepted by the Council.



**Article IV: COMMITTEES**

1. Membership on all Standing Committees, in GC and SG Assembly, shall be open to all Graduate Students, no matter their voting status on the Council.
2. GC may establish or dissolve ad-hoc committees at any time with a simple majority vote. These committees will dissolve by the first meeting of the following Autumn Quarter.
3. A Committee Chair must be a Graduate Student. Chairs shall not vote, unless in so voting the outcome would be affected.
4. All Committees shall keep records of their proceedings and attendance of members. These shall be available for public inspection.
5. The time, location, and agenda of all committee meetings shall be made public by announcement at the preceding GC meeting and to interested parties in other ways as may be determined by the respective chairs.
6. **The Events Committee** shall:
  - a. Be responsible for organizing and running at least two (2) GC social events per quarter.
  - b. Create a calendar of events for each quarter by the sixth week of the previous quarter and submit it for GC approval, determined by a majority vote.
  - c. Receive a budget set by the Council.
7. **The Issues Committee** shall:
  - a. Investigate graduate student concerns brought to the attention of GC by contacting administrators and students, as appropriate
  - b. Propose the best course of action with regards to a student concern
  - c. Formulate GC's policies with regard to general student issues
8. **The Graduate Aid Committee** shall:
  - a. Receive a budget set by the Council.
  - b. As directed by the Council, administer programs to fund individual Graduate Students' projects, travel, or other expenses related to their academic and professional work.
9. **The Finance Committee** shall:
  - a. Administer programs to provide GC funding for student groups.
  - b. be responsible for deliberating on matters concerning SGFC proceedings, as subject to the SG Assembly By-Laws.
  - c. provide a recommendation on all SGFC appeals for the GC.
10. **The Summer Committee** shall:
  - a. be responsible for organizing GC social events held during the Summer Quarter.
  - b. select the dates of GC events to be held during the next academic year.
11. Funding awarded to other organizations or individuals by the Council or one of its committees shall be subject to an expiration date stated at the time of the award, by which date all reimbursement requests must be received from the awardee. Unless otherwise noted, the expiration date shall be thirty (30) days following the end of the quarter during which the funded activity is to take place.



**Article V: AMENDMENTS**

1. Amendments to these By-Laws may be presented by any voting member and approved with a two-thirds (2/3) majority.
2. At no time may these By-Laws contradict the Student Association Constitution or By-Laws.

***History:***

Amended by the Council: April 4, 2016

Amended by the Council: October 26, 2015

Enacted by the Council: *May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007*