



## **Constitution of the Graduate Student Organization of Stony Brook University**

### **Article I. Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Organization of Stony Brook University, hereinafter referred to as the GSO.

### **Article II. Purpose**

The purpose of the GSO is to identify and protect the rights of graduate students, advance their interests, provide a forum for public debate and promote graduate student participation in University affairs. The GSO is committed to affirmative action/equal employment laws and to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability (including but not limited to mental or psychiatric, neurological, cognitive, intellectual, physical, sensory, chronic illnesses, and any and all other invisible disabilities), marital status, veteran status, or citizenship status. The GSO is committed to the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of all graduate students, and shall govern based on the needs of its members.

The GSO, as a registered organization at Stony Brook University, is committed to promoting a safe and vibrant campus community. The leaders and members of the GSO also agree to abide by the Stony Brook University Code of Student Responsibility, University policies, and Federal, New York State, and Local laws. Therefore the rules, regulations, and policies of Stony Brook University shall supersede any terms or processes outlined in this constitution.

### **Article III. Membership**

Membership in the GSO shall consist of all graduate students who are enrolled at Stony Brook University and paying student activity fees. Any member of the GSO that satisfies the criteria in the GSO Election Bylaws is eligible to be an Officer of the GSO, and may serve on any GSO committee. All members of the GSO are eligible to vote in Officer elections, referenda, and other organization-wide ballots. All members of the GSO vote equally.

#### **Section III.01 Eligibility**

1. The primary focus of the GSO shall be to serve graduate students. Active membership must be limited to currently enrolled students at SBU, and is open to all graduate students.
2. No person shall be denied membership for or office because of sexual orientation, nation of origin, race, sex, disability, political or religious beliefs, any of the aforementioned categories, and all other protected classes under federal and state laws.
3. Non-University members may participate, but may not act on behalf of the organization or perform any of the following functions: Holding office in the organization; Presiding,

officiating, voting, or making/seconding motions at any meeting of the organization; Soliciting funds on campus on behalf of the organization; Working at tables/events on the campus on behalf of the organization unless a GSO student member or GSO staff is at all times present and responsible for the activity.

4. Members shall be recognized as “active” after having paid the student activity fee for the respective academic term: Fall, Spring, or Summer.

#### **Article IV. Executive Council**

The Officers of the GSO shall be those of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Speaker. In the event of an Officer position vacancy and an inability to promptly fill the position, succession of power and responsibilities shall be temporarily granted to remaining Officers in the order noted above.

#### **Section IV.01 General Requirements**

1. Executive Council Officers must:
  - a. Hold only one position on the Executive Council
  - b. Be matriculated, currently enrolled, and working toward a graduate degree
  - c. Be in appropriate conduct standing with the University. Sanctions of University Probation or higher, or a sanction restricting participation in clubs/organizations or from holding leadership positions disqualify students from serving in an Executive Council or leadership position.
  - d. Meet and maintain the minimum GPA requirement of 3.0
2. All Officers shall serve for one year and may be re-elected at the end of their term, provided they maintain the requirements noted above.

#### **Section IV.02 Duties of the Executive Council:**

The Executive Council shall:

1. Read the entirety of the GSO constitution and be knowledgeable of its statutes and provisions;
2. Have general supervision of the affairs of the GSO between Senate meetings;
3. Coordinate the activities of the GSO, its Officers, committees and representatives;
4. Recommend policies, programs and activities to the Senate, and bring resolutions before the Senate;
5. Oversee the operation of the GSO office;
6. Carry out the directives of the Senate and consider directives as status quo between Senate meetings;
7. Have the authority to fill any vacant Officer positions by majority vote of the remaining Executive Council in situations where there is good reason to believe that a Senate meeting cannot be convened to obtain Senate ratification in a reasonable period of time.
  - a. The nomination will be made by the President, and any current GSO member may serve.
  - b. Upon confirmation by the Executive Council, this person will serve as the Interim Officer. The Interim Officer has the authority to discharge all of the duties and responsibilities of the vacant office until the Senate has confirmed a new Officer.
8. Approve the hiring of administrative personnel and Appointees as defined by the Internal Control Program, and suggest removals to the Judiciary Committee.

#### **Section IV.03 President**

The President shall:

1. Act as a spokesperson for the GSO in the presentation of its positions and enunciation of its policies;

2. Supervise the execution of Senate-approved legislation;
3. Appoint and remove members of all GSO and University committees in accordance with the bylaws of the respective committees;
  - a. The President must inform the Senate of any new appointments at the next general body meeting
  - b. The Senate has the right to object and remove an appointee by majority vote
4. Chair meetings of the Executive Council;
5. Hire and remove the GSO Control & Disbursement (C&D) Agent, subject to a three-fourths vote of the remaining Executive Council;
6. Report at each Senate meeting a summary of their activities and such activities of the University Committees that may be of interest to GSO members;
7. Have the power to interpret this Constitution. In the President's absence, this power devolves upon the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Speaker, in that order.

#### **Section IV.04 Vice President**

The Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President in the execution of their duties;
2. Fulfill the responsibilities and duties delegated to her or him by the President;
3. In the absence of the President, perform all duties of immediate concern vested in the President;
4. Shall organize training of the elected Officers after annual GSO Elections;
5. Chair the GSO Senate in the absence of the Speaker;
6. Keep the updated list of all GSO committee members and GSO representatives to university committees;
7. Report at each Senate meeting a summary of their activities, which may be of interest to GSO members;:
8. Coordinate with the Secretary to determine committee assignments for Senators in compliance with Article VI of this Constitution.

#### **Section IV.05 Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

1. Record, publish, and report the minutes of Senate and Executive Council meetings;
2. Assist the President with the dissemination of GSO related matters to the public;
3. Maintain and distribute a membership list of the Senate;
4. Chair the Elections Committee;
5. Report at each Senate meeting a summary of their activities which may be of interest to the GSO members;
6. Keep and maintain the GSO inventory as recorded in the executive committee minutes;
7. Keep, maintain, and purge the official GSO records in compliance with Article XI herein;
8. Record the attendance of senators at each Senate meeting;.
9. Notify department(s) of loss or restoration of active status in compliance with Section V.03 (1) of this Constitution.
10. Keep and maintain a current listing of active committees and committee assignments, and ensure committees have elected chairs;
11. Compile a report of the committee assignment reports submitted by Senators prior to each Senate meeting in compliance with Section VI.04 (7) of this Constitution;.
12. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

#### **Section IV.06 Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall:

1. Chair the Budget Committee;
2. Be responsible for the management of all GSO revenues and expenditures, as detailed in

- the GSO Internal Control Program;
3. Prepare the organization's budget in conjunction with the Budget Committee and the Executive Council for the following academic year;
  4. Maintain a publicly available repository of GSO expenditure recipients, amounts, and sources;
  5. Provide an oral and written update on the state of the GSO finances at least once every semester;
  6. Report at each Senate meeting with a summary of their activities which may be of interest to the GSO members;:
  7. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

#### **Section IV.07 Speaker of the Senate**

The Speaker of the Senate:

1. Shall be chosen from among the Senators at the first Senate meeting of the beginning of each academic year by a majority vote of the Senate; in the event of a vacancy, the Senate shall elect a new Speaker;
2. May be removed by two-thirds vote of the Senate;
3. Upon election, must relinquish Senatorial status;
4. May participate in a consecutive election for Speaker without requiring Senatorial status;
5. Shall chair the GSO Senate and have the power to interpret rules of order at Senate meetings;
6. Shall be a member of the Executive Council;
7. Shall chair the Rules and Constitution Committee;
8. Shall perform other duties as assigned by the President;:
9. Shall serve as representative of all GSO Senators to the Executive Council.

#### **Section IV.08 Election, Removal, and Succession of Executive Council Officers**

1. Candidates for office must be members of the GSO. The Officers of the GSO shall be chosen in a membership-wide election held in the month of April, in accordance with the GSO Election Bylaws. Candidates are elected by a plurality (the largest number) of all votes cast for the office. Should the membership-wide election result in a tie vote, the Senate shall vote to decide which of the candidates shall become the Officer. Newly elected Officers shall take office on the day following May commencement of the academic year. No member shall hold more than one office at a time, except in the event that a temporary leave of absence is approved. The offices of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Speaker shall have two-term limits. No member shall hold an office and be a GSO Senator at the same time. Only individuals who are qualified to serve in the office of President may serve in the office of Vice President.
2. All Executive Council elections shall have a "no confidence" option. If the "no confidence" option receives the plurality of votes, the candidate(s) shall not assume the seat and the seat shall be considered vacant.
3. If a primary senator gains an Executive Council seat during an election, the alternate Senator shall assume the position of primary Senator. If no alternate Senator is available, a thirty-day grace period will be granted to the department during which the department is considered active, and a new election for primary Senator must be held;
4. "Vacancy" is defined as an Officer position that is unstaffed, or expected to be unstaffed, for sixty-one calendar days or longer due to long-term inability to perform executive duties. Vacancies are officially declared by:
  - a. Removal from office as outlined by Article IV, Section E, Subsection b of the GSO Constitution,
  - b. Voluntary resignation of executive duties,

- c. Unreported absence from three consecutive executive committee meetings and a majority vote of no confidence by executive committee members present at the third missed meeting.
5. "Requests for voluntary resignations," hereby referred to as "resignation letters," for the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and Speaker of the Senate must be made in writing addressed to the President in a formal letter including the first date of official resignation. Resignation letters must be made public to the senate. Requests for voluntary resignations for the position of President must be made in writing addressed to the senate. On the date of the resignation outlined in the resignation letter, the Officer's seat is immediately considered "vacant."
  6. "Leave of Absence" is defined as a short-term sabbatical from Officer duties due to exigent circumstances including, but not limited to, health concerns, bereavement, immigration procedures, and academic obligations. Leaves of Absences must not exceed sixty calendar days. Officers taking a leave of absence are hereby referred to as "absent Officers."
  7. If a leave of absence exceeds sixty calendar days, the seat will be considered vacant on calendar day sixty-one. If at any point during an Officer's leave of absence, should an absent Officer feel that the absence would likely extend beyond sixty days they are expected to resign their post. If at any point during an Officer's leave of absence should the Executive Committee feel that the absence would likely extend beyond sixty days, they may declare the seat vacant by a majority vote of no confidence. If a seat becomes vacant by either an Executive Committee vote of no confidence, by the absent Officer's voluntary resignation, or by the leave of absence exceeding the sixty day limit, procedures governing vacancies take immediate effect.
  8. Executive committee members may apply for a leave of absence by filing a "leave of absence form" to be signed by the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Speaker of the Senate. In the event that the absent Officer is not able to produce a physical leave of absence form, they may grant another member of the executive committee specific power of attorney to file for a leave of absence form on their behalf. Consent to specific power of attorney must be documented by writing or email and filed with the Secretary. In the event that the Secretary is requesting a leave of absence and is unable to produce a physical leave of absence form, the consent to a specific power of attorney must be documented in writing or email and submitted to the President.
  9. Officers are not required to provide details on the circumstances for their leave of absence request. Leaves of Absence may not be claimed retroactively.
  10. A Leave of Absence must be requested at least fourteen calendar days before the first date of the absence. Requests submitted less than fourteen calendar days before the first date of the absence.
  11. If the seat of Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Speaker of the Senate is left temporarily unstaffed due to an accepted leave of absence, the President will appoint an "interim Officer" to fulfill the duties of the absent Officer. Interim Officers must be eligible candidates for full-time office according to Section IV.01 (1). Interim Officers serve at the pleasure of the President and may be dismissed at any time at the President's discretion. The President may appoint another executive committee Officer to serve as an interim Officer while simultaneously serving in their elected position. Interim Officers may serve for a maximum of sixty calendar days.
  12. If the President requests a leave of absence, the Vice President shall serve as interim President for a maximum of sixty -calendar days. The Vice President will appoint an interim Vice-President to serve for the duration of their tenure as Interim President. Candidates for the position of Interim Vice-President must be eligible candidates for full-time office according to Section IV.01 (1). If the offices of President and Vice-President are unstaffed simultaneously due to leaves of absence, the Secretary shall

serve as interim president. The secretary will then appoint an interim Vice-President and interim Secretary.

13. Remuneration for interim Officers is prorated on a daily basis based on the absent Officer's salary divided by 365 calendar days. Remuneration for the interim Officers is deducted from the absent Officer's total remuneration for the calendar year.
14. If the office of the Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer is vacant, the President shall nominate a candidate for that office. Senators may also nominate a candidate for vacant office following an endorsement of the candidate by seven senators. The nomination, if possible, shall be made known to the senate no less than ten days prior to the next senate meeting. The nominee shall be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Senate. Should the nominee fail to be confirmed, the President may nominate another candidate. If the office of President is vacant, the Vice President shall assume the office and nominate a new Vice President. Should the offices of President and Vice President be vacant simultaneously, the Senate shall meet to elect a new President. For such a meeting, a stricter quorum shall apply of 66% of the total number of currently certified GSO Senators, or twenty-four certified Senators, whichever is greater. If necessary, a special Senate meeting can be scheduled with the purpose to elect a new President. Nominations shall be accepted from the floor and are open to any member eligible for the office in question. The candidate receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be elected and shall assume the office immediately. Remuneration for Officers elected to vacant positions is prorated on a daily basis based on the removed Officer's salary divided by 365 calendar days. Remuneration for the Officers elected to vacant positions is deducted from the removed Officer's total remuneration for the calendar year.

#### **Section IV.09 Advisory Groups**

Any voting member of the Executive Council may form an Advisory Group to assist her or him in the administration of an official duty. An Advisory Group is under the sole authority of the Executive Council member forming it, and may be granted only those powers or responsibilities already possessed by the Executive Council member. The Executive Council shall inform the Senate of the formation of any Advisory Groups. Members of Advisory Groups must be GSO members.

#### **Article V. Senate**

The legislative power of the GSO shall be vested in the Senate. The term "Senator(s)" shall refer to the primary senator of a school or department unless otherwise specified.

#### **Section V.01 Duties and Powers of the GSO Senate.**

1. The Senate shall establish the policies and procedures of the GSO.
2. Each Senator shall have the right to vote once on all matters that come before the Senate, except when a conflict of interest exists, or when prohibited by law.
3. Senators may not vote by proxy. Alternate Senators may vote in the absence of the Primary Senator(s).
4. Unless otherwise specified, every Senate vote refers to the vote of the members present (quorum vote).
5. In compliance with the GSO Internal Control Program and The Chancellor's Guidelines, the passage of any subsequent amendments to the GSO annual budget shall require a majority vote. All budgetary allocations recommended shall require a two-thirds vote.
6. Changes in the Internal Control Program take effect immediately following a majority vote of the Senate.

#### **Section V.02 Meetings of the GSO Senate**

1. The Senate shall meet at least once every month, except during intercession periods.
2. The Senate meeting cannot take place unless the majority of the Executive Council is present.
3. A quorum shall consist of 25% of the total number of currently certified GSO Senators, or eight certified Senators, whichever is greater.
4. Emergency meetings of the Senate must be convened upon the request to the Speaker of the Senate, or whoever is filing the vacancy of the Speaker at that time, of either two voting members of the Executive Council or eight Senators. Emergency meeting agenda is set by the members requesting it.
5. Senate meetings are open to all GSO members. Senate meetings are to be publicly announced at least one week in advance. Meeting agenda and the previous month's meeting minutes need to be publicly announced at least two business days in advance.
6. A specific portion of the senate meeting can be held as a "closed" session (meeting is only open to senators, Officers, and individuals approved by a senate majority vote to attend). A "closed" session will be held following a recommendation from the Executive Council and approval by a senate majority vote. Minutes will not be recorded for the closed session portion of the meeting.

### **Section V.03 Election, Tenure and Removal of Senators/Liaisons**

1. Each department, school, or program shall elect its own Senator(s) with the following restriction:
  - a. The election must reflect the informed consent of the constituency. All departments shall demonstrate informed consent through an organized departmental election. The election must be validated by at least one of the department authorities indicated in the senator's registration form provided by the GSO. Should an election not take place, all departments shall demonstrate informed consent through the department-wide advertising of the Senate position(s) and the presentation of a petition signed by at least 30% or fifty of the department's registered graduate students, whichever is less. The departments of Continuing Education (CED) and the School of Professional Development (GSP) Senator(s) shall demonstrate informed consent through the presentation of a petition signed by at least 5% or fifty registered students in the program, whichever is less. In all cases, the petition must include: the form provided by the GSO completed, the number of graduate students in the department, the required number of signatures as described above, acknowledgement that no election was required, and must be validated by at least one of the department authorities as indicated on the form.
  - b. All Senators will be required to submit their credentials to the GSO Secretary for certification according to the procedures outlined in the GSO Election Bylaws. Should there exist a question of legitimacy for a Senatorial election, the Executive Council shall refer the disputed election to the Judiciary Committee for resolution.
2. A department may elect up to three alternate Senators, according to the same guidelines established above, one of whom may fulfill the duties of the primary Senator(s) when they are unable to attend a GSO Senate meeting, prioritized by the order they are listed upon election.
3. Student governing organizations or graduate worker union organizations not represented by or affiliated with the GSO may each appoint one representative to serve as a Liaison to the GSO Senate with the following restrictions:
  - a. Liaisons from these organizations will be non-voting members of the GSO Senate who are eligible to participate in all other matters of the Senate excluding "closed" sessions.
  - b. Liaisons must be appointed by informed consent from their respective organization.

4. A list of GSO-membership eligible departments, schools, and programs shall be compiled by the GSO Secretary within one month from the beginning of the fiscal year and shall be approved at the first senate meeting of the fiscal year.
5. Departments or schools belonging to the GSO with less than fifty students shall be allotted one Senator; those having between fifty and two hundred students shall be allotted two Senators; those having greater than two hundred students shall be allotted three Senators.
6. The term of a Senator shall be from September 1st to August 31st (of the following year).
7. A Senator may be removed from office by means of a petition signed by a majority of the Senate.
8. A Senator must inform the GSO Secretary if they will run for reelection before the last day of classes of the spring semester. There will be a general call for nominations made by the GSO Secretary during the first week of classes of the fall semester.
  - a. The current primary Senator may continue their Senatorial status into the next term without a departmental petition if an additional Senatorial candidate or objection to continuation is not received from the department within two weeks of the end of term.
  - b. If the current primary Senator does not wish to continue in their position, an alternate Senator may instead seek to continue as primary Senator following the same requirements described above.
9. If a Senator does not attend two consecutive meetings they are considered inactive. The Secretary is authorized to send a notice to the department in question if it has not had any representation at two consecutive meetings. If a department does not have an active Senator, they may not partake in certain funding lines as specified in the Internal Control Program. A Senator may become active again after attending two consecutive meetings as certified by the Secretary.

## **Article VI. Committees**

### **Section VI.01 Membership and Procedures**

1. Membership of all GSO committees is open to all GSO members.
2. Each Senator is required to serve on at least one committee. Available committee assignments will be presented to each Senator at the beginning of each school year. Senators may choose their committee assignment on a first come, first served basis if the committee has a limited number of members. If no preference is indicated within two weeks after earning certification as Senator, assignment will be made at the discretion of a consensus within the Executive Council.
  - a. Committees shall provide a summary report of the previous month's committee activity, if any, at least one week prior to the upcoming month's general body meeting. Reports should be submitted to the Secretary and Speaker.
  - b. Reports shall be provided during meetings of the Executive Council.
3. Only Senators may be voting members of Standing Committees.
4. Each committee must elect a chair from its membership. Committee chairs shall:
  - a. Be elected during or between committee meetings;
  - b. Be confirmed by the Executive Council or the Senate; a Senate confirmation takes priority;
  - c. Report any changes in committee membership to the Secretary;
  - d. Solicit additional provisional or permanent committee members to fulfill the function of the committee in the event that committee membership is insufficient according to the GSO Constitution or committee bylaws;
  - e. Only be Senators for Standing Committees.



5. Committee members or elected chairs whose positions are not defined in the GSO Constitution may be removed from their current committee(s) by a majority vote of the Senate.
  - a. The Executive Council may recommend the removal of committee members to the Senate.
6. Meetings of all GSO committees, except the Judiciary Committee, must be open to all GSO members. The times and locations of all committee meetings shall be made publicly available.
7. Committees shall keep the Executive Council apprised of their activities and deliberations, and shall periodically present reports to the Senate.
8. All committee actions and resolutions are subject to review by the Senate.
9. Committees with a specified number of voting members may have a total membership beyond this number by way of alternate voting members. Voting members during the meetings of the committee shall be prioritized by senatorial status, then order of signup.

### **Section VI.02 Standing Committees**

Standing Committees are permanent committees that are necessary to the continued function of the GSO. All Standing Committees shall have bylaws, which must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. Sufficient membership of Standing Committees shall be prioritized over other committees. The GSO Standing Committees are as follows:

1. The Budget Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer, shall include five Senators, and may include additional non-voting members. The Treasurer shall be a non-voting member, with responsibilities as detailed in the Chancellor recommendations to the Senate in accordance with the GSO Internal Control Program.
2. The Rules and Constitution Committee shall be chaired by the Speaker, shall include at least three Senators, and may include additional non-voting members. The Speaker shall be a non-voting member. This committee shall review and recommend modifications to the GSO Constitution, Rules of Order, committee bylaws, and other governing documents of the GSO.
  - a. Should a President's constitutional ruling be challenged, the Rules and Constitution Committee shall convene prior to the following Senate meeting and issue the definitive interpretation of the Constitution with regard to the dispute at hand.
3. The Judiciary Committee shall consist of a Senator as chair and four other Senators. The Judiciary Committee shall act in an advisory capacity in matters concerning the consequences to an Officer, Appointee, Senator, or GSO member, including removal, and shall adjudicate grievances against the GSO, its Officers, Senate, committees or representatives brought by any member of the GSO in accordance with the Judiciary Committee bylaws.
  - a. Membership of the Judiciary committee shall not consist of Officers.
  - b. Membership with conflicts of interest against any grievance members shall recuse themselves for the respective grievance.
  - c. The Judiciary Committee may grant a hearing to grievance members.
  - d. The Judiciary Committee may convene closed hearings; however, it must inform all concerned parties of the nature and source of the dispute and must provide all concerned parties the opportunity to argue their case.
  - e. Rulings of the Judiciary Committee may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.
  - f. The Senate shall be responsible for deciding what actions are to be taken against those individuals found guilty of the charges.
  - g. The Judiciary Committee may not hear a grievance more than once unless new evidence has been presented.

- h. The Judiciary Committee shall not hear a grievance which can be adjudicated by Stony Brook University policy, and shall instead refer the grievance to the appropriate Stony Brook University office.
4. The Elections Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary, shall include at least three Senators, and may include additional non-voting members. The Elections Committee shall prepare, conduct and report to the Senate all GSO elections in accordance with the Elections Committee Bylaws.

### **Section VI.03 Special Committees**

The Senate may form Special Committees as necessary to carry out a specified task. A Special Committee dissolves upon completion of its duties and responsibilities.

### **Section VI.04 University Committees**

1. Any GSO member(s) can be appointed by the President, subject to consensus of the Executive Council, to represent the GSO on a University Committee over which the GSO holds power of appointment.
2. Any GSO member(s) can be nominated by the President, subject to consensus of the Executive Council, as a candidate(s) for a University Committee over which the GSO holds no power of appointment.
3. GSO representatives shall inform the Executive Council of the proceedings and actions of the University Committees on which they serve.
4. Representatives may be removed by a majority vote of the Senate.
5. Representatives may be removed by a recommendation of the President and a majority vote of the Executive Council. This decision may be overruled by a majority vote of the Senate.

## **Article VII. Amendments and Referenda**

### **Section VII.01 Amendments to the GSO Constitution**

1. Amendments to the GSO Constitution may be proposed by any GSO member. Proposed amendments require approval by at least three-fourths of Senators in the Senate in order to be approved. Should the Senate fail to approve the proposed amendment, it may be put to a vote of the membership upon presentation of a petition signed by two-hundred GSO members.
2. A proposed amendment approved by petition shall be put to vote during the membership-wide election for GSO Officers, unless the Senate convenes a special membership-wide election. Ratification of a proposed amendment requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast by the membership.
3. An amendment to the GSO Constitution shall not be proposed and voted on at the same Senate meeting unless it is publicly disclosed three business days prior to the meeting, to all Senators and Executive Council members.
4. When an amendment (or amendments) is approved, a copy of the Constitution prior to the addition of the amendment(s) shall be kept on file by the Executive Council.

### **Section VII.02 Establishment and Amendments to the GSO Bylaws**

1. Bylaws, separate from the GSO Constitution, that contain detailed procedures may be established to conduct business of GSO affiliated committees, groups, meetings, or other bodies.
2. When a bylaw is in contradiction with the constitution, the constitution shall override the bylaw.
3. Specific bylaws may be passed, amended, suspended, or rescinded by a majority vote of

the Senate. Language which will be passed, amended, suspended, or rescinded must be submitted to the Senate in writing for review at least three business days prior to the meeting in which the language will be voted upon.

4. The Rules and Constitution Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity for proposals to create new or alter existing bylaws. It may make recommendations for alterations to the received proposals. Recommendations by the Rules and Constitution Committee may be accepted by a majority vote of the Senate.
5. Should the GSO Senate fail to approve language in order to pass, amend, suspend, or rescind a bylaw, it may be put to a vote of the membership upon presentation of a petition signed by two-hundred GSO members.
6. A proposed bylaw amendment approved by petition shall be put to a vote during the membership-wide election for GSO Officers, unless the Senate convenes a special membership-wide election. Ratification of a proposed amendment requires a majority of votes cast by the membership.
7. The passage of any change to the bylaws shall be regarded as the ratification of a new set of bylaws composed of the standing bylaws except deletions and new passages as approved. The new bylaws thus created shall bear the date of its latest change in its heading.

### **Section VII.03 Referendums**

1. Types of Referendums
  - a. Amendment Referendum – referendum dealing with amendments to the Constitution. This type of referendum is enumerated and shall be carried out in accordance with in Section VII.01 of this Constitution. Amendment referenda are binding on the Graduate Student Organization.
  - b. Mandatory Student Activity Fee Referendum – referendum on whether the Student Activity Fee shall be mandatory or voluntary, in accordance with the SUNY Chancellor’s Guidelines, shall occur every two years. This type of referendum shall pass by a majority of votes cast. Mandatory Student Activity Fee Referenda are binding on the Graduate Student Organization.
  - c. Student Activity Fee Referendum – referendum approving an increase or decrease in the amount of the Student Activity Fee. It shall pass by a majority of votes cast at the ballot in a general election. Student Activity Fee referenda are binding on the Graduate Student Organization.
  - d. Advisory Questions – question on the use of the Student Activity Fee, specifically whether a club, organization, service, or event should be budgeted a certain amount of funds. This includes creation, continuation, or increase of funding. Advisory referenda shall be considered one of the factors in determining an organization’s funding or GSO position and are not binding on the Graduate Student Organization, in accordance with the SUNY Chancellor’s Guidelines.
2. Referendum Procedures
  - a. Referendums may be proposed by any GSO member. Proposed referenda require a majority vote of the Senate in order to be put to a membership wide vote. Should the Senate fail to approve the proposed referendum, it shall be put to a vote of the membership upon presentation of a petition signed by at least 100 GSO members with no more than 30% of the petitioners from any one department or school.
  - b. Should a referendum that is in regards to the same subject or issue be approved by both the Senate and by petition, the following protocol shall apply:
    - i. If the referendum was approved first by the Senate and later by petition, the Senate shall vote to determine which referendum shall be presented to the membership. A majority vote is required for the Senate approved option to be presented to the membership in lieu of the petition

approved option. Failure of the Senate approved option to receive a majority vote shall result in the presentation of the petition approved option to the membership.

- ii. If the referendum was approved first by petition and subsequently by the Senate, the Senate shall vote to determine which referendum shall be presented to the membership. A three-fourths vote is required for the Senate approved option to be presented to the membership in lieu of the petition approved option. Failure of the Senate approved option to receive a three-fourths vote shall result in the presentation of the petition approved option to the membership.
- c. Referendums shall be put to a vote during the membership wide election for GSO Officers unless the Senate convenes a special election.

#### **Section VII.04 Special Elections**

1. The Senate may convene a membership-wide election in order to vote on referenda Bylaw and Constitutional amendments at times other than the annual election for GSO Officers.
2. Special elections may not be convened more than once per semester.

#### **Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rule of Order (Newly Revised) shall govern the GSO in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution or any special rules of order which the GSO may adopt.

#### **Article IX. Communication**

The GSO shall facilitate communication between its membership. Methods of communication shall be maintained by the Executive Council.

##### **Section IX.01 Communication with Senators**

1. The Executive Council, Appointees, and administrative personnel shall communicate to all Senators using at least one method of mass communication.
2. At least one form of mass communication must be reciprocal between the Executive Council, Appointees, administrative personnel and Senators.
3. The GSO may maintain methods of communication that are exclusive to the Executive Council, Appointees, administrative personnel, and Senators, but must maintain at least one form of mass communication that is also open to all GSO members upon the member's request. Non-exclusive communication may contain information regarding, but not limited to, meetings, events, votes, agendas, and resolutions.
4. Any communication participants that are alleged to be using said communication to violate the GSO Constitution or its associated bylaws may be referred to the Judiciary Committee and relegated to only receive, not send, communications until a grievance ruling has been made.

##### **Section IX.02 Communication with GSO Members**

1. The GSO shall communicate to all GSO members using at least one method of mass communication.
2. Any GSO member who wants to be included in the method of mass communication, if said method cannot be automatically opted into, may send a request to the Secretary.
3. Executive Council, Appointees, Senators, and administrative personnel shall make available individualized methods of communication to all GSO members.

#### **Article X. Paperwork Retention**

The GSO will retain hard or electronic copies of all financial documents (including, but not limited to Annual Operating Budgets, Audits, and vouchers), Oaths of Office, and statements of Fiduciary

Responsibility for at least seven years. Electronic copies of minutes from the GSO Senate, Executive Committee, and Standing Committees shall be posted on the GSO Website for at least two years and all documents shall be retained on the GSO Office computer, or GSO maintained cloud, for at least seven years.

Revised and Ratified: October, 2023