

# **Clark University Graduate Student Council**

## **CONSTITUTION**

May 9, 2003

### **Section 0: Purpose.**

- 0.01. The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is the representative body of the graduate community at Clark University. It is the purpose of the GSC to
- a) Provide and be a communication center for graduate students;
  - b) Voice graduate student concerns on campus;
  - c) Provide a link between the administration and graduate students;
  - d) Link the graduate community with the broader campus community and Worcester, specifically the Main South community;
  - e) Ensure that services on campus meet graduate student needs.

### **Section 1: Membership.**

- 1.01. Each qualified individual, regardless of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age or handicap shall have equal opportunity to participate as a member.
- 1.02. Qualified individuals consist of those people who are resident graduate students at Clark University for the current academic year. A “resident graduate student” is defined as those students designated as “in residence” by Clark University and their department.
- 1.03. GSC annual membership fees (also known as student activity fees) shall be paid by all “resident graduate students” in order to fund the GSC activities. The membership fee shall be the same for all students (i.e. no graduate student shall be paying more or less than any other graduate student).
- 1.04. Each academic department that enrolls graduate students is allowed to have no more than two voting members and as many non-voting members as in resident graduate students.
- 1.05. A “voting member”, also called department representative, shall be defined as

those members (max. 2) of the department that have been appointed (usually the first week of the fall semester, see Section 5.02) by the department as departmental voting members to the GSC. In case of the absence of one or both voting members from any given department, other members of that department may assume their voting rights. However, the GSC must be given at least 1 day prior notice of such changes by the department reps or other department officials (i.e. department chair).

- 1.06. Upon agreement of the majority of the GSC voting members present at time of vote, outside organizations may be permitted to have one non-voting representative authorized to attend GSC meetings. Permission to attend GSC meetings is subject to re-evaluation at the beginning of each semester and must always take place under the condition of extraordinary session as outlined in 3.06.

## **Section 2: Officers and Appointees of the GSC.**

- 2.01. The GSC shall elect five officers. There shall be two co-presidents (one 1st co-president and one 2nd co-president), one Treasurer, one Secretary (also referred to as Administrator/Secretariat), and one Communications officer. In addition to the five officers, there shall be appointed representatives to the various University committees and various sub-committees of the GSC.
- 2.02. The duties of the officers of the GSC are as follows:
  - 2.02.1. The duties of the two co-presidents shall be to coordinate the activities of the GSC. Their responsibilities shall include:
    - a) Organization of meetings, including setting the time, place, and agenda for the meetings;
    - b) Facilitating the meetings;
    - c) Organizing and tabulating votes;
    - d) Forming and disbanding sub-committees;
    - e) Organizing the election of officers for the next academic year;
    - f) Acting as liaison between the GSC and the University and other University organizations;
    - g) Appointing representatives to the various University committees;
    - h) Oversight of the Administration of the GSC and GSC property.

The two co-presidents have the right to delegate any above responsibility to any willing member of the GSC. It is the responsibility of the two co-presidents to divide these responsibilities between themselves as they see fit.

The Co -Presidents have the right to make decisions without approval of the GSC in the case that a meeting cannot be called to ask approval of the GSC. These decisions must be reported and approved at the next meeting of the GSC. Monetary appropriations are subject to the guidelines discussed below in section 4.03.

2.02.2. The duties of the treasurer shall include:

- a) Keeping the accounts of the GSC, including monetary and non-monetary assets and liabilities;
- b) Making a report at the GSC meetings on the state of GSC funds, including any concerns the Treasurer might have regarding the use of GSC funds;
- c) Signing requisition and reimbursement forms.

2.02.3 The duties of the Secretary shall include:

- a) Taking the minutes of each and every meeting of the GSC, distributing these minutes to all GSC members before the next meeting of the GSC, and revising the minutes if needed;
- b) Making arrangement for the minutes to be kept by another member of the GSC in case that he or she cannot attend a meeting;
- c) Maintaining a list of current GSC members;
- d) Archiving material as deemed appropriate by the GSC (this includes delivering copies of the minutes at the end of the year to the Clark University archives).

2.02.4 The duties of the Communications Officer shall include:

- a) Production and timely distribution of the GSC's newsletter (GradNet);
- b) Regularly attending to the GSC email account
- c) Regular Maintenance of the GSC website
- d) Writing occasional news and information pieces in any campus-wide publication as deemed appropriate by the GSC.

2.02.5 The aforementioned duties may be temporarily reorganized amongst the officers or may be assigned to another member of the GSC by the President. The President must put the temporary reorganization or reassignment to a vote by the GSC as a whole. Any temporary reorganization or reassignment may extend to no longer than the end of the academic year, at which time the duties revert to the aforementioned organization and assignments.

2.03. GSC-appointed members of the University committees shall have the responsibility of representing the views of the GSC at University committee meetings. Committee members shall be appointed by one of the two co-presidents, with the exception of seats on the University Graduate Board, which will be made up of the two GSC co-presidents. All committee members shall make reports to the GSC at the GSC meeting following their respective committee meetings. This report can be made at a GSC meeting and a summary of it must be handed in to the Secretary for archiving purposes. In the case where a committee has allocated two seats to the GSC, it is recommended that the seats be filled by one Masters and one PhD candidate student.

2.04. Members of the GSC sub-committees shall have the responsibility of carrying out the duties imposed upon them by the GSC as a whole. Subcommittees can be

formed at any time during the academic year, subject to a 2/3 majority vote of GSC voting members present at the time of vote. Reapproval for existing GSC sub-committees shall take place at the beginning of each academic year through a 2/3 majority vote of GSC voting members present at the time of vote.

### **Section 3. Meetings.**

- 3.01. GSC meetings shall be held at least once a month during the academic year. Meetings may be called by either of the two co-presidents, two of the three other GSC officers together, or five voting GSC members. There must be a meeting in April to elect officers for the following academic year.
- 3.02. At the first meeting two pieces of business should be taken care of:
  - a) A copy this document should be distributed to all members who do not have a copy;
  - b) Treasurer must give state of GSC finances, and if necessary, a budget sub-committee shall be formed.
- 3.03. Only “voting members” may vote at any meeting. No department shall have more than two votes for any vote taken by the GSC.
- 3.04. A quorum shall consist of the first or second GSC co-president and four voting members. Non-voting members of the GSC shall not count toward a quorum.
- 3.05. The first item on the agenda of all GSC meetings, except the first of the academic year, shall be to vote to approve the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes of the last meeting of the year shall be voted on by the officers of the GSC before the end of the academic year.
- 3.06. Either GSC co-presidents (see section 2) may at any time call for an extraordinary session during which only GSC officers and voting members will remain present. Such sessions in which only officers and voting members are present count as official and may take place during scheduled GSC meetings, or may be held in addition to scheduled GSC meetings.

### **Section 4. Appropriation of Funds.**

- 4.01. The GSC has the right to allocate funds as it sees fit to benefit the graduate community at Clark University. GSC funding is made available through the collection of a graduate student activity fee at the beginning of each semester; to be collected by the University Accounting Office.
- 4.02. The executive board shall decide on the necessity for and the construction of a budget. The budget must be approved by the GSC as a whole. Appropriation of

funds is subject to the guidelines listed below in 4.03.

- 4.03. Any appropriation of funds in excess of \$100 must be approved by the GSC. Either of the two co-presidents may appropriate funds less than \$100 but must report such appropriations to the Treasurer at the next GSC meeting.
- 4.04. The GSC has the ability to appropriate funds to any group of graduate students that petitions the GSC for money. In order to petition for money the group must give a written letter to either of the two co-presidents stating the amount requested and a reason for the request. The written letter must include contact information, affiliation of students requesting funds, date of the project, a description of event/project, importance to graduate students, budget, and what is requested of the GSC. The GSC has the option of approving an amount equal to, greater than or less than the requested amount or deny appropriation of money.

## **Section 5. Election of Officers and Appointment of Representatives.**

- 5.01 Election of Communications officer, Secretary, Treasurer, and one Co-president shall be held at the April meeting of the GSC. Election of one Co-president shall be held at the December meeting of the GSC. This has been done to ensure continuity within the council. The elections will follow the following procedure:
  - a) it will be the responsibility of the Communications officer to publicize the election of GSC members at least one month in advance of the election,
  - b) GSC members eligible for election as co-president are those who have been appointed “voting members” by their departments, candidates for other officer positions must have attended at least one GSC meeting prior to elections;
  - c) Candidates must be nominated by another individual of the graduate student community and these nominations shall be made to one of the two co-presidents;
  - d) The electorate of the GSC officers shall consist of the current voting members of the GSC;
  - e) The officer-elect for each vacant position shall be determined by a majority vote of voting members present at the April or December meeting;
  - f) At least one week before elections, a GSC meeting will be held in which members can hear from each candidate.
- 5.02 Each department shall appoint no more than two representatives (voting members) to the GSC. The appointment process shall be decided upon by the individual departments with the following guidelines:
  - a) each member of the department who satisfies the conditions outlined in Section 1 shall have equal opportunity to become a “voting member;”
  - b) no voting member of the department shall be denied opportunity to participate on the GSC unless his or her behavior is deemed harmful to the

GSC (see Section 6 for specifics);

- c) no individual may be appointed to the GSC without his or her consent;
- d) the appointment shall last no more than one academic year, with the possibility of re-appointment;
- e) non-voting members shall not count toward a quorum.

- 5.03 In the event of a vacancy of one of the positions of GSC officers, the co-presidents, jointly, may appoint an interim officer for that vacant position for the remainder of the semester, unless that position refers to co-presidency, in which case the co-president remaining in office may unilaterally appoint a GSC member to that position. At the beginning of the next semester the GSC will vote in a new individual for the vacant position. Any members eligible to hold the position may run for the office, including the interim officer. All interested parties must comply with the normal procedures and rules for electing an officer. This procedure shall repeat itself again when the conditions under Section 5.01 are met.

## **Section 6. Removal of Officers, Representatives and Appointees.**

- 6.01 In the case where an officer, representative or appointee has acted in a manner inconsistent with their duties they may be removed from their position as defined by this constitution.
- 6.02 The actions of a GSC officer or representative shall be deemed inconsistent with their duties if those actions
- a) fail to follow the rules set forth in the University Code of Conduct;
  - b) violate the law;
  - c) involve not attending GSC meetings regularly;
  - d) are harmful to the GSC;
  - e) violate this constitution;
  - f) are harmful to members of the graduate community;
  - g) or if the respective individual consistently does not fulfill his/her assigned duties as defined by this constitution or determined by the GSC.

In order to remove an officer or representative, a meeting must be called and a “vote to remove” must be taken. This vote may be called by any member of the GSC. There must be at least one week between the call for a “vote to remove” and the actual vote. To cause a removal, quorum must be met and there must be a two-thirds vote of those present in favor of removal of the person in question. Removal from the post of one of the five officers does not cause the removal from the GSC; a separate vote must be taken for this.

- 6.03 Those individuals that are appointed to University committees by either of the two co-presidents may be removed by the coordinators (co-presidents) if their actions are deemed inconsistent with their duties. Actions deemed inconsistent with their duties are:

- a) those listed in 6.02 above;
- b) failure to regularly attend meeting of the committee;
- c) failure to accurately represent the views of the GSC and the graduate community;
- d) failure to report to the GSC as to the action of the committee that they sit on;

The co-presidents (jointly) may temporarily suspend, in writing, the individual from his/her University committee if deemed absolutely necessary. However, no later than 14 days after the start of suspension, the GSC must vote on the removal of a University committee member.

6.04 Those individuals appointed to sub-committees of the GSC may be removed. Removal may be based on:

- a) those listed in 6.02 above;
- b) failure to regularly attend meetings of the sub-committee;
- c) failure to execute the duties assigned in the sub-committee;

The co-presidents (jointly), with the approval of a 2/3 majority of the respective sub-committee members, may temporarily suspend, in writing, the individual from his/her duties if deemed absolutely necessary. However, no later than 14 days after the start of suspension, the GSC must vote on the removal of a GSC sub-committee member.

## **Section 7. Campus-wide Referendum**

- 7.01 The GSC may decide to seek the input of the graduate community as a whole on any issue through a campus-wide referendum. Any issue that involves the imposition of fees on the graduate community by the GSC must be taken to a referendum.
- 7.02 The referendum will be administered to each department by the representatives from that department.
- 7.03 The wording of the referendum will be decided on by the GSC and must have approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.
- 7.04 Any Clark in resident graduate student may petition to a referendum. A petition for referenda shall be considered valid if it has been signed by at least 1/3 of in resident students (consistent with Section 1) and no more than 50% of those signatories should be from a single department. The referendum remain subject to all other points outlined in Section 7.
- 7.05 In order for the referendum to pass, the number of “yes” votes must be greater than or equal to 2/3 of the votes cast by current resident graduate students.
- 7.06 Rules for Referenda

- a) Referenda may be called by either co-president on advise of the GSC
- b) Referenda may be administered by traditional ballot methods, electronic methods (eg. E-mail) or any appropriate method decided by the GSC.
- c) All referenda shall be advertised at least two weeks in advance of a vote to all graduate students.
- d) Advertisements on any recognized graduate students forum eg. GSC website or GradNet may be deemed adequate. Other forms of acceptable advertisements may include notices by e-mail, written documents (eg. notes, letters, letters, posters) and under certain circumstances by word of mouth.
- e) Departmental representatives shall be responsible for organizing and collating votes from each department.
- f) The exact wording of a referendum shall be determined by the GSC.
- g) There shall be no minimum number of votes required for validity of the results provided that all the above requirements have been met.
- h) If the results of a referendum requires a constitutional amendment the GSC shall automatically form a subcommittee as outlined in (Section 8). The committee shall hear from the chief sponsors of the referendum and make appropriate changes or recommendations. The introduction and passage of any amendment is subject to all the rules outlined in (Section 8) of this constitution.

## **Section 8. Amendment, Ratification, and Review of this Constitution.**

- 8.01 The GSC has the right to amend and ratify this constitution.
- 8.02 In order to add to or change this document after ratification the GSC must vote first to amend the document at the section in question. A sub-committee must be formed to consider options on how the document should be amended. These options shall be presented to the GSC at least two weeks prior to an acceptance vote, and all voting members need to be informed. In order for the amendment to be accepted, there must be a two-thirds vote of GSC voting members present at the voting time in favor of the proposed amendment.
- 8.03 Ratification of this document shall be done by the GSC. An “Official Draft” shall be released to the graduate community before ratification. This “Official Draft” shall be available to the graduate community for no less than two weeks. During this time, graduate students may raise objections to the draft. Any objections must be raised with and addressed by the subcommittee on the constitution. At the end of this period of review, the GSC must vote to ratify. At this time the document may be finally changed. Votes on sections shall be majority votes by GSC voting members present at the meeting.
- 8.04 This constitution will supercede any and all other GSC constitutions that have



been in force.

- 8.05 Changes made relative to previous GSC constitutions for the purposes of officers, elections, voting, and duties shall be considered retroactive for the purpose of this GSC constitution.

Clark University - Worcester May 9, 2003

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