Constitution of the Graduate Student Congress
June 2006, revised March 2018

ARTICLE I. NAME

1.1 Name of the Organization

1.1.1 The name of the organization shall be the "Graduate Student Congress," hereinafter referred to as GSC.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE, OPERATION, AND STRUCTURE

2.1 Purpose

2.1.1 GSC exists to unify and represent the graduate student body at the University of Kentucky (UK) in matters affecting the quality of graduate student life and work.

2.1.2 GSC exists to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and promote professional development for graduate students through seminars, forums, and social functions.

2.2 Operational Guidelines

2.2.1 The GSC shall manage funds allocated to and/or generated by the GSC in manner consistent with the GSC purpose.

2.2.2 The GSC shall operate based on the timing of the UK Academic Calendar.

2.3 Structure

2.3.1 The GSC consists of the Executive Board, Representatives, and General Membership.

2.3.2 Members of the GSC shall also form the committees of the GSC.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATIVES

3.1 Eligibility

3.1.1 General Membership of the GSC shall consist of any and all members of the graduate student body who are in good academic standing.

3.1.2 Membership shall not be restricted based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, religion, creed, veteran status, criminal record, or political affiliation.

3.2 Selection of Representatives

3.2.1 There shall be an official List of Representative Seats within the GSC. Representative Seats shall approximately correspond to the departments, programs, and other graduate student organizations at UK.

3.2.2 For the purposes of this Constitution and By-Laws, Graduate Centers shall be considered Graduate Student Organizations.

3.2.3 A department, program, or graduate student organization may be allotted multiple Representative Seats.

3.2.4 A Representative is any member Recognized as holding a Representative Seat and shall be afforded all rights and responsibilities that entails.
3.2.5 Representatives must register with the Secretary through a process the Secretary will administrate to be officially Recognized. Upon Recognition, the Representative Seat is officially held and no longer open until that Representative’s term ends or they otherwise resign.

3.2.6 The term of office for a Representative shall be from their Recognition until the end of the following or current spring semester.

3.2.7 A member may serve as a Representative any number of times.

3.3 Responsibilities of Representatives

3.3.1 Each Representative shall attend all GSC General Meetings, and shall review any correspondence from GSC executive board sent before the meetings.

3.3.2 To remain In Good Standing, a Representative must maintain satisfactory attendance to General Meetings.

3.3.3 To remain In Good Standing, a Representative shall serve on and remain In Good Standing with at least one committee as described in Article VI.

3.3.4 Only programs and departments with Representatives In Good Standing for all Representative Seats they have been allotted are eligible for monetary awards from the GSC. When the President or Vice-President is from a program or department with fewer than 20 students that program or department is exempt from this requirement.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

4.1 General Meetings

4.1.1 General Meetings shall be held no less than once per month during the fall and spring semesters.

4.1.2 Any member may attend and join in discussion at General Meetings.

4.1.3 Only Representatives and Executive Board Members may vote at General Meetings.

4.2 Committee Meetings

4.2.1 Committee Meetings shall be held by each standing committee no less than once a month during the fall and spring semesters.

4.2.2 Committee Chairs may petition the Committee Coordinator for permission to meet less frequently.

4.2.3 Any member may attend, vote, and join discussion at Committee Meetings.

4.3 Executive Board Meetings

4.3.1 Executive Board Meetings shall be held no less than once per month during the fall and spring semesters. There shall be at least one Executive Board Meeting held during the summer semester.

4.3.2 Unless otherwise requested by the Executive Board, only Executive Board Members may attend, vote, and join discussion of Executive Meetings.

ARTICLE V. EXECUTIVE BOARD

5.1 Membership

5.1.1 The Executive Board shall consist of (1) the President, (2) the Vice-President, (3)
the Secretary, (4) the Treasurer, (5) the Information Technology Director, (6) the Committee Coordinator, and (7) any Student Government Association (SGA) Representatives. The Executive Board may also contain the President Emeritus as a non-voting member.

5.2 Purpose of the Executive Board

5.2.1 The purpose of the Executive Board is to operate on behalf of the GSC when needed; however, they report to the general GSC body and actions taken by them must be approved by the general GSC body.

5.2.2 The Executive Board shall set the overall direction of the GSC and lead on achieving the GSC’s goals. The Executive Board shall be the party primarily responsible for ensuring that GSC’s needs are met and is represented at the larger university level.

5.3 President

5.3.1 The President is charged with setting the direction of and leading the GSC. While the President is ultimately accountable to the general GSC body, a large amount of power and discretion is vested into this role to allow them to aggressively pursue the goals of the GSC.

5.3.2 The President may not serve as a Representative.

5.4 Vice-President

5.4.1 The Vice-President is charged with assisting the President in their duties to whatever extent they are requested to do so and are able. When needed and with the President’s consent, they are permitted to act with similar authority and power as the President.

5.4.2 If the President for whatever reason vacates their seat, the Vice-President shall completely assume all duties and responsibilities of the President until an election for a replacement can occur.

5.4.3 The Vice-President may not serve as a Representative.

5.5 Secretary

5.5.1 The Secretary is charged with organizing documents to maintain institutional memory. The Secretary shall be given powers and responsibilities to ensure record keeping of sufficient quality is done to meet the needs of the GSC.

5.6 Treasurer

5.6.1 The Treasurer is charged with managing the financial resources of the GSC. The Treasurer shall be given powers and responsibilities to ensure funds are received and distributed to meet the needs of the GSC.

5.7 Information Technology Director

5.7.1 The Information Technology Director is charged with managing and procuring technological resources for the GSC, both digital and physical. The Information Technology Director shall be given powers and responsibilities to ensure that the digital and technological needs of the GSC are met.

5.8 Committee Coordinator

5.8.1 The Committee Coordinator is charged with aiding any Committees established with completing their goals. The Committee Coordinator shall be given powers and responsibilities to ensure Committees function to the fullest potential possible.
5.8.2 The Committee Coordinator shall be considered the Chair of any Committee with its Chair position currently open.

5.9 Student Government Association (SGA) Representatives

5.9.1 Members holding this position must be elected to the SGA.

5.9.2 Any number of Graduate Students serving as Senators to the SGA may hold this position contingent on the approval of the President.

5.9.3 All members holding this position are entitled to a full vote at all General Meetings and Executive Board Meetings.

5.9.4 SGA Representatives are charged with representing and advocating the GSC interests to the SGA.

5.10 President Emeritus

5.10.1 The President Emeritus shall be held by either the immediate past President or Vice-President.

5.10.2 At the end of a President’s term, they automatically assume the role as President Emeritus. If the President has graduated or is otherwise unable to hold this position, the last member serving as Vice-President under that President shall hold this position.

5.10.3 If for some reason the previous President and Vice-President are unable or unwilling to hold this position; the Executive Board is allowed to function with this role open.

5.10.4 The President Emeritus serves to maintain institutional memory.

5.10.5 The President Emeritus is a non-voting, advisory position exempt from Executive Board term limits.

5.11 Selection of Executive Board Members

5.11.1 Election of the Executive Board Members shall be conducted at the final General Meeting of each spring semester.

5.11.2 Executive Board Members are elected for one term starting at the end of the current spring semester and lasting until the end of the following spring semester.

5.11.3 A member can serve a maximum of two terms as each position on the Executive Board.

5.11.4 Terms that last less than two academic semesters do not count towards these term limits.

5.11.5 All Representatives and Executive Board Members present at the meeting of an election are eligible to vote in that election.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

6.1 Definition of Committees

6.1.1 The majority of GSC activity not done by the Executive Board shall be done through the use of committees.

6.1.2 Committees shall be established through the use of By-Laws; however, any committee established must be approved by the Committee Coordinator before that By-Law will be considered to have been passed.

6.1.3 Each committee shall be led by a Committee Chair, who shall be the primary
individual responsible for a committee completing their duties and responsibilities.

6.1.4 Committees have the authority to plan, organize, and implement events and projects independent of the entire GSC body, so long as these events and projects fall within the purview of that committee as specified in this Constitution or in By-Laws.

6.1.5 Committees are encouraged, but not required, to draft and submit By-Law Notes summarizing their activities as detailed in Article VII.2.5 to VII.2.6. However, any event or project that has a financial cost, involves a major change to GSC operation, or explicitly required to do so in this Constitution or a By-Law shall be submitted as a regular By-Law.

ARTICLE VII. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

7.1 Constitutional Changes

7.1.1 Any Representative or officer may propose a change to this Constitution.

7.1.2 Any change of this Constitution must be submitted to the Communication and Documents Committee for approval.

7.1.3 Changes to this Constitution must be submitted to the GSC body one week prior to the General Meeting at which it is to be voted on.

7.1.4 Upon their approval, any change of this Constitution shall require approval at a general meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the Representatives and Executive Board Members present.

7.1.5 Any change which receives GSC approval shall become effective immediately after adjournment of the meeting at which it is adopted, unless the motion to amend specified another time at which the amendment shall take effect.

7.2 By-Law Process

7.2.1 By-Laws are the written recording of all proposals, operating guidelines not specified in this Constitution, and funding requests.

7.2.2 Major proposals and requests for funds not specified in the approved budget will undergo the By-Laws process.

7.2.3 By-Laws must be submitted to the GSC body one week prior to the General Meeting at which it is to be voted on. The Executive Board may waive this requirement for single pieces of By-Laws as needed by a majority vote of the Executive Board Members.

7.2.4 Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution or in passed By-Laws, By-Laws, with the exception of those submitted by the Executive Board, shall pass upon a majority vote of Representatives and Executive Board Members present at the General Meeting. By-Laws submitted by the Executive Board shall pass upon a majority vote of Representatives present at the General Meeting.

7.2.5 Actions and projects undertaken or planned by a committee that are agreed to be within the purview of that committee by a majority of the Executive Board Members and are not explicitly required to be submitted as a By-Law by this Constitution or other By-Laws may be submitted as a By-Law Note.

7.2.6 By-Law Notes, once submitted to the GSC body, are considered passed and do not require a majority vote to be ratified. However, time at the General Meeting following their submission shall be set aside for the By-Law Note to be discussed.