

Preamble

Recognizing the diverse interests and needs of the Concordia University Political Science Graduate Students, the Political Science Graduate Student Association (PSGSA) will strive to act in a manner that is representative of its members.

Objectives

The PSGSA, under the parameters set forth within these General By-Laws, shall:

- 1) Represent the collective interests and promote the general welfare of the Political Science graduate students of Concordia University.
- 2) Provide a platform to stimulate opportunities for all members in a variety of cultural, intellectual, political, recreational and social activities.
- 3) Provide representation for its members to promote the influence of graduate students on decision-making bodies and encourage the involvement of its members in political processes, both internal and external to the University.
- 4) Create a positive working and social environment for its members.
- 5) Advocate to improve the quality of graduate education at Concordia.
- 6) Facilitate cooperation among students by providing services and organizing events, which supplement the learning experience of its members and develop a sense of community.
- 7) Publicize information of interest to association members.
- 8) Support endeavors to foster and disseminate the work of students in the Masters of Public Policy and Public Administration (MPPPA) and PhD students in Political.

Article 1 – Name

The Political Science Graduate Student Association of Concordia University, with the initials PSGSA to be designated in short form, shall be the official name of the Association. Either form shall be legally accepted.

The PSGSA head office is located and operates in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Article 2 – Purpose and Structure

The PSGSA is an association of Political Science graduate students founded to act as representatives of the Political Science graduate student body in affairs internal and external to the university. The PSGSA is also responsible for the coordination of social and academic activities, subject to the by-laws of the university.

Any group functioning within the MPPPA or PhD program in Political Science is requested to coordinate its interests with the PSGSA.

Article 3 – Membership

A PSGSA member shall be considered anyone that fulfills all of the following:

- 1) Is a Concordia University graduate student registered in the Master's in Public Policy and Public Administration or the Doctorate in Political Science.

Article 4 – Executive

The permanent PSGSA Executive shall oversee the daily functions and services of the PSGSA.

The permanent Executive shall be comprised of

- 1) President;
- 2) Secretary/Treasurer;
- 3) VP Representation and Grievance;
- 4) VP Internal;
- 5) VP External;
- 6) VP Academic Master's;
- 7) VP Academic PhD

Other ad hoc temporary VP positions may be created as required by the PSGSA. These positions will automatically terminate when the task for which the position was created is completed, or by unanimous vote by all permanent PSGSA Executive members.

The permanent PSGSA Executive shall be composed only of people within the MPPPA program or PhD program in Political Science elected in periodic PSGSA elections. Temporary VP positions shall also be elected through duly called PSGSA elections.

Article 5 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Executive

The President shall:

- 1) Be the chair of the Executive Council Meetings and of General Assemblies;
- 2) Be the official spokesperson for the PSGSA;
- 3) Oversee the day-to-day management of the PSGSA;
- 4) Direct the implementation of Executive resolutions;
- 5) Be responsible for relations with other student communities, student governments, the university administration, and the general public;
- 6) Make available an annual PSGSA report summarizing the achievements during his or her term as well as outlining tasks resolved by the Executive;
- 7) Call monthly Executive Council meetings;
- 8) Be responsible for any decisions that must be made immediately. The president is, however, responsible to the executive for any decisions made in this fashion;
- 9) Perform duties as outlined in the PSGSA By-Laws;
- 10) Manage internal communications of the PSGSA
- 11) Ensure submission of the constitution and names of elected executives to the Graduate Student Association (GSA) prior to October 15th every year.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- 1) Oversee the finances of the PSGSA and keep all accounting processes up to date;
- 2) Write annual budgets in collaboration with the President;
- 3) Submit an operating budget and financial report for the previous year to the GSA prior to October 15th every year;
- 4) Maintain the file cabinet and office of the PSGSA office in good order;
- 5) Record the minutes at every Executive Council meeting and General Assembly;
- 6) Keep a copy of all the Executive Council meeting minutes and General Assembly minutes;
- 7) Keep an up-to-date copy of the PSGSA By-Laws;
- 8) Keep a copy of any other pertinent documents to the PSGSA, including any documents relating to finances or receipts;
- 9) Perform duties as outlined in the GSA By-Laws.

The VP Representative and Grievance (VP Rep & Grievance) shall:

- 1) Act as a liaison between the members of the PSGSA and the Executive;
- 2) In the absence of the President, act as Executive Council Chair;
- 3) Advise students of the procedures and resources available to them for grievances;
- 4) Organize the General Assembly alongside the President;
- 5) Perform duties as outlined in the PSGSA By-Laws.

The VP Internal shall:

- 1) Assume responsibilities of President in the absence of the President;
- 2) Oversee and supervise the work and tasks of the Treasurer;
- 3) Oversee other internal managerial positions;
- 4) Recruit, interview, and recommend to the Executive Council the candidates for Graduate Student Representation on the University's academic and administrative organs;
- 5) Prepare, in unison with the VP External, a wine & cheese event at the beginning of each semester, excluding summer;
- 6) Perform duties as outlined in the PSGSA By-Laws.

The VP External shall:

- 1) Be responsible for representing the PSGSA, through regular attendance at meetings, of external organizations, including both student and non-student organizations, such as TRAC, PSSA, and the GSA;
- 2) Monitor the socio-political and economic developments that may affect Graduate students at Concordia;
- 3) Monitor the activities of non-Concordia student associations and universities;
- 4) Locate new opportunities, and build on existing relationships with student unions and organizations;

- 5) Promote activities that provide opportunities for intellectual and social benefit of the members;
- 6) Prepare, in unison with the VP Internal, a wine & cheese event at the beginning of each semester, excluding summer;
- 7) Perform duties as outlined in the PSGSA By-Laws.

The VP Academic shall:

- 1) Act as a liaison between the members of the PSGSA and the Faculty of the Political Science Department;
- 2) Maintain cordial relations between the executive and the members and faculty;
- 3) Perform duties as outlined in the PSGSA By-Laws.

Article 6 – Executive Council

The Executive Council shall be attended by voting (Executive) and invited members. All voting members shall be referred to as “The Executive”.

- 1) Invited members may include:
 - A representative of “The Briefing Note” as long as it is in existence.
 - A representative for the Union of Teaching and Research Assistants of Concordia (TRAC).

The Executive Council shall:

- 1) Set policy;
- 2) Plan PSGSA actions;
- 3) Approve budgets.

Prior to every Council meeting all Executives and invited members shall be given individual notice at least seven calendar days before each Executive Council meeting, unless waived by every member of the Executive.

Executive Council meetings shall be called at least once per month. At least four (4) of the six (6) permanent members must be present for quorum. Meeting dates for each semester be established by polling all Executive members to determine which dates are most convenient for all members.

Voting procedures

- 1) The PSGSA Executive shall each have one vote;
- 2) Ad hoc temporary VP positions shall each have one vote;
- 3) Proxy votes will be allowed;
- 4) A simple majority (50% + 1) of the PSGSA Executive is needed to carry a motion unless the motion pertains to Constitutional Amendments, Annual Budgets, Membership Revocation, or otherwise stipulated in the General By-Laws. In these cases a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is needed to carry the motion;

- 5) Abstentions, blank or spoiled ballots shall not be considered as a “Yes” or “No” vote and they will be excluded from the final tally in all voting scenarios.

Minutes of the most recent Executive Council meeting shall be made available to all PSGSA Executive members within seven days of the Council meeting and to students of the MPPPA and PhD programs upon request, within seven days of that request.

The Executive shall have the authority to create and excuse committees and delegate unto them the powers and tasks that it chooses. These powers and tasks shall be determined during Executive Council meetings.

Article 7 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Executive Council Chair

Set the Council meeting agenda and disseminate documents as required.

Mediate the meetings of the Executive Council according to the most recent version of Robert’s Rules of Order for anything that is not outlined in the GSA By-Laws.

The Chair shall also have a vote in any matters that are to be voted on.

Article 8 – Finances

All cheques drawn against the PSGSA account shall be signed by the Treasurer and the President.

Finances shall be equally split between the Fall and Winter semesters.

Executives receive no honorariums.

The fiscal year shall run from January 1st to December 31st.

No Faculty, Departmental or Program Associations shall have the right to incur any debt or liability on behalf of the PSGSA.

Any budget expenditures above those allocated by the Executive Council’s final approved budget require approval during a regular or special Council meeting. Where expenditures are required outside of a regular or special Council meeting, unanimous approval may be obtained through electronic vote by each member of the Executive.

Article 9 –Elections

Executives must be democratically elected every year through an open, fair and transparent electoral process, which is adequately communicated to all constituents, even in the case of acclamation.

The Executive Members shall be elected annually depending on the position. VP Internal, VP External, VP Academic, and Secretary/Treasurer shall be elected at the beginning of the Fall semester. The President and VP Representative & Grievance shall be elected at the beginning of the Winter Semester.

The VP Internal, VP External, VP Academic, and Secretary/Treasurer shall take office on September 1st every year for a period of one fiscal year. The President and VP Rep & Grievance shall take office January 1st every year for a period of one fiscal year.

Nominations for each Executive position candidature shall be signed by a minimum of ten Political Science MPPPA or PhD students in good standing.

In the event of an unfilled or vacant Executive position, the executive shall within 45 days of notification call a by-election to fill the position with a member who satisfies the candidacy criteria.

Elections and by-elections are to be conducted by secret ballot.

A member not currently part of the Executive must count the votes.

Executive members elected in a by-election shall serve the remainder of the fiscal year in which they were elected.

Where an eligible candidate is uncontested, appointment to the available position may be made by acclamation.

Results of elections or appointment by acclamation shall be adequately communicated to all constituents.

Article 10 – Revocation of Executive Membership

Members of the PSGSA have the right to dismiss any Executive Member if that person's actions or inaction is detrimental to the honor or interest of the GSA.

Revocation of Executive membership can be called by a two-thirds (2/3) decision of the Executive or a petition of at least 20% of the PSGSA members (constituents).

Executives are to be impeached individually, not in groups. Voting will be by secret ballot. An Executive shall abstain from voting on his/her impeachment.

Article 11 – Resignations

An Executive shall give a written notice of resignation to Council at least two weeks prior to his/her resignation.

Article 12 – Eligibility for Office

A person is eligible to sit on the PSGSA Executive if she or he is a member in good academic standing for the full duration of his/her term in office.

Article 13 – General Assemblies

A General Assembly of the membership may be called by

- 1 The Executive Committee; or
- 2 The president upon receipt of a written petition signed by a least 5% of the PSGSA members and clearly stating the reason for the assembly on each page of the petition.

General Assemblies shall be chaired by the President.

The Agenda for the General Assembly shall be created by the Executive.

The notice of General Assembly shall be made at least five (5) calendar days in advance. The notice will consist of an email to all PSGSA members to the address currently on file with Concordia University.

Quorum for all General Assemblies shall be 10%, excluding Executives, of the PSGSA members.

Only current PSGSA members shall be admitted to a General Assembly.

Unless otherwise stipulated, fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the votes cast is needed to carry a motion in a General Assembly.

Subject to the General By-Laws, General Assembly resolutions are binding on the Association.

A General Assembly shall be called at least once per fiscal year by the PSGSA.

All General Assemblies shall be conducted according to the General By-Laws

In cases where the General By-Laws do not address an issue, the General Assembly shall adhere to the provisions laid forth in the latest edition of Robert`s Rules of Order.

Article 14 – Amendments

These General By-Laws may be amended only at a General Assembly by a two-thirds (2/3) decision to be called specifically for this purpose.

Article 15 – Ratification

The current General By-Laws supersede and negate all previous constitutions of the PSGSA and come into effect upon the approval by a fifty plus one percent (50% +1) vote in any General Assembly.

Article 16 – Briefing Note

The Briefing Note is a Graduate Level Newsletter that began in the Graduate department of Political Science.

One member of the Briefing Note may sit in as an observer at Executive Council meetings for any information relevant to the Briefing Note as deemed by the Executive of the PSGSA.

Either the VP External or the President shall act as the official voice of the PSGSA to the Briefing Note in consultation with the Executive, regarding PSGSA statements or positions.

The Briefing Note is independent in all matters from the PSGSA

Article 17 – Miscellaneous

Wine & Cheese events shall be held twice every year, one at the beginning of the Winter semester and one at the beginning of the Fall semester. The event shall be hosted and paid for by the PSGSA.

The Fridge in the Political Science Graduate lounge shall be regularly cleaned by a member of the PSGSA Executive, on an alternating basis.

A survey shall be conducted by the PSGSA Executive every couple of years to ensure satisfaction of its members with the program and to gather information about any issues students may be having with the program.