

Biology Graduate Student Organization Constitution

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Article 1: Name of Organization

This club shall be known as the Biology Graduate Student Organization (BGSO).

Article 2 Mission:

The goals of the BGSO are:

1. To provide a forum for expression of student opinion
2. To provide a mechanism for discussion and enactment of student decisions
3. To provide opportunities for social interactions among graduate students
4. To foster social, intellectual, and institutional links with faculty
5. To promote social, institutional, and intellectual links with graduate students in other
6. departments

As appropriate, the BGSO will work with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Union (GSU) to achieve its mission.

Article 3 Membership:

All graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences are members of BGSO.

Article 4 Organization Officers:

1. The BGSO will have a committee of up to 12 elected officers.
2. Within the committee, there will be the following executive officers
 - a. a single president
 - b. a single vice president
 - c. a single secretary/GSU representative
 - d. a single treasurer
 - e. two recruitment chairs
 - f. a single Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Representative
 - g. a single first year graduate student representative
 - h. a single International Student Representative
3. Within the committee, there may be one or more of the following executive officers, any of which may serve as an additional GSU representative
 - a. one or more outreach chair
 - b. one or more activities chair
 - c. one or more webmaster
4. This group of 12 officers should include at least one student from each focus. The three foci area:
 - a. Biomedical Sciences
 - b. Ecology and Environmental Science
 - c. Global Health
5. These ≤ 12 officers will be voted in to serve 1 year terms (see Article 6 for election procedures).
6. No person shall serve on the committee for more than 2 years. In the event that a person serves a partial term due to a late appointment (see Article 4 Section 8), if their appointed term was 6 months or less in length, then it will not count towards their 2 years of service. If their appointment was greater than 6 months in length, it will count as one year of service.
7. No person shall hold multiple executive officer positions simultaneously.
8. No person shall serve concurrently on the executive board of both BGSO and the IBMS Graduate Student Organization.
9. If a member of the committee leaves before the end of their term, the remaining members have the right to appoint a replacement.

Article 5 Responsibilities of Officers:

Duties held by all executive board officers

1. All executive officers are responsible for supporting each other, and particularly for helping to organize functions in keeping with the mission of the BGSO.
2. All officers will have an opportunity to give a report at a BGSO meeting, and some (specified below) will be required to report at some or all meetings.
3. All executive officers will be expected to attend BGSO meetings unless they have a conflict. If an executive officer cannot attend a BGSO meeting due to a conflict, they must communicate this to the President at least 24 hours before the meeting begins, and if they have duties for that meeting, they must find another executive board member to fulfill those duties.

Duties held by specific executive board officers

4. The President is responsible for scheduling, publicizing (by email) and chairing meetings, and general organization of the BGSO. The president has the power to call emergency meetings, which is further described in Article 8 section 5. The president shall represent the BGSO and its interests in any interactions with the university administration. The president shall co-sponsor major fundraising events with the treasurer, and work with the webmaster to manage the BGSO display case. The president must have served one previous year on the executive board.
5. The Vice President will be responsible for serving as a liaison between the BGSO and the department of Biological Sciences. It is recommended that this person also be the graduate student representative at faculty meetings. The vice president will solicit and collect comments, concerns, and feedback from the BGSO membership and communicate these to the department of Biological Sciences. This may involve contacting the DGS and/or the department chair. Feedback can be gathered during open forum at meetings, by survey, through petitions, or any method that allows the vice president to assess what the collective thoughts of the BGSO are. The vice president will also serve as the graduate student representative on the Academic Community Engagement & Translation faculty committee. This will insure graduate student input from graduate student elected positions within the department and a platform for communication with the faculty.
6. The Secretary/GSU representative is responsible for taking minutes at each meeting, to be presented for comment at the following meeting. Meeting minutes shall be passed at each meeting. It is recommended that this person also manages the BGSO email and documentation. The secretary will be the keeper of the constitution, shall have a working

knowledge of the constitution, and shall have a copy of the current constitution on hand for reference at all meetings. A GSU representative will be responsible for attending GSU meetings, representing and communicating BGSO interests at GSU meetings, and reporting the content of GSU meetings at the following BGSO meeting. If the GSU representative is unable to attend a GSU meeting, they are responsible for finding a substitute officer to attend the meeting in his/her place.

7. The Treasurer is responsible for keeping BGSO funds in order. The treasurer will provide an update on the balances of the BGSO account, remind others about delinquent receipts, and give updates on financial activity at each meeting. The treasurer and the president will co-sponsor major fundraising events (i.e. the concession stand). The treasurer is responsible for managing the t-shirt sales in the main office. This includes ordering new t-shirts and collecting funds from t-shirt sales monthly. The treasurer should create a budget for the coming year.
8. A Recruitment Chair will be responsible for assisting the recruitment committee with planning, coordinating, and executing the annual recruitment event. A recruitment chair will attend faculty recruitment committee meetings and report the activities and content of those meetings to the BGSO. A recruitment chair will represent the interests of the BGSO at recruitment committee meetings. A recruitment chair will be responsible for coordinating volunteers for recruitment weekend, distributing a recruitment schedule, and communicating recruitment information to the BGSO and its membership. The two recruitment chairs cannot be from the same research focus area. Recruitment chairs co-sponsor events with the activities chair early in fall semester to welcome the new students. The two recruitment chairs will also serve on the graduate recruitment faculty committee as graduate student representatives. This will insure graduate student input from graduate student elected positions within the department and a platform for communication with the faculty.
9. The Professional Development Chair will be responsible for coordinating and planning professional development events for the BGSO. A professional development chair should coordinate with other university professional development organizations when possible. A professional development chair should investigate costs associated with such activities and make them known to the BGSO at meetings. The professional development chair will simultaneously serve on the Graduate Program & Curriculum faculty committee as grad representative to provide input.

10. An Outreach Chair will be responsible for coordinating and planning outreach events and keeping BGSO members aware of outreach opportunities. These can take the form of philanthropic and volunteer opportunities. They should actively seek out such opportunities and present them to the BGSO at meetings when they are identified. An outreach chair should investigate costs associated with such activities and make them known to the BGSO at meetings. The outreach chair will be responsible for coordinating the BGSO's involvement with the annual Science Alive event.
11. An Activities Chair will be responsible for coordinating and planning social activities for the BGSO. An activities chair should investigate costs associated with such activities and make them known to the BGSO at meetings. The activities chair will simultaneously serve on the Departmental Events faculty committee as a grad student representative to provide input.
12. A Webmaster will be responsible for maintaining the BGSO website, particularly updating the online BGSO calendar and posting monthly meeting minutes for public scrutiny. A copy of the most up to date constitution will be available on the BGSO website. The webmaster should place recent photos of BGSO activities on the website. The webmaster will be responsible for any BGSO social media accounts. The web master and the president will share responsibility for the BGSO display case.
13. A DEI representative will be responsible for organizing departmental events related to increased education surrounding diversity and inclusion. This is an effort to combat systemic racism and work toward an environment of respect and inclusion within our department. The DEI representative will provide a place for individuals seeking to further educate themselves to become more aware of microaggressions, white privilege, historical barriers to equality, and systemic racism within the world as well as our community.
14. A First-Year Graduate Representative will be responsible for acting as a liaison between the first-year students and the rest of the department. This position was created during COVID-19 in hopes of better integrating first-year graduate students into the department, despite not being able to hold in-person social activities. This position is also intended to be used as a way to bring up concerns that first-year students may have and to make sure no one is socially isolated and their mental health compromised.
15. An International Student Representative will be responsible for acting as a liaison between international students and the BGSO executive board. As a member of the executive board, the international student representative will be able to bring the needs

and concerns of international students to the attention of the other board members. This position is also intended to be used as a way to bring up concerns that international students may have to make sure all students are receiving fair treatment, and international students are provided with the resources they need to be successful in this department and country.

Officers Serving on Faculty Committees

1. Officers serving on faculty committees should be expected to make contributions to faculty discussions on how to improve different aspects of the department. Graduate students should not be responsible for implementing changes on the behalf of the faculty.
2. The role of the BGSO officers on a faculty committee is to provide a voice for the body of graduate students they serve through conversations with students, surveys, and focus groups.
3. Faculty committees should provide officers with a minimum of two weeks to collect necessary data and feedback before coming to decisions.
4. The president will serve as a mediator between faculty committees and BGSO officers when necessary.

Article 6 Executive Officer Election Procedures:

1. A two week nomination period should allow any BGSO member to nominate any other BGSO member (so long as it is in keeping with term limits outlined in Article 4 Section 5) for a specific executive officer position, or for a general executive officer position. Nominees will be contacted and asked if they accept the nomination. BGSO members may accept multiple nominations. If a BGSO member is nominated and accepts the nomination, their name shall be placed on the ballot for that election.
2. Annual elections will be held at the end of the Spring semester, to be concluded by the last week of May.
3. Elected officials take over their responsibilities immediately but the summer should be used as a collaborative transition period.
4. All members of the BGSO are eligible to vote, and voting should be organized such that all BGSO members have the opportunity to vote. The outgoing executive board committee is responsible for organizing voting. No person who is nominated for the following year shall be involved in ballot counting.
5. Elections will be conducted by secret ballot. The voting period will last 5 days. Each BGSO member will be given a voting card (paper or electronic), to be filled out and

returned by the second week in May. This voting card will list those members who have been nominated, organized by the executive office. The lab, focus, and year in their program for each nominee shall be listed on the ballot.

6. The ballot will use the alternative voting system, which is also called instant runoff voting. Voters will number their choices.
7. If a focus is not represented on the executive board by the minimum number of members (outlined in Article 4 Section 4), then at least two vacancies will be left on the executive board until an executive board member of the missing focus can be found.
8. Emergency elections can be held to find members from the missing focus area. Emergency elections will be identical in procedure to normal officer elections with the following potential changes.
 - a. The dates of the election are more flexible
 - b. The nominations may be restricted to a particular focus
9. Executive board positions shall be filled in the order that they are outlined in the constitution, meaning that if a focus is maximally represented, then the position will go to the next runner up that is not a member of a maximally represented focus. If a person who runs for multiple positions wins and accepts a position, the alternative vote system will be used to carry out the elections for the other positions that that individual was on the ballot for.
10. The first year representative elections will follow the same procedure outlined above. Nominations for this position will open in the first week of October and close after the two week nomination period specified in Article 6 Section 1. Voting will take place over a five day period as specified in Article 6 Section 5.

Article 7 Dismissal of Elected Officers:

1. In the event that an officer is judged to be deficient in his/her duties (as decided by a unanimous agreement of the other executive officers and advisor), he/she may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the club's membership. The advisor shall oversee this process.
2. Inactive officers (those who have missed two consecutive meetings without offering valid reasons to the president) can be removed from the committee by the remaining executive officers with a majority (>50%) vote.

Article 8 Meetings:

1. There shall be regular meetings of the BGSO, which are open to the entire membership. At least three meetings per semester must occur.
2. Meetings shall have a basic structure, including a call to order, officer reports, an open forum, and an adjournment.
3. Decisions made at BGSO meetings are binding on the membership, providing:
 - a. The meeting is attended by $\geq 75\%$ of elected officers, the quorum.
 - b. The decision is supported by more than 50% of those elected officers present (except for constitutional changes, as outlined in Article 11 and some officer dismissals as outlined in Article 7 Section 1).
4. Voting shall be conducted in a manner utilizing basic parliamentary procedure.
 - a. An executive officer can make a motion (using the language "I move to..").
 - b. Another executive officer needs to second that motion (using the language "I second"). If a motion is not seconded within several seconds, it dies.
 - c. Once a motion has been made and seconded, a discussion will take place.
 - d. An executive officer can move to end discussion (using the language "I move to end discussion of the motion"). The meeting chair will ask for dissent. If no executive officer expresses dissent, discussion will end.
 - e. At any point during the discussion, an executive officer can move to amend the current motion. This requires its own second and discussion.
 - f. Once discussion has ended and all amendments to the motion are accounted for, voting can take place.
 - g. Each executive officer can vote once, with three options. They can be in favor, oppose, or abstain. Abstention is encouraged if an executive board member is personally and directly benefiting from the motion.
 - h. An officer who was not present at the meeting may vote absentee electronically within 48 hours of the distribution of the meeting minutes.
 - i. At request, voting can be done anonymously.
5. Voting shall be used to decide on activities, allocate funds, appoint new executive officers to vacant positions (Article 4, Section 7), dismiss executive board members (Article 7), and other activities that the executive board officers deem appropriate.
6. In the event that an emergency meeting of the club needs to be held, the President of the club shall have the authority to call such meetings. All officers must agree in advance to the emergency meeting and at least 24 hours notice must be provided to all active

members by sending out an email. Communication of emergency meetings will be the responsibility of the President.

Article 9 End of Term Report

End of Term Report Assembly and Distribution

1. The goal of the end of term report is to collect in summation the accomplishments and ongoing work accomplished by the BGSO executive board during their term to allow for a continuation of successful events, information regarding the preparation of events, and progress made in faculty committee appointments.
2. All members of the outgoing BGSO Executive Board must contribute to the document.
3. This document will be assembled and condensed for distribution to the students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Biological Sciences by the president and vice president prior to elections for the upcoming year.
4. The entirety of the document will remain in the BGSO Google Drive as it is handed off to the incoming BGSO Executive Board so that the new board can access all of the detailed information that is deemed unnecessary for distribution to the department but necessary for continued efforts by future boards.

End of Term Report Contents

1. The end of term document will be distributed as a summary to the department and this summary sheet will not exceed 2 pages. This summary will make up the cover page of the total end of term report. This document will contain the following: brief statement by the president and vice president describing the contents and summarizing any major accomplishments of the board, a list of events held by the BGSO, and a brief summary of ideas submitted by the officers in their respective faculty committee assignments.
2. Events- all events hosted by the BGSO during the term should be included with the following information: location of activity, attendance, cost, date & time, and helpful planning/logistical details. This includes events held by the Activities Chair, the Outreach Chair, the Professional Development Chair, DEI Representative, and any other officer who hosted a gathering, service opportunity, panel, etc. on behalf of the BGSO.
3. Faculty Committee Summaries- officers that are members of faculty committees should prepare full written reports of their time on their respective committees. This should focus on the contributions they made on behalf of the students of the department and any ongoing efforts that the faculty committee has worked on during the academic year.

Article 10 Disbursement of Funds:

1. Funds will be made available to the officers and to the members for activities in keeping with the previously stated mission (Article 2) of BGSO and previously described executive officer duties (Article 5).
2. Funds may be requested through the voting process (Article 8).
3. Receipts reflecting expenditures from disbursements will be collected by the treasurer who will maintain an accounting record for the organization.
4. All disbursements of funds must be approved by the Treasurer.
5. Reimbursement for expenditures will only be accepted for members who have retained an original, itemized receipt and a description of the expense incurred.
6. Only the club officers and the club advisor shall have the ability to charge expenses to the club via the university's account charge system.

Article 11 Organization Advisor:

1. The BGSO advisor will be a faculty or administrative member of the Department of Biological Sciences.
2. The advisor will be appointed by consensus of the new committee each year, and will serve a term from March 1 to February 28 (or February 29 during leap years).
3. The duties of the advisor include approving fund disbursements and facilitating interaction between the BGSO and the faculty and administration.
4. The advisor shall be an ex-officio member of the club and, as such, shall not have voting rights.
5. The advisor shall have veto power over any decision made by the club which is in direct violation of University Policy. This authority shall be used only in circumstances where the club officers knowingly intend to violate University Policy.

Article 12 Provisions for Amendment:

This constitution may be amended by the following process.

1. At any BGSO meeting, a change may be proposed.
2. A precise formulation of the suggested change must be read to the members attendant.
3. A motion to put the change in place must be made, specifying Article and Section numbers.

4. If this suggestion is seconded, a discussion and vote on the suggested change will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, which will take place not less than two weeks later.
5. The president is responsible for making sure that all members are informed of the exact wording of the proposed change, and the timing of the vote meeting.
6. The suggested change is incorporated into the constitution if there is a 75% executive officer quorum, and the amendment receives a $\geq 2/3$ majority vote of those members in attendance at the second meeting.

Changes to the constitution that are basic grammatical corrections (spelling, punctuation, etc.) that do not impact the meaning of the content do not require any sort of voting.

This document was last revised January 3rd, 2023.