**Arts & Sciences Graduate Student Organization (A&S GSO)**

University of Pittsburgh

**Date Approved:** November 7th, 2017

**Constitution**

**Preamble**

As graduate students in A&S GSO, we seek an academic culture that:

* Fosters well-rounded development in our roles as scholars, teachers, departmental citizens and community members.
* Promotes open inquiry and free exploration of ideas so that students can generate a unique scholarly path.
* Appreciates diversity in all its forms, values intellectual differences as strengths, and which recognizes them as crucial to successful cooperation in scholarship, teaching, and service activities.
* Recognizes participation in graduate student governance as crucial to securing our collective voice in departmental and University affairs.

**Definitions**

A&S: Arts and Sciences

GSO: Graduate Student Organization

**Bylaws**

**Name of Organization**

The name of this organization shall be the Arts & Sciences Graduate Student Organization (A&S GSO) of the University of Pittsburgh.

**Acceptance and Compliance to Registration Requirements and Limitations**

The A&S GSO and its membership accept and will fully comply with the requirements and limitations of registration.

**Limits of Registration**

The A&S GSO and its membership accept and will fully comply with the limits of registration. Registered student organizations are student associations and are not official components of the University. Registration does not permit a student organization to use or act in the name of the University, to represent the University, engage in any contractual obligation in the name of the University nor represent the organization as being an official part of the University. Registered student organizations are permitted to have approved external affiliations. Registration expressly permits certified student organization to only operate on campus. Off campus activities of registered student organizations are the sole responsibility of the organization, officers and members, unless expressly approved in advance by the University. Membership in a registered student organization and participation in its activities are voluntary and all risks of personal injury, property damage or other losses incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or participant(s).

**Annual Re-registration**

The A&S GSO will submit its annual re-registration application to the SORC during the re-registration period following the election of new officers.

**Purpose**

Its purpose shall be to represent the interests of the graduate students enrolled in the A&S at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Activities**

The activities of the organization will include:

1. Holding social and recreational events, which include but are not limited to
   1. Grad Expo
   2. Diversity and inclusion events
2. Providing monetary awards for graduate students in the form of
   1. Travel grants
   2. Teaching awards
   3. Summer research grant
3. Representation on the following committees
   1. Graduate and Professional Student Government
   2. Arts and Sciences Council
   3. Arts and Sciences Planning and Budget Committee
   4. Arts and Sciences Graduate Council

**Membership Requirements**

1. Membership is open to currently enrolled Pitt students as defined herein.

2. All members must accept and comply with all of the requirements and limitations of registration as a condition of membership.

3. Membership in the A&S GSO is voluntary and all risk of personal injury, property damage or other losses that occur incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or non-member participant(s). Accordingly, the University of Pittsburgh, its officers and agents shall not be responsible nor liable for any claims or causes of action for damage or loss of property or personal injury of any kind or nature which may arise out of or are incidental to the conduct of any organization's activities or that of any individual's participation in any group-related activity. it is further understood and agreed that it is the responsibility of the officers of the organization to assure that all of the organization's members and non-member participants in all activities sponsored by the A&S GSO are fully informed and advised of this ASSUMPTION OF RISK, and in the event any individual member or participant should express or indicate non-acceptance, the organization's officers shall forbid participation and/or membership of such individual. In regard to the organization member or non-member participant Assumption of Risk, the A&S GSO acknowledges that the University recommends that the organization members and non-member participants make every effort to arrange for the acquisition of liability insurance sufficient to protect all participants against those risks being assumed.

4. No hazing or illegal discriminatory criteria for membership, including those listed in the University of Pittsburgh's non-discrimination policy, will be used as a condition for membership in the organization. These factors include race, color, religion (except for religious organizations which may restrict membership to those who share their faith-based beliefs), national origin, ancestry, sex (except same sex organizations permitted under Title IX), age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability or status as a veteran. This non-discriminatory policy will be applied in a manner consistent with the requirements of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and other laws applicable to student organizations.

5. All full-time and part-time graduate students enrolled in the departments of the Arts and Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh are considered to be members.

6. There are no financial requirements for membership.

7. Please see the next section, ‘Council’.

**Council**

**Section 1.**

The Council is the legislative body of the A&S - GSO. All sovereign power of the A&S graduate students shall reside in the Council. It shall have the sole power to authorize expenditures of funds in the treasury. It shall have the power to enter into contracts with other organizations within and outside the University of Pittsburgh.

**Section 2.**

The Council shall be composed of one delegate from each department of A&S. Each delegate shall be elected by the members of her/his department.

**Section 3.**

The Council shall meet at least once every month, excluding August and December. The presiding officer shall conduct each meeting in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 4.**

A quorum shall consist of at least ten (10) delegates.

**Section 5.**

The Council shall elect the officers of A&S - GSO and the representatives of A&S - GSO to various A&S and University committees. The Council shall make appointments to various committees when and where this is appropriate. These officers, representatives, and appointees shall be responsible to and accountable to the Council.

**Department Delegates to the Council (Membership Procedures)**

**Section 1.**

Each department's duly authorized delegate to the Council shall submit the following information to the President or Administrative Assistant at the beginning of each academic year:

1. Names of the officers of the department's GSO.
2. Name of the person responsible for the department's account.
3. Name of the department's delegate and alternates.

**Section 2.**

If the officers of a department's GSO or the person responsible for a department's account should change, the delegate shall forward this change to the Administrative Assistant. Any change must be accompanied by the signatures of the formerly and newly authorized persons.

**Section 3.**

Any department adhering to Section 1 and 2 shall be deemed active. Any department not deemed active shall be deemed inactive.

**Section 4.**

Delegates shall attend at least every other meeting of the Council.

**Section 5.**

Any department not represented in accordance with Section 4 shall be deemed non-participatory.

**Section 6.**

The Council shall have the right to reprimand any department deemed inactive or non-participatory.

**Voting Privileges**

Voting privileges are limited to currently enrolled Pitt student members/departments in good standing with the organization. Each active and participatory department is accorded exactly one vote. The President and Vice President retain voting rights. In the event of a tie, the President, Vice President, and Administrative Assistant will vote.

Voting privileges shall be lost if the department is deemed inactive or non-participatory.

**Officers, Terms of Office, and Elections**

**Section 1.**

The organization shall have the following officers elected annually by the Council:

1. President
2. Vice-President

**Section 2.**

1. Nominations for officers shall be opened during the regularly scheduled meeting of the Council held during the month of March. If no regularly scheduled meeting is held during March, a special meeting should be convened for this purpose. Nominations shall remain open for a period of no less than two weeks after the March meeting and should be closed no less than one week before the election of officers. The exact date for the closing of nominations shall be determined by the current officers and announced at the March meeting.
2. Any graduate student in A&S may nominate a candidate. A nomination shall require a nominator and a second to be valid.
3. Nominations may be made orally at the March Council meeting. After the adjournment of this meeting, all further nominations are to be submitted in writing to the Administrative Assistant and must be signed by the nominator and second. A valid nomination shall be entered onto the ballot once the candidate’s assent has been obtained.

**Section 3.**

* + 1. Elections shall occur as a special election prior to the start of the April GSO General Council Meeting.
    2. Eligible voters are members of the General Council.
    3. Only one vote will be tabulated per department.
    4. Voting shall be by secret ballot with no abstentions.
    5. In the event of a tie, the President, Vice-President, and Administrative Assistant shall submit a vote by secret ballot to be counted by the faculty advisor.

**Section 4.**

Any graduate student in A&S is eligible to run and to serve as an officer.

**Section 5.**

Officers shall serve for a period of one year. Term of office shall commence on 1 May.

**Section 6.**

Vacancy in the President position will be filled by the Vice President for the remainder of the term. If the Vice President is unable to fill the President position then the office shall be filled by the Council by nomination and vote for the remainder of the term. Vacancy in the Vice President position shall be filled by the Council by nomination and vote for the remainder of the term.

**Section 7.**

Removal of officers may be proposed during a general A&S GSO council meeting or via email to the Administrative Assistant by any departmental representative or officer if there is a concern that an existing officer is not fulfilling their duties. Evidence should be presented to accompany the concern, and the accused officer should have the opportunity to respond. At that point, in a private vote (i.e., the accused officer leaves), the A&S GSO council will vote to place the accused officer on a one-month probation to address the areas of concern and provide a report at the next A&S GSO council meeting. A 3/4 vote will be required to place the accused officer on probation. At the next meeting, the officer will provide a report of how they have addressed the areas of concern. The A&S GSO council will then hold a series of private votes to reinstate the officer or remove them. First, a vote for reinstatement (which requires 3/4 approval from the council). If the officer is not reinstated, a second vote to remove them from their position will occur (which also requires 3/4 approval from the council). In the event that the second vote does not result in the removal of the officer, their period of probation will be extended by another month and the process will repeat at the next meeting.

**Officer Duties and Responsibilities**

The organization shall have the following officers:

**Section 1. President**

The President shall administer the affairs of the organization in line with its general policies and procedures. She/he shall preside at all meetings of the Council. She/he shall be ex-officio member of all committees created by the Council, except a nominating committee. She/he shall chair the committee of the Council that will make the final recommendation on the hiring of the Administrative Assistant. She/he will meet with Faculty Advisor as needed; represent at monthly University Senate meetings and other events as necessary. She/he will conduct annual survey of the A&S Graduate community for interest in workshop topics, issues concerning graduate students, and other student concerns. She/he will set dates for and work to develop the Professional Workshop series

**Section 2. Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall perform all duties of the President in the absence of that officer. The Vice-President will serve as Chair of Grad Expo committee and may take a co-chair if interested student volunteers.

**Section 3. Administrative Assistant (Business Manager)**

The Administrative Assistant (an unelected official) shall act as Treasurer, and, as such, she/he shall pay all bills incurred by the A&S - GSO with the approval of the President. She/he shall pay bills from officers and departmental representatives according to A&S - GSO guidelines. She/he shall keep records of all financial transactions and give a statement of finance to the Council as often as required. The Administrative Assistant shall issue all notices, shall send and answer correspondence at the direction of the President and the Council. She/he shall record the roll and minutes of the Council meetings. She/he shall keep the records of the organization. She/he shall perform any and all other duties as directed by the President and/or Council in accordance with the position's description.

**Representatives**

**Section 1.**

The Organization has representatives to the following:

1. Two (2) to the Arts & Sciences Council.
2. Five (5) to the A&S Graduate Council (one of whom shall serve on the A&S Budget and Policies Advisory Committee).
3. Three (3) to the Graduate and Professional Student Association.
4. One (1) to the University Senate Council.
5. And to any other A&S or University committees as appropriate.

**Section 2.**

It is the responsibility of the A&S Council members to provide representatives to the university bodies listed above. Representatives shall be elected at the September meeting.

**Section 3.**

Any graduate student in A&S is eligible to serve as a representative.

**Section 4.**

Representatives shall assume their duties at the first scheduled meeting of the Council or the committee or council to which they are a representative, whichever occurs first, immediately following the elections.

**Section 5.**

Vacancies shall be filled by the Council.

**Duties of Representatives**

**Section 1.**

Representatives should attend regularly scheduled meetings of their committees.

**Section 2.**

At least one representative to an A&S or University committee or council shall report to each regularly scheduled meeting of the Council the issues discussed at their meeting, the votes of all representatives on all motions, and the issues that will be discussed at future meetings.

**Section 3.**

Representatives shall request that motions having great significance for A&S graduate students be tabled so that such representatives may consult the Council before voting.

**Section 4.**

The Council shall remove any representative for dereliction of her/his duties and responsibilities.

**Committees**

The chair of each committee will be filled on a volunteer basis unless otherwise noted. If more than one graduate student is interested in serving as chair, the chair will be determined by a vote at the general council meeting. Ad hoc and standing committees will be established and terminated by a proposal by any general council member or officer at a council meeting during new business and must be approved by a ¾ vote.

**Standing A&S GSO Committees**

**A. Social Programs** **Committee** plans and executes social activities for Arts & Sciences graduate students and works with GPSG and other organizations to co-sponsor larger events for all Pitt graduate students.

**B. Grad Expo Committee** hosts an all-day event where Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences graduate students from a variety of disciplines present papers and posters to their fellow students, faculty, and other members of the Pitt community. The committee is responsible for advertising the event, reading and sorting abstracts, and hosting the event. The Vice President will serve as the committee chair.

**C. Elizabeth Baranger Teach Awards Committee** acknowledge excellence in graduate student teaching across the Arts & Sciences. Awards are presented to two students nominated by faculty, fellow graduate students, and undergraduates, in each of the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Humanities. The award, which is given in April, is named after Elizabeth Baranger, former Dean and, later, Vice-Provost of the School of Arts & Sciences. The committee is responsible for advertising the event, recruiting judges, and judging.

**D. Peer Professionalization Workshop Committee** is responsible for planning the course or workshop series including developing a detailed course syllabus and teaching a workshop with at least 6, 2-hour sessions over the course of the Fall term. They will also provide feedback on projects and be available to participants by email. They will assist the director in preparing the final report and coordinate with the direct as needed regarding course design and logistical requirements.

**E. Summer Research Grant Committee** awards $500 to 5 University of Pittsburgh Graduate Students in the school of Arts and Sciences to supplement summer research. The committee is responsible for advertising the event, recruiting judges, and judging.

**F. Diversity and Inclusion Committee** is concerned with issues of diversity and inclusion as it relates to the graduate student population. This committee will organize programming and events as well as participate in university-wide administrative initiatives such as the Inclusion and Diversity Senate Council Working Group. This committee will be involved in the ongoing work of implementing aspects of the university’s strategic plan.

**Meetings**

Monthly meetings will be scheduled by the Administrative Assistant.

The chairperson will be the President. The meetings will follow Robert’s Rules of Order.

Special meetings may be called by the officers with two weeks notice.

**Finances**

The A&S GSO shall fully comply with the University fundraising policies and procedures for registered student organizations. The organization will not maintain an outside bank account if it receives funding from GPSG.

**Section 1.**

The A&S - GSO shall be supported by a fraction of the funds allocated to the Graduate and Professional Student Association from the "Activity Fee."

**Section 2.**

The Administrative Assistant shall present to the Council a budgetary report at the beginning of each academic year.

**Section 3.**

The Administrative Assistant shall approve all reimbursement requests. Each department shall delegate a graduate student to approve department GSO expenses.

**Publications Code**

In compliance with the Publications Code for Student Organizations, all publications of the organization will comply with current copyright laws, be distributed according to policies and procedures, refrain from expressions that are considered obscene or libelous according to current statute, advocate or insight the material interference or physical disruption of the educational process of the peace, order and decorum of the campus, or that advocate or incite imminent, lawless action or the violent overthrow of the government and identify the organization as publisher and specify that the group is a certified student organization at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Advisor**

The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies and Research will serve as the advisor for the A&S GSO.

**Adoption**

This Constitution shall become effective immediately following a simple majority approval of A&S graduate students voting in a secret ballot.

**Amendments**

This Constitution shall be amended by a ¾ vote of the Council when at least 50% of the A&S departments are represented. Votes on amendments to this Constitution shall be by secret ballot.

All constitution additions, revisions and deletions must reported to SORC.

**Bylaws**

1. At the beginning of the fiscal year, each department will receive an allotment of money based on the number of students enrolled.
2. Active department funds will be automatically carried over to the departmental account for the next academic year.
3. Funds of inactive departments will be forfeited to the general account at the April meeting.
4. The council should dispense of the funds in the General Graduate Student Organization fund, subject to majority vote.
5. The council may reprimand, by majority vote, any department qualifying as non-participatory, up to and including forfeiture of all funds.
6. Funds forfeited in accordance with 5 shall be frozen for the period until the following meeting of the council during which time the reprimanded department shall be able to appeal to the council. Subject to majority vote, funds may be reinstated during this period.
7. Inactive departments who have had their funds seized during the April meeting, in accordance with bylaw 3, shall have until the October meeting to petition for reinstatement of funds, subject to majority vote.