

# Constitution of the Graduate Students Association

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The Graduate Students of the University of California, Los Angeles,

*Considering* that there is a constant need to provide for the representation of graduate students and the promotion of graduate students' interests on this campus and within the University of California; but

*Considering also*, that the nature of graduate study requires that a governing body be established that will not unduly burden the individual graduate student who would like to participate and will answer to the students of the different academic disciplines; and

*Considering further*, that the reasonable procedures must be established to guarantee the fair and responsible representation of all graduate students,

*Hereby* establish this Constitution.

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## **Article I. Name, Membership, and Membership Fees**

### Section A.

1. The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Students Association of the University of California, Los Angeles, hereinafter referred to as the GSA.
2. The GSA is part of the unincorporated association known as the Associated Students of UCLA but the GSA possesses its own rights to adopt its own rules and procedures, to set its terms of membership, and further to establish such relationships with the University of California, Los Angeles, as shall be beneficial to the interests of graduate students.

### Section B.

The membership of GSA shall consist exclusively of currently enrolled UCLA graduate students.

### Section C.

Each member of the GSA shall be assessed a quarterly membership fee of ten dollars (\$10.00). A minimum of four dollars (\$4.00) of each member's ten dollars (\$10.00) must be returned to that member's Council. These Council funds shall not be reappropriated by GSA except as follows: any Council's balance exceeding that year's share shall be reapportioned to the Forum Discretionary Fund at the end of the fiscal year. A minimum of twenty-five cents (\$0.25) of each member's ten dollar (\$10.00) fee shall be allocated to the University of California Student Association (UCSA); transfer of these funds to UCSA shall be subject to Forum discretion.

This quarterly membership fee will increase by one dollar (\$1.00) every academic year beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year through the 2005-2006 academic year. Of this one dollar (\$1.00), a minimum of fifty cents (\$0.50) must be returned to that member's Council. In 2005, the quarterly membership fee will be thirteen dollars (\$13.00).

In addition to the quarterly membership fee, each member of the GSA shall be assessed a fee of \$3 which shall fund the Graduate Writing Center. The Graduate Writing Center shall serve the academic and professional writing needs of all members of the GSA, including but not limited to: academic writing (all graduate levels), thesis and dissertation writing, professional presentations and public speaking, grant and fellowship writing, and writing for publication. A graduate-student majority committee appointed by GSA shall oversee and conduct annual evaluations of the Graduate Writing Center. Governing documents for the Graduate Writing Center (including oversight committee charter, statement of mission, vision and goals) shall be adopted and updated with GSA Forum approval.

#### Section D.

No mandatory fee may be assessed the GSA membership by the GSA except as stated in this Constitution.

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### **Article II. Documents**

#### Section A.

The official documents of the GSA shall include the GSA Constitution and the GSA Codes.

#### Section B.

Any contradiction which arises among official documents and the wording contained therein shall be decided in favor of the Constitution. The conflicting wording of the Codes involved shall be stricken from that document.

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### **Article III. Councils**

#### Section A.

The membership of GSA shall be divided into thirteen (13) Councils.

#### Section B.

Each Council shall comprise schools, related academic departments, or related academic majors, hereinafter referred to as departments, and these shall be defined for each Council in the Codes.

#### Section C.

Each department of ten (10) or more members shall be entitled to one Representative for each one hundred members, or fraction thereof, enrolled in that department, and chosen from that department as defined in the Codes. The Council's representation shall be reapportioned each summer based on the prior academic year enrollment.

#### Section D.

The Representatives of each Council shall ensure:

1. the representation of the interests of the members of that Council to the governing bodies of the GSA;
2. the establishment of a governing structure in a manner which assures equal representation and fair and reasonable access to funding for members of that Council;
3. the administration and programming of the funds of that Council
4. the election of Council Officers and Council Representatives to GSA committees and Delegates to the GSA Forum; and
5. the performance of such duties as may be specified in the GSA Constitution or Codes.

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### **Article IV. *Assembly***

#### Section A.

The governing authority of the GSA shall be the Assembly.

#### Section B.

The voting members of the Assembly shall consist exclusively of the departmental representatives. The Officers of the GSA shall be nonvoting members of the Assembly. Each Council shall submit a list of its representatives to the Vice President -- Internal Affairs. When said list is received by the Vice President -- Internal Affairs, a Council's Representatives shall be deemed seated.

#### Section C.

Assembly action may be taken at a meeting of the Assembly or by means of a mail ballot. In any meeting of the Assembly, a quorum shall be one-half (1/2) of the designated Representative positions. No Assembly Representative shall cast any vote other than his/her own.

Section D.

1. A mail ballot shall be held in such cases as may be called for by either a majority of the Forum, twenty (20) Assembly Representatives, or by petition bearing the signatures of one percent (1%) of the GSA membership.
2. Mail ballots shall be conducted according to procedures outlined in the Codes. A measure shall be approved by mail ballot when a majority of the ballots cast by Assembly Representatives favors the measure, provided that at least one half (1/2) of the voting membership of the Assembly properly returns their ballots as defined in the Codes.

Section E.

The Assembly shall meet within ten (10) days of the presentation to the President of a petition bearing the signatures of one-third (1/3) of the Representatives or two percent (2%) of the GSA membership.

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**Article V. *Forum***

Section A.

The Forum shall be the executive committee of the GSA by authority delegated by the Assembly. The Forum may act on behalf of the GSA on any matter not specifically reserved to the Assembly. All actions of the Forum shall be subject to disapproval by the Assembly.

Section B.

The Forum shall consist exclusively of Delegates as voting members.

1. There shall be one (1) Delegate for each six hundred (600) members, or fraction thereof, in each Council. The Forum shall reapportion itself each summer.
2. In the absence of a Delegate, the alternate for that Delegate may vote and counts for quorum provided that such alternates are elected in the same manner as the regular representatives. No Delegate or alternate may cast any vote other than his / her own.
3. There shall be two (2) voting Delegates from a single board representing all of the student interest groups or organizations as defined in the GSA Codes. The above-mentioned board shall be referred to as the Student Interest Board.
4. Each Council and organization (V.B.3) shall submit a list of its Delegates to the Vice President -- Internal Affairs. When said list is received by the Vice President -- Internal Affairs, the Delegates shall be deemed seated. The Forum may not convene until a majority of the Councils have seated Delegates and at least one third (1/3) of the maximum possible number of Delegates are present.

Section C.

The Forum must hold six (6) regular meetings in each academic year, at least two (2) in the Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters.

Section D.

Quorum for Forum meetings shall be the number of Delegates equal to one-half of the designated Delegate positions.

Section E.

The Forum shall have the authority to:

1. approve the GSA budget; and
  2. establish or amend the Codes to define GSA guidelines and procedures
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**Article VI. *Officers***

Section A.

There shall be four (4) Officers of the GSA: a President, a Vice President -- Internal Affairs, a Vice President -- External Affairs, and a Vice President -- Academic Affairs. All Officers must be members of the GSA. It shall be the joint responsibility of all GSA Officers to uphold the Constitution.

Section B.

The duties of the Officers shall be as follows:

1. the President shall act as chief executive officer of the GSA; shall be responsible for calling and conducting meetings of the Cabinet; shall be representative of the GSA in UCLA campus affairs; shall coordinate the work of the Cabinet and all GSA representation to the UCLA campus committees; shall be jointly responsible with the Vice President -- Internal Affairs for Central Office expenditures; shall recommend a budget for the GSA Central Office annually in the Spring; and shall be responsible for calling and conducting meetings of the Appointments Board.
2. The Vice President -- Internal Affairs shall be responsible for calling and conducting meetings of the Assembly and Forum; shall be responsible for calling and conducting meetings of the Council Presidents; and shall be jointly responsible for Council expenditures with the Council Presidents; shall be jointly responsible with the President for Central Office expenditures; and shall be acting President in his/her absence.
3. The Vice President -- External Affairs shall be the representative of the GSA to the University of California Students Association; shall be the representative of the GSA to the system wide Academic Senate; shall consult regularly with the Forum and the

- Assembly; shall consult regularly with the Cabinet and Council Presidents; and shall be the GSA representative to the UCLA Alumni Association.
4. The Vice President – Academic Affairs shall be the representative of the GSA to the UCLA Academic Senate; shall appoint and coordinate GSA representation on all Academic Senate committees; and shall consult regularly with Cabinet and the Forum.
  5. The Officers of the GSA shall be nonvoting members of the Forum and the Assembly and shall not serve as Representatives or Delegates.

#### Section C.

Any conflicts over the responsibilities of the Officers shall be resolved by the Forum, subject to disapproval by the Assembly.

#### Section D.

The Officers shall be elected by a majority of those GSA members voting in the Spring election. Candidates shall be nominated by a petition signed by at least fifty (50) GSA members. Officers shall take office four (4) weeks after the results of the annual election are announced.

#### Section E.

The Officers of the GSA may receive annual stipends as defined in the Codes. Additionally, GSA Commissioners who are appointed by the GSA Officers may receive stipends upon approval of the Forum as specified in the Codes.

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### **Article VII. *Removal, Recall, Resignation, Initiative, and Amendment***

#### Section A.

Any Officer of the GSA, Commissioner, Director, Delegate, or any Representative, or any GSA committee appointee, may be removed for nonperformance of duties by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all seated Forum Delegates, subject to disapproval by the Assembly, after receiving adequate notice and opportunity to be heard. A removed Representative or Delegate shall be replaced by the appropriate constituency. An Officer removed by the Forum shall be replaced by a vote of Assembly held not more than two weeks after such removal and the officer removed may run for re-election in this election.

#### Section B.

1. An Officer of the GSA may be removed by majority vote in a general recall election of the GSA membership in which at least ten percent (10%) of GSA membership votes. Such an election shall be held within two (2) weeks after a petition is submitted bearing the signatures of five percent (5%) of the GSA membership.

2. If an Officer is recalled by the GSA membership, an election for a replacement shall occur at the same time. Candidates shall be determined in accordance with Article VI, Section D of this Constitution.

#### Section C.

In the event of the resignation of a GSA Officer, a replacement for that Officer shall be elected by the Assembly by mail ballot. Nomination for that office shall be made in accordance with Article VI, Section D.

#### Section D.

Specific legislation upon matters within the authority of the GSA may be proposed by any member of the GSA. If a petition bearing the signatures of two percent (2%) of the GSA membership is presented to the President, at least two (2) weeks prior to any GSA election, the GSA is constrained to submit the proposal to the membership in that election. A majority of votes cast in an election in which at least ten percent (10%) of the GSA membership votes shall be sufficient to pass such legislation and the GSA shall be required to give effect to such legislation.

#### Section E.

This Constitution can be amended only by a majority vote of GSA membership in a general election in which at least ten percent (10%) of the GSA membership votes. An amendment shall be placed on an election ballot by either

1. a majority of the Assembly's voting membership;
2. a majority of the Forum's voting membership; or
3. the submission of a petition to the President bearing the signatures of five percent (5%) of the GSA membership.

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### **Article VIII. *Procedural Guarantees***

#### Section A.

In regard to the establishment of policies and the conduct of proceedings of the GSA, principles of procedural fairness shall be strictly adhered to.

#### Section B.

Adequate notice and fair opportunity to be heard shall be provided for every item under consideration by the GSA. In particular:

1. no item shall be considered at a regular meeting of the Forum or the Assembly unless it has previously been placed on the agenda for that meeting, except that a two-thirds

- (2/3) vote of either the Forum or the Assembly shall be sufficient to place an item on the Agenda for that meeting;
2. no Officer, Delegate, or Representative shall be the subject of disciplinary action by the GSA unless a written statement alleging the specific improprieties is presented to that individual seven (7) days before such a matter is considered by a governing body of the GSA; and
  3. any individual who is the subject of disciplinary action of the GSA may submit any statement or other material on his/her behalf at any appropriate GSA meeting or with any appropriate mail ballot without regard to the prior notice requirement of (1) above.

#### Section C.

All meetings of the Assembly, Forum, and other committees of the GSA shall:

1. be open to all members of the GSA except that in the case of any meeting to consider the taking of disciplinary action against any member of the GSA, that member may request that such meeting be closed;
2. be conducted in accordance with the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* except as otherwise provided herein and in the Codes; and
3. have written records kept, including minutes and voting records. Voting records shall contain each member's vote by name on roll call votes.

#### Section D.

Information kept by the GSA shall be available on request to any member. This information shall include: all meetings and voting records within ten (10) days of the meeting; membership lists; and the Constitution, Codes, and all other official documents.

#### Section E.

It shall be the responsibility of every Officer, Delegate, and Representative of the GSA to bring to the attention of the membership any violation of these procedures.

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### **Article IX. *Legal Counsel and Transfer of Funds* \***

#### Section A.

The General Counsel of the Regents shall advise GSA on legal questions and shall provide legal services pertaining to the business of the GSA as may be required, but when judged necessary by the GSA Forum, GSA may obtain outside legal services on its own behalf and pay for such services with GSA membership fees.

#### Section B.

The Graduate Students Association shall have the right by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Forum to transfer any or all of its membership fees and/or other monies to nationally or state chartered and insured banks, savings and loan or savings institutions, providing accounting is reasonably consistent with applicable University fiscal policies and procedures and conforms with normally-accepted business practices. Choice of such banks, savings and loan, or savings institutions shall be left to the discretion of the Graduate Students Association Officers, subject to the approval of the Forum.

\*This article has not been accepted by the Chancellor. A definitional agreement is being negotiated (November 1982)