



# Association of Students of the University of Nebraska

## Graduate Student

## Assembly Bylaws

### Part I – The Assembly

#### Article I – Members

##### **Section 1. Composition**

The Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) shall consist of one (1) representative per department or program of the University that awards a graduate or professional degree.

##### **Section 2. Qualification**

1. Every representative is required to be a full-time or full time-certified graduate or professional student in a department or program, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
2. No graduate or professional student shall serve on the Assembly if that student is currently on academic or disciplinary probation.
3. All department representatives must be enrolled in the department which they are representing.

##### **Section 3. Election/Appointment**

1. For such departments or programs where a departmental graduate or professional student association (DGSA) exists, and is in full compliance with Student Involvement, said organization shall be responsible to determine the method of election or appointment of the representative.
2. In departments or programs without a DGSA, or in which such DGSA is not in full compliance with Student Involvement, the graduate chair or director of the department or program shall be responsible for organizing the selection of the representative.
3. For each principal representative, an alternate may be appointed, who shall meet all the qualifications of office, be a graduate or professional student in said department or program, and shall hold all the same powers to attend, speak and vote at meetings in the absence of the principal representative.

4. After the fall semester, all representative vacancies shall be filled by the constituent DGSA or graduate chair or director within a period of one (1) month of the vacancy's occurrence, after which such vacancies may be filled by an at-large representative nominated by the Vice President of Representation and approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Assembly.
  - a. A vacancy shall occur when the principal and alternate representative Page 2 of 11 accumulate two (2) absences from Assembly meetings during a single term, without reasonable excuse as determined by the Vice President of Representation or appealed to the Executive Committee.
  - b. A vacancy shall occur when the principal and alternate representative fail to fulfill their standing committee duties as determined by the standing committee chair, or appealed to the Executive Committee.
  - c. At-large representatives shall meet all the qualifications of office and shall hold all the same powers to attend, speak, and vote at meetings, but they may not have alternates.
5. All representatives shall serve a renewable term of one (1) year, starting the first day of September and finishing the last day of August.

#### **Section 4. Duties**

Duties of representatives include, but are not limited to:

1. Attending all meetings of the Assembly, unless excused by the Vice President of Representation.
2. Serving on a GSA, ASUN or University-wide committee and attending all committee meetings, unless excused by the committee chair.
3. Meeting with the representative's DGSA and/or graduate chair or director.
4. Posting pertinent material in designated buildings and sharing GSA communications via email per the request of the Executive Committee.

#### **Section 5. Disciplinary Procedures**

1. The President, the Executive Vice President, or a majority of the Assembly may call for a disciplinary hearing of any officer, standing committee chair, or representative if said person has committed any of the following infractions:
  - a. Manifesting negligence generally in assigned duties.
  - b. Committing any action unbecoming of a GSA officer or representative.
  - c. Failure to report a change in eligibility resulting in disqualification.
2. The Executive Vice President will notify the officer, standing committee chair, or representative of the hearing with no less than three days' notice. If the hearing is for the Executive Vice President, the President shall notify the Executive Vice President with no less than three days' notice.
3. The Assembly will conduct the hearing in closed session, but will vote on the removal in open session. A two-thirds (2/3) vote shall remove the officer, standing committee chair, or representative from office.

## Article II – Meetings

### Section 1. Meetings

1. The Assembly shall regularly meet on the first Tuesday of classes of each month during the regular school year.
2. The President may change the time or place of the meeting, provided one (1) week advance notice is given to the Assembly and this change is published on the GSA Page 3 of 11 website prior to the meeting.
3. The Assembly may be convened in special session provided two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee or twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership requests it.

### Section 2. Quorum

Quorum shall be fifteen (15) members of the Assembly and shall be necessary to transact all business except that fewer members may adjourn a meeting. A quorum must be called at a given Assembly meeting in order to affect business that may come before the Assembly.

### Section 3. Voting

A simple majority of those members present, unless otherwise stated, shall be sufficient to adopt any resolution.

### Section 4. Bills

**All bills included on the GSA meeting agenda must:**

1. Be submitted to the President no later than two weeks prior to the GSA assembly meeting at which the bill is to be voted on.
2. Be reviewed by at least one member of the Executive Committee.
3. Not violate federal, state, and university laws and regulations.
4. Clearly state how the bill is relevant to UNL graduate and professional students.
5. Be disseminated to GSA representatives one week prior to the assembly meeting at which they are to be voted on.

## Article III – Committees

### Section 1. Standing Committees

1. The Assembly shall have the following standing committees:
  - a. The Committee for Academic Affairs shall identify and advocate on behalf of graduate and professional students regarding any issues pertaining to academic affairs, including, but not limited to, access to facilities and funding for research, the faculty-graduate student mentoring relationship, and academic policies

pertaining to graduate and professional education and teaching for graduate and professional students.

- b. The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion shall encourage and promote participation by students from throughout the University community, including, but not limited to, students from racial and ethnic minorities, international students, women, the LGBTQA+ community, and distance learning students, and ensure that GSA programming is available and pertinent to the diverse graduate and professional student community.
  - c. The Committee for Graduate Travel Awards shall manage the Graduate Travel Awards Program (GTAP) as defined in the Special Rules.
  - d. The Committee for Professional Development shall coordinate and implement a series of activities to promote the development of graduate and professional students, including but not limited to, networking activities, guest lectures, and career development workshops, **and shall manage the Special Projects Grants Program (SPGP). and shall plan, coordinate, and execute the Midwest Graduate Career Fair (MGCF).**
  - e. The Committee for Quality of Life shall attend to issues relevant to graduate and professional student life including, but not limited to, housing, transportation and parking, child care, and health benefits, and shall organize events or develop policies that support the improvement of graduate and professional students' quality of life.
  - f. The Committee for Social Events shall plan, coordinate, and execute social events throughout the fall and spring semesters for all graduate and professional students, including those for Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week (GSAW), and shall organize and staff all GSA activities during new graduate student welcome.
2. The Executive Vice President shall appoint, taking into account individual preferences, every representative to a standing committee.
  3. Service in University-wide or ASUN committees shall exempt representatives from service in GSA standing committees.

## **Section 2. At-Large Members**

1. Any graduate or professional student may petition the Executive Committee in writing to be appointed to a standing committee as an at-large member.
2. The Executive Committee may approve or deny this request by a simple majority vote taking into consideration the opinion of the standing committee chair.
3. At-large standing committee members shall meet all the qualifications of office required for representatives and shall hold all the same powers to attend, speak and vote at standing committee meetings.

## **Section 3. Standing Committee Chairs**

1. Standing committee chairs shall be elected, independently, and in the order stated in Part I - Article III - Section 1, by a ballot majority vote of those present and voting. The Assembly may proceed with the election of standing committee chairs by individual ballots, or combine all positions into a single ballot.
  - a. All nominees and subsequently elected committee chairs shall meet requirements

- 1 and 2 in Article I, Section 2 of this document for being a representative
- b. Nominations for the election of standing committee chairs shall follow the election of all officers during the first meeting of the GSA following the ASUN spring elections. All nominations, including self-nominations, shall be taken from the floor, defined as those present during the meeting in which the vote takes place. Candidates may be nominated for multiple standing committee chair positions, but may only be elected to one such position.
  - c. Co-chairs shall run for office and be elected as a slate.
  - d. Candidates, one at a time, in reverse order of nomination, shall give speeches not to exceed five (5) minutes in which they shall disclose all prior involvement in ASUN, GSA and any DGSA or similar student government organization, or lack thereof. Upon completion of each individual's speech, the floor shall be opened for questions from members of the Assembly not to exceed a total time of five (5) minutes. While each candidate presents **their** speech, the other candidates shall remain outside the room of the Assembly meeting.
  - e. After the last candidate has finished answering questions, all candidates shall remain outside of the Assembly meeting room for representatives to discuss the candidates for no more than fifteen (15) minutes.
    - **Following the discussion period, should there be any outstanding questions, the candidate shall be called back into the room for further clarification for no more than five (5) minutes.**
    - **Following the clarification period of all candidates, the candidate(s) shall leave the room and the body shall continue discussion for no more than ten (10) minutes.**
  - f. Representatives, including the candidates, shall vote by ballot. If no candidate receives a majority, only the two (2) highest vote-getters shall be considered, and the Assembly shall re-ballot until one candidate receives a majority. Provided only one candidate runs for a position, the Assembly may proceed with a vote by acclamation.
2. Standing committee chair vacancies shall be filled by the Assembly during the first meeting of the GSA after which the vacancy arises.

#### **Section 4. Standing Committee Rules**

1. Quorum for standing committees shall be three (3) members or one-third of its membership, whichever is larger, and shall be necessary to transact all business except that fewer members may adjourn a standing committee meeting.
2. Standing committee chairs may distribute, taking into account individual preferences, committee members into subcommittees.
3. Standing committees may elect a vice chair from among its members.
4. Alternate representatives shall hold all the same powers to attend, speak and vote at standing committee meetings in the absence of the principal representative. Alternate representatives may seek further appointment to another standing committee as an at-large member.

#### **Section 5. Special Committees**

1. Any other special committee, created by the Assembly, shall be appointed by the Executive Vice President taking into consideration individual preferences of the

- Assembly membership.
2. At-large members may be appointed to special committees.
  3. The chair of any special committee shall be elected by simple plurality of its membership, unless otherwise outlined specifically in the legislation creating such committee.
  4. Standing committee rules, as outlined in Part I – Article III - Section 4, shall be applicable to special committees.

### **Section 6. Ad-hoc Members**

Ad-hoc members are to be restricted to undergraduate students, post-baccalaureate non-degree students, part-time graduate and professional students, faculty, or staff who carry skills or experience above and beyond the normal graduate or professional student to warrant special consideration for addition to one of the GSA's committees. These ad-hoc members are to be considered on an individual basis, and must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Come at the official recommendation of the chair of the committee. This recommendation must be in writing, and given to the Executive Vice President and the advisor of the GSA.
2. Be approved by a majority vote of the Assembly.
3. Ad-hoc membership to any standing or special committee shall not entail voting privileges in said committee.

## **Article IV – Advisors**

### **Section 1. Advisor**

1. The Advisor must be a graduate faculty member and shall be nominated by the President at the first meeting of the GSA following the ASUN spring elections and confirmed by the Assembly with a two-thirds (2/3) vote.
2. The Advisor shall serve a renewable term of one (1) year.

### **Section 2. ASUN Director of Administration**

The ASUN Director of Administration shall serve as an advisor to the GSA.

### **Section 3. Past President**

The immediate past President shall serve as an ex officio advisor to the GSA, provided he/she meets all requirements for being a representative.

## **Part II – The Executives**

### **Article I – The President and Executive Vice President**

#### **Section 1. Qualifications**

1. The President and Executive Vice President shall meet all the requirements in Part I, Article I, Section 2, have completed nine (9) credit hours of graduate or professional work at the University, and have served on GSA or any DGSA in any capacity for at least one semester.
2. The President and Executive Vice President shall not concurrently serve as representatives.

## **Section 2. Election/Appointment**

1. The President and Executive Vice President shall be directly and independently elected during the ASUN spring elections by a ballot majority vote of those voting.
  - a. Only graduate or professional students shall be eligible to vote, support the election of and be elected as President or Executive Vice President.
  - b. Candidates for President or Executive Vice President may run in a Student Election Group (SEG), independently, or as write-ins.
  - c. If no candidate receives a majority, the Assembly shall elect a President and/or an Executive Vice President, in said order, among the two (2) highest vote-getters. The representatives, including the candidates, shall vote by ballot. If there is a tie vote, the Assembly shall re-ballot until one candidate receives a majority.
2. In the case of vacancy of the office of the President, the Executive Vice President shall assume the duties of the President for the remainder of the term. If the office of the Executive Vice President becomes vacant, or both the office of the President and the Executive Vice President become vacant, the Assembly shall elect a President and/or an Executive Vice President, in said order, among its officers, standing committee chairs and representatives by a ballot majority vote of those present and voting.
  - a. Nominations for the election shall be the first order of business of the agenda of the first meeting of the GSA after which the vacancy arises. All nominations, including self-nominations, shall be taken from the floor, defined as those present during the meeting in which the vote takes place. Candidates may be nominated for multiple positions, but may only be elected to one such position.
  - b. Candidates, one at a time, in reverse order of nomination, shall give speeches not to exceed five (5) minutes. Upon completion of each individual's speech, the floor shall be opened for questions from members of the Assembly not to exceed a total time of five (5) minutes. While each candidate presents **their** speech, the other candidates shall remain outside the room of the Assembly meeting.
  - c. After the last candidate has finished answering questions, all candidates shall remain outside of the Assembly meeting room for representatives to discuss the candidates for no more than thirty (30) minutes.
    - **Following the discussion period, should there be any outstanding questions, the candidate shall be called back into the room for further clarification for no more than five (5) minutes.**
    - **Following the clarification period of all candidates, the candidate(s) shall leave the room and the body shall continue discussion for no more than ten (10) minutes.**
  - d. The representatives, including the candidates, shall vote by ballot. If no candidate receives a majority, only the two (2) highest vote-getters shall be considered. Those two (2) candidates shall leave the room for no more than fifteen (15)

minutes for discussion of the Assembly. Then the representatives, including the candidates, shall vote by ballot with the candidate receiving a majority being elected. If there is a tie vote, the Assembly shall re-ballot until one candidate receives a majority. Provided only one candidate runs for a position, the Assembly may proceed with a vote by acclamation.

3. Candidates for President and Executive Vice President shall abide by all Electoral Commission rules when applicable.

### Section 3. Duties

1. The President shall:
  - a. Serve as the official representative from the GSA to the University **and to the community.**
  - b. Set the agenda and chair the GSA Executive Committee ~~and Assembly~~ meetings.
  - c. **Set and disseminate the agenda for GSA Assembly meetings, along with all meeting documents, no later than 7 days before the assembly meeting.**
  - d. Periodically attend Senate meetings to report on the activities of the GSA.
  - e. Meet every semester with ~~the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Dean of Graduate Studies.~~
  - f. **Maintain working relationships with the Chancellor, the Executive Vice Chancellor, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.**
  - g. Serve as a member of the Academic Planning Committee, the Graduate Council and ASUN Executive Committee, or appoint another officer in **their** representation.
  - h. Serve as liaison to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students.
2. The Executive Vice President shall:
  - a. **Chair all GSA assembly meetings. Record the minutes of all GSA meetings.**
  - b. Appoint representatives to standing committees, taking into account their preference, and **notify representatives of their placements no later than one week prior to the October GSA assembly meeting.**
  - c. Serve on the Graduate Council.
  - d. Attend ASUN Electoral Commission meetings in representation of GSA.
  - e. **In the event of a vacancy in allocated graduate ASUN Senate positions, be required to apply to serve as a Senator, and if selected, is required to serve as a Senator.**

## Article II – Officers

### Section 1. Officers

In addition to the President and Executive Vice President, the GSA shall have the following officers:

1. Vice President of Student Affairs.
2. Vice President of Representation.
3. Vice President of Finance.

## Section 2. Qualifications

1. Officers shall meet all requirements for being a representative and have served on GSA or any DGSA in any capacity for at least one semester.
2. Officers may not concurrently serve as representatives.
3. Should an officer position remain vacant at the beginning of the fall semester only the requirements for being a representative need be met.

## Section 3. Election/Appointment

1. The Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Representation, and the Vice President of Finance shall be elected, independently, and in said order, by a ballot majority vote of those present and voting.
  - a. Unless there is a vacancy in the office of the President and/or Executive Vice President, nominations for the election shall be the first order of business of the agenda of the first meeting of the GSA succeeding the ASUN spring election. All nominations, including self-nominations, shall be taken from the floor, defined as those present during the meeting in which the vote takes place. Candidates may be nominated for multiple positions, but may only be elected to one such position.
  - b. No candidate who campaigned with a Student Election Group (SEG), and no independent candidate with any campaign expenditures, may accept a floor nomination if they have failed to submit the Graduate Student Campaign Finance Disclosure Form by March 25.
    - i. The Graduate Student Campaign Finance Disclosure Form can only be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly.
    - ii. Once submitted, any Graduate Student Campaign Finance Disclosure Forms will be posted on the GSA website no later than one week prior to the April assembly meeting, and will be sent to all GSA members in advance of the April assembly meeting.
    - iii. Once elected, if errors are found on the Graduate Student Campaign Finance Disclosure form, the elected officer will have 14 (fourteen) days to rectify the error and resubmit the form for review by the Executive Committee. If the officer fails to submit the corrected form, the Executive Committee may commence disciplinary proceedings on these grounds.
  - c. Candidates, one at a time, in reverse order of nomination, shall give speeches not to exceed five (5) minutes in which they shall disclose all prior involvement in ASUN, GSA and any DGSA or similar student government organization, or lack thereof. Upon completion of each individual's speech, the floor shall be opened for questions from members of the Assembly not to exceed a total time of five (5) minutes. While each candidate presents **their** speech, the other candidates shall remain outside the room of the Assembly meeting.
  - d. After the last candidate has finished answering questions, all candidates shall remain outside of the Assembly meeting room for representatives to discuss the candidates for no more than fifteen (15) minutes.
    - i. **Following the discussion period, should there be any outstanding questions, the candidate shall be called back into the room for**





**submitted one week prior to the meeting.**

## Article III – The Executive Committee

### Section 1. Composition

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following voting members: President as chair, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Representation, Vice President of Finance, and standing committee chairs. The Executive Committee shall also include the ASUN Director of Administration, the GSA Advisor and the immediate past President.
2. Executive Committee members shall be required to attend all meetings unless **informing and receiving written approval from the President no less than one week prior to the Executive Committee Meeting** ~~excused by the President.~~
3. **At each Executive Committee Meeting, all Executive Committee members shall provide an oral report of activities and plans.**

### Section 2. Meetings

1. The Executive Committee will meet at **on the third Tuesday of each month** ~~the call of the President with no less than forty-eight (48) hours' notice.~~
2. The quorum for the Executive Committee will be a majority of the voting members.

### Section 3. Officer Preparation

Officers and appointed chairs must attend an orientation session prior to the first assembly meeting of the school year (or their term of service) led by the outgoing officers or their appointees. The orientation must include an introduction to Robert's Rules of Order, a mock assembly session, review of GSA Bylaws, training in how to draft a piece of legislation, and time to get to know the other officers and chairs. The orientation will be required for all officers and chairs but will be open to all assembly members and to University of Nebraska, Lincoln, graduate or professional students interested in running for or applying for a position within the assembly. Should an officer or chair be unable to attend the orientation, they must arrange an alternate orientation session with the organizer(s). Officers or chairs who do not attend the orientation will be considered on probation and will have one month to rectify the situation. If a month passes without orientation participation, the officer or chair will be removed from their position.

## Article IV – Appointments

### Section 1. Appointment

1. The Vice President of Representation shall interview and nominate graduate or professional students to serve on University-wide committees and as at-large representatives in the Assembly.

2. The Vice President of Representation may not seek to be appointed to a University-wide committee or as an at-large representative during **their** tenure.
3. All open positions shall be advertised for a period no shorter than two (2) weeks.
4. Appropriate records shall be maintained on interviews and appointments to University-wide committees at the ASUN office.
5. Graduate or professional students nominated to University-wide committees must be ratified by a majority vote of the Assembly and two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.
6. At-large representatives must be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Assembly.

## **Section 2. Resignation**

Any principal or alternate representative, at-large representative, or graduate or professional student appointed to a University-wide committee must give the Vice President of Representation two (2) weeks' notice should they choose to forfeit their position.

# **Part V – General Provisions**

## **Article I – Senatorial Supremacy**

The GSA shall operate in accordance to the ASUN Constitution and Bylaws and Special Rules and these bylaws. The President shall report regularly to the Senate.

## **Article II – Non-Discrimination Clause**

Neither ASUN nor the GSA or any DGSA may discriminate in the selection of members or appointments when discrimination is defined as denying individuals membership or appointment on the basis of a person's age, race, national or ethnic origin, color, gender, religion, sex, identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, veteran's status, marital status, or place of residence.

## **Article III – Special Rules**

The GSA may adopt Special Rules to govern the GSA with a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Any standing committee or officer may request to have the Special Rules concerning their functions amended in a written request to the Executive Committee.

## **Article IV - Bylaws**

### **Section 1. Amendment**

1. All bylaw amendments shall be submitted to the Executive Committee in writing for review. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to amend or kill the bylaw amendment in addition to sending it to the Assembly.
2. Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present and voting taken by roll call vote, provided written previous notice of the amendment was electronically



distributed at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting.

3. All bylaws amendments shall be submitted to the Senate which may reject them by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, but may not introduce any modifications.

## **Section 2. Suspension**

None of these bylaws may be suspended at any time.

## **Article V – Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the GSA in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and the ASUN Bylaws and Constitution.

Adopted by the Graduate Student Assembly on April 5, 2016.

Amended by the Graduate Student Assembly on October 4, 2016.

Amended by the Graduate Student Assembly on April 4, 2017.

Amended by the Graduate Student Assembly on November 7, 2017.

Amended by Graduate Student Assembly on April 3, 2018.

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