Constitution of the Graduate Student Association of
the University of Miami

Ratified by the Graduate Student Executive Board and Senate on October 7, 2008. Amended
on April 26, 2017.

PREAMBLE
We, the graduate students of the University of Miami, in order to provide means for responsible and
effective graduate student participation in the planning and conducting of University affairs, establish
this constitution of the Graduate Student Association of the University of Miami;
And, whereas, we the graduate students acknowledge the diversity of human experience;
And, whereas, we the graduate students exist to further knowledge within our disciplines by
eliminating biases and prejudices;
Be it resolved, that the Graduate Student Association shall adopt as continuing policy that no
individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, age, disability, national and/or
ethnic origin, marital status, gender, or sexual orientation.

ARTICLE I: NAME
The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the University of
Miami.

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
The GSA shall exist as the student government organization representing all students in the
University of Miami Graduate School. The GSA shall serve as the liaison between graduate students,
individually and collectively, the faculty, the administration, and the alumni of the University of Miami.
Further, the GSA shall exist as a forum to support and improve the quality of the environment for
graduate students at the University of Miami.

The general functions of the GSA shall be:

a. To protect and advocate for the civil rights, social welfare, and economic well-being of graduate
   students by making recommendations regarding University of Miami policies to University
   administration;
b. To sponsor and lend its name to community-building, networking, and educational events
   conducted for the benefit of graduate students;
c. To expend its funds appropriately for the fulfillment of graduate student needs; and
d. To facilitate graduate students’ access to information regarding the resources and services
   available to graduate students.
ARTICLE III: RESPONSIBILITY
The GSA shall comply with all University of Miami policies and procedures, including but not limited to those policies set forth in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, the Graduate Student Organization Handbook, IRB, the Hippocratic Oath, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP
GSA membership is granted to any degree-seeking student registered for graduate credit with the University of Miami Graduate School who has paid the Graduate Activity Fee.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD
Section 1: The GSA shall have nine (9) elected officers, which constitute the Executive Board. The elected officers of the GSA shall be the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Parliamentarian, the Public Relations Officer, the Student Life Officer, the Webmaster, and the Operations Officer.

Section 2: The term of office for all elected Officers shall be for the period of one year, commencing May 1.

Section 3: The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the GSA.

Section 4: No more than two (2) graduate students who are seeking the same degree from the same program at the University of Miami may be elected officers at the same time.

Section 5: The following procedures shall govern all eligibility of officers. All procedures for the nomination and election of officers are outlined in the Bylaws.

a. The position of President will be limited to any returning GSA Officer continuing their degree during the following academic year at the University of Miami. If no current Officer is interested in running or qualified to run due to not continuing their degree the following academic year at the University of Miami, the office of the president will be open to any Senator in good standing that is continuing their degree during the following academic year. Offices other than the office of the President will be open to:
   i. Any member of the GSA that will be continuing his or her degree the following year at the University of Miami.
   ii. Any incoming graduate student of the University of Miami that provides a letter of acceptance to seek a graduate degree at the University of Miami.

b. The President and Vice President shall be elected at a regular meeting no later than one (1) week before applications for the student member on the Board of Trustees is due. The remaining six (6) Officers of the Executive Board shall be elected at a regular meeting no later than the first regular meeting in April of the Graduate Student Senate and before the GSA banquet and scholarship dinner, should one be held.
   i. The election of the President and Vice President is to take place at a meeting prior to the meeting where the remaining six (6) officers are elected.

c. All members of the Senate and the Executive board shall be entitled to vote in the GSA officer elections.

Section 6: Duties of the officers

a. The duties of the PRESIDENT shall be:
i. To enforce the GSA Constitution and Bylaws; ii. To serve as the Executive Board chairperson; iii. To preside over Senate meetings;
iv. To represent the GSA on matters of business with the Graduate School Dean and other University officials;
v. To represent the GSA at all official and social occasions or to appoint a representative, as appropriate;
vi. To recruit and appoint chairpersons as members of the GSA Committees and serve as an ex officio member on all Committees;
vii. To recruit and appoint graduate students to serve as GSA Representatives on the following University committees:
   1. Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee
   2. Board of Trustees Master Planning and Construction Committee
   3. Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee
   4. Department of Wellness and Recreation Advisory Board
   5. Faculty Senate
   6. Faculty Senate Library and Information Resources Committee
   7. Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee
   8. Graduate Council
   9. Graduate Council Grievances Committee
  10. Green U
  11. Information Technology Advisory Board
  12. Library Advisory Board
  13. Parking Advisory Board
  14. Police Advisory Board
  15. Rathskeller Advisory Board
  16. Student Government Senate and
  17. Any additional group(s) presented to the GSA.

viii. To conduct training and orientation for the GSA President-elect;
ix. To prepare the GSA annual report at the end of the officer’s term;
x. To serve as the liaison to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students; xi. To oversee (or designate a representative to oversee) the election of any GSA Executive Board Officer position which involves the current Parliamentarian as a candidate thereof.

xii. To approve in writing and oversee the medium upon which GSA logos and letterheads are used.

xiii. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

b. The duties of the **VICE PRESIDENT** shall be:

   i. To assume the President’s duties in the officer’s absence; ii. To assist the President in the performance of the officer’s duties;
   iii. To coordinate the departmental or program elections or appointments of the GSA Senators; iv. To recruit senators in the event that a department or program fails to elect or appoint a Senator;
   v. To initiate actions for the recall of a Senator, Committee Chairperson, Committee member, or Representative when necessary;
   vi. To assist with graduate student orientation programs;
   vii. To serve as a committee chairperson, as decided by the Executive Board at the start of their terms;
viii. To perform the duties of the Parliamentarian in the event that the office is vacant; and ix. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

c. The duties of the **SECRETARY** shall be:

i. To record the official minutes at all official GSA meetings;

ii. To maintain the official Senate roster and take attendance at all Senate meetings;

iii. To supervise the GSA office staff in maintaining directories of graduate students, deans, graduate advisors, graduate faculty, administrative personnel, and support staff;

iv. To supervise the office staff in maintaining a file of all official GSA correspondence;

v. To notify Senators and graduate advisors of all Senate meetings and other GSA activities; and

vi. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

d. The duties of the **TREASURER** shall be:

i. To manage the GSA finances;

ii. To preside over Senate meetings in the President & Vice-President’s absence;

iii. To present a monthly fiscal report at each Senate and Executive Board meeting;

iv. To maintain current financial records in the GSA office;

v. To coordinate and record all financial transactions with the Graduate School, including approval of all requisitions, disbursements, and maintenance of account ledgers;

vi. To serve or appoint a representative to serve on the Graduate Activity Fee Allocation Committee;

vii. To coordinate with the Graduate School Budget Director on the processing of paperwork for office staff hiring and payment;

viii. To serve as committee chairperson, as decided by the Executive Board at the start of their terms; and

ix. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

e. The duties of the **PARLIAMENTARIAN** shall be:

i. To advise the President of the constitutionality of all actions by the GSA;

ii. To ensure that Senate and Executive Board meetings are conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th Edition;

iii. To keep the GSA Bylaws current;

iv. To conduct the annual review of the GSA Constitution and Bylaws and serve as the Constitution Review Committee chairperson;

v. To serve on the Committee on Graduate Student Organizations;

vi. To oversee the review and approval process that establishes and maintains GSA-recognized Graduate Student Organizations;

vii. To conduct the annual administrative review of the GSA-recognized Student Organizations;

viii. To draft and distribute, as appropriate, all resolutions approved by the Senate;

ix. To oversee any elections for GSA Executive Board Officers not involving the current Parliamentarian as a candidate; and

x. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

f. The duties of the **PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER** shall be:

i. To manage GSA external communications activities;

ii. To produce and distribute the GSA newsletter;

iii. To serve as Graduate Student Alumni Association liaison;

iv. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

g. The duties of the **STUDENT LIFE OFFICER** shall be:

i. To chair or sit on the Events Committee;
ii. To ensure that GSA events fall under one or more of the following categories: community building, educational, professional, or cultural, in compliance with the GSA’s mission statement;

iii. To submit event proposals for approval to the E-board and Senate; iv. To record and report on the outcome of events to the E-board and Senate; and

v. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

h. The duties of the WEBMASTER shall be:
   i. To oversee and maintain the GSA website and e-mail account, in cooperation with the Information Technology Department;
   ii. To provide office technical support and maintenance; and
   iii. To perform such duties as the office shall require.

i. The duties of the OPERATIONS OFFICER shall be:
   i. To coordinate and lead all operational and logistical functions of the GSA.
   ii. To maintain, organize, replenish and clean GSA Lounge in the Shalala Student Center on a regular basis and ensure that all upkeep, usage and physical structures within the lounge are in safe, working condition and order. This includes the GSA copier (toner, copy paper, etc.)
   iii. To remain in communication with and follow all policies and procedures with the Shalala Student Center.
   iv. To maintain and organize the GSA Office in the Whitten Student Center on a regular basis and ensure that all upkeep, usage and physical structures within the office are in safe, working condition and order.
   v. To coordinate and work with UM Information Technology to assign and de-assign ID card access to the GSA Office for approved GSA executive board members only or other authorized members approved by the GSA executive board.
   vi. To maintain, order and control inventory of basic GSA materials stored in the GSA Office and utilized throughout the academic year for meetings, activities, events and everyday operations of the GSA including, but not limited to, the following:
      • GSA Table Covers
      • GSA Copier (including toner and copy paper)
      • Tables
      • Chairs
      • Computers systems and all needed computer accessories
      • Office Lock Box/Safe
      • Storage Cabinets and keys
      • Utensils (Plates, Forks, Knivers, Spoons, Cups, Napkins, etc.)
      • GSA Banners and Flags
   vii. To coordinate and control reservations for all GSA meetings for Senate and Eboard and special committee meetings or events that require meetings space.
   viii. To lead, control, maintain all aspects of food and drink ordering for all GSA Senate meetings and other meetings approved for meals as a part of the meeting.
   ix. To be responsible for managing the ordering, payment, budgeting process, pick-up, delivery and set up and break down of all meals that are a part of GSA meetings and events. If the Operations Officer is unable to attend any events that require meals or food, they must find an appropriate GSA member to handle all the responsibilities of meal and food preparations and follow through in their absence.
x. To work in collaboration and cooperation with the GSA Student Life Officer and GSA events committee on specific operations and logistics for approved GSA events, activities and programs throughout the year. Special emphasis and assistance should be placed on annual and larger-scale GSA events that required additional operational and logistical priorities.

xi. To assist President, Parliamentarian and Secretary when deemed necessary for preparations and follow up on operational and logistical responsibilities involving all GSA meetings and programs.

xii. To serve on at least one University committee deemed appropriate and assigned by the GSA President.

xiii. Other duties as assigned by GSA President.

j. All officers shall attend every Senate meeting. Two (2) unexcused absences are grounds for impeachment.

k. The GSA officers shall have the right to vote on all matters brought before the Senate.

Section 7: Impeachment of Officers

a. GSA officers may be impeached for misconduct of malfeasance in office or for not performing duties as outlined in Article IV, Section 6 of the Constitution. Charges must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School Dean by three (3) or more persons who are either officers or senators of the Executive Board or the Senate. The officer being charged shall be notified of the charges within forty-eight (48) hours of them being filed.

b. All charges shall be made public and investigated by the GSA Ethics Committee under the direction of the Graduate School Dean.

i. The Ethics Committee will be created as needed in response to any Officer being charged. The committee will be randomly assigned from the pool of existing GSA Senators. The Graduate School Dean shall have the right to reject any committee members at his or her discretion and any selected Senator may recuse him or herself only if evidence of a conflict of interest is provided.

ii. The Ethics Committee will be dissolved at the conclusion of the impeachment proceedings.

iii. The recommendations of the Ethics Committee based on the findings of its investigation shall be presented to the Senate. The Officer in question shall have the opportunity to present a response to recommendations at the Senate meeting prior to the vote. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is necessary to remove the officer from office.

c. The officer may appeal his or her impeachment at the next Senate meeting. Any request for such an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School Dean and the Ethics Committee one (1) week prior to the Senate meeting.

d. A two-thirds vote of the Senate shall be necessary to overturn the impeachment.

Section 8: Duties of the Executive Board

a. The duties of the Executive Board shall be:

i. To create the GSA annual budget; ii. To set the GSA calendar of events; iii. To determine the GSA’s annual objectives and coordinate the officers’ functions in meeting those objectives;

iv. To ensure the decisions of the Senate are carried out; and

v. To coordinate management of the GSA office staff and office functions, including presentation of current resources and event information for graduate students.

b. The Executive Board shall hold at least four (4) meetings per semester to be scheduled by the
President. A quorum for Executive Board meetings shall consist of a minimum of five (5) officers. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the President or by the petition of four (4) officers. The minutes of each Executive Board meeting shall be presented to the Senators at the next Senate meeting.

c. Each member of the Executive Board shall have one (1) vote at the Executive Board meetings. A majority vote of those present is necessary to approve any motion. In the event of a tie that cannot be broken by the Executive Board alone, the Advisor(s) to the GSA may be consulted for assistance.

d. All budget allocations or expenditures in excess of $200.00 must be approved by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board. All budget allocations in excess of $1,000.00 must also be approved by the Senate. Proposals for sponsorship of events and allocations of funds in excess of $1,000.00 must be submitted in writing to the Senate with a detailed budget for approval by the Senate prior to the expenditure.

   i. When the senate is out of session, the executive board will have the opportunity to purchase promotional items without senate approval;

e. The Executive Board has the authority to recall any Senator who fails to attend two (2) consecutive Senate meetings without sending a written proxy or alternate representative to those meetings. Recall procedures are defined in the Bylaws.

f. In the event of a documented dispute over the interpretation of the constitution and/or Bylaws, a majority vote of the Student Organization and Constitutional Review Committee must take place to determine the official interpretation. The submission of clarification shall be presented as an Amendment by the Parliamentarian to be voted on in the Senate, per processes outlined in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI: THE SENATE

Section 1: The legislative authority of the GSA shall be vested in the Senate.

Section 2: The Senate shall consist of one Senator from each department or program of the University of Miami Graduate School.

a. One non-voting representative from each of the University of Miami Student Government (Undergraduate), Student Bar Association (Law), and/or Student Government (Medicine) shall be selected by the leadership of these entities and welcomed to attend GSA Senate Meetings.

b. For each of the following student government entities, one GSA representative (for up to a total of three) shall be selected by the GSA President to attend the official meetings of the University of Miami Student Government (Undergraduate), Student Bar Association (Law), and Student Government (Medicine) as a non-voting member.

Section 3: Each Senator shall be elected by the graduate students of each respective department or program. In the event an election cannot be held, the Senator shall be appointed by the faculty chairperson of the department or program prior to the first meeting of the fall semester.

Section 4: At-large Senators may be elected to the Senate by a two-thirds approval of the Senate.

Section 5: The term of office for each Senator shall be until the end of the current academic year.

Section 6: If a Senate position is vacated before the end of the term of office, the department or program shall designate a replacement for that position to complete the term. If no designation is made, an additional at--large senator can be elected to fill the vacancy.

Section 7: The duties of each Senator shall be:
a. To represent their constituents' interests in all GSA matters;
b. To attend all Senate meetings, or email for attendance within 24 hours and votes;
c. To participate in a GSA Committee or act as a GSA representative to other University boards, senates, councils, or committees;
d. To inform their constituents of GSA activities and events;
e. To discuss, draft, and approve GSA resolutions;
f. To review the monthly Treasurer’s report and approve by a majority vote budget allocations or expenditures brought by the Executive Board as required by Article V, Section 6(d) of the Constitution;
g. To review the GSA Constitution and Bylaws; and
h. To approve recommendations regarding University of Miami policies

Section 8: A quorum of simple majority of the combined total of active GSA Senators (or their alternates) and GSA officers shall be required for any Senate meeting.

a. An active senator is defined as one who has attended or email responded to at least half of the scheduled Senate meetings since being seated that term;
b. Senators who are not active are not eligible to vote at Senate meetings;
c. Senators who are not active may regain active status by meeting with the executive board and following their recommendations;
   i. Executive board recommendations for regaining active status shall be reasonable and participation-based

Section 9: Each Senator and GSA officer shall have one (1) vote in all matters brought before the Senate. A Senator that is absent may submit a written proxy for a specific vote or send an alternate to serve as a general proxy.

Section 10: The GSA President shall designate an executive board member to preside over Senate meetings.

Section 11: At least four (4) meetings of the Senate shall be scheduled per semester by the Executive Board. The President may call special meetings of the Senate, by petition of three (3) officers or by two-thirds of the Senators.

Section 12: Any Senator, Committee Chair or member, or Executive Board member who exhibits gross misconduct, malfeasance in office, or fails to attend two (2) consecutive Senate or committee meetings without sending a written proxy or alternate representative, or has not paid their Graduate Activity Fee may be recalled from office upon written notification by the Executive Board. The Executive Board must vote to recall a member by a majority of present Executive Board members. Senators may appeal a recall action as defined in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

Section 1: The President shall recruit and appoint graduate students to serve as members and chairpersons on the functioning GSA Standing Committees. The Executive Board shall approve all appointments by majority vote.

Section 2: Each Committee chairperson and member must be an active GSA Senator or Officer. In order to remain an active committee, each of the standing committees must have members representing at least three (3) departments, with no more than one (1) member from the same department (i.e. either Masters or PhD, but not both).
Section 3: All graduate students who accept an appointment to a Committee are expected to carry out the following duties:

a. All Committee members must attend all meetings of said committee or send an alternate, represent the interest of all graduate students on said committee to the best of his or her ability, and send reports to their respective Committee Chairperson.

b. All Committee chairpersons must call and attend all meetings of said committee or send an alternate, represent the interest of graduate students on said committee to the best of his or her ability, send all committee notes to the GSA Secretary within a week following each Committee meeting, and prepare an oral or written Committee report to be presented at the next Senate meeting.

c. All Committees must meet at least once every 4 weeks between official semester start and end dates (as determined by the Registrar’s Office), as called by the chairperson. The chairperson must finalize the meeting date, time, and location after a majority of Committee members express in writing their ability to attend. Notification of the finalized Committee meeting will be communicated to Committee members at least one week prior to the Committee meeting.

Section 4: Any Committee chairperson or member who exhibits gross misconduct, malfeasance, or failure to attend two (2) consecutive committee meetings without sending a written proxy or alternative representative may either be removed or replaced with another committee appointment upon written notification by the Executive Board. Committee chairpersons or members may appeal a recall action as defined in the Bylaws.

Section 5: The following shall be the GSA Standing Committees: a.

Student Wellness Committee

b. Academic Relations Committee
c. Events Committee
d. Committee on Graduate Student Organizations (COGSO)

Section 6: The STUDENT WELLNESS COMMITTEE shall address graduate student issues not addressed by other Committees, including but not limited to: housing, parking/commuter issues, health insurance, library concerns, etc.

Section 7: The ACADEMIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE shall address issues related to graduate student academics, including but not limited to: serving as liaisons in a student advocacy capacity with and between departments/programs, policies, resources and students as these have been documented to potentially impact upon the graduate student teaching and learning experience.

Section 8: The EVENTS COMMITTEE shall organize official GSA events, including but not limited to: socials, luncheons, barbecues, Orientation activities, seminars, and information sessions. All proposals for events shall be submitted to the Executive Board and the Senate for approval. Each event must fall under one of these four categories: Community Building, Educational, Professional, or Cultural. The Committee must justify each event by describing how it impacts one or more of these categories.

Section 9: The COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS shall review student organizations’ constitutions for approval and annually for re-registration and assist the Parliamentarian in addressing graduate student organization concerns. They shall review the GSA Constitution and Bylaws annually and propose revisions to the Senate under the direction of the Parliamentarian.
Section 10: **AD-HOC COMMITTEES** may be established by the President for a limited duration to investigate and make recommendations to the Executive Board and the Senate. As with Standing Committees, the President shall recruit and appoint graduate students to serve as members and chairpersons on Ad-hoc Committees. The Executive Board shall approve all appointments of Chairpersons by majority vote.

a. In the event that the President declares the creation of an Ad-hoc Committee, the President must specify the name of the committee and specify the length of time the committee shall stand before further review by the Executive Board to determine if the committee has addressed its charge.

b. At the time specified by the President upon the creation of the Ad-hoc Committee, the Executive Board shall conduct a review of the Committee. The Executive Board shall decide by majority vote whether the Ad-hoc Committee shall be:
   i. granted a specified length of time to continue operation before being called under review again;
   ii. disbanded; or
   iii. made into a standing committee by proposing an amendment to the Constitution.

Section 11: The chairpersons and members of the GSA Committees and the Executive Board shall comprise the GSA Cabinet, which will meet upon the President’s request.

Section 12: If a committee has committed gross misconduct or malfeasance of office, as documented in accordance with the recall process outlined in the Bylaws, or has not been active in communication or meeting in two months, the committee may be dissolved for the rest of the semester by a majority vote of the Senate. At the start of the next semester, the committee will undergo the review process outlined in the Ad-hoc committee Article/Section.

**ARTICLE VII: CONSTITUTIONAL AND BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

Section 1: The powers to amend the GSA Constitution and Bylaws shall rest with the Senate.

Section 2: Constitutional amendments shall address overall governing structure, duties, and missions of the GSA. Bylaws amendments shall elaborate terms, governing structure, duties, and processes specified in the Constitution. No GSA officer or Senator may offer amendments that create conflict between the Bylaws and the Constitution.

Section 3: Amendments must be sponsored by the Parliamentarian, on behalf of the Constitution Review Committee, or a current Senator not under recall. The Senator must present the proposed amendment in writing to the Parliamentarian at least two (2) weeks prior to the Senate meeting at which action is taken by the Senate.

Section 4: Senators must be given a minimum of one (1) week’s notice prior to meetings at which amendments are to be considered.

Section 5: Constitutional amendments shall be adopted immediately upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members at a Senate meeting and approval of or no action by the Graduate School Dean within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the amendments. Bylaw amendments shall be adopted immediately upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members at a Senate meeting and submitted notification to the Graduate School Dean. After an affirmative vote, the amendment will immediately take effect, but will not be written into the Constitution until the annual Constitutional review. The amendment will not need to be voted on again during the annual vote on changes to the Constitution.