

Graduate Students,

The attached document contains the proposed amendments for the Graduate Student Association (GSA) bylaws. The main goal of these amendments is to create more efficient communication for graduate students through the GSA to the Grad Division, Offices of the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor, as well as to the various departments and committees on campus.

The Delegate Assembly will be voting on these amendments later in the month. Please read the amendments and discuss them with the Delegate for your graduate program.

The amendments for the GSA constitution that are voted on by the graduate student body are contained in another document.

Comments on the amendments should first be addressed with your Delegate, but you may also contact GSA President, Brandon Batzloff at bbatzloff@ucmerced.edu.

Respectfully,
Brandon Batzloff
President, Graduate Student Association

Proposed Amendments to the UC Merced Graduate Student Association By Laws

Amendment 1: Article 1, 3 c. Establishes voting rule for offices occupied by two officers, as is the case for 2019 – 2020.

Amended: Addition

- c. If an office is occupied by more than one officer, the officers share the vote of that office and are required to confer with each other to determine the vote of their office.
 - i. A voting disagreement in a shared office results in an abstention.

Amendment 2: Article II, 1. Assigns proactive legislative powers to the Delegate Assembly. The purpose of doing this is to improve bottom-up communication from the general membership through the Delegate Assembly the Executive Council. Such a change empowers the representatives of each department and gives graduate students more direct access to decisions made by the GSA.

Original: The legislative power of the GSA shall be vested in the Executive Council which shall be presided over by the President of GSA and subject to supervision by the Delegate Assembly.

Amended: The legislative power of the GSA shall be ~~divided between~~ the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly. ~~which shall be presided over by the President of GSA and subject to supervision by the Delegate Assembly.~~

- a. Legislation proposed in the Executive Council is presided over by the President of the GSA.
 - i. Legislation introduced in and approved by the Executive Council must be submitted to the Delegate Assembly where it is confirmed, vetoed, or returned to the Executive Council with suggested alterations.
 - 1. Legislation returned to the Executive Council must be dismissed or rewritten and resubmitted to the Delegate Assembly.
- b. Legislation proposed in the Delegate Assembly is presided over by the Internal Vice President of the GSA.
 - i. Legislation introduced in and approved by the Delegate Assembly must be submitted to the Executive Council where it is confirmed, vetoed, or rewritten and submitted as new Executive Council Legislation.

Amendment 3: Article II, 2. Items a-c codify the financial functions of the GSA. The GSA has functioned in this way for several years. It is important to codify the process for financial decisions because, as the graduate student community grows, the GSA budget will grow and become more complex. Item d is an anti-corruption clause standard in the constitution of student governments. The lack of the clause in the bylaws in the past has resulted in complaints against GSA Officers who have received travel awards and project funding from the GSA. This is the only item in the amendments that was disputed in the Executive Council. Currently, Executive Officer are volunteers and do not receive a stipend, so there was concern about eliminating a potential financial source for officers. To address this concern, the Executive Council is looking

into methods of increasing funding from sources external to student fees that can be used to establish a small stipend for officers.

Original:

2. The power to allocate money and internal GSA funds are subject to supervision by the Delegate Assembly.

Amended:

2. The power to allocate money and internal GSA funds are **proposed in an annual budget by the Executive Council and approved by the Delegate Assembly.**
 - a. All changes to GSA spending after the approval of the budget are approved by the Delegate Assembly.
 - b. The Delegate Assembly determines the recipients of funding for Graduate Student Organizations and Sponsored Event funding by methods determined by the Delegate Assembly except where detailed in the By-Laws.
 - c. The Executive Council determines funding amounts allotted to Graduate Student Organizations and Sponsored Events after applications have been approved by the Delegate Assembly.
 - d. To avoid a conflict of interest, Executive Officers and Delegate Assembly members are not eligible for funding sourced from the GSA budget, except for stipends approved by the Delegate Assembly or refunds for the cost of materials and services incurred in the service of an elected position.

Amendment 4: Article III, 1, d. Establishes a process for assigning Executive Officers in a newly created office.

Amendment: Addition

- d. **If an Executive Office is added through constitutional amendment, the Executive Council of the GSA has the choice of filling the position by appointment or by election.**

Amendment 5: Article III, 2, f, v. Activated only when Amendment 3 to the GSA Constitution is approved by the general membership. In past elections, voting results resulted in a deadlock or no candidates being elected because none of the candidates reached 50% +1 votes. A plurality vote will eliminate empty offices or the need for two officers to serve in a single position.

Original: Officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote (50% + 1).

Amended: Officers shall be elected by a **plurality** vote (**largest number of votes**).

Amendment 6: Article IV, 5, e-f. Duties of the Academic Affairs Officer. Clarifies the duties of the Academic Affairs Officer. This is done to provide structural support that GSA designees on campus committees that work on policy and campus services. Previously members of committees did not report back to the GSA and the only people aware of proposed changes were the associates of committee members. The proposed change has two effects: 1) Graduate students will be informed and educated about proposed changes to policy and services, and 2) graduate students will have the opportunity to give input on what decisions committee members

should be making. This Helps GSA designees on committees be informed about the needs of other graduate students when making decisions.

Amended: new duties inserted after clause (d).

e. Communicate suggested voting from the Delegate Assembly to graduate and professional student representatives serving on campus committees, and

f. Communicate voting decisions of campus committees to the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly, and

Amendment 7: Article IV, 5, c & Article IV, 12. Only activated when amendment 1 to the GSA Constitution is approved by the general membership. Establishes the functions of the Solidarity Officer. A duty of the overburdened Academic Affairs Officer is removed and added to the duties of the Solidarity Officer.

Article IV, 5, c.

Original: To assist graduate and professional students with academic grievances and be aware of the agencies or individuals in the campus community who can assist students with problems and to appoint an Ombuds, if necessary, to help in this role, and

Amended: ~~To assist graduate and professional students with academic grievances and be aware of the agencies or individuals in the campus community who can assist students with problems and to appoint an Ombuds, if necessary, to help in this role, and~~

Article IV, 12

Amended: Addition

12. Duties of the Solidarity Officer will be:

- a. To assist graduate and professional students with academic grievances and be aware of the agencies or individuals in the campus community who can assist students with problems and to appoint an Ombuds, if necessary, to help in this role, and
- b. To maintain the confidentiality of graduate and professional students who present grievances by not keeping any records of stated grievances, and
- c. To maintain the confidentiality of graduate and professional students who present grievances by only referring graduate or professional students rather than contacting relevant agencies or individuals on their behalf, and
- d. To attend meetings of the UC Merced UAW 2865 as a representative of the GSA, and
- e. To refrain from concurrently holding an elected and/or paid position within the UAW 2865, and
- f. To serve as a communication channel between the GSA and UAW 2865.