



Constitution of the Graduate Student Association at the University of California, Merced

Amended by a vote from the General Membership and ratified on May 13th, 2024

Preamble

We, the graduate and professional students of the University of California, Merced, in order to provide means for responsible and effective shared governance and graduate and professional student participation and representation in the planning and conducting of University affairs, establish this constitution of the Graduate Student Association of the University of California, Merced. Our aims are as follows:

- To provide a forum where matters of concern to graduate and professional students may be discussed.
- To encourage graduate and professional student involvement in the University and civic community.
- To promote the expansion of human knowledge.

- To provide services to the graduate and professional student body and to the general University community.
- To transparently, efficiently, and responsibly, utilize student fees to promote the general student welfare of graduate and professional students.
- To act as a liaison between the graduate and professional student community and university administration.
- To cultivate the personal and professional growth of graduate and professional students through culturally, socially, and academically focused programming.
- To foster and promote diversity and inclusion among graduate and professional students.
- To create a safe and healthy campus climate where all members of the Graduate Student Association, but in particular, historically underrepresented students thrive.

Article I: Name and Membership

- A. Name: The name of the organization shall be the “Graduate Student Association of the University of California, Merced”, hereafter referred to as the Association.
- B. Membership: All registered graduate and professional students at the University of California, Merced who have paid the graduate and professional student government fees are members of the Association and constitute the General Membership.
 1. The Association may extend honorary membership to members of the broader University community in recognition of support or gratitude.
 2. Honorary members are not part of the General Membership and do not have the privilege of voting or running for office in any Association activity.

Article II: Non—Discrimination Policy

- A. We affirm the University of California, Merced Principles of Community and prohibit discrimination on basis of race, class, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, color, national origin, physical and/or mental disability, age, military status, or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable University policy, State and Federal laws.

Article III: Organizational Structure

A. Authority of the Association rests in three bodies: the General Membership, the Delegate Assembly, and the Executive Council.

1. The General Membership, as defined in Article I Section B, elects members of the Executive Council and may amend the Constitution as required in the annual Election.

a. By Petition of at least ten (10%) of the General Membership, additional special elections or votes may be held on any matter concerning the Association and whose outcome supersedes the authority of both the Delegate Assembly and the Executive Council.

2. The Delegate Assembly

a. Membership and Term of Office

i. The Delegate Assembly shall be composed of graduate or professional students (Delegates) from each Graduate or Professional Group, selected in accordance with the Association's By—Laws.

ii. In addition, the Delegate Assembly shall be chaired by a Delegate appointed to the position in accordance with the Association's By—Laws.

iii. The Delegate(s) will serve a term of one (1) academic year, beginning from appointment and concluding with the end of the following Summer term.

iv. The Association shall have the authority to choose Delegates from the students of each Graduate or Professional Group as outlined in the By—Laws.

b. Responsibilities

i. The Delegate Assembly serves as the bridge between each Graduate or Professional Group and the Association. As such, the Delegates shall provide a voice for their constituents in the affairs of these respective graduate or professional groups.

- ii. Delegates shall seek to fill administrative and representative roles within the Association and the university as needed in accordance with the Association's By—Laws.
- iii. Delegates of the Delegate Assembly are expected to
 - a. Perform their duties, as detailed in the By—Laws, in a timely manner,
 - b. Regularly attend meetings, as required in the By—Laws,
 - c. Conduct themselves in a professional manner, as required in the By—Laws and by applicable University policy, and
 - d. Maintain good academic and judicial standing throughout their term.

3. The Executive Council

a. Membership and term of Office

- i. The Executive Council shall be composed of thirteen (13) voting officers: President, Internal Vice President, External Vice President, Legislative Affairs Officer, Academic Affairs Officer, Public Relations Officer, Treasurer, Internal Communications Officer, International Affairs Officer, Solidarity Officer, a Climate, Diversity, and Equity Officer, Undocumented Affairs Officer, and a Social Media & Graphic Design Specialist in addition to any number of non—voting, ex officio officers appointed from the General Membership by the Council or as permitted within the By—Laws.
- ii. All Officers will serve for a term of one (1) year beginning May 15th through May 14th and are responsible for training their successor before leaving office, in addition to other duties as specified in the By—Laws.
- iii. The voting members of the Executive Council shall be elected by a plurality vote (largest number of votes) of the General Membership as provided for in the By—Laws.

b. Responsibilities of the Executive Council

- i. The Executive Council shall act as the executive officers of the General Membership, in accordance with procedures and responsibilities as outlined in the By—Laws.
- ii. The Executive Council shall prepare and propose a budget of the Association to the elected bodies of the Association before their first meeting of the academic year to be reviewed and approved as outlined in the By—Laws.
- iii. The Executive Council shall prepare and propose the Association's Advocacy Agenda of the academic year to be approved by the elected bodies of the Association at their first meeting of the academic year as outlined in the By—Laws.
- iv. The Executive Council has the primary mission of accomplishing the Association's Advocacy Agenda as approved by the elected bodies of the Association and executing recurring actions and events stated therein, in addition to serving as a first—response to community concerns and desires as they arise.
- v. Officers of the Executive Council are expected to
 - a. Perform their duties, as detailed in the By—Laws, in a timely manner,
 - b. Regularly attend meetings, as required in the By—Laws,
 - c. Conduct themselves in a professional manner, as required in the By—Laws and by applicable University policy, and
 - d. Maintain good academic and judicial standing throughout their term.

Article IV: Operating Principles

A. Meetings of the General Membership

1. Meetings of the General Membership shall occur at least once a semester or as often as called by petition of at least ten (10%) of the General Membership, whichever is more frequent. The President and Internal Vice President of the

Executive Council shall act as Chair and Co—Chair of these meetings, respectively.

2. Parliamentary authority, procedures, and quorum are as specified in the Association's By—Laws.

B. Meetings of the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly

1. Meetings of the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly shall be called by the Executive Council's President, Internal Vice President or Delegate Assembly Chair at such times as are appropriate to conduct the business of the Association. Such meetings can be held jointly between the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly as needed.
2. Such meetings shall occur at least once a month during the Fall and Spring semesters and be advertised and open to the General Membership, except when in closed session as necessary to conduct business.
3. Parliamentary authority, procedures, and quorum are as specified in the Association's By—Laws.

Article V: Amendment

- A. The Association's Constitution may be amended by a vote of the General Membership where at least two—thirds (2/3rds) of the cast votes are in support of the proposed amendments.
 1. The General Membership shall have at least two (2) weeks before such a vote to review and comment on the proposed amendments, otherwise such a vote will be null and void.
 2. Constitutional amendments with the sole purpose of maintaining or reaffirming compliance with applicable University policy, State, and Federal laws shall be voted on in meetings of the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly, shall not require a vote from the General Membership, and shall follow the process listed in Section B of this Article.
- B. The Association's By—Laws may be instituted, amended, or repealed by a favorable majority vote (50% + 1) of the Executive Council and a favorable majority vote (50% + 1) of the Delegate Assembly.

1. The General Membership must be informed at least two (2) weeks before such a vote to review and comment on the proposed amendments, otherwise such a vote will be null and void.
- C. Should there be provisions that present a conflict between the Association's Constitution and By—Laws, the relevant provisions stated within the Association's Constitution shall take precedent.