

**CONSTITUTION OF  
THE COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

Approved by the MSU Graduate Students in an election  
April 4, 2022 through April 10, 2022.

This Constitution replaces any constitution adopted prior  
to this 2010 election.

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Chittenden Hall, Room 120  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS CONSTITUTION

### Article I NAME

The name of the organization is the Council of Graduate Students, which hereinafter is referred to as “COGS”.

### Article II OBJECTIVE & LEGITIMACY

**Section 2.1** The objectives of COGS shall be:

- (a) To promote the academic, social, and economic goals of Graduate Students at Michigan State University.
- (b) To establish effective communication among Graduate Students and create channels of communication with other student organizations and with the academic and administrative units of the University.

**Section 2.2** COGS is a body whose power is derived solely from the Graduate Students of Michigan State University and is, therefore, independent of The Graduate School.

**Section 2.3** COGS, at no time, shall discriminate on the basis of age, color, gender, identity, disabilities status, height, marital status, natural origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran’s status, or weight.

### Article III DEFINITIONS

**Section 3.1** As used in this Constitution:

- (a) **Associate Member.** “Associate Member” is a Committee Representative or other designated Graduate Student that has the right to participate in discussion. However, Associate Members are not counted for voting or quorum purposes.
- (b) **Academic Year.** “Academic Year” begins on the first day of classes in the fall semester as defined by the official Michigan State University Academic Calendar, and shall run until one (1) day prior to the first day of classes the following fall semester.
- (c) **Bylaws.** “Bylaws” are the Bylaws of COGS that have been approved by the Full Council, including any amendments thereto.
- (d) **Committee Representatives.** “Committee Representatives” are Graduate Students that are serving on a COGS or University standing or ad-hoc committee as a representative of

COGS, and that are not Department Representatives nor Representatives seated pursuant to Section 4.2(b).

- (e) **Constituent Departments.** “Constituent Departments” are the academic departments that are represented by Department Representatives of COGS.
- (f) **Department Representative.** “Department Representative” is the Graduate Student that represents his or her respective Constituent Department, or his or her designated alternate when the Department Representative is absent.
- (g) **Graduate Students.** “Graduate Students” are students of Michigan State University that are actively pursuing master’s, doctoral, or professional degrees, and have paid the COGS student tax.
- (h) **Officers.** “Officers” are the Officers of COGS as defined by Article V of this Constitution and the respective provisions of the Bylaws.
- (i) **Representative Member.** “Representative Members” include Department Representatives and additional voting members established through Section 4.2(b).

#### **Article IV FULL COUNCIL**

**Section 4.1 Powers of Full Council.** The business and affairs of COGS shall be under the direction of its Full Council. The Full Council shall have, and is not limited to, the power to:

- (a) Adopt, amend or repeal Bylaws;
- (b) Levy a student tax on all Graduate Students, subject to university policy, and to establish an annual budget to allocate and appropriate funds;
- (c) Elect and empower Officers, and establish their respective duties and responsibilities; (d) Remove an Officer from his or her office, through a process established through the Bylaws. Removal requires an affirmative 2/3rds vote of the Full Council present at a meeting with quorum;
- (e) Establish committees to further the business and affairs of COGS;
- (f) Determine requirements for quorum, voting, and the manner of taking action at meetings of the Full Council; and
- (g) Establish duties and responsibilities for Representative Members of the Full Council, and to establish sanctions for failure to perform the duties and responsibilities.

#### **Section 4.2 Membership of Full Council.**

- (a) The Graduate Students of a Constituent Department may select one individual (and alternate individual if desired) to represent the Graduate Students of the Constituent Department as a voting member of the Full Council pursuant to Section 4.3.
- (b) The Full Council may establish additional voting members of the Full Council.
- (c) Committee Representatives are Associate Members of the Full Council.
- (d) No person may hold more than one seat as a Representative Member at any time.

**Section 4.3 Selection of Department Representative.** The method of selection of the Department Representative (or alternate) shall be determined by the Graduate Students of each Constituent Department. Each selection shall have prior public notification within each Constituent Department.

**Section 4.4 Meetings.** All meetings of the Full Council shall be open to the public and have prior notification. There shall be at least eight regular meetings of the Full Council per Academic Year. The Full Council may permit special meetings and provide for procedure for calling special meetings. The Full Council may meet in executive session through a process established within the Bylaws.

**Section 4.5 Voting.**

- (a) Each Department Representative shall be entitled to one vote in the Full Council.
- (b) Each member established by Section 4.2(b) of this Constitution shall be entitled to one vote in the Full Council.
- (c) Committee Representatives shall not have a vote in the Full Council
- (d) Unless otherwise specified, passage of motions and resolutions in the Full Council shall be based on the votes of Representative Members present, provided there is a quorum.

**Section 4.6 Vacancies in the Membership of Full Council.** The Full Council shall establish procedures to fill vacancies in the membership of the Full Council.

## **Article V OFFICERS OF COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Section 5.1 Officers.** The Officers shall include a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Treasurer and a Recording Secretary.

**Section 5.2 Election and Term.** The Full Council shall elect the Officers of Section 5.1. The elections of the Officers shall be held during the second-to-last regular meeting of the Spring Semester. The three weeks following the election will be a transition period. During this time the serving Officers will transition their responsibilities to the newly elected Officers. A full term of office shall commence at the end of the three-week transition period after the election and terminate at the end of the three-week transition period following the election of Officers the following year.

**Section 5.3 Qualifications.** Any Representative Member at the time of election, or any Graduate Student who has attended more than half of the regular meetings of the Academic Year, shall be eligible for any Officer position listed in Section 5.1.

**Section 5.4 Term Limit.** No person shall be elected to more than two full terms in the same Officer position listed in Section 5.1, unless waived by a two-thirds vote of the Full Council.

**Section 5.5 College Limit as a Qualification.** The Full Council may provide that Officers shall be from different colleges of Michigan State University, through a process established within the Bylaws.

**Section 5.6 Forfeiture as Representative Member.** Officers forfeit their position as Representative Member and the voting rights of that position, effective on the first day of the Officers' positions. New Representative Members may be elected to fill the vacated positions.

**Section 5.7 Vacancies.** In the event of a permanent vacancy in any Officer position, the vacancy shall be filled by special election by the Full Council's second meeting from the occurrence of such vacancy. The Full Council may establish a procedure for selecting an interim replacement pending the special election for a permanent replacement.

**Section 5.8 Officers; other.** The Full Council may establish other Officers, and provide for their election, qualifications, duties and responsibilities through the Bylaws.

## **Article VI OPERATING FUNDS**

**Section 6.1** By an affirmative vote of a majority of the Graduate Students voting, Graduate Students may authorize COGS to assess a tax on Graduate Students, of an amount specified by the referendum.

**Section 6.2** The money that COGS collects shall be used to further the objectives of COGS as specified in Article II.

**Section 6.3** Representative Member, and Committee Representatives shall not receive compensation unless authorized by referendum.

**Section 6.4** Officers of COGS will receive compensation in the manner outlined in the bylaws.

## **Article VII REFERENDA AND REDRESS**

**Section 7.1** All referenda required by this Constitution shall be conducted by COGS in a fair and impartial manner decided upon by the Full Council.

**Section 7.2** All referenda must have at least one month prior announcement in the major student news media.

**Section 7.3** Referenda shall not be held during the summer or during the first month of classes fall semester.

**Section 7.4** Upon petition of one thousand or more Graduate Students, a referendum shall be held on any issue or officer.

### **Article XIII RULES AND AMENDMENTS**

**Section 8.1 Rules.** This Constitution in conjunction with the Bylaws, rules of order, and standing rules duly adopted by the Full Council that are consistent with this Constitution shall be the rules of COGS.

#### **Section 8.2 Constitutional Amendments.**

- a) A motion to amend this Constitution may be made by petition of 20 percent of the Representative Members or by a petition of 20 percent of the Graduate Students.
- b) A motion to amend shall be voted upon by the Full Council at least two weeks but not more than five weeks after the motion is made and upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Full Council, be submitted as a referendum to be voted on by the Graduate Students.
- c) Amendments to this Constitution shall be declared ratified and adopted following the affirmative vote of two-thirds of Graduate Students voting in a referendum.

**Section 8.3 Parliamentary Authority.** The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules promulgated by the Full Council.

### **Article IX RATIFICATION**

**Section 9.1** This Constitution shall be declared ratified and adopted following an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Representative Members present at a Full Council meeting and an affirmative vote of a majority of Graduate Students voting in a referendum.

**Section 9.2** This Constitution shall be effective upon ratification, and the Officers at this time shall be retained in their position until new officers are elected.

### **Article X MISCELLANEOUS**

**Section 10.1 Captions and Headings.** The captions, headings, and titles in this Constitution are intended for the convenience of the reader and are not intended to have any substantive meaning and or to be interpreted as part of this Constitution.

**Section 10.2 Terminology.** All terms and words used in this Constitution, regardless of the number or gender in which they are used, are deemed to include any other number and any other gender as the context may require.