

# Constitution and Bylaws of the NJIT Graduate Student Association

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## **Section I: Overview**

### **A. Name**

The name of this organization shall be the New Jersey Institute of Technology Graduate Student Association, abbreviated as NJIT GSA.

### **B. Purpose**

The NJIT GSA shall provide a structure through which graduate students work together to improve the quality of graduate student life. The objectives of the NJIT GSA are to:

- represent and articulate the interests of the graduate students
- promote communication between students, faculty, and the administration
- oversee the expenditure of graduate student activity fee
- promote and encourage the professional growth, social and cultural development, and academic excellence of students in the graduate programs of the New Jersey Institute of Technology
- GSA NJIT is associated with National Association of Graduate Professional Student (NAGPS).

### **C. Membership**

#### **1. Members of the General Body**

Every student who is currently enrolled in credit-bearing graduate programs at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and paying the Graduate Student Activity fee is considered a member of GSA. Membership ceases at the date of graduation or termination of affiliation with NJIT.

#### **2. Member Privileges and Responsibilities**

- a. Any Member of the GSA has the right to attend any meeting of the General Assembly of the GSA as well as any event sponsored by the GSA.
- b. Any Member has the right to address the General Assembly of the GSA.
- c. Any Member enrolled in a graduate department/program is entitled to represent his or her graduate department/program in the GSA.
- d. Any Member is entitled to vote in the election of the Department Representative and alternate Department Representative to the GSA.

#### **3. Members of the General Assembly**

The General Assembly is defined as the elected Department Representatives and officials of the Executive Board of the GSA.

### **D. Eligibility**

Any currently enrolled graduate student, full-time or part-time, and who is maintaining good academic standing (minimum 3.00 GPA) at New Jersey Institute of Technology is eligible to be elected to a position in the General Assembly. For the role of the President, students must have completed at least one academic year at NJIT or equivalent credit load in order to be eligible. Additionally, any student elected to the Executive Board of the GSA cannot simultaneously serve on

the Executive Board of any graduate student organization recognized by New Jersey Institute of Technology.

### **E. Advisors**

The GSA shall have two advisors who are full-time, professional staff members at NJIT to provide general guidance on policies and procedures, assistance with conflict management, and approvals for expenditures. The GSA Academic Advisor shall be a member of the Office of Graduate Studies as determined by the Vice Provost. The GSA Social Advisor shall be a member of the Office of Student Life as determined by the Executive Director.

### **F. Election Procedures**

Elections for members of the General Assembly will take place each Spring semester in accordance with the election procedures outlined by the Office of Student Life in the Elections Packet.

- Elections will be coordinated and communicated to the graduate student body by the GSA Executive Board. In case of absence of the GSA Executive board, elections will be coordinated and communicated to the graduate student body by the GSA advisors.
- If applicable, the current GSA Vice President of Programming will serve as the Election Officer for any General Election during his/her tenure.
- The term of each position in the General Assembly shall be one academic year concluding at Commencement.
- An Executive Board member cannot hold more than one position in the GSA.
- Members may not be elected to or serve more than two terms in any one GSA officer position.
- New GSA officers will assume their role and duties at the beginning of Summer semester.

#### **1. Department Representatives Elections**

- a. Department Representatives and Alternate Representatives shall be nominated and elected by the graduate students in their respective graduate department by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the fall semester.
- b. When an election is not possible, Department Representatives shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Department Chair.
- c. If a Department Representative cannot be either elected or appointed, the General Assembly shall represent the program of study in its best interests.
- d. No graduate student may represent more than one department during the same term of office.

#### **2. Executive Board Elections**

- a. Applications for the GSA executive board will be accepted via online submission starting 3 weeks before the scheduled election date (in Spring Semester).
- b. All eligible applicants will have an opportunity to present their platform to the General Assembly and answer questions at the next scheduled assembly meeting.
- c. Elections procedures must be followed as indicated in the Elections Packet.

- d. Preferably, at the first General Assembly, the Department Representatives who are the voting members will nominate and appoint the Vice President for Academic Affairs for the Executive Board by a majority vote. This position will be appointed from within the Department Representatives. Refer to Elections Packet info for more information.
- e. All other positions within the Executive Board shall be elected by a majority vote by the General Assembly.
- f. The Executive Board members will be announced to the graduate student body following elections.

### **G. Impeachment**

Impeachment of any elected member of the GSA may be determined by a two-thirds majority vote of all the department representatives the General Assembly in a vote organized by the GSA Social Advisor. GSA members may be subject to impeachment and may be removed for:

- Having two or more unexcused absences from mandatory meetings during the semester.
  - An “unexcused absence” shall be defined as an absence that has not been excused in writing by the GSA President.
- Abuse of power or office held.
- Deliberate dereliction of duties assigned to that office in other articles and sections of this Constitution.
- Deliberate misuse of GSA money or facilities.
- Any violation of New Jersey Institute of Technology [Student Code of Conduct](#), including but not limited to harassment, sexual assault, threat to safety and misuse of university documents and/or technology.

### **H. Vacancies**

To resign, any executive members of the GSA must submit a letter of resignation to the GSA President or GSA Social Advisor who will notify the General Assembly at the subsequent assembly meeting. The process for filling a vacant Executive Board position is determined by the following guidelines.

1. Applications will be sought from any currently enrolled, full-time or part-time student, at NJIT, including members currently serving on the GSA Executive Board or Committees in any capacity, or within specific departments in which a vacancy exists.
2. The Vice President for Communications will notify the respective graduate student body of the vacancy and election process.
3. Applications will be reviewed by the Vice President of Programming and GSA Social Advisor to ensure eligibility requirements are met. Application review may entail an interview with each candidate depending on the number and strength of the candidates. Interviews take place at the discretion of the Vice President of Programming and GSA Social Advisor.
4. Applicants will be provided an opportunity to present their platform to the General Assembly and answer questions at the next scheduled assembly meeting.
5. The General Assembly members will make the final determination by a majority vote.

6. Outgoing officers may not participate in the application review or voting process for their replacement.

## **Section II: Executive Board**

The Executive Officers of the GSA shall be the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Programming, Vice President of Communications, and Vice President of Finance.

### **A. Responsibilities**

All members of the Executive Board are required to attend the following meetings: Executive Board meetings, meetings with Advisors as needed, Committee meetings as required by their position, and General Assembly Meetings. Once designated, neither the day nor the time of a General Assembly Meeting shall be changed, nor shall any meeting of the GSA be cancelled except by majority vote of the Executive Board. Additionally, all members of the Executive Board are responsible for the duties of their position, outlined as follows:

#### **1. President:**

- a. Convene and preside over all Executive Board meetings and provide general oversight to the members within. This Executive Board member is expected to have frequent meetings with the GSA Social Advisor.
- b. Serve as the official representative of the GSA and NJIT Graduate Student Body.
- c. Present a report at all General Assembly meetings.
- d. Coordinate with presidents of graduate student clubs and organizations to perform any function if need be for the benefit and welfare of the GSA.
- e. Serve as the GSA representative on at least one institutional committee.
- f. Coordinate and communicate regularly with the President of the Student Senate to ensure successful communication to meet the needs of the entire NJIT student body.
- g. For the role of the President, students must have completed at least one (1) academic year or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.

#### **2. Vice President for Academic Affairs**

- a. Serve as the liaison between the GSA and the Office of Graduate Studies to best represent the academic interests of the graduate student body. This Executive Board member is expected to have frequent meetings with the GSA Academic Advisor.
- b. Chair the General Assembly meetings and coordinate with Department Representatives to ensure the successful delivery of programs and services throughout the graduate academic departments.
- c. Assist with annual academically-based programming and initiatives including but not limited to Research Day and three-minute presentations.
- d. Serve as the GSA representative on academically focused institutional committees.
- e. Assume the duties of the President in their absence.

- f. For the role of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, students must have completed at least one (1) semester or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.
- 3. Vice President of Programming:**
- a. Serve as the liaison between the GSA and the recognized graduate student clubs and organizations, in conjunction with the GSA Social Advisor and Office of Student Life.
  - b. Coordinate social and cultural programs and initiatives on behalf of the GSA, as well as communicate and assist with the programming of graduate student organizations.
  - c. Communicate with all graduate student organizations on policies and procedures.
  - d. Serve as the GSA representative on the institutional Campus Life committee.
  - e. Coordinate with the President of the Student Activities Council for the promotion of campus-wide programs and events for the entire NJIT student body.
  - f. For the role of the Vice President of Programming, students must have completed at least one (1) semester or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.
- 4. Vice President of Communications**
- a. Record and distribute the minutes of all GSA meetings, including Executive Board meetings, Committee meetings, and General Assembly meetings.
  - b. Schedule all Executive Board Meetings and General Assembly meetings as well as any other meetings as needed.
  - c. Communicate elections information and vacancies within the GSA with the respective graduate student body.
  - d. Coordinate all marketing and public relations for the GSA in conjunction with the Office of Student Life and the Office of Graduate Studies.
  - e. Create and distribute promotional materials, update social media, and maintain the GSA website to ensure accurate and timely information is available to the graduate student body.
  - f. Perform other duties delegated by the President to bolster the administration of the GSA, and represent GSA whenever needed.
  - g. For the role of the Vice President of Communication, students must have completed at least one (1) semester or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.
- 5. Vice President of Finance**
- a. Manage the social and cultural budget for the GSA, and review the professional and academic budget in coordination with the GSA Academic Advisor to provide travel awards to the graduate student body.
  - b. Review the annual budget requests from graduate student organizations, as well as additional funding requests for programs, conferences, and events that benefit the graduate student body, and present to the General Assembly for approval.

- c. Maintain up-to-date financial records and give a financial report at each General Body Meeting and an annual report at the end of their term.
- d. Prepare the annual GSA budget in conjunction with the Offices of Student Life and Graduate Studies.
- e. For the role of the Vice President of Finance, students must have completed at least one (1) semester or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.
- f. Submit status of current operating budget to the general assembly once a month.

### **B. Authority**

In the event that the GSA General Assembly adjourns for a period exceeding thirty days within the academic year, the Executive Board shall be given the authority to make decisions on their behalf.

1. During this period, the Executive Board shall retain all of the rights, privileges and immunities of Representatives as defined in the Constitution and Bylaws except amending the Constitution and Bylaws.
2. Passage of motions shall be restricted to the same guidelines the Representatives must abide by as defined in the Constitution and Bylaws.
3. The Executive Board shall pass any and all motions with the best interests of the graduate student body in mind.
4. The GSA Advisors shall be kept abreast of all motions pending before the Executive Board during this period.
5. The General Assembly shall receive a report of all motions passed during executive session and may overturn any and all such motions with at 2/3 majority vote.

### **Section III: Department Representatives**

Each graduate department shall elect one (1) Department Representative to the GSA. This Representative will speak for and act in the best interests of the students of the programs for which they have been elected.

In addition, each academic graduate department shall elect one (1) Alternate Department Representative, who is empowered to vote in the event that the primary Department Representative is absent or in some other way unable to fulfill the duties of the representative.

For the role of the department representatives, students must have completed at least one (1) semester or equivalent credit load at NJIT and had potential involvement in campus activities.

### **A. Responsibilities**

The duly elected Representatives or alternates acting as the Representative of the department to the GSA shall complete the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Aid in the nomination and election process for all GSA Representatives and officers in accordance with the election rules and guidelines of GSA Constitution and Bylaws.
2. Discuss and vote upon GSA Activities.

3. Inform and survey the students within their respective programs **at least once per semester** on matters they or their respective constituencies determine pertinent and necessary for University governance.
4. Be appointed to and serve on either one GSA committee or University committee. Each Representative shall report the events of their respective committee to the GSA General Assembly.
5. Vote on expenditures according to the guidelines for appropriation of funds, including but not limited to graduate student organization requests, capital purchases, and programs and initiatives in excess of \$500.
6. Be available to their constituency in the following ways:
  - a. Conduct at least one (1) departmental feedback session once a semester.
  - b. Hold a minimum of one office hour per week in the GSA office.
  - c. Allocate their own assigned funds for department feedback sessions as well as use the facilities, supplies, and equipment of the GSA to accomplish adequate representation.

#### **Section IV. Standing Committees**

Standing Committees may be determined annually by the President of the GSA to meet the changing needs of the graduate student body. Any currently enrolled graduate student, full-time or part-time and who is maintaining good academic standing (minimum 3.00 GPA) at the NJIT is eligible to apply and be appointed to any Committee of the GSA. General Assembly Members must be appointed to serve on a Standing Committee by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Standing Committees of the GSA shall be:

##### **A. Finance Committee**

1. The Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President of Finance.
2. The Voting Members of the Committee will be at least two Representatives.
  - a. Representatives must abstain from votes relating to an organization of which they are a member.
  - b. The Vice President of Finance may vote to break a tie, or in the case of an abstention.
3. The duties of the Committee will be to:
  - a. Review all financial policies and rules pertaining to student funds.
  - b. Review and approve any student organization's budget when deemed necessary.
    - i. Submission deadlines for organization budgets will be determined by the Vice President of Finance, but should be more than 2 weeks before the first General Assembly meeting of each semester.
  - c. Hold finance hearings for organizations fund requests.

#### **Section V: Bylaws**

##### **A. Standing Meetings**

The standing meetings of the GSA shall be:



1. Bi-weekly meetings consisting of Executive Board Members and the GSA Advisors when available.
2. Bi-weekly General Assembly Meetings to begin no later than the third full week of classes and continue through the beginning of finals.
3. Monthly Committee meetings when applicable.
4. Meetings shall be run according to Robert's Rules of Order.
5. Any graduate student may attend the GSA General Assembly, but only elected Assembly Members (a.k.a. department representatives) may vote.

### **B. Voting**

1. All members of the GSA General Assembly receive one vote on any proposal or in any election procedure.
2. A two-thirds majority of votes is required to pass any proposal or motion.
3. A quorum shall be defined as based on the collection of all the voting members (a.k.a. department representatives) of the General Assembly.

### **C. Amendments**

Proposals for Amendments to the NJIT GSA Constitution and Bylaws can be proposed by any Member of the General Assembly and shall be presented in writing to the Executive Board. Amendments require a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly to be implemented.

### **D. Relationship with Graduate Clubs and Organizations**

The GSA seeks to have a positive and productive relationship with the graduate student organizations recognized by the Office of Student Life.

In coordination with the Office of Student Life, GSA puts forth the following requirements for recognized graduate clubs and organizations in order to receive funding from the GSA:

1. All graduate clubs and organizations recognized by the Office of Student Life show active participation in General Assembly Meetings held by the GSA. At least one member from the Executive Board of each graduate club/organization must attend every GSA General Assembly Meeting and provide an update on club activities.
2. All graduate student organizations must maintain an accurate and up-to-date roster and organizational profile in Highlander Hub.
3. All organization events must be registered in Highlander Hub at least one week prior to the proposed event date.
4. All marketing for organization events must feature the GSA logo as co-sponsors when funding has been provided
5. All budget requests must be submitted in Highlander Hub by the dates set by the GSA Vice President of Finance.
6. All clubs allocated funding through the GSA must abide by the requirements outlined in the Student Organization Handbook provided by the Office of Student Life.

7. The Presidents of all graduate student organizations must attend a bi-monthly with the Vice President for Programming.

### **E. Budget**

The Graduate Student Association shall be funded from the Graduate Student Association fee. The GSA Budget must fall within the boundaries of the annual income garnered from graduate student fees and the surplus remaining from past years.

The GSA Budget must be approved by the GSA representatives in the General Assembly before disbursements can be made. The GSA General Assembly can transfer money between the social and academic categories by majority vote. The Budget of the GSA may be changed by the University only in the event that the Budget is in a conflict with NJIT policies or regulations of the State of New Jersey.

Budgets for student organizations supported by the GSA shall be reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee as outlined in Section IV and in accordance with the Graduate Clubs Financial Bylaws. The Finance Committee shall review organization budget requests at least one week prior to the first General Assembly meeting of each semester; when all approved budgets will be presented in a period of no more than 5 minutes per organization (including Q&A). Appropriate budget materials will be sent to the Assembly at least two days before the date of budget presentations. The General Assembly may veto a budget approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Representatives present, in which case the Assembly must make specific recommendations to the requesting organization and the Finance Committee.

### **G. Expenditures**

All expenditures must be consistent with the purpose and objectives of the GSA.

1. Each April, the Executive Board shall review the Operating Budget prepared by the Vice President of Finance and submit a completed copy to the General Assembly for a vote.
2. The overall annual operating budget without line item expenditures shall be as follows:

#### **Social and Cultural Operating Budget:**

- a. 40% to be reserved for graduate student organizations for approved events and activities such as cultural celebrations and networking receptions.
- b. 15% to be reserved for the Office of Student Life to support the cost of campus-wide programs for the graduate student body including Highlander Awards, Welcome Week, and the annual LEADS conference.
- c. 20% to be reserved for members of the General Assembly to provide feedback sessions and other academically-based programs to the graduate student body.
- d. 20% to be reserved for members of the Executive Board to ensure the successful delivery of services and programs for the graduate student body. This includes but is not limited to capital improvements and purchases, promotional items, and events.
- e. 5% of emergency funds.

**Academic and Travel Awards Operating Budget:**

The budget will be reviewed and audited regularly with the Office of Graduate Studies and Vice President of Finance. The travel awards budget is based on the assumption that any graduate student approved for travel by their academic department in order to present research results should be eligible for a travel award. A graduate student will be hired and supervised annually by the Office of Graduate Studies to process and review all travel awards.

3. Itemized budgets must be submitted in Highlander Hub for review of the Vice President of Finance prior to the General Assembly vote.
4. The Vice President of Finance with the majority vote of the GSA Executive Board shall have the authority to approve itemized budgets (this excludes grants and additional funding requests) up to \$500 without General Assembly approval provided they fall within the general Operating Budget.
5. NJIT financial authorization by the GSA Advisors is required for all disbursements of money.