



Bylaws

**Graduate Student Government at Albany of the
SUNY Polytechnic Institute**

May 2016

Preamble

The State University of New York (“SUNY”) Polytechnic Institute Graduate Student Government at Albany (“GSGA”) Bylaws specify the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the GSGA in accordance with the graduate student resolution of May 28, 2013.

The GSGA Bylaws affirm an overarching commitment to a unified graduate student governance structure at the Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (“CNSE”), and establish the standards for the various degrees of autonomous CNSE graduate student governance in the areas of student leadership, scholarly activities and advocating the position of the graduate student body to institutional and external constituencies.

The GSGA Bylaws establish the standards for full participation of GSGA student members in college wide governance in areas such as planning and policy, graduate academic affairs, academic assessment, and college life.

The Bylaws rest upon representative responsibility in a body to be known as the GSGA. Therefore, the Bylaws provide that student members of the executive board (“E-Board”) be chosen from defined categories so that the GSGA will be representative of the entire graduate student body at CNSE. Acknowledging the essential and critical role of the various professional constituencies within CNSE, the Bylaws establish the inclusion of professional and administrative staff as necessary.

The GSGA Bylaws shall be interpreted and applied, in accordance with the rules and regulations of SUNY, CNSE, and appropriate State and Federal law, and shall not be construed in any way as to take precedence over those rules, regulations, and laws.

Definitions

As used in the Bylaws, unless otherwise specified, the following terms shall mean:

- a. “Academic Staff” - Members of the staff comprised of those persons having academic teaching, and/or academic support as a job responsibility.
- b. “Administrative Staff” - Members of the CNSE staff who are affiliated with the administrative and management operations of CNSE.
- c. “Board of Trustees” - The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York.
- d. “Chancellor” - The Chancellor of the State University of New York.
- e. “CNSE” - The Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering of State University of New York.
- f. “GSGA” – State University of New York, Polytechnic Institute, Graduate Student Government at Albany.
- g. “Majority vote” – A yes-or-no vote for which passage requires an affirmative vote of a minimum of 51% of individuals voting.
- h. “Plurality vote” – A vote among options for which passage requires a given option receiving more votes than any other available option.
- i. “Senior Vice President and CEO” - The Senior Vice President and CEO (or other equivalent title) of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering of the State University of New York.
- j. “SUNY” - The State University of New York.
- k. “Supermajority vote” – A yes-or-no vote for which passage requires an affirmative vote of a minimum of 67% of individuals voting.
- l. “Vice President for Academic Affairs” – The Vice President and Chief Academic Officer of CNSE.

Article I - Duties of the Officers

The GSGA will have the following officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Records Officer, and Communications Officer,

1. **President:** The President of the E-Board shall act as the chairperson of any meetings of the E-Board or in any forum of the GSGA membership. The President also acts as the chief spokesperson and chief executive officer of the GSGA. The President is the de-facto first nominee of the GSGA to the CNSE College Senate.
2. **Vice President:** In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall assume the duties of the President. Should the Presidency become vacated, the Vice President shall become the President. The Vice President is the de-facto second nominee of the GSGA to the CNSE College Senate.
3. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall receive, disburse, and account for all funds of the GSGA and its activities, present a written report of finances at least once per semester, coordinate all budget and financial decisions, prepare the budget for the next fiscal year to be voted upon by the E-Board, and coordinate the funding of student activities.
4. **Records Officer:** The Records Officer is responsible for keeping accurate records of all meetings, resolutions, and other documentation pertaining to events involving the GSGA, as well as for producing these documents as required for official functions.
5. **Communications Officer:** The Communications Officer is the default point of contact for members or other agencies petitioning or seeking information from the GSGA and is also responsible for handling public releases of information to the GSGA membership or external agencies.

Article II - Committees

Section 1 - Committee Structure

Standing Committees of the GSGA shall be those defined in Article II, Section 4 of the Bylaws.

Other committees, to be referred to as temporary committees, may be formed by a majority vote of the E-Board. All temporary committees shall dissolve upon the ending of the current E-board's term. Unless specified otherwise, the membership of committees shall consist of graduate student volunteers who serve at the pleasure of the E-Board. Standing committees shall elect their chairpersons by majority vote unless otherwise indicated; the chairpersons of temporary committees shall be appointed by the President and subject to approval by the E-Board. The chairpersons shall call and preside over all committee meetings, and shall be responsible for ensuring that all committee procedures are followed.

Section 2 - Committee Procedures

Committees established by the E-Board must operate under the GSGA Constitution, Bylaws, and other policies, but may formulate additional internal rules as are necessary for committee operation. Committees shall report on its activities to the E-Board on a regular basis, inform the Officers of current developments, maintain pertinent documentation, and handle the responsibilities of distributing publicity or otherwise communicating with the graduate student body. Committees may form subcommittees as deemed necessary by the committee chairs. Subcommittees shall dissolve upon the ending of the current E-Board's term.

Section 3 - Suspension of Committees

A majority vote of the E-Board may move to initiate an inquiry into the proceedings of any committee and may suspend a committee until such a time as a majority vote is cast by the E-Board to return the committee to active status.

Section 4 - Standing Committees

1. CNSE Faculty Council & CNSE GSGA Joint Committee on Graduate Student Affairs
 - a. Membership
 - i. The Senior Vice President and CEO of CNSE
 - ii. The Chair of the CNSE Faculty Council
 - iii. The Secretary of the CNSE Faculty Council
 - iv. The President of the CNSE GSGA, who shall serve as Co-Chair

- v. Other members of the Executive Committee of the CNSE GSGA
- vi. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and CAO of CNSE
- vii. The Vice President for Student Affairs of CNSE, who shall serve as Co-Chair

b. Duties

- i. Advising the Senior Vice President on issues and concerns relating to the graduate students of CNSE.
- ii. Meeting with other administrative and operational staff as needed to recommend development or modification of CNSE policies and practices.
- iii. Advising the Faculty Council on the inclusion of graduate student representation as the CNSE College Bylaws and the Charter of the CNSE College Senate are developed.
- iv. Determining how the Joint Committee will continue as a standing body within CNSE college governance, perhaps expanded to include the chairs or their designees of certain councils of the CNSE College Senate.

Article III - Elections

1. Elections shall be held on the last Monday of April. For up to one week prior to election, any member of the GSGA may submit his or her name to the E-Board as a candidate.
2. There must be a minimum of 10 candidates on the ballot.
3. E- Board member elections will be conducted by electronic ballot and shall remain open for forty-eight hours. The E-Board shall be responsible for conducting the elections.
4. Every member of the GSGA shall have the right to vote in this election and shall be able to cast a single ballot with the names of up to seven candidates.
5. The tabulation of the ballots shall be public and results communicated to the GSGA membership and administrative staff no later than three business days following the elections.

6. During tabulation, each candidate receives a single vote per ballot on which he or she is named. The seven candidates with the highest number of votes will gain E-Board seats for the following academic year. In the event of a tie, the graduate student with the fewest number of semesters at CNSE shall receive the seat or office in question. In the event of a tie in which seniority is unclear, the current E-Board shall vote to break the tie.
7. The newly elected E-Board shall take office on the last Monday of May and shall serve a one-year term, expiring on the last Monday of May the following year.
8. The E-Board will elect from their number a President, Vice-President, Communications Officer, Records Officer, and Treasurer upon their first meeting after taking office.
9. Recall of an E-Board member may be initiated by the petition of one third of the GSGA membership. Such proposals must be made and submitted to the E-Board at least a week before the scheduled General Meeting. The E-Board shall be required to make arrangements for a recall vote in which each member of the GSGA may vote. The E-Board shall also notify all GSGA members of the proposed recall not less than one week prior to the vote. A Majority vote of the GSGA members who cast a vote is required in order for the recall of that E-Board to become effective.

Article IV - Meetings of the GSGA

Section 1 - General Meetings

1. The E-Board shall arrange to hold General Meetings no less than once during each of the Fall and Spring Semesters.
2. General Meetings shall be open to all members of the GSGA. Non-GSGA members shall be permitted to attend at the pleasure of the Chair.
3. The Communications Officer shall provide notice to all GSGA members of the time, date, and location of the General Meeting not less than one week in advance, using either officially sanctioned CNSE e-mail or online calendar systems.

4. Meeting minutes and passed resolutions, motions, or bills shall be maintained by the Records Officer and shall be made available for viewing upon request by any member of the GSGA.

Section 2 – E-Board Meetings

1. The E-Board shall hold meetings no less than once every month.
2. E-Board meetings shall be open to all members of the E-Board. Non-E-Board members shall be permitted to attend at the pleasure of the Chair.
3. The Communications Officer shall provide notice to all E-Board members of the time, date, and location of the E-Board Meeting not less than one week in advance, using either officially sanctioned CNSE e-mail or online calendar systems.
4. Meeting minutes and passed resolutions, motions, or bills shall be maintained by the Records Officer and shall be made available for viewing upon request by any member of the E-Board.

Section 3 - Committee Meetings

1. Committees shall meet no less than once during each Fall and Spring semester.
2. Committee Meetings shall be open to their members as well as all members of the E-Board. Others shall be permitted to attend at the pleasure of the Chair.
3. The Committee Chair shall provide notice to all Committee Members as well as the Communications Officer of the time, date, and location of the Committee Meeting not less than one week in advance, using either officially sanctioned CNSE e-mail or online calendar systems.
4. Meeting minutes and passed resolutions, motions, or bills shall be maintained by the Committee Chair and shall be sent to the Records Officer. These shall be made available for viewing upon request by any member of the Committee or E-Board.

Section 4- Special and Emergency Meetings

1. Special Meetings may be called:
 - a. by the Chancellor, the Senior Vice President, or the Vice President for Academic Affairs,
 - b. by motion of the E-Board,
 - c. by petition of at least 1/3 of the total members of the GSGA.
2. Special and Emergency Meetings cannot serve as General Meetings, E-Board Meetings, or Committee Meetings. Modifications of the Constitution or Bylaws may not occur at Special or Emergency Meetings.
3. The Communications Officer shall provide notice to appropriate individuals of the time, date, location, and purpose of the Special or Emergency Meeting not less than twenty-four hours in advance, using either officially sanctioned CNSE e-mail or online calendar systems.

Section 5 - Rules of Order

1. The GSGA shall use the most current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* unless otherwise specified. The Presiding Officer may appoint a parliamentarian to advise on conduct of the meeting.
2. With the exception of changes to the Bylaws, Majority vote by members of the E-Board are necessary to pass a motion. Changes to the Bylaws shall require a Supermajority vote by members of the E-Board and Majority vote of GSGA members present to pass. Abstentions by the E-Board members are not permitted.
3. Votes may be cast in person or via electronic communication.
4. E-mail shall be the default and official mode for communications involving the E-Board.
5. If any seat of the E-Board becomes vacated, the standing E-Board members shall immediately appoint GSGA members to the vacant seats. These appointments must have the unanimous consent of all standing E-Board members.
6. Should any office of the E-Board other than the Presidency become vacated, the standing E-Board members shall immediately elect one of the E-Board to fill the vacated office. In the case that the Presidency becomes vacated, the Vice President assumes the Presidency and the E-Board shall elect a new Vice President.
7. Should any member of the E-Board become unfit for office, that member shall be given notice that the E-Board intends to proceed to impeach him or her. Not less than one week after notice is given, the E-Board may proceed to impeach that member; this requires a unanimous vote of all other six members, and immediately strips the impeached member of their seat on the E-Board.

Section 6 – Agenda

1. At each General meeting of the GSGA the agenda shall consist of the following items:
 - a. Reports of E-Board members and Committees.
 - b. Unfinished business.
 - c. New business.

2. New business not on the agenda may be presented by an E-Board member or GSGA member from the floor at any regular meeting. Such new business may be accepted pending a Majority vote of the GSGA E-Board or at least Majority vote of members present.

Article V – Finances

1. Financial expenditures shall require a Majority vote of the E-Board to authorize.
2. Vouchers and dispersal forms shall require the signatures of the GSGA President and Treasurer to be valid.
3. Financial Structure

The official financial structure of the GSGA is described by the Budget, which covers a single academic fiscal year. Institute accounting is on a cash basis, and thus the Budget consists of the following:

1. A beginning-of-year reserve
2. Cash inflows
3. Cash outflows
4. An end-of-year reserve - The end-of-year reserve is equal to the beginning-of-year reserve plus inflows minus outflows, and must not be negative.