



Advocating and providing a voice for graduate students

## Graduate Student Senate Constitution

### University of San Francisco • Student Leadership and Engagement

#### **PREAMBLE**

*We, the graduate students of the University of San Francisco, in order to best express our rights and interests, hereby establish a representative body of student governance, providing a forum for all graduate students' voices. We do so to protect the well-being of our community, to further the Jesuit mission of the University of San Francisco, and to develop and promote socially responsible leadership for the future. The Associate Graduate Students of the University of San Francisco will be governed and represented by the Graduate Student Senate.*

#### **MISSION**

*The Graduate Student Senate will represent, lead, and unify the Associated Graduate Students of the University of San Francisco to achieve holistic personal and professional development. The Senate commits to advocating to administration of the University and serving as the student body voice in order to promote positive change in policy, programs, and services. We uphold the University's mission and respect the Jesuit values.*

#### **ARTICLE I: Name**

**Section 1.** The name of this organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Senate (GSS).

**Section 2.** The name of the student association that the GSS will govern and represent shall be known as the Associated Graduate Students of the University of San Francisco (AGSUSF).

#### **ARTICLE II: Purpose**

**Section 1.** The GSS is organized to represent, lead, and unify the AGSUSF, to achieve the betterment of the students in their professional and social interests, and to facilitate the coordination of activities for these graduate students. This purpose does not contradict the University's mission or its Catholic, Jesuit character.

#### **ARTICLE III: Affiliation**

**Section 1.** This organization has no direct affiliation with any local, state, or national organization.

#### **ARTICLE IV: Membership**

**Section 1.** All members of AGSUSF must be matriculated, currently enrolled graduate students in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Education, School of Management, or School of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of San Francisco (USF). Voting membership is restricted to matriculated, currently enrolled graduate students at USF.



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- Section 2.** All membership in GSS must have full-time enrollment status (6 credits), maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0, and be in good academic and disciplinary standing with USF during their term of office. All candidates who are USF employees, must submit with their application a letter of support from their current supervisor with a copy sent to Human Resources and the relevant union representatives (if applicable).
- Section 3.** Membership in the organization will not be denied to anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age (except minors), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, or disability.
- Section 4.** No member of this organization shall engage in hazing including but not limited to physical abuse, causing excessive mental stress, verbal abuse, or subservience (see *Fogcutter Student Handbook* for descriptions). Furthermore, students may not commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending this institution.

## ARTICLE V: Officers

- Section 1.** The officers of the GSS consist of five (5) executive board members and nine (9) senator representatives. All officers of this organization must be matriculated, currently enrolled graduate students at USF.
- Section 2.** At least the top two executives are required to complete the Student Organization Advising and Registration (SOAR) sessions offered by Student Leadership and Engagement.
- Section 3.** All elected positions shall be for a term of one year commencing with the official oath of office ceremony, and ending no later than the end of the Spring Semester.
- Section 4.** The Executive Branch of the GSS shall consist of five (5) executive board members: President, Vice President of Internal Affairs, Vice President of Treasury, Vice President of External Affairs, and Vice President of Mission.
- Section 5.** The Legislative Branch of the GSS shall consist of nine (9) representative senators:
  - a. two (2) representative senators from College of Arts and Sciences
  - b. two (2) representative senators from School of Education
  - c. two (2) representative senators from School of Management
  - d. two (2) representative senators from School of Nursing and Health Professions
  - e. one (1) representative from the branch campuses
- Section 6.** Vacancies will be published and applications accepted for two (2) weeks, at which time candidates will be brought forward to the Internal Affairs Committee. Upon recommendation of the Internal Affairs Committee, the GSS shall fill vacated offices of the GSS with final



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appointments. These appointments must be approved by at least two-thirds (2/3) vote. Disapproved candidates from the previous election may not be appointed to any position.

## ARTICLE VI: Duties of Officers

- Section 1.** The GSS President shall be a non-voting, ex officio member of all GSS bodies as well as the USF Board of Trustees. The President shall give quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees and give an annual presentation to the Board of Trustees on behalf of the AGSUSF. The President shall call meetings of the Senate at the request of at least three representatives and may also call meetings in conjunction with the majority vote of the executive board.
- Section 2.** The Vice-President of Internal Affairs (VPIA) shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies. The VPIA shall coordinate the internal development, set the agenda, and chair the meetings of the GSS. They shall keep an accurate and current roster of GSS executive and legislative members. The VPIA shall preside in the absence of the President. They shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the office of President, should the President of GSS resign the office, withdraw from the University, or cease to be a member in good standing.
- Section 4.** The Vice President for External Affairs (VPEA) shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies. The VPEA shall oversee the planning and implementation of all GSS-sponsored programs, services, and events. In partnership with the President and advisor, the VPEA shall plan, implement, and direct public relations events for the GSS. The VPEA shall coordinate and foster programs in collaboration with the University and other graduate student organizations. They shall keep and maintain the GSS website and social media.
- Section 5.** The Vice President of Treasury (VPT) shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies. The VPT shall oversee funds of the AGSUSF in the University restricted fund accounts as supported by Student Leadership and Engagement. The VPT shall submit a complete and detailed financial report to the GSS on a quarterly basis. The VPT shall submit annually, with the President, a proposed AGSUSF Operating Budget to the GSS for its consideration and approval. They shall coordinate the requests, review, and approval of all AGSUSF funding.
- Section 6.** The Vice President of Administrative Affairs (VPAA) (dissolved May 2015) shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies. The VPAA shall keep an accurate and current record of the number of AGSUSF members by school, according to the data of the Registrar. They, or their designee, shall write, keep, and publish complete minutes of all meetings of the GSS within 72 hours after the end of the meeting. They shall attend to the correspondence of the AGSUSF and the GSS as well as preserve and maintain the GSS's archives.
- Section 7.** The Vice President of Mission (VPM) (enacted May 2015) shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies. The VPM shall be responsible for instilling the mission of USF within the GSS and the AGSUSF. The VPM shall create advocacy, awareness, and educational



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initiatives in collaboration with key groups on campus, to promote and foster the spirit of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus. They shall act as an advocate for and with students and serve as the GSS liaison between all graduate student organizations.

**Section 8.** The Senator Representatives of the GSS shall serve as voting members of the GSS. Senators shall primarily represent the voice and needs of their respective constituency. Senators shall coordinate communication outreach to understand the needs of their constituency. They are responsible for coordinating initiatives that support the needs of their constituency.

**Section 9.** Senate shall have the authority to:

- a. Represent the AGSUSF to the University's administration, trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, AGSUSF, or other bodies.
- b. Determine Association policies, including Bylaws and procedures consistent with this Constitution.
- c. Establish rules and ordinances (in collaboration with the University) for the greatest good of the AGSUSF.
- d. Create standing and advisory committees and determine the structure and rules for said committees.
- e. Hear graduate students' concerns and complaints.
- f. Issue resolutions and reports, encouraging the advancement of graduate student support and the betterment of graduate student life.
- g. The GSS shall approved the AGSUSF Operating Budget annually.

## ARTICLE VII: Nominations and Elections

**Section 1.** During the filing period, any eligible student shall self-apply for candidacy. Eligibility requirements for candidacy are outlined in the Elections Regulations provided by Student Leadership and Engagement.

**Section 2.** There shall be an GSS election held no later than the third week of April in the Spring prior to the academic year representatives are to serve to elect student members of the GSS. Vacant GSS seats, shall be filled by appointment no later than October 1st in the academic year they are to serve. Student Leadership and Engagement shall supervise the general elections.

**Section 3.** All executive board members and senator representatives shall be elected by AGSUSF, by majority vote, via online process coordinated by Student Leadership and Engagement.

**Section 4.** All executive board members and senator representatives shall maintain full-time enrollment status, maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0, and be in good academic and disciplinary standing with the University during the term of office.



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**Section 5.** No student shall hold more than one GSS office, excluding committee membership, during the term of office.

**Section 6.** All elected positions of the Association shall be subject to recall by their respective constituencies. Presentation of a petition to GSS bearing fifteen (15) percent of the said constituents' signatures or a 2/3 vote of GSS will make it incumbent on the Internal Affairs Committee to investigate, conduct a hearing and present a verdict to GSS within ten (10) business days. Any elected official of the Association shall be removed from office in the event that they receive a 2/3 majority vote of GSS against them or is declared on academic probation by the University.

## ARTICLE VIII: Advisors

**Section 1.** The organization must have a University advisor. This person must hold at least a bachelor's degree and be employed as a full-time faculty or staff member by the University of San Francisco. The advisor shall be a staff member of Student Leadership and Engagement.

**Section 2.** The advisor shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of all GSS bodies.

**Section 3.** The duties of the advisor shall be to:

- Assist the GSS in fulfilling their mission and purpose.
- Be knowledgeable about the Constitution and Bylaws and assist in interpreting them.
- Be aware of initiatives, activities, and events of the GSS.
- Ensure compliance with policies and procedures of the University of San Francisco.
- Be aware of the organization's financial standing and all financial transactions using the organization's funds.
- Attend organization meetings, executive board meetings, and events.

## ARTICLE IX: Meetings

**Section 1.** The GSS shall meet publicly at least once a month on Mondays from 6-8 p.m. excluding University holidays.

**Section 2.** The President, or by a call from at least three (3) Senate members, has authority to call "special meetings."

**Section 3.** Quorum for GSS shall be a simple majority of its currently elected, voting positions. Ex officio members shall not be counted as part of quorum.

**Section 4.** The parliamentary authority of the GSS shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

## ARTICLE X: Committees

**Section 1.** The standing committees of the GSS shall be the External Affairs Committee, the Finance



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Committee, the Internal Affairs Committee, and the Mission Committee.

- Section 2.** The purpose of the External Affairs Committee is to plan and implement of all GSS-sponsored signature events, coordinate outreach to the AGSUSF, and oversee GSS social media. The External Affairs Committee is chaired by the VPEA.
- Section 3:** The purpose of the Finance Committee is to support the fiscal responsibility of the AGSUSF, proposing the annual AGSUSF Operating Budget, and oversee the allocation of funding. The Finance Committee is chaired by the VPT.
- Section 4.** The purpose of the Internal Affairs Committee is to review amendments, bylaws, other governing documents, committee codes, and policies and procedures that pertain to GSS. The Internal Affairs Committee is chaired by the VPIA.
- Section 5.** The purpose of the Mission Committee is to be responsible for instilling the mission of the university within the AGSUSF through advocacy, awareness, and education initiatives. The Mission Committee is chaired by the VPM.

## ARTICLE XI: Events/Activities

- Section 1.** Sponsored or co-sponsored activities are not inconsistent with the acceptable conduct at an American university committed to the Roman Catholic moral tradition, and activities do not foster hatred or intolerance of others because of their race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, or disability.
- Section 2.** Each fall semester, GSS will host a Graduate Student Summit event and invite all members of AGSUSF to attend. The purpose of the summit is to provide a space and opportunity for graduate students to get to know GSS and their initiatives. It is also a space for members to voice concerns and engage in dialogue about issues of USF graduate student life.
- Section 3.** Each spring semester, GSS will host a Graduate Student Academic Showcase event and invite all members of AGSUSF to attend. The purpose of the showcase is to provide a space and opportunity to highlight the academic work of graduate students. It is also a space to celebrate graduate student organizations and highlights of USF graduate student life.
- Section 4.** Annually, GSS will participate in a community action project; an activity or service performed that engages the graduate student community to promote a culture of service that respects and promotes the dignity of every person. The signature project of the GSS shall be voter registration and promoting civic engagement of graduate students.



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## ARTICLE XII: Dues/Fees

**Section 1.** Members of the AGSUSF shall pay a mandatory AGSUSF Student Activity Fee of \$25 per semester (**the fee shall increase to \$30 per semester in 2018-19, \$35 per semester in 2019-20, and \$40 per semester in 2020-21**). All proposed fee increases or decreases will go before AGSUSF, via an online vote, and must be passed by a majority vote. AGSUSF fees shall be approved by the USF Board of Trustees, prior to adoption.

**Section 2.** There are no additional dues or fees to be collected by members of GSS.

## ARTICLE XIII: Amendments

**Section 1.** This Constitution shall be reviewed by the end of every academic year in order to ensure continued relevancy with the GSS' goals and interests. Any senator or executive may originate a proposed amendment to the GSS Constitution.

**Section 2.** Any proposed amendment shall be presented to the Internal Affairs Committee. The Internal Affairs Committee shall be responsible for determining distinction between substantive and non-substantive changes.

**Section 3.** Non-substantive amendments to the Constitution must be approved by majority vote of GSS. The GSS may amend the Constitution for non-substantive purposes to remove inconsistencies and ambiguity, achieve consistency with applicable law or policy, and correct obsolete terms, names, or titles.

**Section 4.** Substantive amendments to the Constitution must be treated as a referendum:

- A referendum shall be any legislation requiring direct approval by the Association in the AGSUSF elections. Referenda include, but are not limited to, substantive amendments to the Constitution, proposed changes to the AGSUSF Student Activity Fee, and any other issue that merits the vote of the graduate student body.
- Any referendum approved that proposes to change the AGSUSF Student Activity Fee shall also be approved through the USF Board of Trustees in their December meeting prior to implementation of said referendum.

**Section 5.** There shall be two (2) methods of proposing a referendum to the graduate student body:

- A vote of approval of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total GSS membership will place an item before the Association membership in the form of a referendum.
- Submission of a petition signed by at least ten (10) percent of the Association members and presented to the GSS will place an item before the Association membership in the form of a referendum.

**Section 6.** Any referendum proposed must be submitted to Student Leadership and Engagement for approval to appear on the election ballot at least thirty (30) academic days, excluding



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university holidays, prior to the election in which the referendum is to appear. This procedure is in line with the expectations set forth in the Elections Regulations. A majority vote of approval by the students voting will be required to implement an amendment/referendum.

**Section 7.** Should an amendment or issue be brought to the GSS or GSS President more than forty-five (45) business days, excluding university holidays, prior to a general election, the President shall call a special election after consultation with the GSS Advisor and Student Leadership and Engagement. No less than twenty (20) percent of the members of the Association must vote in the special election in order to validate the results. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval by the students voting will be required to implement a referendum in a special election.

**Section 8.** This Constitution shall be considered adopted upon the approval of the members of the Association voting in the election. Upon adoption of this Constitution, appointments that would have continued under the prior Constitution and any legislative acts not superseded by this new Constitution shall continue in effect.

## ADOPTION

Adopted by the Graduate Student Senate in May 2012, amended in May 2017.

## EFFECTIVE DATES

**2012/13** Amended in December 2012 to clarify terms of executive board members and senators. Amended in May 2013 during annual review with non-substantive edits to language for consistency and conciseness, as well as, to add eligibility requirements for members.

**2013/14** Amended in May 2014 to reflect AGSUSF referendum approval of an officer structure transition of the VP of Administrative Affairs to VP of Mission to go into effect in 2014-15.

**2016/17** Amended in May 2017 to reflect AGSUSF referendum approval of an increase in the AGSUSF Student Activity Fee. The fee shall increase to \$30 per semester in 2018-19, \$35 per semester in 2019-20, and \$40 per semester in 2020-21.