



Advocating and providing a voice for graduate students

Graduate Student Senate Constitution

University of San Francisco • Student Leadership and Engagement

ARTICLE I: Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be 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. **This purpose does not contradict the University's mission or its Catholic, Jesuit character.**

Section 2. Preamble

- a. 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.

Section 3. Mission

- a. 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 the 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 its Jesuit values.



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 the organization must be matriculated, currently enrolled students at the University of San Francisco. Voting membership is restricted to matriculated, currently enrolled students at the University of San Francisco.

- a. Membership of AGSUSF includes graduate students in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Education, School of Management, School of Nursing and Health Professions, or School of Law at the University of San Francisco (USF).

Section 2. Membership in the organization will not be denied to anyone on the basis of ability, age, color, creed, culture, race, ethnicity, family model, gender identity, gender expression, health status, nationality, political view, religious, spiritual, and philosophical belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, educational background or veteran status.

Section 3. 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 the University's hazing policy statement and student conduct code). 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.

Section 4. Members of the AGSUSF shall pay a mandatory AGSUSF Student Activity Fee of \$40 per semester. 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.



ARTICLE V: Officers

Section 1. All officers of this organization must be matriculated, currently enrolled students at the University of San Francisco. All officers must have full-time enrollment status and must be in good academic and disciplinary standing with the University of San Francisco during their term of office. The President, Vice President, Marketing, and Finance positions (or their equivalents) must be graduate students.

Section 2. The President, Vice President, Marketing, and Treasurer officers (or their equivalents) are required to complete the Operations, Marketing, and Finance modules in Student Leadership and Engagement's Graduate Student Organization Canvas course to be considered a recognized organization. All officers are also required to complete any other requirements established by Student Leadership and Engagement.

Section 3. The term of office shall be from the time of election in mid-spring, considering transitions from former board to new, through the following spring semester. These terms reflect the process for organization registration outlined by SLE, including holding elections no later than April 1 each year. Exceptions must be approved by SLE in advance of registration.

Section 4. The officers of the GSS consist of five (5) executive board members (and twelve (12) senator representatives. All officers of this organization must be matriculated, currently enrolled graduate students at USF.

- a. The Executive Branch of the GSS shall consist of the following executive board members:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice President of Internal Affairs
 - iii. Vice President of Treasury
 - iv. Vice President of External Affairs
 - v. Vice President of Mission.
- b. The Legislative Branch of the GSS shall consist of the following representative senators:
 - i. Two (2) representative senators from College of Arts and Sciences
 - ii. Two (2) representative senators from School of Education
 - iii. Two (2) representative senators from School of Management
 - iv. Two (2) representative senators from School of Nursing and



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Health Professions

- v. Two (2) representatives from School of Law
- vi. One (1) representative from Orange County Campus
- vii. One (1) representative from Sacramento Campus

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 3. 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 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.



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Section 5. 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 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 6. 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 7. 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, Elections, and Vacancies

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. Elections will take place in mid-spring no later than April 1, which reflects the process for organization recognition outlined by SLE. Exceptions must be approved by SLE in advance of renewing recognition.



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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. Officers no longer able to serve shall submit a letter to the President notifying their resignation at least two (2) weeks in advance. Prior to the resigning officer's final day, they shall provide all documents relating to their position and current projects.

Section 5. 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.

Section 6 Vacancies will be published and applications accepted, 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 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 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.

Section 2. The advisor shall be a non-voting member of the organization.

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

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



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- f. Attend organization meetings, executive board meetings, and events.

ARTICLE IX: Meetings

Section 1. The following meetings will be held consistently throughout each semester:

- a. The GSS shall meet publicly for General Body Meetings one to two times per month.
- b. GSS Committee Meetings will be held on alternative weeks between General Body Meetings.
- c. GSS Executive Meetings shall be held once a week prior to General Body Meeting and Committee Meetings.

Section 2. The President, or by a call from at least three (3) Senate members, has authority to call “special meetings.” and must provide at least 24-hour notice.

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 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 ability.

Section 2. GSS will host the following annual events:

- a. 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.
- b. Each spring semester, GSS will host an End of Year Gala and invite all members of AGSUSF to attend. The purpose of the Gala is to provide a celebratory space to comrade with fellow graduate students at the end of the academic year.

Section 3. 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.

ARTICLE XII: Dues/Fees

Section 1. There are no dues or fees to be collected by members of GSS.

ARTICLE XIII: Amendments



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- 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 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



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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.

Adopted by the Graduate Student Senate in May 2012, last amended April 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATES

- 2024/25** Paused and resumed to complete increase to \$40 per semester in 2024/25 due to Covid-19.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.