

# **Case Western Reserve University Physics Graduate Student Association**

## **Constitution**

### **Article I: Name of the Organization**

The name of the organization shall be the Physics Graduate Student Association, hereafter referred to as the PGSA.

### **Article II: Purpose of the Organization**

The Organization shall exist to provide a forum for all Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) Graduate Physics students to express internal concerns, as a collective conduit for interaction with faculty and University, and to provide its members with social and professional opportunities.

### **Article III: Membership**

- A. All full-time or part-time Ph.D., Masters, and Entrepreneurial track students in the Department of Physics shall be considered members of the organization.
- B. Any graduate student of CWRU that is not a student in the Department of Physics may petition the PGSA president to become a member of the PGSA and shall be granted membership upon request.
- C. Each member is entitled to one (1) vote, which may be cast in person, by proxy, or by absentee vote. An absentee vote may be submitted in writing via CWRU email to the PGSA President prior to the casting of a vote. A proxy may only be appointed in person at a PGSA meeting in front of either the President or Vice President.
- D. No restrictions on membership or participation in PGSA-sponsored activities on the basis of handicap, race, sex, sexual preference, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, or status as a veteran will be permitted, in complete accordance with the CWRU anti-discrimination policy.

### **Article IV: Administration**

- A. Officers
  - a. The PGSA officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Diversity Chair, Faculty Liaison, and First Year Representative, as well as a Graduate Council of Arts and Sciences (GCAS) senator, and Alternate GCAS senator(s).
  - b. The officers shall form the Executive Council, save the Alternate GCAS Senator(s), unless the Alternate(s) holds another Office.
  - c. Each office shall be uniquely held by one (1) individual, save GCAS senator(s), which may hold other offices.

- d. Officer nominations may be made by any member, including self nominations. A nominee may decline any nomination.
  - e. All officers shall be elected annually by a plurality vote between the months of April to June, and shall serve one year starting August 1 and ending July 31, save the First Year Representative.
  - f. The First Year Representative shall be appointed by the incoming first year class during the month of September, and shall serve one year from their appointment until the appointment of the next First Year Representative.
  - g. All officers shall retain their rights as PGSA members, including voting privileges but shall not have additional voting rights (e.g. cast more than one vote).
  - h. The PGSA shall seek out one Faculty Advisor from the Department of Physics to act as Graduate Student Council (GSC). This position can be held indefinitely, and the approval of the chosen faculty member shall be by plurality. A vote for Faculty Advisor may be called at any time by any member of PGSA by adding it to the meeting agenda.
- B. Duties of Officers
- a. Duties of the President shall be to:
    - i. Act as the official spokesperson of the PGSA.
    - ii. Schedule, organize, create agenda for, and chair all PGSA meetings.
    - iii. Ensure action is taken on all PGSA resolutions.
    - iv. Co-create and co-maintain a budget for PGSA funds with the Secretary/Treasurer.
    - v. Maintain an up to date list of all PGSA members and their email addresses.
    - vi. If the GCAS senator office is unfilled, the President must attend the GCAS meeting or find someone else to do so.
  - b. Duties of the Vice President shall be to:
    - i. Assume the role of the president in his or her absence.
    - ii. Assist the President in the completion of his or her duties.
    - iii. Organize PGSA social events.
    - iv. Serves as the primary point of contact between PGSA members and the executive board.
  - c. Duties of the Secretary/Treasurer shall be to:
    - i. Keep minutes of general and executive meetings
    - ii. Assist the President and Vice President with creation and approval of the PGSA budget.
    - iii. Maintain a ledger of funds dispersed.
    - iv. Periodically inform the PGSA of budgetary standings.
  - d. Duties of the Faculty Liaison shall be to:
    - i. Act as the spokesperson for graduate students at faculty meetings.
    - ii. Request attendance at appropriate departmental faculty meetings.
    - iii. Obtain an agenda and prepare for issues expected in a faculty meeting prior to the meeting taking place.

- iv. Report to the PGSA during general meetings on the topics of faculty meetings.
  - e. Duties of the First Year Representative shall be to:
    - i. Act as a spokesperson for the first year class.
    - ii. Act as a liaison to first year students.
    - iii. Sit on the Recruitment Committee outlined below
  - f. Duties of the GCAS senator(s) shall be to:
    - i. Serve on the GCAS and act as spokesperson to the GCAS.
    - ii. Report GCAS applicable topics to the PGSA.
    - iii. Ensure annual recognition from the governing graduate student body (GSC and/or GCAS)
- C. Committees
- a. The Executive council shall appoint a Recruitment Committee for the purpose of handling the visitation of prospective graduate students. It shall coordinate all aspects of such visits, including but not limited to travel, accommodation, entertainment, and meetings with faculty.
  - b. There shall be no standing committees apart from the Recruitment Committee, although the Executive council may create temporary committees as deemed necessary.
  - c. After a trial period of at least one year, any temporary committee may become a standing committee by affirmative vote by a simple majority in a PGSA general meeting.

## **Article V: Meetings**

- A. It is intended that the PGSA shall hold general meetings once a month, but can meet as often as desired with no fewer than two (2) meetings per semester.
- B. The President shall schedule a meeting in a timely fashion when approached by a PGSA member with new business requiring approval of the PGSA.
- C. The President shall inform all PGSA members of a meeting twice via email, with one notification no less than seven (7) days in advance.
- D. All members of PGSA may present new business for meetings by submission in writing (via CWRU email) to the President (or Vice President in the absence of the President) anytime up to two days prior to meeting.
- E. All meetings shall be conducted by the President (or by the Vice President if the President cannot attend). Whosoever presides over the meeting shall compose the agenda of the meeting including new business topics.
- F. General meetings shall proceed according to the agenda, with a time period for discussion of new business at the end, then motion for adjournment may be made by whosoever presides over the meeting. Motion shall be seconded before adjournment.
- G. Members who bring new business to the general meeting shall have the floor when their time is due. Other members shall not have the floor until business is concluded.
- H. Quorum
  - a. Quorum shall be 10 PGSA members or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of total membership, whichever is fewer.

- b. Any general meeting may not commence without a representative Quorum.
- c. Proxy and absentee votes shall be applied to the count of Quorum.

#### **Article VI: Ratification of this Constitution**

**The original PGSA Constitution was ratified by no fewer than fifteen Physics graduate students on July 25, 2005 and was approved by a two-thirds supermajority of attending graduate students. After taking immediate effect, the constitution was submitted annually to the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) along with a Petition for Recognition. Following the dissolution of the GSS and the creation of the GCAS and GSC, the Constitution of the PGSA was re-written to accommodate the new graduate student government as well as to correct any outdated clauses. This latest version of the PGSA Constitution is to be ratified on 9/3/2015 by a two-thirds supermajority. The ratified PGSA Constitution will be submitted to the GSC along with a Petition for Recognition annually.**

#### **Article VII: Amendments to this Constitution**

- A. Any PGSA member may propose an amendment to this constitution.
  - a. An amendment must be submitted to the standing President no later than two (2) weeks prior to the next scheduled general meeting.
    - a. The President shall distribute copies of the amendment to all PGSA members within one (1) week of its receipt.
- B. An amendment must be approved by a two-thirds supermajority of Quorum at a general meeting.
- C. All amendments shall take effect at the adjournment of the general meeting at which it is passed, unless the amendment includes a specific schedule otherwise.

**Amendment 1.** In the event of a PGSA officer losing membership during term, that officer may name a successor without formal vote of the members, but accepted by remaining executive board members.

**Amendment 2.** In the event of a tie for officer positions, the tie shall be broken by the best of three matches of rock-paper-scissors, the form of which is decided upon beforehand.

#### **Amendment 3. Amendment of the Constitution**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the members at least one week prior to the meeting. Alternatively, an amendment may be proposed and voted on electronically via a secure web form, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The secure web form is created and administered by the PGSA President or Vice President, and is accessible only to the members of the PGSA.

- The proposed amendment is clearly stated and explained in the secure web form, and is accompanied by a rationale and a pro/con list.
- The secure web form is open for voting for at least one week, and the voting deadline is clearly communicated to the members via email and other appropriate channels.
- The secure web form records the name and email address of each voter, and verifies that they are a member of the PGSA.
- The secure web form allows each member to cast only one vote, either for or against the proposed amendment.
- The secure web form results are announced to the members via email and other appropriate channels within 24 hours after the voting deadline.
- The amendment is considered ratified if it receives at least two-thirds of the votes cast, and becomes effective immediately unless otherwise specified in the amendment.

#### **Amendment 4. Election of Officers**

The officers of the association shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the members present at the annual general meeting, provided that the nominations for each office have been announced to the members at least one week prior to the meeting. Alternatively, an election may be conducted electronically via a secure web form, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The secure web form is created and administered by the PGSA President or Vice President, and is accessible only to the members of the association.
- The candidates for each office are clearly listed and profiled in the secure web form, and are given an opportunity to present their platform and vision.
- The secure web form is open for voting for at least one week, and the voting deadline is clearly communicated to the members via email and other appropriate channels.
- The secure web form records the name and email address of each voter, and verifies that they are a member of the association.
- The secure web form allows each member to cast only one vote for each office, and prevents multiple or invalid votes.
- The secure web form results are announced to the members via email and other appropriate channels within 24 hours after the voting deadline.
- The candidates with the highest number of votes for each office are declared elected, and

assume their duties immediately unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.

In case of a tie, a runoff election shall be held between the tied candidates within one week of the original election.

**Amendment 5.** The *Secretary/Treasurer* seat will be split into two positions, *Secretary* and *Treasurer*.

The *Secretary* has the following responsibilities: keep minutes of general and executive meetings, and organize social events.

The *Treasurer* has the following responsibilities: assist the President and Vice President with creation and approval of the PGSA budget, maintain a ledger of funds dispersed, and periodically inform the PGSA of budgetary standings.

**Amendment 6.** The executive board will have a Diversity Chair. The Diversity Chair will serve as a liaison between PGSA and PURMS (Physics Underrepresented Minority Students group), and serve as a representative voice for diversity and inclusion.