Constitution

1. Name

The official name of the association shall be the “Biology Graduate Student Association” hereinafter referred to as the “BGSA.”

2. Mission

The mission of the BGSA is to represent and advocate the interests of all graduate students in the Department of Biology and to facilitate enhanced interactions between members through social and academic events.

3. Objectives

The BGSA exists to perform the following functions:
   a) to provide representation for Biology graduate students;
   b) to promote social interaction among Biology graduate students;
   c) to create forums for informal exchange between Biology graduate students, faculty, and departmental staff;
   d) to participate in the development of policies which relate to Biology graduate students;
   e) to organize and/or participate in academic activities related to Biology graduate students;
   f) to promote the exchange of information among Biology graduate student representatives.

4. Membership

All students registered as full-time or part-time graduate students in the Department of Biology at the University of Waterloo shall be members of the BGSA. General membership is free and not based on any associated fees.

5. Executive

The administrative authority of the BGSA shall be authorized to the Executive members of the BGSA.

The Executive shall consist of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, GSA Representative, Social Coordinator, Academic Coordinator, Teaching Assistant Representative, Conference Coordinator, First-year Representative, and Departmental Liaison.

The duties, privileges, responsibilities, and remuneration of the Executive shall be set forth in the by-laws.
The election and nomination of the Executive will take place according to provisions in the by-laws.

6. **Biology Graduate Student Social Committee**

   The social and political body of the BGSA shall be the Biology Graduate Student Social Committee, hereinafter referred to as the “Social Committee.”

   The Chair of the Social Committee shall be the Social Coordinator. All Executive members of the BGSA shall be ex-officio members of the Social Committee. The Social Committee shall consist of any interested BGSA member and is not limited in size. It is highly encouraged that each departmental laboratory group, as well as Pharmacy, have representatives on the Social Committee. All Social Committee members must be members of the BGSA. Elections and/or appointment to the Social Committee shall be in accordance with the by-laws.

7. **Authority**

   The jurisdiction and powers assumed by the BGSA in this constitution and any amendments thereto arise from an autonomous self-governing authority and do not require the approval of any other authority than the BGSA itself.

8. **By-laws**

   The BGSA may adopt, amend, or abolish the by-laws at any General Meeting of the members with a majority votes cast at such meeting. At least ten percent (10%) of the total membership must be in attendance.

9. **Amendments to the Constitution**

   This constitution can only be amended by a majority of votes at a General Meeting called for such purpose.

AMMENDED BY THE MEMBERSHIP on the 29th day of November 2011 (date will change).
By-law 1: Definitions

1.1 General Membership

General members are defined as full-time and part-time graduate students registered in the Department of Biology at the University of Waterloo.

1.2 Executive Membership

Executive members of the BGSA consist of members who have been elected or nominated into the following positions:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- GSA Representative
- Social Coordinator
- Academic Coordinator
- Teaching Assistant Representative
- Conference Coordinator
- First Year Representative
- Departmental Liaison

The duties, privileges, responsibilities, and remuneration of the Executive shall be determined in by-law 4.

1.3 Majority of Votes

A majority of votes is considered to be at least fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the members in attendance or voting by proxy.
By-law 2: General Meetings

2.1 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the members will be held at the University of Waterloo during June or July as determined by the Executive for the purposes of:

a) hearing reports and statements from the current Executive;

b) nominating and electing new Executive members for the upcoming year;

c) addressing other business that may be properly brought before the meeting.

2.2 General Meetings

A General Meeting will be called in October for the purposes of nominating and electing the First Year Representative (to the BGSA Executive) and new Social Committee members. A General Meeting may be called anytime during the year provided that due notice is given and that the meeting occurs at the University of Waterloo.

2.3 Executive Meetings

Executive meetings may be called by any one of the Executive members and should occur at least once per month.

2.4 Social Committee Meetings

Social Committee meetings may be called by any of the Executive members and should occur at least once per term. In the absence of the Chair of the Social Committee, any member of the Executive may act as the Chair of the Social Committee.

2.5 Calling General Meetings

The Executive shall have the power to call a General Meeting at any time.

Ten percent (10%) of the general members, including Social Committee members, may submit in writing a request to the Executive to call a General Meeting. The meeting request should state the general nature of the business to be presented at the meeting, be signed by those members making the request, and be delivered to an Executive member. The Executive members then must call and hold a General Meeting of members within two (2) months from receipt of the petition. It is the duty of the Executive to verify the validity of the request and each signature.

2.6 Notice

Notice of the time, place, and general nature of such a meeting shall be given not less than fourteen (14) days before the General Meeting is to take place. Notice must be given as direct mail out, electronic or otherwise. Notice may also be given through advertisements on the
BGSA website, the Biology newsletter, through the departmental secretary, posters, and new media resources (e.g., facebook).

2.7 Quorum of Members

A quorum for the proceedings at any General Meeting must consist of not less than ten percent (10%) of the general membership, including at least 2/3 of Executive members.

2.8 Procedures

The Chair of the Executive members will serve as the chair person for all Annual and General Meetings unless otherwise determined by the Executive. In the Chair’s absence, the Vice-Chair, or an elected Executive member, will act as a replacement.

The Secretary will record the minutes of the Annual and General Meetings. In the absence of the Secretary, the Executive will elect a replacement.

2.9 Voting

Every member of the BGSA (with the exception of the Departmental Liaison) may vote at any Annual General Meeting or General Meeting in person or by proxy. If a member is unable to attend, the member may appoint, in writing, another member as a proxy.

In the event of a tie, the motion shall not carry. A simple majority will be declared to exist if the number of votes in favour of a resolution exceeds the number of votes opposed. A 2/3 majority will be declared if the number of votes in favour of the resolution is equal or exceeds twice the number of votes opposed.
By-law 3: Terms of Office

3.1 Terms of Office

Terms of Office for BGSA Executive members will normally run from July 1st following their election and will last until June 30th of the following year, unless otherwise removed. Executive members elected or nominated after July 1st will hold office until the end of the usual term.

Terms of Office for BGSA Social Committee members will normally run from November 1st following their election and will last until October 31st of the following year, unless otherwise removed. Social Committee members elected or nominated after November 1st will hold office until the end of the usual term.

3.2 Vacancies

In the event of vacancies on the Executive and Social Committee, a nomination period will be opened by the Executive. All vacancies will be advertised through direct mail out, electronic or otherwise. Vacancies can also be posted on the BGSA website, the Biology newsletter, through the departmental secretary, posters, and new media resources. The vacancy period shall be open for fourteen (14) days. At the end of the nominated period, the Executive will select from the candidates on behalf of the electorate. If no nominations are received, the nomination period shall remain open. Upon receipt of a nomination, the Executive shall close the nomination period.

3.3 Removal of Executive Members

The electorate may remove an Executive member before the expiration of his or her term if they fail to fulfil their duties. A resolution of removal must be passed by a ¾ majority of the Executive.

When an Executive member is removed from their position, that individual is thereby disqualified from holding office for a term of not less than one academic year. Further, with the removal of an Executive member they are determined to have been relieved of their powers as defined herein for the remained of their present term of office.
By-law 4: Executive Membership and Duties

4.1. Duties of the Executive

All Executive members shall further the long-term interest of the BGSA while fulfilling the mission and objectives of the BGSA. All members of the Executive are responsible for attending Executive and General Meetings. Members are expected to work together outside of their outlined duties to promote major BGSA events such as orientation.

4.2. Honoraria

Executive and Social Committee members shall not receive an honorarium.

4.1 Duties of the Chair
- Organize and manage the general operations of the BGSA
- Schedule and chair Executive and General meetings
- Present nominees for the Executive to appoint as vacancies arise
- Act as a graduate student liaison between faculty and departmental staff
- Communicate to BGSA members about BGSA events and initiatives
- Provide the following Chair with necessary documents and information to successfully chair the BGSA, such as the constitution and by-laws, previous budgets, and requests for funding

4.2 Duties of the Vice-Chair
- Keep full and accurate accounts of all BGSA funds, receipts, transactions, and deposit all money into the BGSA bank account
- Have signing authority for the BGSA on all financial accounts
- Prepare and present an annual financial statement to the members at the Annual General Meetings
- Prepare and present updated financial statements to the Executive upon request
- Prepare and submit a proposed budget and request for funding to the Biology Department at the beginning of the Fall term
- In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform all the duties and responsibilities of the Chair

4.3 Duties of the Secretary
- Record and distribute minutes from Executive, Annual, and General Meetings
- Maintain the BGSA website and email account
- Develop and maintain promotion of the BGSA through communications on the website, bulletin boards and other publications
- Ensure that the BGSA maintains an efficient time-line by maintaining, reviewing, and updating an annual event calendar (e.g., submission of funding requests to the Biology Department and the Graduate Student Association, General Meetings to elect Executive and Social Committee members)
4.4 Duties of the GSA Representative
- Attend the University of Waterloo Graduate Student Association (GSA) meetings on a monthly basis and represent Biology graduate students
- Report to the BGSA Executive and Social Committee on events and opportunities with the GSA
- Submit an application to the GSA for Departmental donations (Fall, Winter, Spring) and the Graduate Studies Endowment Fund when applicable

4.5 Duties of the Social Coordinator
- Responsible for planning and organizing social events for BGSA members that promote interaction among graduate students, faculty, and staff
- Plan and implement a minimum of one social event per term, for a minimum of two terms (two per year)
- Act as the Chair of the Social Committee

4.6 Duties of the Academic Coordinator
- Organize and facilitate academic events and seminars
- Provide BGSA members with useful workshops and events that will enhance their academic or working careers
- Collaborate with the Administrative Coordinator, Graduate Studies

4.7 Duties of the Teaching Assistant Representative
- Responsible for overseeing undergraduate evaluation of TAs, TA awards, and any graduate concerns about teaching assistantships
- Act as an advocate for Teaching Assistants in the event that any issues or concerns arise between students and faculty/staff of the department

4.8 Duties of the Conference Coordinator
- Play a major role in the organization of the annual University of Waterloo Graduate Student Research Conference in association with the associate chair of graduate studies
- Plan and organize the Biology Reception at the Graduate Student Research Conference
- Seek Corporate Sponsorship to help fund the conference

4.9 Duties of the First Year Representative
- Represent the interests of first year students in the Department of Biology at BGSA Executive meetings
- Assist with the organization and execution of various BGSA events, with a focus on promoting events to first year graduate students
- Responsible for planning and implementing orientation events for new graduate students commencing in the Winter and Spring terms

4.10 Duties of the Departmental Liaison
• Is any faculty or staff belonging to the Department of Biology that is appointed by the BGSA
• Act as a representative from the Department of Biology and advise the BGSA on matters of concern
• May attend BGSA Annual and General meetings where he or she will not have voting privileges
• May attend BGSA Executive and Social Committee meetings upon invitation only

4.11 Duties of Social Committee Members
• Perform duties and responsibilities as directed by the Executive
• Express ideas for BGSA events to the Executive and help execute all BGSA related events

By-law 5: Finances

5.1 Monetary Information

All monies belonging to the BGSA shall be kept in a bank account under the name of the Biology Graduate Student Association. Money belonging to the BGSA shall not be invested in any other way except for the promotion of the BGSA mission and objectives.

5.2 Signing Authority

All financial transactions must be signed or executed on behalf of the BGSA by any two Executive members who hold the office of Chair or Vice-Chair.

5.3 Financial Year

Unless otherwise determined, the fiscal year shall terminate on the last day of June every year. The Executive must not leave a negative balance in the operating account for the next fiscal year.

5.4 Borrowing

The Executive shall not have the authority to borrow money on the credit of the BGSA.