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CONSTITUTION OF
David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science Graduate Student Association
(CSGSA)

Ratification shall be undertaken via a referendum of all graduate students of David R. Cheriton School of Computer Sciences and be approved by a **majority** of the voting population.

Date of Ratification: Jan. 14th, 2025

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this organization shall be: David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science Graduate Student Association of the University of Waterloo (CSGSA, hereafter “the Association”).

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Association is to provide an educational, political, and social forum for the graduate students of the David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science (CS) of the University of Waterloo (UW) to enhance their academic and social experience. More specifically, by:

- Holding educational and social events relevant to CS grad students,
- Nominating and electing Representatives to Department and Faculty Committees and the UW Graduate Student Association (GSA) Council to represent the best interests and voice of GSS graduate students,
- Acquiring and making available information to assist CS graduate students in their studies at the University, and
- Working alongside and promoting communication with the GSA and other university organizations.

ARTICLE 3: AFFILIATION

The Association is affiliated with the GSA and compliant with GSA bylaws and policies.

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

4.1 General Requirements

- All computer science graduate students and post-doctoral fellows primarily registered with the University of Waterloo
- All members must be from the UW community
- No discrimination (UW - Policy 33)
- At least ten members

4.2: Eligibility

Membership of the Association is automatically granted to all students formally admitted to the graduate program in CS. Membership is also open to other interested members of the UW community (e.g. dual Ph.D. students abroad, visiting students)

ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS

5.1 General Requirements (GSA)

As stipulated by the GSA, only members of the University of Waterloo community may serve as Executive officers, and Executive officers shall be graduate students enrolled in the CS graduate program. Members may only hold one (1) Officer position at the Association with the exception of the GSA Councilor position that can be held in conjunction with other Officer positions.

5.2 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Association will comprise of at least the following four (4) positions:

1. President

The President's duties are to:

- Call, chair, and set the proposed agendas for all General and Executive Meetings;
- Draft and distribute the proposed agenda to all members in a timely fashion;
- Organize all meetings, including booking times and meeting space;
- Act as the departmental liaison, including representing the interests and voice of CS graduate students to the Department, especially maintaining a good relationship and communication between the Association and the department chair and graduate advisor(s);
- Attend departmental meetings and provide, in a timely manner, a report on topics discussed that are relevant to graduate students;
- Ensure communication within and outside the association, distributing any important and pertinent information to members;
- Hold an introductory session during the CS departmental orientation in September. The President introduces new students to the Association, its activities, and members and informs new students of the upcoming election. Also, coordinate with the GSA to introduce new students to the GSA and its services at the September orientation session.
- Facilitate, with the GSA, the organization of elections in mid-September for all Executive positions and any Representatives;
- Act as one of the two Executive signing authorities required for financial transactions; and
- Act as Treasurer in one of the following cases:
 1. The sitting Treasurer is unable to perform their duties, or
 2. The position of Treasurer is vacant.

2. Vice President

The Vice President's duties are to:

- Assist the President in carrying out their duties as needed;
- Act as one of the two Executive signing authorities required for financial transactions; and
- Act as President in one of the following cases:
 1. The sitting President is unable to perform their duties, or
 2. The position of President is vacant.

3. **Treasurer**

The Treasurer's duties are to:

- Collect fees remitted from the GSA each term, before mid-May, mid-September, or mid-February of the following term. If unable to collect the fees themselves in person, then the Treasurer will arrange for an alternate person;
- Maintain proper financial documents for the organization, including recording all revenue and expenditures;
- Manage the Association's finances, e.g. ensuring all invoices are paid on time, that any cash from events, fundraising, etc. is paid into own funds immediately;
- Organize any fundraising or sponsorship activities;
- Manage the membership list and collect fees from non-student members;
- Liaise with the GSA if in need of technical assistance related to finances;
- Present complete financial statements to the Executive at the beginning and the end of each year for approval by the membership;
- Provide an update once a term on the state of the finances, including any changes between proposed and actual budgets;
- Make financial information available to members upon request;
- Act as one of two Executive signing authorities required for financial transactions; and

4. **GSA Councilor**

The GSA Councilor's duties are to:

- Represent the interests and voice of the Association and its membership at all GSA meetings,
- Regularly engage with all constituents in the CS to gather feedback and understand needs for reporting at GSA Council (e.g. monthly meetings)
- Conduct feedback surveys when necessary for getting input from constituents to inform decisions at GSA Council
- Serve as point of contact for graduate students in CS for information on resources and to seek assistance with an issue
- Keep GSA Council apprised of activities of the Association through period updates at GSA Council
- Report on GSA activities to the Association in a timely manner, and
- Find an alternate to attend in their place if they cannot attend (a) meeting(s).

Creating additional elected Executive positions or making fundamental changes to one of the Executive positions may only be done by amending the constitution as per Article 8.1. Only

very significant changes to the roles require a constitutional amendment; however, updating or adjusting the duties of the Executive in the normal course of Association operations does not require an amendment to the constitution.

5.3 Representatives

All Representatives will be self-nominated and will be elected or selected through an application process by a majority of the Executive Committee. If a position becomes vacant prior to the end positions term, the Executive Committee members will perform the duties of that Representative role if it is reasonable to do so or appoint someone to fulfil the duties until the end of the positions term.

There are no limits to how many times a person may hold a Representative role. The Executive Committee may elect or select any other Representatives or Directors (e.g. Social Convener, Web & Social Media Manager, Events Coordinator) on an ad hoc basis as deemed necessary by a normal vote of the membership (see Article 7.5).

ARTICLE 6: ELECTIONS

6.1 Timing & Terms

Elections shall take place in July each year, normally mid-month. The term of office for all positions shall be for one academic “year” (September to August). No one person may hold the President position more than twice; this does not include appointments resulting from a vacancy (see Article 6.3).

6.2 Nomination & Voting

All nominations will be by self-nomination and open to all members. To hold a position, the member must be regularly present on-campus in Waterloo. The candidate who receives the most votes (a plurality) will win the position. The election will be conducted by online ballot to allow for all members of the Association to participate independent of geographical location. If there is one (1) candidate for a position, that candidate will be assigned to the position.

Elections will be conducted by the Executive Committee. The person responsible for the administration of elections should not have a conflict of interest with the current election, which includes running in the election.

The election period will consist of the following sections:

- Nomination period
 - Duration: Minimum of seven (7) calendar days
 - Candidates will submit their self-nominations and autobiographies to the Executive Committee
- Campaigning period

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- Duration: Minimum of two (2) calendar days
 - Candidates will be able to promote their campaign and engage with students of the Association. Executive Committee will ensure to introduce all candidates to the constituents.
 - Voting period
 - Duration: Minimum of two (2) calendar days
 - Members of the Association will cast their votes to elect the Executive Committee members

6.3 Special Situations – Ties, Vacancies, etc.

Executive Committee

The outgoing Executive Committee shall abstain their vote in Executive elections, except in the event of a tie, as only one person can occupy each Executive position at a time. If no one steps forward for an Executive position, and no one eligible to run has nominated themselves, then a General Meeting must be called to find a solution and, if required, amend the constitution (see Article 8).

Suppose an Executive position becomes vacant after the election or is made available for any reason during the year in progress. In that case, the remaining Executive Committee members must reopen the position for election.

Representatives

In the case of a tie in a Representative election (see Article 5.3), the winning candidates shall share duties. If only one person steps forward for a role, they may be acclaimed, or if no one does, then an Executive Committee member should fill that role if possible.

If a Representative position becomes vacant after the election or is made available for any reason during the year in progress, the normal appointment process as per Article 5.3 would apply.

ARTICLE 7: MEETINGS

7.1 Meetings of the General Membership

Only the President may call General Meetings, though Executive members or a significant group of the members (33% of total membership) may request the President call a General Meeting at any time. General Meetings are open to members only, though, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, non-members may be invited to give a special presentation or participate in relevant discussions. All decisions will be voted on *in camera*.

7.2 Executive Committee Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee will take place at the discretion of the Executive, with a minimum of one (1) meeting per term. Executive Meetings usually are closed, though the

Executive may choose to invite Representatives or others as they see fit. All decisions will be voted on *in camera*.

7.3 Attendance & Participation

Meetings may be attended in person or by telephone or video conference (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Skype). For decisions requiring a vote, a member may submit a vote by any authenticated approach. All members are encouraged to participate at meetings and may propose agenda items be added. All meetings shall follow an amended version of Robert's Rules of Order for the viability of meetings via web conference.

7.4 Notice of Meetings

The President will book all times and rooms for General Meetings and inform all members at least one week (7 calendar days) before the first meeting and at least ten (10) days before subsequent meetings. The President will strive to schedule meetings so that they do not conflict with other department obligations (e.g. Graduate courses, teaching, special events) and at a time of day that allows any members in different time zones to participate.

7.5 Meeting Rules & Quorum

The President will chair all meetings, and the Secretary will record the minutes (see Article 5.2). Agenda for the next meeting can be decided towards the end of each meeting so that members may propose additions and have time to consider any decisions that must be made. Additions may also be added on the floor, time permitting.

All motions (e.g. to add to the agenda, accept the minutes, close the meeting, vote on a decision) must be seconded, and a simple majority must approve votes of those present.

Quorum for Meetings of General Membership shall consist of ten (10) members being present, or 10% of the total membership, whichever is lower. "Present" will be defined as participation: in person, electronically, by proxy, or by (e)mail (see Article 7.2).

All members shall act with respect towards other members, as stipulated in UW's Policy 33 – Ethical Behaviour.

7.6 Sub-Committees

Sub-committees (e.g., organizing events) will be formed on an ad hoc basis for a maximum of one (1) year. Any interested member may sit on a sub-committee.

ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (AND BYLAWS IF ANY EXIST)

The constitution shall be reviewed once per year. No bylaws exist at this time but may be created at any time and approved by a normal vote (see Article 7.5).

Failure to obtain either a constitutional quorum or the required majority, as outlined below, shall result in the failure of a proposed constitutional amendment.

8.1 Amendments – Articles 4.1-4.3 & Creating/Amending Elected Executives

To add or otherwise substantially change the elected Executive roles (i.e. to make fundamental changes) or amend Articles 4.1-4.3, which pertain to membership eligibility and the fee, an amendment must be voted on at a General Meeting. It will require a **two-thirds majority** of those present to pass, with a normal quorum as per Article 7.5.

8.2 Amendments – All other Articles

All other amendments shall be approved by a normal vote at a General Meeting to pass, with the normal quorum and majority (see Article 7.5).

ARTICLE 9: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

All concerns and/or issues not addressed herein shall be managed within and at the discretion of the Association's Executive Committee. Where the Executive Committee cannot be impartial or cannot reach a solution internally, assistance from the GSA shall be sought.

ARTICLE 10: EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We strive to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, protecting the human rights of all graduate students of CS and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that all students and graduate students of CS enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the CS offers and to achieve their full potential as graduate students of CS. We acknowledge that the GSA-UW, is an advocacy partner and we will work with them when issues and concerns relate to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The CS is actively committed to achieving a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. In striving to become an equitable community, we will also work to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the adverse effects of any barriers to full participation in the CS that we find, including physical, environmental, attitudinal, communication or technological.

ARTICLE 11: DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution or windup of the Association and following the payment of all outstanding debts, liabilities, costs, charges and expenses properly incurred in winding up, the Association shall transfer all of its property and assets to organization(s) having similar objectives or purposes. This can include, but not limited to, the GSA-UW, the CS or other dGSAs within the same Faculty. The recipient(s) of the transfer will be decided by the Members at the final General Meeting.

Approved by the Executive Members of CSGSA, 2024
on January 14th, 2025

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Gengyi Sun
President of CSGSA

01/14/2025

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Vice President of CSGSA

01/14/2025

Ruizhe Wang

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Treasurer of CSGSA

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Evelien Riddell

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Secretary of CSGSA

01/14/2025

James Riddell

James Riddell
Chief Coordinator of CSGSA

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Meray Sadek

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Vice President Administration of the GSA

17/01/2025

Amendments

- Initial draft, Jan. 14th, 2025