

# **University of Waterloo Environment Graduate Student Association Constitution**

This constitution came into force and effect on September 30, 2014, amended November 16, 2015, November 26, 2018, July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, September 21, 2021 and December 12th, 2023.

## **Article 1: Name of Association**

The name of the association is the Environment Graduate Student Association of the University of Waterloo, hereon referred to as the “EGSA”.

## **Article 2: Mission and Objectives**

The mission of the EGSA is to represent the voice of all graduate students within the EGSA membership and to ensure a positive and fulfilling graduate experience during their time at the University of Waterloo.

- a. Ensure the representation of Environment graduate students within faculty and university-wide meetings, including but not limited to:
  - i. Faculty Council
  - ii. Graduate Student Council
  - iii. Faculty Administrative Council
  - iv. Waterloo Environment Student Endowment Fund
  - v. Graduate Student Association council
  - vi. SEED, GEM and SERS department meetings
- b. Facilitate discussion and communication channels that allow graduate students to raise concerns and questions pertaining to their graduate students and experience
- c. Promote a sense of community through regular social events
- d. Foster an inclusive environment for all students

### **2.1 Mission Statement**

The mission of the EGSA is to represent the voice of all graduate students within the EGSA membership and to ensure a positive and fulfilling graduate experience during their time at the University of Waterloo.

## **2.2 Representation**

*2.2.1 University-wide Representation:* Ensure comprehensive representation of Environment graduate students within various university and faculty bodies, including but not limited to:

- I. Faculty Council
- II. Graduate Student Council
- III. Faculty Administrative Council
- IV. Waterloo Environment Student Endowment Fund
- V. Graduate Student Association council
- VI. SEED, GEM, and SERS department meetings

*2.2.2 Communication Channels:* Facilitate open and transparent channels of communication, allowing graduate students to freely express concerns, pose questions, and discuss matters related to their academic journey and experience.

## **2.3 Community Engagement**

Foster a vibrant graduate community by organizing and promoting regular social events that encourage camaraderie and networking among graduate students.

## **2.4 Inclusivity**

Dedicated to creating and sustaining an inclusive and welcoming environment for all graduate students, irrespective of their background, identity, or perspective.

## **Article 3: Membership**

### **3.1 Eligibility**

Membership of the EGSA is granted to all master's and Ph.D. students currently registered in the following departments in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo:

- I. School of Environment, Enterprise, and Development (SEED)
- II. School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability (SERS)
- III. Geography and Environmental Management (GEM)

Graduate students registered in the School of Planning are not members of the EGSA. However, the EGSA and the Association of Graduate Planners (AGP)

will collaborate on events and issues as needed to strengthen relationships among graduate students throughout the Faculty of the Environment.

### **3.2 Member Types**

There are two types of Members of the EGSA:

1. Members at Large
2. Executive Members

Collectively referred to as "Members."

## **Article 4: Executive**

### **4.1 Executive Members**

The affairs of the EGSA are administered by the Executive Members which includes the following Officers:

- I. Co-Presidents
- II. Social Chair
- III. Event Director/Coordinator
- IV. Finance Director
- V. Asset Manager
- VI. Internal Communications
- VII. External Communications
- VIII. Department/School Representatives

### **4.2 Non-executive members**

At the discretion of the Executive committee it may be deemed necessary to designate departmental representatives from each department to help facilitate information and knowledge exchange from students. This can be done through an appointment process. Representatives will serve for a duration deemed necessary by the executive committee.

## **Article 5: Executive Responsibilities**

Members of the ESGA serving as Executive Members have the following responsibilities:

## **5.1 The Co-Presidents, inter alia,**

- I. is the official representatives of the Association;
- II. presides at Executive and General meetings;
- III. Records and publishes online the minutes of Executive and General Meetings;
- IV. has the deciding vote in the event of a tie at Executive and General meetings;
- V. creates external committees deemed necessary by the Executive;
- VI. serves as a representative/sits on any boards as necessary;
- VII. collaborates with the financial director to distribute cheques from the EGSA bank account, as necessary;
- VIII. be familiar with the contents of this constitution to ensure all roles perform their respective responsibilities;
- IX. Attend or request presence at appropriate GSA council meetings to communicate university-level news or changes;
- X. creates agenda for Executive and General meetings (presides point)
- XI. Maintains, updates, and organizes file management systems (i.e. Google Drive, etc.);
- XII. engages directly with departments and GSA to ensure student representation positions are filled and collaborates with Communications chairs and GSA to fill positions when vacant;
- XIII. Delegates responsibilities as they arise to Executive Members and;
- XIV. Delegation of Co-Presidents' tasks are up to the discretion of the current Co-Presidents

## **5.2 The Social Chair, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for the social activities of the EGSA;
- II. ensure that the EGSA hosts at least two social events per academic semester;
- III. responsible for organization, set up, clean up and oversight of social events;
- IV. is responsible for organizing the smaller events associated with orientation (pub crawl, conference etc.)
- V. delegate duties regarding social activities to other Members as necessary;
- VI. work with the Finance Director to allocate funds for social events; and
- VII. perform the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents and;
- VIII. responsible to collaborate with Events Director to ensure one academic event per term

### **5.3 The Events Director/Coordinator, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for organizing the two annual WESEF funded events the EGSA hosts (i.e. Charity Ball and Orientation Week);
- II. is responsible for organizing Orientation while smaller events associated with orientation is the Social Chair responsibility (pub crawl, conference etc.);
- III. Organize an event planning committee if deemed necessary
- IV. scheduling one academic event per semester;
- V. delegate duties regarding social activities to other Members as necessary;
- VI. Responsible for recruiting volunteers as necessary, this is done by relaying the event details and potential volunteer tasks to the External Communication Director for them to contact the EGSA volunteers;
- VII. Delegation of event tasks are up to the discretion of the current Co-Presidents and between the Event Coordinator and Director
- VIII. work with the Finance Director to allocate funds for academic events; and;
- IX. performs the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents.

### **5.4 The Finance Director, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for the financial affairs of the EGSA;
- II. keeps an accurate account of the assets of the EGSA;
- III. prepares the EGSA's budget, subject to approval by the Executive;
- IV. Is responsible for the development of all WESEF proposals;
- V. Keeps up to date on University and faculty funding opportunities that may be beneficial to the EGSA;
- VI. distributes funds as directed by the Executive or by majority at participatory budgeting meetings; and
- VII. performs the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents.

### **5.5 Asset Manager, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for the physical space of the EGSA office and grad lounge
- II. The responsibilities are outlined with the Space Agreement between AGP and EGSA, thus it is the Asset manager job to be familiar with its contents and follow it accordingly;
- III. In the case where the Finance Director is unable to complete their duties the Asset Manager may be asked to act as their substitute (ex.

attending WESEF board meetings, creation of financial applications, creation of invoices/finance tracking etc.)

#### **5.6 The Internal Communications Chair, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for production of promotional materials of EGSA;
- II. is responsible for facilitating interaction with public-facing platforms, notably social media, ENV digital signage, posters
- III. monitors the EGSA email and ensures any information and news relevant to members, from the University, GSPA, GSA, is communicated to members via email and social media.
- IV. liaison (point)
- V. Collabs for newsletter (internal puts together info and external puts it together and send)
- VI. performs the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents.
- VII. acts as a liaison between the EGSA and other departments or Grad Studies Societies as applicable.

#### **5.7 The External Communications Chair, inter alia,**

- I. is responsible for facilitating interaction with public-facing platforms, such as EGSA website, monthly grad newsletter email, and student feedback collection in collaboration with departmental representatives;
- II. is responsible for updating and maintaining the EGSA website;
  - i. WCMS 3 Fundamental course is required to do so
- III. manages the EGSA email and sends out monthly newsletters as well as frequent communication to volunteer email lists regarding opportunities and upcoming events;
- IV. performs the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents.
- V. acts as a liaison between the EGSA and other departments or Grad Studies Societies as applicable.

#### **5.8 Department/School Reps (1 Representative from SERS, SEED, and GEM, respectively)**

- I. are responsible for attending their respective Department/School meeting or communicating with the assigned student member of these meetings to relay relevant information to the EGSA Executive Member team
- II. communicate with students within their respective Department/School regarding student issues within the Faculty of Environment via a

- semester town hall or Department/School-wide survey. Results are to be communicated with the EGSA executive team and/or Faculty-level councils (Graduate Studies Council)
- III. work collaboratively with other Department/School reps to host surveys to solicit feedback from Environment graduate students regarding EGSA events. Additionally, following the Fall and Winter semester Reps should plan to collect feedback from graduate students who hold TAs
  - IV. performs the functions delegated by the Co-Presidents.

## **Article 6: Meetings**

### **A. An “Executive Meeting” shall:**

- a. be held every week, or as necessary as deemed by the Co-Presidents.
- b. be open to all Members, but only Executive Members may move, second, and vote on motions;
- c. be empowered to amend this Constitution by a vote of 51% or greater of Executive Members present; and
- d. only satisfy quorum (2/3) requirement if a majority of Executive Members are present.

### **B. A “General Meeting” shall:**

- a. be open to all Members;
- b. be empowered to move, second, and vote on all motions, except recall motions. Motions will bind the Executive, provided they are passed by a single majority; and
- c. be held:
  - i. within the fourth to sixth week following the first official day of each semester; or
  - ii. at the call of the Co-Presidents; or
  - iii. within two weeks after the Co-Presidents receives a written notice from at least two Members requesting a General Meeting, who then must be present at the requested General Meeting.

### **C. A “Closed Meeting” shall:**

- a. be open only to Executive Members; and

- b. be held as deemed necessary by the Co-Presidents.

**D. Student Representation Meetings shall:**

- a. be called once a month by the Co-Presidents.
- b. occur the week following a GSA council meeting.
- c. include the following invitees:
  - i. EGSA executive members
  - ii. student department (SEED, SERS, GEM) representatives
  - iii. student department (SEED, SERS, GEM) GSA councilors
    - 1. ideal for dep reps to takes both roles (GSA + EGSA), so EGSA reps would have to apply for GSA councilor role
  - iv. AGP members (optional as it depends on the subject of the meeting)
- d. Request all invitees present relevant updates from department and council meetings that should be communicated to EGSA members.
- e. record important information as official meeting minutes; and
- f. shall share official meetings to all members via website.

**E. Participatory Budgeting Meetings shall:**

- i. be held once a term, within the first month of the term.
- ii. be organized and led by the Finance Director, Co-Presidents and applicable event person: Social Chair, Event Director, Event Coordinator.
- iii. be open to all members.
- iv. facilitate a discussion regarding the allocation of funding for that specific term; and
- v. be empowered to move, second, and vote on all motions, except recall motions. Motions will bind the Executive, provided they are passed by a single majority.

**Article 7: Elections**

- a. Prior to an Election, the Co-Presidents shall call a General Meeting informing all Members that positions on the Executive are available. At this General Meeting, the Co-Presidents will request volunteers for each position on the Executive. For each position, the Co-President(s) will,



- i. if there is a single volunteer for an Officer's position, appoint that volunteer as the relevant Officer; or
  - ii. if there is more than one volunteer for an Officer's position, conduct an election as outlined in paragraphs (c) – (e) of Article V.
- b. Nominations for Executive positions will:
  - i. Remain open for seven days.
  - ii. be provided to the Co-Presidents via email from Members.
  - iii. be posted in an email to all Members no more than 48 hours after the nomination period has ended.
- c. Elections for Executive positions will:
  - i. be conducted via email.
  - ii. be held within one week of the day that nominations close.
- d. All Members are eligible to vote for all Executive positions.
- e. General Meetings in regard to Executive positions as outlined in paragraph (a) will be held within the first two weeks of each academic semester when at least one Executive position becomes available.
- f. If positions remain unfilled following an election, executive members may appoint members to vacant executive positions and will be confirmed by a vote of 51% or greater of Executive Members present

### **Article 8: Executives' Terms of Office**

- a. Each Executive member will sit from the first Executive Meeting following an appointment or election in the semester in which they were appointed or elected, until the first Executing Meeting of the following semester, subject to paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this Article.
- b. By vote of 51% or greater of the Executive Members, an existing Executive Member may remain in Office for up to three consecutive semesters without being subject to an Election.

- c. If an Executive Member will no longer be a Member at the time of the first Executive Meeting of the following semester, they will sit until the last day of the semester.
- d. An Executive Member may be removed as an Officer of the Executive if
  - i. they have been given two weeks' notice of the intention to remove them from office and the reasons for doing so.
  - ii. they have been given the chance to defend themselves at a Closed Meeting; and
  - iii. be voted out by a 75% majority of Executive Members.

### **Article 9: Distribution**

This Constitution and regulations shall be publicly available to the membership.