

# COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTION

## University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### **Article I. Name**

The organization established under this constitution shall be known as the **College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG)**.

### **Article II. Acceptance and Compliance to Registration Requirements and Limitations**

*The College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) and its membership accept and fully comply with the requirements and limitations of registration.*

### **Article III. Limits of Registration**

*Registered student organizations are student associations and are not official components of the University; Registration does not permit a student organization to use or act in the name of the University, to represent the University, engage in any contractual obligation in the name of the University nor represent the organization as being an official part of the University; Registered student organizations are permitted to have approved external affiliations; Registration expressly permits registered student organizations to only operate on campus; Off campus activities of registered student organizations are the sole responsibility of the organization, officers and members, unless expressly approved in advance by the University; Membership in a registered student organization and participation in its activities are voluntary and all risks of personal injury, property damage or other losses incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or participant(s).*

### **Article IV. Annual Re-Registration**

*The College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) will submit its re-registration application once a year during the defined re-registration process.*

Section 1. CGSSG will update the CGSSG roster during the annual SORC re-registration application period.

## **Article V. Purpose**

CGSSG shall:

- Represent and express the needs and interests of students enrolled in the College of General Studies (CGS) in their relations with the University community, with a focus on enriching the nontraditional student experience;
- Plan, conduct, and support programs, activities, and services which meet their expressed needs and interests;
- Serve in an advisory capacity to the faculty, staff, and administrative officers of the University in matters of student interest;
- Promote a spirit of community and identity among students;
- Provide opportunities for personal growth through the exercise of leadership and group interaction; and
- Provide for the equitable expenditure of CGS student activity fees within the parameters allowed by the University policies and procedures.

## **Article VI. Activities**

Section 1. CGSSG shall participate in various activities around welcoming new CGS Students admitted to campus. These include orientation and new student welcoming social events.

Section 2. CGSSG shall engage in the planning and offering the following term-by-term activities/programs: CGS student organizations, CGS elected council and appointed committee positions, Celebration of Nontraditional Student Week Programs, CGS Open Houses, Stewardship of the CGS Student Choice Awards and Excellence Dinner, and other events planned on a yearly basis by the Event Planning and Outreach Committee, depending on current student needs and/or interests.

## **Article VII. Membership Requirements**

*Section 1. Membership is open to current students enrolled in a primary degree program at the College of General Studies (CGS) as defined herein:*

Section 2. Conditions of Membership:

- Current enrollment in at least one major degree program as the student's primary plan within the University's College of General Studies (CGS)
- Have successfully completed at least one academic term in CGS (any exceptions to this policy must be approved by Council on a case-by-case basis)
- Accumulation of credits such that the applicant or member of the organization would not be expected to graduate prior to the end of the academic term following that of election (exceptions to this policy must be approved by Council on a case-by-case basis.)
  - General Council Members may graduate in the Fall semester, if they previously served on the Council the year prior
  - Have attained a Cumulative Grade Point Average of not less than 2.5; and
  - Membership is not open to current Pitt employees pursuing a CGS program.

Section 3. There are no financial requirements for membership in CGSSG.

*Section 4. All members must accept and comply with all the requirements and limitations of registration as a condition of membership.*

*Section 5. Membership in the College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) is voluntary and all risk of personal injury, property damage, or other losses that occur incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or non-member participant(s). Accordingly, the University of Pittsburgh and its officers and agents shall not be responsible nor liable for any claims or causes of action for damage or loss of property or personal injury of any kind or nature which may arise out of or are incidental to the conduct any organization's activities or that of any individual's participation in any group-related activity. It is further understood and agreed that it is the responsibility of the officers of the organization to assure that all of the organization's members and non-member participants in all activities sponsored by the College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) are fully informed and advised of this ASSUMPTION OF RISK, and in the event any individual member or participant should express or indicate non-acceptance, organization's officers shall forbid participation and/or membership of such individual. In regard to the CGSSG member or non-member participant Assumption of Risk, the College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) acknowledges*

*that the University recommends that the organization members and non-member participants make every effort to arrange for the acquisition of liability insurance sufficient to protect all participants against those risks being assumed.*

*Section 6. No illegal discriminatory criteria may be used as criteria for membership including those listed in the University of Pittsburgh's non-discrimination policy. These factors include race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. All groups, except those exempt by law, must permit male and female membership. Sport clubs involving physical contact or in which participation is based on competitive skill may limit participation in competition to one sex; provided that, for any for any such sport club engaged in a non-contact sport, unless there is a sport club available for members of the opposite sex, the club must permit try-outs for each sex. Membership can be limited by factors unrelated to status or beliefs and which are also not illegal. Membership can be limited by school, college, department, major and grades, etc. No hazing or illegal discrimination will be used as a condition of membership in the organization.*

## **Article VIII. Membership Procedures**

Section 1: Any CGS Student may attend and participate in CGS Student Government public meetings or sponsored events, as a member of the CGS student body, at their own discretion. To become an active member of CGSSG, CGS students must complete an official application. Applications may be accessed online through the CGS website.

Section 2: To maintain membership in the College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), all active members must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5. If a Council member is expected to graduate in the Fall semester (December graduation), they may retain their status as a member if they have served on the Council the year prior, only as a General Council Member.

## **Article IX. Voting Privileges**

Section 1. Voting privileges on official CGSSG business are limited to elected or appointed members of the College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) currently enrolled in and in good standing.

Section 2. All members of CGSSG, including the President, Vice-President, Chair Members, and General Council Members shall be voting members of CGSSG Committees.

Section 3. Voting in the election of replacing Chair positions due to graduating and/or non-returning members is limited to currently appointed members of CGSSG.

Section 4. The Judicial Affairs Chair and President shall be responsible for voting on the election of any students from outside of the current Council in the yearly general election.

Section 5. The legislative and executive authority of the CGS Student Government shall be vested in the CGSSG Council Members.

## **Article X. Officers**

Section 1. The organization shall have the following officers: President, Vice-President, Business Manager, Judicial Affairs Chair, Wellness Chair, Event Planning Chair, and Engagement Chair.

Section 2. Up to five General Council Members.

## **Article XI. Terms of Office**

Section 1. Tenure of office for President and Members of College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) shall begin on May 1<sup>st</sup> and end on the last day in April of the following year. The inauguration of officers shall take place at the annual CGS Excellence Reception.

- General Council Members may graduate in the Fall Semester (December graduation) if they served on the Council the year prior.

Section 2. No student may serve in the Office of President or Vice President more than four terms.

## **Article XII. Officer, Chairs, and Member Responsibilities & Duties**

Section 1. The President's responsibilities include:

- Preside over all meetings of CGSSG;
- Be (or appoint someone to be) the official representative of CGSSG at public or University functions, when such representation is necessary (not to exceed three absences per term);

- Submit to CGSSG nominees to represent CGS Student Government at meetings of all deliberative bodies of the University when such representation is requested;
- Be empowered to act *ad interim* for CGSSG, with all such actions subject to review by the Council;
- Regularly communicate with CGSSG committee chairpersons to ensure active progress towards stated goals and guidelines as specified by constitution and bylaws; and
- Administer an Oath of Office to the President-elect, who in turn shall administer an Oath of Office to the Members of CGSSG-elect, before each assumes the duties of this office, as follows: “I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the duties of this office and will, to the best of my ability, uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the College of General Studies Student Government.”

Section 2. The Vice President’s Responsibilities Include:

- Assist the President in performing their duties;
- Serve as the President Pro Tempore and take on the duties of the President when they are temporarily unable to do so, after temporarily serving as President Pro Tempore, meet with the President within ten (10) days to debrief the President on all actions taken during time of service
- Ensure accurate records of meetings by taking minutes or electronic records and making them available to the Council in a timely fashion; and
- Oversee regular attendance and involvement of all Council members, making sure to notify the President first, then Council members (if necessary) when there are issues concerning active involvement.

Section 3. The Business Manager’s Responsibilities Include:

- Oversee financial requests from the Committee Chairs on behalf of the President;
- Become and remain familiar with SORC policy and serve as a resource for members of CGSSG Council as they plan, organize, and execute activities;
- Write a monthly summary report of all accomplishments and activities of the Cabinet; and
- Act as the Chairperson of the Allocations Committee.

Section 4. The Judicial Affairs Chairperson’s Responsibilities Include:

- Be knowledgeable of the Constitution’s Articles and Amendments;
- Update, edit, and improve the CGSSG Constitution if applicable;
- Submit any new Bylaws or Amendments to members of CGSSG for ratification, then to SORC for official approval;

- Supervise and initiate the election, as well as hiring processes; and
- Act as the Chairperson of the Judicial Affairs Committee.

Section 5. The Wellness Chairperson's Responsibilities Include:

- Advocate for the health and well-being of students;
- Work with the Event Planning and Outreach Committee to execute relevant wellness events for CGS students; and
- Promote University resources.

Section 6. The Event Planning Chairperson's Responsibilities Include:

- Plan and execute a minimum of two events during each Fall and Spring term;
- Ensure proper approval and funding for events;
- Work with the Engagement Chair to promote events; and
- Act as the Co-Chair of the Event Planning and Outreach Committee.

Section 7. The Engagement Chairperson's Responsibilities Include:

- Consistently check and update the CGSSG social media accounts;
- Create advertisements and graphics for dispersing;
- Continue to build a strong social media presence and increase engagement;
- Work with the Event Planning Chair to improve event turnout; and
- Act as the Co-Chair of the Event Planning and Outreach Committee.

Section 8. The General Council Members' Responsibilities:

- Attend meetings and contribute to meeting discussions;
- Aid Chair members when necessary;
- Participate in Council and Senate Committees; and
- Serve as Ambassadors to the College of General Studies.

Section 9. The Members of CGSSG shall regularly attend CGS Student Government meetings. If a member is unable to adhere to CGS Student Government meeting times, they will make a substantial effort to attend sponsored events throughout the academic year and be involved in other responsibilities of the Council, including active participation in CGSSG Committees as well as University Senate Committees. This includes the planning of various CGSSG events. Oversight will be provided by the Vice President of CGSSG. Members who are unable to attend any meeting and/or event must notify the Vice President of the organization with a reasonable excuse, left to the discretion of the Vice President to determine.

## **Article XIII. Election of Officers**

Section 1. Any CGSSG Council Member may be nominated during the replacement process of Chair Positions, which will only include current Council Members returning for the next term of service.

- The first round of the replacement process will focus on the replacement of graduating and/or non-returning Chair Member positions, including President and Vice President.
- The second round of replacement process will focus on the replacement of any Chair Member positions that remain vacant after the first round.
  - The replacement election for President and Vice-President will occur first, before the replacement election of other Chair positions.
  - Current Chair members can retain their position if they are still pursuing a CGS primary plan, are not graduating early, and have proven their ability to serve in the role effectively.
  - If there are no current and returning Council Members willing or able to serve as one of the vacant Chair positions, the Judicial Affairs Chair will include this position in the posted election campaign materials for the College of General Studies Student Body.
- The Judicial Affairs Chair will organize and oversee the replacement processes, with the President overseeing the process to ensure a fair election and hiring process.

Section 2. Online election applications will be made available to CGS degree-seeking students for open positions after the replacement process concludes. Only complete applications submissions will be considered. Application submissions are usually due the Friday before Spring break.

Section 3. Nominees for CGSSG Council must meet the condition for general membership, and in addition must have attained a cumulative GPA of not less than 2.5.

Section 4. The Judicial Affairs Chair will supervise the election process. This officer will prepare a written election code and election application packets. In the absence of a Judicial Affairs Chair, the CGSSG Vice-President will provide the election materials.

Section 5. Each member of CGSSG shall be eligible to cast not more than one ballot, and vote for not more than one nominee for the office of President, and not more than four nominees for Members of the College of General Studies Student Government.



Section 6. The nominee for the office of President who receives a plurality of the votes cast shall be elected to that office. The four nominees for the offices of Member of CGS Student Government who receive the highest number of votes cast shall be elected to those offices.

Section 7. The President and Vice President may not hold more than one office during their tenure. - Other council members may hold up to two positions in the event that suitable candidates are unavailable. The officers of the CGS Student Government shall not hold or seek election to the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director or other similar office of any other Executive Organization at the University. The President or members of the CGS Student Government shall resign any such office within 30 days following election to the College of General Studies Student Government.

Section 8. Absentee and/or proxy ballots are unnecessary due to availability of online voting.

Section 9. Results will be made available via email after nominees have been notified and confirmed.

## **Article XIV. Voting Power of Officers**

Section 1. Neither the officers nor any individual member of CGSSG may take any action or allocate any funds on behalf of the Government Council unless approved by majority vote at a CGSSG meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings of CGSSG shall be scheduled at least once each month during the academic year (September through April) for the purpose of conducting Government business. Special meetings may be called by the President or by a majority vote of CGSSG, provided that written or orally-communicated notification has been given to each Student Government member at least forty-eight hours in advance of the special meeting.

Section 3. At all CGSSG Council meetings, a Quorum shall consist of three Student Government Officers (at least two members and the President or Vice-President must be included in those present). No action may be taken without a Quorum. The presiding officer at Student Government meetings shall confirm the fulfillment of the provision for a Quorum before commencement of all meetings.

Section 4. At all CGSSG meetings, majority decisions rule.

Section 5. Unless otherwise prescribed in this document, each CGSSG member shall be entitled to one vote per poll on all issues and motions brought before it.

### Section 6: Avoidance of Ties

- In the event the Quorum contains an even number of members, the presiding officer will refrain from casting any votes, thus ensuring a majority decision.

## **Article XV. Removal of Officers**

Section 1: Any CGSSG member may be removed from office on the grounds of unsatisfactory discharge or neglect of duty. The procedure for removal from office shall be as follows:

- Any Student Government member may initiate a ‘removal from office grievance.’ The grievance shall be in writing, shall include a statement of rationale, and shall be presented to all CGSSG members. The Council member initiating the grievance shall obtain in writing the names of at least two other CGSSG members in support of the grievance. This petition of names shall be presented to all Council members and the staff/faculty advisor along with, and as part of, the grievance mandated in Section 1. In the absence of a suitable number of Council members, the grievance may be submitted to the staff/faculty advisor directly. Within seven calendar days following receipt of the grievance and petition, the CGSSG member in question is obliged to either resign from office or contest the grievance, and the President and all other Student Government members must be informed of the choice. Failure to act results in automatic removal from office.
- If the CGS Student Government member in question chooses to contest, the Student Government President will convene a special meeting (hearing) of the CGSSG members within fourteen calendar days following the announcement to contest. The hearing shall be presided over by the President; if the President is the Student Government member in question, then the President “pro tempore” shall preside.
- The CGSSG member in question shall be given the opportunity to respond to all charges, present witnesses, and be represented by counsel. The same rights will be extended to the griever. From the time of a filed grievance through the hearing process, the Student Government member in question has his or her CGSSG member voting rights suspended.
- The CGSSG Council may vote to recess the hearing for the purpose of obtaining additional information upon a request to do so by either party. Said recess shall be granted for no more than seven calendar days, and only one such recess shall be allowed.

- Before 48 hours have elapsed following the end of the hearing, the CGSSG Council will vote on removal from office, then communicate its decision to the initiator of the grievance and the Student Government member in question.
- The CGSSG advisor should be present for any process to remove an officer and ensure that the procedure is followed as defined.

## **Article XVI. Vacancies**

Section 1. Should the office of a member of CGSSG become vacant, the Chairperson of Judicial Affairs shall appoint to that office the nominee who received the highest number of votes cast for a Member of CGSSG in the preceding election, without having been elected, for the remainder of the unexpired term. Should that person be unable or unwilling to serve, the Chairperson shall appoint the nominee who received the next highest number of votes cast, and so on, until a successor is appointed.

Section 2. Should none of those persons be able or willing to serve, CGSSG shall, from applications submitted, appoint a student. In the case that no other student has received votes, CGSSG shall appoint a student from the general body of CGS.

Section 3. In the case of extremely low membership, CGS staff may assume the responsibility of appointing member from qualified candidates in conjunction with at least one actively enrolled student. CGSSG Council membership requirements, minus election to office, apply to appointed members.

## **Article XVII: Committees**

Section 1. In the event that Committees are appointed by CGSSG, the chief officer of each shall be a chairperson who shall take office upon confirmation by CGSSG.

Section 2. Committees shall consist of CGSSG Council Members. The members of the committee will be appointed by the College of General Studies Student Government Council and maintain their position for the school year unless graduating in the fall term or any other extenuating circumstance.

Section 3. The Chairperson of Mandatory Committees will be the corresponding Chair Member of the Council including:

- The Judicial Affairs Chair as chairperson of the Judicial Affairs Committee
- The Business Manager as chairperson of the Allocations Committee

- The Event Planning and Engagement Chairs will work in conjunction as chairpersons of the Event Planning and Outreach Committee

Section 4. Nominees for the Chairperson must also be regular CGSSG members and:

- Have accumulated credits such that the student would not expect to graduate prior to the end of the next academic term; and
- Have attained a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5.

Section 5. The Chairperson of each Committee shall:

- Preside over all meetings of the Committee;
- Submit to CGSSG a written report on the objectives of the Committee, on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year;
- Appoint other students to serve on the Committee and notify the Student Government within one week of the appointment (when other students are unavailable, Chairperson will solicit votes and counsel from other CGSSG Council members); and
- Regularly attend the meetings of CGSSG.

Section 6. Mandatory Committees of CGSSG are:

- Judicial Affairs Committee, which shall be responsible for:
  - Overseeing elections, filling of vacant positions, and removal of officers;
  - Advising CGSSG about the CGSSG Constitution; and
  - Overseeing and supporting the CGSSG Constitution Amendment Process.
- Allocations Committee which shall be responsible for:
  - Being the point of contact for CGS Student Organizations requesting funds from CGSSG;
  - Advising CGSSG about allocating funds, including
  - Recommending allocation of funds to CGS Student Organizations, from the CGSSG Council (CGSSG has final say on allocation of funds), and
  - Maintaining a record of all allocated funds and expenditures for CGSSG; Supporting CGSSG with maintaining, recording, and submitting a budget.
- Event Planning and Outreach Committee, which shall be responsible for:
  - Planning, creating, and submitting advertising for CGSSG; and
  - Planning and executing CGS events.

Section 7. In the event that CGSSG membership is not sufficiently large enough to chair all committees, the current members shall divide the tasks between themselves. The CGS staff

administrative assistant assigned to CGSSG may also be asked to assume such duties as deemed appropriate and necessary by CGSSG and CGS administration.

## **Article XVIII. Meetings**

Section 1. The College of General Studies Student Government shall conduct no less than one public meeting each month during the spring and fall academic terms. Notice of all public meetings shall be given to the Student Government members not less than 5 business days prior to convening.

Section 2. Special meetings of the Council may be conducted when deemed appropriate by the President. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the Student Government not less than 3 days prior to convening.

Section 3. At least three members of CGSSG should be present at all meetings.

Section 4. An accurate record shall be kept of all CGSSG meetings. This record shall include all motions, resolutions and deliberations of Student Government, as well as the names of those in attendance. Electronic records may be used.

Section 5. The rules of procedure at all meetings of CGSSG, except as the Student Government shall otherwise order shall be those in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised Edition.

## **Article XIX. Finances**

*The College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) shall fully comply with the University fundraising policies and procedures for registered student organizations.*

Section 1. CGSSG will prepare an estimate of the total funds to be available for the upcoming year on or before May 31 of each year.

Section 2. CGSSG will require all students/student organizations recognized by the Student Government who request funding to submit a budget request on or before the end of September for the Fall semester and January for the Spring semester, unless CGSSG Council amends the budget due date temporarily to accommodate exceptional circumstances.

Section 3. Upon submission of a budget request, the Student Government will receive and review such requests and vote to approve or not approve such requests.

Section 4. CGSSG will produce a semi-annual audit of the Student Government budget before January 1 of each year.

Section 5. CGSSG will not maintain an outside bank account if it receives funding from Student Government Board.

## **Article XX. Publication Code**

*In compliance with the Publication Code for Student Organizations, all publications of the College of General Studies Student Government will comply with current copywriter laws, be distributed according to policies and procedures, refrain from expressions that are considered obscene or libelous according to current stature, advocate or insight the material interference or physical disruption of the educational process of the peace, order and decorum of the campus, or that advocate or insight imminent, lawless action or the violent overthrow of the government and identify the organization as publisher and specify that the group is a registered student organization at the University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh.*

## **Article XXI. Advisor**

Section 1. CGSSG will work with CGS administration to appoint a staff or faculty advisor when the previous advisor is no longer able to perform that service.

Section 2. The Advisor to CGSSG will be available to the Government to offer counsel when situations or circumstances occur in the daily operation of the organization that require clarification of, or advice on, interpretation of school and university policy.

Section 3. The CGSSG Advisor shall

- Monitor all expenditures of the organization to assure funds are properly spent;
- Attend meetings and other functions of the organization; and
- Act as liaison between the Student Government Council and the Dean's office.

## **Article XXII. External Affiliations**

This organization has no external affiliations at this time.

## **Article XXIII. Bylaws**

Section 1. It is the responsibility of the Judicial Affairs Committee to write, research, and propose bylaws for CGSSG by: Recording, refining, and submitting for approval to the CGSSG Council all new bylaws. This committee may also be tasked by the CGSSG Council to form specified bylaws voted on by the CGSSG Council.

Section 2. All new bylaws must undergo the amendment ratification process.

## **Article XXIV. Amendments**

*All constitution additions, revisions, and deletions must be reported to the SORC.*

Section 1. Whenever two or more of the members of CGSSG deem it necessary or desirable, they may propose amendments to the Bylaws. Ratification will require a two-thirds majority of the voting members. Voting members shall be provided with the proposed amendments a minimum of forty-eight hours prior to the ratification. After ratification, the amendments will take immediate effect, but will be considered temporary until approved by SORC. Until approved by SORC, the amendment shall be recorded on a separate log. A simple majority vote can nullify the amendment, up until the amendment is submitted to SORC. The amendment shall be submitted to SORC as soon as possible, after it has been made.