

## **Constitution of the Molecular Genetics Graduate Student Association**

- I. This association, established by the graduate students of the Graduate Department of Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto, shall be called the Molecular Genetics Graduate Student Association or MoGen GSA.
- II. **Membership**
  - All the fee-paying graduate students who are registered in the Graduate Department of Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto.
- III. **Purposes of the MoGen GSA Council**
  - 1) To represent and advocate for the graduate students in the department in all matters affecting their collective interests as students of the Department of Molecular Genetics and the University of Toronto.
  - 2) To serve any additional common needs and interests of the members of the Association.
- IV. **GSA Council Structure**
  1. The GSA Council constitutes all elected positions and social reps.
  2. The GSA Council shall be elected annually (see article X for election details).
  3. The GSA Executive is defined as: the President(s), the Vice-presidents (x3), the Event Coordinators (x2) and the Treasurer.
  4. The council shall institute procedures for recall of its elected members if responsibilities are not fulfilled as outlined by the Constitution. Procedures are as follows:
    - a) Anyone on the GSA may report concerns regarding the failure of a member to fulfill their responsibilities to the President(s). If the concern is about the President(s), then report to a VP.
    - b) The GSA Executive will discuss whether a warning should be issued to the party in question (PIQ) without the PIQ present (the GSA Executive will discuss sans President(s) if President(s) is the PIQ).
    - c) If action is deemed necessary, the PIQ will receive a warning in a one-on-one meeting with the President(s) or a VP and be advised how to rectify the situation.
    - d) If the PIQ continues to shirk responsibilities, the GSA Executive will hold a vote to impeach the PIQ without the PIQ present (consensus required).
    - e) If consensus is not reached by the GSA Executive, a general vote will be put to the GSA. Prior to voting, a GSA Executive member will explain to the GSA the circumstances that put impeachment of the PIQ to question and the PIQ will be allowed to address the GSA. A 2/3 majority will be required to enact impeachment.
    - f) Vacant positions will be filled by current, willing GSA members (elected member or social representatives) with support of the general council. If an elected member switches roles to fill the vacant position, their former position will then be filled in the same manner.

5. The MoGen GSA council shall meet monthly. The GSA Executive shall hold additional meetings as necessary.
6. The council shall be responsible for implementing the purposes of the MoGen GSA. In particular:
  - **President(s)**
    - Two individuals may be nominated together for a co-presidency; co-presidents will divide the presidential tasks as they see fit.
    - Communicates with other department's Graduate Student Associations.
    - Receives emails from the GSU President's ListServe.
    - Is the student advocate at faculty meetings.
    - Is the student representative on the Departmental Executive Committee.
    - Serves or nominates another member to serve on the Graduate Representation Committee and ensures successful transition of new member.
    - Keeps students informed of departmental/university policies.
    - Monitors attendance of GSU reps at monthly GSU meetings.
    - Has signing authority at the bank for the MoGen GSA account.
    - Call elections and coordinates election of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO).
    - Chairs alternate monthly meetings of the GSA.
    - Coordinates activities of sub-committees.
    - Keeps the GSA google drive updated and organized with all pertinent information and documentation.
    - Ensures successful transition to new council (see section IX for details)
    - Organize the holiday party.
    - After term as President is completed, the former President(s) takes on the role of Presidential Advisor the following year (see below) (in the case of co-presidents, one must fulfill this condition).
    - Must be a Molecular Genetics Graduate student in the research stream (in the case of co-presidents, one must fulfill this condition).
    - Must have been a member of the elected council for at least 1 year (in the case of co-presidents, one must fulfill this condition).
    - Responsible for maintaining and running MoGen GSA email.
  - **Vice Presidents (3 positions)**
    - Although having distinct portfolios, shall work together to assist the President(s).
    - Chair alternate monthly meetings of the GSA at the request of the President(s).
    - Must have been a member of the council for at least 1 year.
  - **VP Student Life**
    - Together with the President(s), VP student life is responsible for coordinating the council's social calendar of events with the Event Coordinators and Social Reps.
    - Shall serve as the main liaison with the Molecular Genetics undergraduate council if needed.
    - Is responsible for coordinating events and programs that will benefit and add to the GSA education experience, such as but not limited to mentorship programs, group volunteering initiatives, and fundraisers.

- Is responsible for establishing and advocating for student mental health initiatives, such as running a committee, if interests exist in the department.
  - Is responsible for establishing and advocating for initiatives that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, such as running a committee, if interests exist in the department.
  - Is responsible for coordinating the departmental Summer BBQ.
  - If GSU Representative positions are not volunteered for, is nominated by default.
- **VP External**
    - Together with the President(s), oversees affairs involving council and constituents outside the department, such as other departments, GSU, and the general community.
    - Is a GSU Representative.
    - Can represent council in external meetings that involve GSA interests.
    - Is responsible for spearheading the GSA's involvement in Science Rendezvous.
    - At the end of their term, responsible for emailing the GSU Executive Assistant and providing he/she with the emails of the new GSU representatives.
    - May request the attendance of other GSA VPs as GSU representatives for voting power in 'important matters' as defined by the VP external.
    - Is responsible for reporting a 'GSU debrief' to the MoGen council at council meetings in conjunction with the GSU Representatives.
- **VP Internal**
    - Together with the President(s), oversees affairs from within the department, such as coordinating with faculty members on graduate student recruitment.
    - If summoned by the President(s), shall attend faculty meetings with the President(s).
    - In the event of the absence, resignation or incapacity of the President(s), the Vice President Internal will serve as an "Interim President" and assume the President's duties until a new President(s) is elected.
    - Is responsible for organizing Re-class/Qualification wine and cheese and the Departmental Retreat.
    - If GSU Representative positions are not volunteered for, is nominated by default.
- **Career Resource Coordinator**
    - Identifies and disseminates information regarding upcoming career development events at the University of Toronto to the MoGen community.
    - Maintains a repository of links to all of the career development resources, societies and events on campus.
    - Liaison for MoGen career development workshops/alumni symposium and coordinates with VP external for any MoGen engagement in external career development activities.
    - Maintains a MoGen LinkedIn group for current students and alumni.
- **Event Coordinators (2 positions)**
    - Prepares a tentative event calendar to present at the GSA at the first official council meeting.
    - Oversees all social events planned by the GSA council.
    - Plans, organizes and attends all social events (with the help of the Social Reps).

- Promotes social events through posters (created by the Graphic Designer), social media and announcements at student seminar (when applicable).
  - Communicates with other departments to organize interdepartmental events.
  - Responsible for maintaining and running MoGen GSA **email**, Twitter, and Facebook accounts, as well as other social media platforms, with the help of executive committee members.
  - Use of social media and the actions of the Event Coordinators should reflect the purposes of the MoGen council as outlined in the Constitution.
  - Coordinate with Faculty for MoGeNews contributions.
  - Prepares a year-end report including expenses, location, contact information, attendance, event success, etc., for all major events.
- **GSU Representatives (2 positions)**
    - Is responsible for attending **University of Toronto Graduate Student Union (UTGSU)** meetings at the request of the VP External.
    - Is responsible for reporting a 'GSU debrief' to the MoGen council at council meetings in conjunction with the VP External.
    - These positions can be held by other members of the council.
- **Graduate Representation Committee (GRC) Representative**
    - Is responsible for attending GRC meetings.
    - Is responsible for reporting any GRC updates to the MoGen council at council meetings.
    - This position can be held by other members of the council.
- **First Year Reps (2 positions)**
    - Must be in the first year of their degree when elected.
    - Deal specifically with concerns of the first year class, both social and academic.
    - Plan events aimed at integrating first year students into the department, including 2 socials: 1 during orientation, 1 during last rotation.
    - Coordinate first year mentorship program.
    - Coordinate an orientation event for January start graduate students.
    - With the help of the graduate coordinator, maintain the rotation survey.
    - Ensure the rotation survey is distributed to all first year MoGen graduate students by March 31.
- **Graphic Designer**
    - Designs graphics required by GSA for all purposes (event posters, web banners, etc.).
    - This position can be held by other members of the council.
- **International Student Liaison**
    - Is an international student.
    - Plans at least 3 events lead by and with a focus on international students (all students welcome to all events).
    - Advocates for international students including financial, social, and cultural issues.
    - Collaborates with First Year Reps on events aimed at integrating first year students into the department (with a focus on international student inclusion), including 2 socials: 1 during orientation, 1 during last rotation.

- Coordinates first year International Student Mentorship Program in conjunction with First Year Reps.
- **Presidential Advisor**
  - Former President(s) from previous year holds this position automatically.
  - Advises President(s) in all aspects of presidential role.
  - Attends GSA meetings. Attends other meetings (e.g. Faculty executive meetings) by invitation of the President(s).
- **Secretary**
  - Writes minutes and circulates them to all members following each GSA meeting in a timely manner.
  - Keeps track of attendance at GSA meetings.
  - Sends warning emails to council members who have missed a total of 2 GSA meetings. Must cc the President(s) on this email.
  - If the Secretary is unable to attend a GSA meeting, they must arrange for a proxy and inform the meeting Chair.
  - This position can be held by other members of the council.
- **Sports Rep**
  - Organizes MoGen team sports in university leagues.
  - Organizes social sporting events (i.e. baseball games, ski days, skating days).
- **Treasurer**
  - Keeps a detailed account of GSA spending.
  - Budgets and makes recommendations to the GSA council regarding available funds for events.
  - Pays bills and coordinates reimbursements from the department.
  - Has signing authority at the bank.
  - Has all bank statements and communication sent directly to them (via email). Keeps record of these documents to pass on to the future Treasurer.
  - Applies for head grant cheques from the GSU each year.
  - Prepares and presents quarterly budget/account updates at GSA council meetings.
  - Prepares a year-end budget report to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- **Webmaster**
  - Creates, updates, and maintains MoGen GSA webpage.
  - This position can be held by other members of the council.
- **Social Media Coordinator**
  - Updates and maintains MoGen GSA social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Discord.
  - Works with Graphic Designer to create visuals to accompany posts.
  - This position can be held by other members of the council.
- **Medical Genomics (MedGen) Representative (1-2 positions)**
  - Must be a first year Medical Genomics student(s).
  - Advocates for MedGen students on the GSA.

- Ensures the MedGen cohort is welcomed to the MoGen community, including disseminating relevant information
- Coordinates first year MedGen mentorship program and orientation day.
- Coordinate with the Program Director on behalf of the Medical Genomics students.

- **Computational Biology in Molecular Genetics (CBMG) Representative**

- Must be a graduate student in the CBMG track.
- Advocates for CBMG students on the GSA.
- Promotes community amongst CBMG students, includes but is not limited to managing the Slack group.
- Coordinates with faculty directors of the CBMG program.

- **Social Reps (multiple positions)**

- This is not an elected position; all GSA members are welcome to participate.
- Must volunteer to help organize and promote a minimum of 3 events in cooperation with the Event Coordinators.
- Attends most (if not all) social events.

## V. **General Meetings**

- 1) The association will hold annual general meetings to discuss the concerns of the students, as well as to disclose all council activities over the past year.
- 2) General meetings may be called
  - a. by the council of the MoGen GSA, or
  - b. upon petition by 10% of the members of the association.
- 3) The date, location, and agenda of any general meeting shall be announced to the members through the departmental student email listserv at least one week in advance. In addition, posters announcing the meeting will be placed on notice boards in each of the facilities containing members.
- 4) A meeting held in response to a petition must be held within one month of the presentation of the petition to the council.
- 5) The Annual General Meeting will be informal; however, a meeting called due to petition shall be chaired by a member of the council, as agreed upon by the council and the majority of members behind the petition. This meeting may be conducted in an informal manner, but if its conduct is challenged by any two members, the chair shall subsequently run the meeting according to Bourinot's Rules of Order.

## VI. **Finances**

- 1) The council will apply for the annual Graduate Students' Union Head Grant, which will be made payable to the "Molecular Genetics Graduate Student Association".
- 2) The Treasurer and President(s) will have signing authority over the GSA bank account, and all transactions must be performed by them.

- 3) The Treasurer shall provide to the GSU council any financial statements that the GSU may require.
- 4) Funds shall only be used to fulfill the purposes of the MoGen council as outlined in the Constitution.

#### **VII. GSU Council Representatives**

- 1) The VP External and 2 GSU Representatives will share the role of GSU Council Representatives.
- 2) At least one of the three representatives must attend each GSU meeting, including the Annual General Meeting.
- 3) During the first week of their elected term, the GSU representatives will look up the GSU meeting schedule and determine who will attend each meeting. This meeting schedule will be forwarded to the President(s).
- 4) If a GSU representative cannot attend a scheduled GSU meeting, they must arrange for one of the other two representatives to attend. If this is not possible, another GSU council member must be arranged to proxy for them. The President(s) should be notified of these changes.
- 5) GSU representatives will report a 'GSU debrief' to the MoGen council at council meetings. The council will then share the information with all association members, via the departmental student listserve, if necessary.
- 6) When important votes are conducted - denoted as such at the discretion of the External VP - multiple GSU representatives must attend in order to utilize the full extent of Molecular Genetics' three votes.

#### **VIII. Amendments to the Constitution**

- This constitution may be amended by a majority vote from elected council members. Upon amendment, the new constitution must be distributed to all association members, who will be given one week's time to register any objections. If objections arise, a general meeting will be called, at which the amendments will be debated. Following debate, the amendment must receive two-thirds majority approval of those present at the meeting in order to carry.
- Approved changes to the amendments will take effect following the next round of elections.
- An amendment review session will be held every year, two months prior to the annual general meeting.
- The amended constitution will be sent to the UTGSU each year following the above procedures.

#### **IX. Attendance at the GSA Council Meetings**

- Elected members are strongly encouraged to attend all GSA council meetings. It is considered part of the duties of all GSA positions.

- Meeting attendance can contribute to assessment by GSA peers of a member's involvement/execution of responsibilities towards the basis for nomination for impeachment (Section IV-4).

## X. Election Procedures

### 1. Annual Elections

- Call for CRO\* applicants in December prior to the Annual General Meeting to run the elections.
- Positions and responsibilities of council members will be outlined at the Annual General Meeting.
- The nomination period will occur for one week after the Annual General Meeting, which is held in late January.
- 24 hours prior to the end of the nomination period, a notification of the current status of nominations for all positions will be distributed to the whole department, including uncontested positions. This is to ensure all positions are filled and encourage competition.
- After the week-long nomination period, any contested positions will be voted on.
- Candidates for contested positions will be given the opportunity to submit a short paragraph about themselves, which will be available to all voting members.
- Voting will be carried out via an online survey open for one week following nominations.
- The new council will begin its term as soon as voting results are released.
- President and VP positions are only available to students who have been members of the council for at least 1 year.

### 2. Chief Returning Officer (CRO)\*

- Is not a current member of the GSA council and is not intending to run for any position in that year's election.
- Is a current MoGen student.
- Is elected by the current years GSA executive committee.
- Prior to the elections will meet with the presidents to discuss election procedures.
- Attends Annual General Meeting to record nominations.
- Coordinates the nomination and election periods.
- Releases election results to Presidents to disseminate to the student body.

## XI. Transition of Elected Positions

- The "transition period" is defined as the time during which meetings and exchange of ownership of GSA supplies occurs and will consist of the two weeks following the day on which the voting results are released.
- The outgoing President(s) will organize a transition meeting with themselves, the incoming President(s), the Chair of the Department and the Graduate Coordinator within the transition period.
- Following the transition meeting the incoming President(s) will arrange a meeting with the full executive faculty within the first two months of their Presidency.
- Outgoing President(s) and outgoing Treasurer must each draw up an official notice (with the official letterhead) in which they relinquish signing authority on the GSA bank account and appoint the incoming President(s) and incoming treasurer signing authority.
- The outgoing Treasurer will book a meeting with a financial advisor to change signing authority.



- The outgoing President(s) will organize a sit-down meeting within the transition period with the outgoing and incoming GSA executive in order to exchange pertinent information, account access, GSA supplies, and to change signing authority of the bank account to the incoming President(s).
- If the above tasks are not completed during the defined transition period, the burden of organizing these matters will change from the outgoing President(s) to that of the incoming President(s).

This Constitution was amended January 2022.