

# Constitution of “Graduate Association for Students in Physiology”

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## Table of Contents

1. Article One – Name and Purpose.....	2
2. Article Two – Membership and Membership Fee .....	2
3. Article Three – Rights of Members .....	2
4. Article Four - Executive Committee.....	3
5. Article Five – Executive Committee Composition and Duties.....	3
6. Article Six - General Council .....	5
7. Article Seven – General Council Composition and Duties .....	6
8. Article Eight – Elections.....	8
9. Article Nine – Finances .....	10
10. Article Ten – Resignations, Non-Performance and By-Elections.....	10
11. Article Eleven – The Constitution.....	10

## **1. Article One—Name and Purpose**

- 1.1. The official name of the recognized student group is “**Graduate Association for Students in Physiology**”
- 1.2. The official acronym or abbreviation of the group is “**GASP**”
- 1.3. The purpose, objectives, mission and/or mandate of the organization is to
  - 1.3.1. Serve as the official organization representing graduate students enrolled in the Department of Physiology (hereto referred to as “the Department.”);
  - 1.3.2. Develop graduate student participation in the Department and to promote the interests and welfare of its members;
  - 1.3.3. Promote social, academic, athletic, and outreach activities and to further the purposes and objectives of GASP;
  - 1.3.4. Improve collaboration and involvement between GASP members and the graduate community with regards to social, academic, and university-wide collaborative activities;
  - 1.3.5. GASP opposes all forms of discrimination and oppression, including (but not limited to) those based on gender, ethnicity, race, class, ability, religion, spiritual beliefs, sexuality, sexual orientation, nationality, and age.

## **2. Article Two—Membership and Membership Fee**

- 2.1. All students actively registered in a graduate program through the Department shall be members, hereafter be referred to as the Membership;
- 2.2. There shall be no membership fee levied to members of GASP;
- 2.3. Members of GASP are also members of the Graduate Students’ Union at the University of Toronto.

## **3. Article Three—Rights of Members**

- 3.1. All members have a right to stand for election unless otherwise stated in this document;
- 3.2. All members have a right to cast votes in all group elections;
- 3.3. All committee members (as described below) have a right to propose and vote on amendments to this constitution.

#### **4. Article Four—Executive Committee**

- 4.1. The official term for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be from **September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>**;
- 4.2. The administration of GASP will be the responsibility of an elected Executive Committee consisting of: President, 2–3 Vice Presidents, Financial Advisor, and Administrative Advisor, as outlined in Article 5;
- 4.3. Duties:
  - 4.3.1. The Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that the purposes and objectives of GASP are fulfilled;
  - 4.3.2. The Executive Committee is responsible for the oversight of all GASP activities coordinated by the GASP council;
  - 4.3.3. The Executive Committee is the main representative body of the membership within the Department;
  - 4.3.4. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for communication between GASP and the Chair and Graduate Coordinators of the Department;
  - 4.3.5. The Executive Committee shall ensure that GASP Executive and General Council meetings are held on a timely basis. GASP General Council Meetings must be held monthly from October to June (inclusive);
  - 4.3.6. The Executive Committee shall attend GASP Executive and General Council meetings;
  - 4.3.7. The Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Graduate Coordinators, shall organize an annual orientation presentation and social event for incoming students in the Department to be held within the first two weeks of September.

#### **5. Article Five—Executive Committee Composition and Duties**

##### **5.1. The President shall:**

- 5.1.1. The President shall have joint signing authority on all GASP financial accounts with the Financial Advisor;
- 5.1.2. The President shall normally represent GASP on all bodies and committees in the Department and University, excluding those for which another representative has been appointed;
- 5.1.3. The President shall serve as spokesperson for the group;
- 5.1.4. The President shall chair all Executive and General Council meetings or appoint another Executive member as a designate in their stead;
- 5.1.5. The President shall follow the duties/responsibilities as outlined in Section 4.3 and Section 6.3;
- 5.1.6. The President shall participate in Faculty of Medicine student meetings along with the GSU representative. These meetings will be directed by a different department each year and will occur approximately monthly;
- 5.1.7. The President shall ensure a transition of office from one year to the next.

##### **5.2. The Vice President(s) shall:**

- 5.2.1. The Vice Presidents shall assume the President's duties and privileges, in case of the President's absence;
- 5.2.2. The Vice Presidents shall attend all general meetings of the Department, where possible;
- 5.2.3. Collectively, the Vice Presidents shall organize and host Frontiers in Physiology (FIP), the annual research symposium for members of GASP and

other interested members of the Department;

Duties for FIP include, but are not limited to:

- a) Fundraising: applying and obtaining funds needed for the undertaking of FIP;
- b) Planning and organization;
- c) Logistics and coordination of the symposium;
- d) Liaising with external partners (e.g., caterers, suppliers, speakers and sponsors);
- e) Liaising with the administrative staff and faculty of the Department.

5.2.4. Whether there are 2 or 3 Vice Presidents, they must evenly distribute the duties and responsibilities amongst themselves;

5.2.5. The Vice Presidents shall follow the duties/responsibilities as outlined in Section 4.3 and Section 6.3.

**5.3. The Administrative Advisor shall:**

5.3.1. The Administrative Advisor is responsible for the communication within the GASP Executive and General council;

5.3.2. The Administrative Advisor shall be responsible for internal communications between the GASP Executive and General council and its Membership;

5.3.3. The Administrative Advisor is responsible for securing the room for GASP Executive and General Council meetings;

5.3.4. The Administrative Advisor is responsible for purchasing food and refreshments for GASP Executive and General Council meetings;

5.3.5. The Administrative Advisor shall be responsible for the promotion of GASP events through the monthly newsletter, which is to be designed and distributed by them. The contents of the monthly newsletter will be supplied to the Administrative Advisor by the applicable GASP council member(s);

5.3.6. The Administrative Advisor shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records of GASP decisions, motions, etc, in the form of meeting minutes, which are to be sent out to the GASP Executive and General Council after every meeting;

5.3.7. The Administrative Advisor shall be responsible for maintaining a GASP email account;

5.3.8. The Administrative Advisor is responsible for updating the GASP photo wall at least once a year;

5.3.9. If a qualified Social Media Coordinator cannot be elected, the Administrative Advisor will take over the role;

5.3.10. The Administrative Advisor shall follow the duties/responsibilities as outlined in Section 4.3 and Section 6.3.

**5.4. The Financial Advisor shall:**

5.4.1. The Financial Advisor shall have co-signing authority on all GASP financial accounts;

5.4.2. The Financial Advisor shall maintain an electronic record of all monies received and expended and must attain the signature of the President before any monies are processed;

5.4.3. The Financial Advisor shall have access and maintain the GASP bank account;

- 5.4.4. The Financial Advisor shall be responsible for preparing budgets for submission of requested funds;
- 5.4.5. The Financial Advisor shall make available at least one financial report to the Membership per year;
- 5.4.6. The Financial Advisor will provide a budget update to the individual GASP Executive and General Council members each month as required;
- 5.4.7. The Financial Advisor shall be responsible for collecting itemized proof of payment from those who require reimbursement of monies from the GASP financial account;
- 5.4.8. The Financial Advisor shall follow the duties/responsibilities as outlined in \ Section 4.3 and Section 6.3.

## **6. Article Six—General Council**

- 6.1. In addition to the Executive Committee, GASP will also be administered through a General Council consisting of:
  - 1–2 Social Coordinator(s)
  - 1–2 Sports Coordinator(s)
  - Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) Representative
  - Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3902 Representative
  - Graduate Outreach Coordinator (formerly the “Off Campus Representative”)
  - Undergraduate Outreach Coordinator
  - Science Rendezvous Coordinator
  - Physiology Day Coordinator
  - Social Media Coordinator
  - Graduate Professional Development Coordinator
  - Mental Health and Wellness Representative
- 6.2. The official term for all positions on the General Council shall be from **October 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>**.
- 6.3. Duties and Responsibilities of all General Council members:
  - 6.3.1. Each member of the GASP Executive and General Council is required to attend all GASP General Council meetings, and execute the events specified under their role. The President/Executive Council will give strikes should they not fulfill any of these requirements, such as (but not limited to) inadequate notice of absence at meetings (less than 24 h before the meeting), a missed meeting, being unprepared to present updates at meetings, and failure to carry out responsibilities of their position;
 

Each member, including Executive Council members, is allotted three strikes, after which, the member may be removed from the council. Removal of a GASP Executive or General Council member will be determined at the discretion of the Executive Council. If a GASP Executive or General Council member is removed, their ability to hold a General Council position the following year must be determined at the discretion of the Executive Council. Any GASP Council member who receives three strikes will be ineligible to run for an Executive Council position the following year.

- 6.3.2. GASP Council members shall participate in the organization of all GASP activities as determined by the GASP Executive Council and/or the GASP council;
- 6.3.3. GASP Council members shall organize and participate in an entertainment piece for the annual Holiday Luncheon of the Department;
- 6.3.4. The contents of the monthly newsletter are to be provided to the Administrative Advisor by the applicable GASP Council member(s) by the date(s) set by the Administrative Advisor each month;
- 6.3.5. GASP Council members must prepare a comprehensive document of their duties and responsibilities to be passed on to the following year's representatives. This document is to be submitted to the Administrative Advisor by June 30th, unless otherwise approved of by the President/Executive Council. In the event that a member fails to submit this document in a timely manner (as determined by the Executive Council), they shall be ineligible to run for GASP Executive or General Council positions in the following year;
- 6.3.6. The Executive and General Committees shall organize and hold monthly "How-to Seminars," aimed at helping graduate students achieve academic and professional success. Seminars must take place once a month from October to June (inclusive). As this task is not designated to a specific member/position, it is expected that all members of GASP council contribute at least once per academic year.

## **7. Article Seven—General Council Composition and Duties**

### **7.1. The Social Coordinator(s) shall:**

- 7.1.1. Be responsible for the organization and execution of all GASP social events. Events are to be held monthly and include a minimum of one social event and one pub night each month. Pub nights shall take place the first Thursday of every month from September to May (inclusive);
- 7.1.2. Actively promote events by providing detailed event information along with a poster designed by them to the Membership by:
  - Email sent out through Graduate Programs Administrator to the Department at a timeline agreed upon by the Executive and General Council;
  - The monthly newsletter through the Administrative Advisor;
  - Social media through the Social Media Coordinator at a timeline agreed upon by the Executive and General Council;
- 7.1.3. Maintain communication with other departments in the Faculty of Medicine in order to participate in the organization of interdepartmental events.

### **7.2. The Sport Coordinator(s) shall:**

- 7.2.1. Organize GASP participation in such sporting, athletic, or recreational activities, as the membership sees fit. Events are to be held regularly, but not required to be monthly. It is recommended that these events include organizing intramural team(s) for graduate students in Physiology and that the Sports Coordinator captains the teams;
- 7.2.2. The Sports Coordinator(s) shall maintain communication with other departments in the Faculty of Medicine in order to participate in the organization of interdepartmental events.

**7.3. The Social Media Coordinator shall:**

- 7.3.1. Be responsible for maintaining an accurate and current website that shall include the information important for the Membership, including, but not limited to the advertisement and record of GASP events and archiving important GASP documents;
- 7.3.2. Be involved in maintaining additional digital and social media, including but not limited to the Facebook page, Instagram page, and events;
- 7.3.3. Design and make posters for all GASP events for advertisement purposes;
- 7.3.4. In the event that a qualified person is not available for this position, the Administrative Advisor will take over the role, and GASP council can seek outside help with website maintenance as required.

**7.4. The Graduate Students' Union Representative(s):**

- 7.4.1. The number of Graduate Students' Union representatives allotted to GASP shall be determined by the Graduate Students' Union;
- 7.4.2. One Graduate Students' Union representative shall be elected during council elections;
- 7.4.3. In the event that GASP is allotted more than one representative, the elected President is, by default, the second Graduate Students' Union representative, however, they may choose to delegate this responsibility to a second elected Graduate Students' Union representative. In this case, this second representative shall also be elected at council elections;
- 7.4.4. At least one Graduate Students' Union representative(s) shall attend at least three Graduate Students' Union meetings each semester;
- 7.4.5. The Graduate Students' Union representative(s) shall have full voting rights at Graduate Students' Union meetings;
- 7.4.6. The Graduate Students' Union representative(s) shall represent the interests of the Membership;
- 7.4.7. The Graduate Students' Union representative(s) shall inform the GASP council and GASP Membership of Graduate Students' Union events, issues, etc.

**7.5. The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3902 (CUPE) Representative shall:**

- 7.5.1. Be an individual currently holding a TA position within CUPE 3902, who is elected each January externally and brought into the GASP General Council; this member is not elected at the GASP General Council election;
- 7.5.2. Attend all CUPE meetings;
- 7.5.3. Represent the interests of the Membership, especially those who are also members of CUPE;
- 7.5.4. Inform the GASP Executive and General Council and GASP Membership of CUPE events, issues, etc;
- 7.5.5. Organize an informative event (lunch) with the "Steward's budget" about the Health and Dental Insurance Benefits for Physiology TAs.

**7.6. Graduate Outreach Coordinator (formerly the "Off Campus Representative") shall:**

- 7.6.1. Represent the interests of the Membership, situated on-campus (Medical Sciences Building) and off-campus. Off-campus institutes include (but are not limited to): Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Western Research Institutes, The Hospital for Sick Children, St. Michael's Hospital, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Mount Sinai Hospital, Best Institute, MaRS, etc;

- 7.6.2. Hold at least one “Coffee Break” at each individual research institute (on-campus and off-campus) per academic year;
- 7.6.3. Promote GASP events and make accessible to all graduate students;
- 7.6.4. Serve as an active member of the Graduate Representative Committee (GRC), organized by the student associations under the Faculty of Medicine.

**7.7. Undergraduate Outreach Coordinator shall:**

- 7.7.1. Be responsible for maintaining communication between GASP, Undergraduate Physiology Student Association (UPSA), and the undergraduate community;
- 7.7.2. Organize one event (**the Advisory Shadowing Event**) per academic year that is focused on promoting graduate student mentorship of undergraduate students;
- 7.7.3. Organize and host “**Journal Club**” meetings at a frequency decided by the Executive and General Council. These meetings shall be open to all Graduate and Undergraduate students in the department. GASP General Council members shall act as speakers at these events, which are to be coordinated and executed in collaboration with UPSA.

**7.8. The Physiology Day Coordinator shall:**

- 7.8.1. In partnership with Let’s Talk Science, organize the annual **Physiology Day** event which provides high school students with hands on experience in university laboratories;
- 7.8.2. Promote interactions between graduate students, faculty, staff, and participants;
- 7.8.3. Along with the Science Rendez-Vous Representative, shall organize and host a monthly social event of their choice.

**7.9. The Science Rendez-Vous Representative shall**

- 7.9.1. Organize the Department’s involvement in the University of Toronto St. George Campus Science Rendez-Vous event;
- 7.9.2. Along with the Physiology Day Coordinator, shall organize and host a monthly social event of their choice.

**7.9.3. The Graduate Professional Development Coordinator shall:**

- 7.9.4. Organize a professional-development event (e.g., career fair, networking luncheon, etc.) between January and March. This event shall be open to Membership;
- 7.9.5. Put together a committee of volunteers for planning and logistics.

**7.10. Mental Health and Wellness Representative shall:**

- 7.10.1. Be responsible for raising awareness about mental health and wellness;
- 7.10.2. Represent and advocate for the Membership with the Department for equity and accessibility;
- 7.10.3. Organize an informative seminar about the resources available within the University.

**8. Article Eight—Elections**

**8.1. Executive Council Elections:**

- 8.1.1. Executive Council elections shall be held on an annual basis, no earlier than the first week of July and no later than the second week of August;
- 8.1.2. Executive Council elections shall be held at an annual general meeting of the Membership;
- 8.1.3. Sufficient notice of this meeting and the elections must be given to the Membership at least one week in advance;



- 8.1.4. Quorum for this meeting shall be ten (10) members, not including the Executive Council, or one third of the Membership, whichever is less;
- 8.1.5. If quorum is not met, the election shall be rescheduled for the following week;
- 8.1.6. Elections shall be by simple majority of the members present at this meeting;
- 8.1.7. In the event of a tie, current members of the GASP Council who are present at the election shall decide the winner by a simple majority vote;
- 8.1.8. Elections shall be chaired by a member of GASP who is not standing for election;
- 8.1.9. Anyone who has been a GASP Executive or General Council member for at least one academic year shall be eligible for election for President;
- 8.1.10. Anyone who has been a GASP Executive or General Council member, or a FIP Organization Committee member, for at least one academic year shall be eligible for election for Vice President. A maximum of two members from the FIP Organization Committee can hold a VP position at the same time. An exception is if the member of the FIP Organizing Committee has one year's experience on GASP Council, in which case him/her can act as the former GASP council member, and two additional FIP Organizing Committee members can be elected.
- 8.1.11. Anyone who is a member of GASP, as of the following September, shall be eligible for election for Financial Advisor or Administrative Advisor;
- 8.1.12. Anyone who has held a position on the GASP Executive Council or General Council may run for the same or a different elected position in a subsequent year so long as they will belong to the Membership until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year;
- 8.1.13. Anyone who belongs to the Membership as of the following September shall have voting rights.

## **8.2. General Council Elections:**

- 8.2.1. Council elections shall be held on an annual basis, no earlier than the first week of the academic term, in September, and no later than the fourth week of the term;
- 8.2.2. Quorum for this meeting shall be ten (10) members, not including the Executive Council, or one third of the Membership, whichever is less;
- 8.2.3. If quorum is not met, the election shall be rescheduled for the following week;
- 8.2.4. In the event of a tie, current members of the GASP Executive Council who are present at the election shall decide the winner by a simple majority vote;
- 8.2.5. Sufficient notice of this meeting and the elections must be given to the Membership at least three days in advance;
- 8.2.6. The elected shall be determined by the majority of the members present at this meeting;
- 8.2.7. Elections shall be chaired by a member of GASP who is not standing for election;
- 8.2.8. Anyone who belongs to the Membership until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year shall be eligible for election;
- 8.2.9. Anyone who belongs to the Membership as of the following September shall have voting rights;
- 8.2.10. Social Coordinator applicants and Sports Coordinator applicants are recommended to run as a pair to facilitate communications and event planning.

It is recommended that at least one person in each pair is either a senior student (Year 2+) or has experience as a GASP General Council member.

## **9. Article Nine—Finances**

- 9.1. GASP funds, not administered through internal University of Toronto accounts, shall be deposited under the name of “Graduate Association of Students in Physiology” or “GASP”;
- 9.2. Signing authority shall be the dual responsibility of the President and the Financial Advisor. Signing authority shall require only one signature, either that of the President or Financial Advisor. Additional internal documentation must have additional signatures as per Article 5, Section 4;
- 9.3. Upon election of a new Executive Council, signing authority shall be transferred to the new President and Financial Advisor by September 30<sup>th</sup>;
- 9.4. The financial year shall begin on September 1st.

## **10. Article Ten—Resignations, Non-performance, and By-elections**

### **10.1. Resignations**

- 10.1.1. Members of the Executive Council or General Council shall indicate the desire to resign in writing to the President and/or Vice President. Resignations shall be effective immediately. In the event of a resignation, signing authority on any GASP account will also be terminated immediately;

### **10.2. Non-performance**

- 10.2.1. A GASP Executive Council or General Council member may be removed from office for non-performance of duties or abuse of office. This decision shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote at a GASP council meeting. Quorum at this meeting shall be three (3) members of the Executive Council and five (5) members of the general council, excluding the Executive Council.

### **10.3. By-elections:**

- 10.3.1. In the event of the resignation or removal of any Executive Council or General Council member, a by-election shall be held only if such resignation or removal occurred no later than October 31st of any academic year. Otherwise, positions will be filled through appointment at a GASP Council meeting. Should there be no interest, the duties associated with the position shall be delegated to the remaining members of the council.

## **11. Article Eleven—The Constitution**

- 11.1. All constitutional amendments shall require a 2/3 majority vote to be passed at a general meeting;
- 11.2. All voting members may propose and vote on amendments to the constitution;
- 11.3. The Executive Committee shall submit the revised constitution to staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto within two (2) weeks;
- 11.4. Amendments to the Constitution shall take effect only once the revised constitution has been approved by staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto.