

Constitution of the Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Students' Association (NMCGSA)

Article 1: Definition

I. The Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Students' Association ("NMCGSA") is the sole representative body of graduate students at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations ("the Department") at the University of Toronto ("the University"), and a Course Union under the University of Toronto's Graduate Student Union ("the GSU") pursuant to Article 5 of the latter's bylaws.

Article 2: Purpose

I. The purpose of the NMCGSA is:

- a. To promote and maintain an inclusive social atmosphere of friendship, support, and unity.
- b. To represent and advocate for the interests and wellbeing of its members to the Department, the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, the School of Graduate Studies, and the University in the spirit of cooperation and transparency.
- c. To organize and sponsor an annual symposium and academic events in order to share research, develop professional skills, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.
- d. To maintain a physical space and provide a digital platform to build community and encourage communication within the graduate student body.

Article 3: Membership

I. The NMCGSA is open to all U of T students. However, membership to the NMCGSA is limited to graduate students registered either full or part-time at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations.

Article 4: Meetings

I. Meetings of the NMCGSA include:

- a. Townhall meetings
- b. Executive team meetings
- c. Special general meetings

II. Townhall meetings

- a. There must be a minimum of one townhall meeting at the beginning of the Fall semester for the purpose of:
 - i. Allowing the membership to raise ideas and concerns to the executive team relating to their interests and wellbeing.
 - ii. Bringing forward non-binding motions. A quorum consisting of 10% of membership is required. Motions require a simple majority of members to pass.
 - iii. Discussing other general business related to, or affecting, the membership.

III. Executive team meetings are meetings of the executive team, called by the President, for the purpose of conducting executive business.

- a. There must be a minimum of 1 executive team meeting per calendar month.
- b. A minimum of 5 business days' notice must be given prior to each executive team meeting.
- c. Quorum consists of a majority of the executive team.
- d. Members of the executive team have privilege of voice and vote.
- e. All other members of the NMC GSA have privilege of voice.

IV. Special general meetings are meetings of the student body called by either the executive team or 10% of the membership for a particular purpose.

- a. A minimum of 5 business days' notice must be given. The notice must include a brief statement on the purpose of the special general meeting and be posted in the graduate student lounge.
- b. Quorum consists of 10% of the membership.
- c. All members present have privilege of voice and vote.
- d. A special general meeting may elect its own chair.
- e. Non-binding motions may be passed by a simple majority of all members present.

Article 5: Elections

I. Appointment of a Chief Returning Office (CRO)

- a. Elections will be monitored by a CRO appointed by the executive team.

- b. The CRO is responsible for administering the elections in accordance with the NMCOSA constitution and any relevant policies.
- c. The CRO must disclose any conflicts of interest prior to their appointment.

II. Eligibility

- a. All members are eligible to run for executive positions, and vote in the election.

III. Election Procedures

- a. Elections must be held at the end of the Winter term.
- b. With the support of the VP Communications & Student Outreach, the CRO must:
 - i. Distribute a statement announcing the election procedures, including a description of executive roles to be filled, and the opening of a nomination period of no less than 5 business days.
 - ii. Distribute the ballot to all members for a voting period of no less than 3 business days.
 - iii. Encourage the participation of members during the voting period.
 - iv. Announce the results to all members within 2 business days of the end of the voting period.
- c. The candidate with the most votes will be elected to the position.

IV. Appeals and By-Elections

- a. Any member may appeal an election result within 5 business days of the announcement of results by contacting the CRO in writing. The CRO shall give a written response denying or accepting the complaint within 5 business days.
 - i. If the complaint is denied, the complainant may seek a special general meeting within 1 month of the election to seek a remedy. The complaint will be treated in the same manner as a motion.
 - ii. If the complaint is accepted, the CRO in consultation with the incumbent executive team and complainant must determine an appropriate remedy.
- b. Should an executive position not be filled or become vacant partway through the year, the executive team must fill the position through majority vote.

Article 6: The Executive Team

I. The executive team consists of 7 elected officers:

- a. President
- b. VP Communications & Student Outreach
- c. VP Finance
- d. VP Internal
- e. VP Academic
- f. VP External
- g. VP Events & Operations

II. It is the responsibility of all executive team members to:

- a. Attend at least 75% of all executive team meetings.
- b. Contribute ideas and support the agenda of the executive team.
- c. Work collaboratively across the executive team to achieve the objectives and goals of the NMCGSA.
- d. Submit an interim and year-end report to the President detailing the activities and progress toward the goals of their respective portfolio.

III. Duties of the executive team members.

a. President.

The President is the chief executive of the NMCGSA and is accountable, in principle, for all activities of the executive team.

It is the responsibility of the President to:

- i. Articulate a vision and establish measurable goals for the year in consultation with the executive team.
- ii. Set the agenda for, and preside over, executive team meetings, and identify and hold to account action items.
- iii. Hold signing officer authority on the NMCGSA's bank account, and create the budget in collaboration with the VP Finance.

iv. Represent the executive team to its membership and the University student body.

v. Uphold the NMCGSA's values in all in-person and online interactions related to the NMCGSA.

vi. Present an interim report and final report to the executive team detailing all activities of the NMCGSA, progress toward the goals, and any future recommendations.

vii. Ensure smooth transition of office to the incoming executive team.

b. VP Communications & Student Outreach

It is the responsibility of the VP Communications & Student Outreach to:

i. Assist the President with administrative matters and assume their duties in their absence.

ii. Oversee the various NMCGSA committees.

iii. Maintain and update all digital platforms (e.g., Discord server, email passwords, website, membership list, etc.) in collaboration with the Department.

iv. Provide regular updates to the membership on the activities of the executive team and its committees, and promote events on all available platforms.

v. Work with the President to compile and disseminate the interim and year-end progress reports to the membership.

c. VP Finance

It is the responsibility of the VP Finance to:

i. Maintain an account at a financial institution for the NMCGSA and hold signing officer authority.

ii. Create the budget in collaboration with the President at the beginning of the academic year.

iii. Approve budget requests for all NMCGSA activities once approved by the executive team.

iv. Compose an interim budget update and final year financial report in accordance with GSU regulations.

v. Ensure compliance with all relevant financial regulations and institutions.

d. VP Internal

It is the responsibility of the VP Internal to:

i. Ensure the smooth functioning of the executive team.

ii. Give notice to executive team members of meetings, including sending out calendar invites, meeting agendas, etc.

iii. Record minutes, motions, and action items for all meetings.

iv. Maintain and organize a digital archival record.

e. VP Academic

It is the responsibility of the VP Academic to:

i. Represent and advocate for the interests and wellbeing of the membership at the regular faculty meetings and other department or ad hoc committees.

ii. Be the primary liaison between the Department's faculty and the executive team.

iii. Support the VP Events with organizing an annual symposium and other academic events.

iv. Formulate and facilitate opportunities for professional skill development in collaboration with the VP Events.

v. Promote student access to department academic resources available to membership (e.g., MME Library, RIM, Archaeology Lab, etc.).

f. VP External

It is the responsibility of the VP External to:

i. Represent and advocate for the interests and wellbeing of the membership at meetings of the GSU, as well as any relevant committees

of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, the School of Graduate Studies, or the University of Toronto.

ii. Be the primary liaison between the GSU and the NMCGSA, ensure compliance with all GSU regulations, and report on changes to GSU policies to the executive team.

iii. Build and maintain productive relationships with other graduate student associations and departments.

iv. Work in collaboration with the VP Academic and the Department on a case-by-case basis to cultivate and maintain relationships with community partners and institutions external to the University.

g. VP Events & Operations

It is the responsibility of the VP Events & Operations to:

i. Plan, organize, and administer social and academic events with the assistance of all executive team members.

ii. Coordinate with the VP Communications & Student Outreach to ensure events and activities receive maximum publicity.

iii. Determine event logistics and arrange for suitable venues, volunteers, and vendors.

iv. Lead the Academic Symposium committee and orchestrate symposium operations.

v. Maintain the functionality and accessibility of the graduate lounge.

Article 7: Non-Confidence Vote

I. A non-confidence vote regarding one or more members of the executive team may be held at a special general meeting, and requires a two-thirds majority of members present to be carried.

II. In the event of a non-confidence vote, the executive team will appoint a CRO who will conduct a by-election as soon as feasibly possible.

Article 8: Constitutional Amendments

I. An amendment to change the constitution may be proposed by any member.

II. The executive team must appoint a CRO to administer the vote.

III. A quorum of 10% of membership and two-thirds majority of votes is required for the amendment(s) to be carried.

IV. The amendment(s) shall be posted in the graduate student lounge at least 10 business days prior to voting.

Article 9: Policies

I. Policies guide the ongoing operations of the NMC GSA, and must be made available to any member upon request.

II. A majority vote of the executive team is required to adopt or alter a policy.

Date of last amendment: October 3, 2023
