

**GRADUATE DANCE ASSOCIATION
CONSTITUTION**

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PREAMBLE

Whereas the Graduate students of the Dance Department in the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University have formed the Graduate Dance Association (GDA);

and Whereas this Association shall be recognized as the official student government for the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design Dance Department. Therefore, We, the Members of the Graduate Dance Association, do hereby establish this Constitution in the belief that it shall meet the needs of the present and anticipate the needs of the future, in providing a structure in which the Graduate Dance Association may meet its objectives and responsibilities to the Graduate students within the Dance Department and the York University community as a whole.

DEFINITIONS

In this Constitution, unless a contrary intention appears,

“Act” means an Act of Council or By-Law;

“AMPD”, unless otherwise specified, means the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design Dance Department at York University;

“Associate” means non-voting;

“Chair” means the Chair or Co-Chairs of the board

“Constituency” means the Graduate students of the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design Dance Department at York University;

“Constituent” means a registered Graduate student in the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design Dance Department at York University;

“Constitution” means the Constitution of the Graduate Dance Association;

“Council” means the council of the Graduate Dance Association;

“Executive” refers to any or all of the Executive Officers of the D.G.A. council;

“Fall session” or “Fall term” refers to the Fall term class dates in the official Sessional Dates for the current academic session, as defined by York University.

“GDA” or “Association” means the Graduate Dance Association;

“In camera” means that any meeting held in camera is deemed to be private, and no non-member of Council is permitted access. Nothing discussed in camera may be quoted or transmitted afterwards to anyone who was not present. All motions made in camera are considered public;

“Member” means a Member of the Graduate Dance Association;

“regular class” or “regular school day” means a day of the week on which York University holds regular classes;

“student” or “Student” unless otherwise specified, means an Graduate student at York University;

“subsidiary regulation” includes an Act of Council, order, regulation, rule, form, commission, proclamation, resolution, or other instrument issued, made or established in the execution of a power conferred by or under the authority of the Constitution;

“Summer session” or “Summer term” refers to the Summer term class dates in the official Sessional Dates for the current academic session, as defined by York University.

“University” means York University;

“Winter session” or “Winter term” refers to the Winter term class dates in the official Sessional Dates for the current academic session, as defined by York University.

“YUGSA” means: York University Graduate Students Association;

ARTICLE 1: NAME

1.1 The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Dance Association (GDA).

ARTICLE 2: SUPREMACY

2.1 The GDA shall be the only recognized Graduate student government of the Dance Department within the School of Arts, Media Performance and Design of York University.

2.2 This constitution shall be the sole law of the GDA, and shall be obeyed in all regards in any action Undertaken by the GDA or its associated members and organizations.

2.3 The GDA's members shall collectively be the sole authority in interpreting and enacting this constitution

ARTICLE 3: OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the Graduate Dance Association are:

(a) to represent the interests of Dance Students;

(b) to encourage and coordinate services and activities which will enhance the University experience for Graduate students in the Dance Department, as well as the York University community as a whole;

(c) to foster a sense of community within the Department by encouraging the continuous Interchange of ideas and mutual support among faculty, staff and students of the department;

(d) to encourage students to form professional relationships with each other and with the faculty members within the department to ensure that the exchange of questions, concerns and ideas are fluid between students and faculty;

(e) to provide opportunities for, encourage, and promote student-initiated projects in the field of dance and serve as a support system for Dance Students in their independent creative projects;

(f) to safeguard and uphold the rights of individual students regardless of political affiliation, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, class, age, or physical ability;

(g) to organize, regulate, and maintain a democratic system of its own self-government.

ARTICLE 4: POWERS

4.1 The powers of the Graduate Dance Association are:

(a) to create legislation in the context of this Constitution;

(b) to receive and administer all funds accruing to Council to be put towards Council initiatives;

(c) engage in any undertaking necessary to achieve the objectives of Council;

(d) to do any such things that are incidental or conducive to attainment of the objectives of Council listed in article 3.

ARTICLE 5: DUTIES OF COUNCIL

5.1 The duties of the Graduate Dance Association shall be to:

- (a) each year establish and ratify a budget and programs for the current term of council. This should be completed by September 30th;
- (b) act as the official liaison between the students of the Dance Department, the Faculty of the Dance Department, and the University or other organizations;
- (c) consult with the Chair and Graduate Program Directors on issues of concern, and have representation at meetings at which joint decisions are made (such as the Graduate Committee);
- (d) to ensure that the Graduate Dance Association is visible and accessible to both the students and faculty within this department as well as outside of it in order to ensure that the means to raise concerns or offer suggestions is readily available to all parties.

ARTICLE 6: QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

6.1 Every elected or appointed student Member of Council shall be a Constituent enrolled in the Graduate Dance program in at least one full-year (Fall/Winter) dance course or one “half” dance course in each of the Fall and Winter sessions respectively.

6.2 Each elected student Member Of Council shall have completed at least one full-year (Fall/Winter) in order to be eligible to hold an elected position.

6.3 If, at any time, a Member of Council no longer possesses any or all of the above qualifications, the position of that Member is vacated. This requirement is not in effect during the period between the end of the Winter session and the Member's official registration for the following year; however, the Member must be registering for the following Fall session.

6.4 Any student elected or appointment must be a student within the Graduate Dance Department.

6.5 While elected positions must be held by students within the Graduate Dance Department to allow for the Council to effectively serve the needs of the students within the Graduate Dance programs, any York student may sit on the council as an informal (non-elected) member and may participate in any of the Association's committees.

6.6 All members whether elected or informal are non-paying.

ARTICLE 7: COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

7.1 The Board of Directors of Council should be no more than 7 but no less than 5 members.

7.1.1 The Board of Directors shall elect a Chair or Co-Chairs

7.1.2 There shall be at least one student from each program (MFA, MA, PhD) to sit on the Board.

7.1.3 Each Director shall have a vote on Council

7.2 The Ex-Officio/Associate members of Council shall be

7.2.1 The Chair of the Department

7.2.2 The MFA Graduate Program Director

7.2.3 The MA/PhD Graduate Program Director

7.2.4 The Dance Students Association President

7.2.5 The Chief of Returning Officers

7.2.6 These above positions are to be known as non-voting members

7.3 MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER STUDENT GOVERNMENTS

(a) A person who is a voting member of any student government outside AMPD, will be held responsible to prevent any conflicts of interest which may include choosing to pass on voting rights and/or choosing to not be present when meetings are in camera.

ARTICLE 8: DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

8.1 The duties of all Members of Council are:

(a) to notify the Chair \ at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance, if possible, of their intention to be absent from a meeting of Council;

(b) to comply with the provisions of the Constitution and every subsidiary Act or regulation;

(c) to be responsible for briefing his/her successor in a full and comprehensive manner;

(d) to be familiar with, and possess a full copy of, the current GDA constitution;

8.2 The duties of the Chair are:

(a) to be available during the Summer session and Orientation to assist Faculty with preparations for Academic Orientation

(b) to act as the official spokesperson for the Council in all matters pertaining to the business of Council;

(c) to ensure the coordination of Council activities, and to ensure that such activities do not conflict with other associated groups;

(d) to be a liaison between the GDA and other student governments at York University specifically the other student associations within AMPD;

(e) to be familiar with the financial procedures of Council, and to have coincidental authority to sign or requisition checks for Council funds;

(f) to ensure that all Members of Council and other persons and associates of Council are working to fill the responsibilities of their positions in an honest and efficient manner;

(g) to be a member of all committees of Council;

(h) to present a mid-term report and a year-end report;

(i) to hold a set number of office hours, as prescribed by Council, which shall not be less than two hours per week;

(j) to represent Council and Student concerns on Faculty committees relating to academic matters

(k) to assume such other duties as Council may, from time to time, assign.

(l) to act as the signing authority, with regards to documents and forms. If the position is held by more than one person, both members will hold the right to act as the signing authority.

(m) to be responsible for establishing an annual budget due before the first day of classes;

(n) to act as speaker at all meetings

(o) to be impartial and to preside over the meetings of Council, and to preserve order and decorum;

8.3 The duties of the remainder of the Board:

(a) to be available during the Summer session and Orientation to assist with preparations for Academic Orientation;

(b) to assist in the creation of events and services intended for the cultural and academic enrichment of all Dance students;

(f) to attend any committee meetings should the Chair not be able to attend;

(h) to present a mid-term report and year-end report;

(i) to maintain a set number of office hours, as prescribed by Council, which shall not be less than one hour per week;

(j) to assume such other duties as Council may, from time to time, assign.

(k) to be responsible for the creation, execution and maintenance of all GDA programs;

(e) to organize both the Fall and Winter Faculty-Student Mixers

(f) to assume such other duties as Council may, from time to time, assign.

8.4 The duties of the Chief of Returning Officers

(a) to run a safe and fair election in the fall and winter terms

(b) to assume such other duties as Council or the Executive Committee may, from time to time, assign;

ARTICLE 9: PROCEDURES OF COUNCIL

9.1 Meetings of council shall be run in accordance with the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

9.2 All meetings are open to any individual.

9.3 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

(a) During the Fall and Winter sessions, the maximum amount of time between meetings of Council must be no more than two weeks;

(b) During the summer session, meetings shall be held at least once every month;

9.4 CALLING MEETINGS

(a) In addition to regular meetings of Council, the Chair may call emergency meetings of Council at their discretion;

(b) Chair shall call a meeting upon the discretion, in writing, of any three Members of Council, and said Members are duty-bound to be in attendance at the resulting meeting.

9.5 NOTICE OF MEETINGS

(a) Except in the case of an emergency or exceptional circumstances, notice of meetings shall be communicated to each Member no less than forty-eight hours before the meeting is to take place.

Such notice shall be communicated by the Chair and shall indicate the time and the place of the meeting;

(c) No error or omission in giving notice to any Member of a meeting of Council shall invalidate such meeting or make void any proceedings taken thereat, provided that the error or omission was purely accidental and not so unreasonable that it substantially affected the Member(s) concerned.

9.6 REGULAR MEETINGS

(a) Council shall by motion establish the time and day of the week, or specific dates, for regular meetings of Council;

(b) Where Council has established when regular meetings are to be held, no notice need be given to Members after the first meeting;

(c) Every Member of Council shall be promptly informed by the Chair in the absence thereof, of when regular meetings of Council are to be held, if such Member was absent from the meeting at which such decision was made.

9.7 IN CAMERA MEETINGS

(a) Council may, by a 2/3 vote, hold all or part of a meeting of Council in camera;

(b) Any person may be admitted to an in camera meeting of Council, provided the motion to that effect includes the name(s) of every individual to be admitted, and that the motion is passed unanimously.

9.8 PROXY VOTING

(a) Unless otherwise provided, any voting Member of Council may submit to the Chair a proxy form, which shall be in writing, dated, witnessed and signed by both the proxy giver and the proxy holder, and which will specify if it confers on the proxy holder either the ability to act as the proxy giving member for the duration of the meeting, or instructs the recipient to vote according to the specific wishes of the proxy giver. If specific instructions are given, they must be included on the proxy form;

(b) A proxy form may be submitted at any time before or during a meeting of Council;

(c) The contents of a Member's proxy form may be made known to Council at the request of any Member, and may be inspected by any Member, unless the vote held in Council was by secret ballot, in which case the contents of a Member's proxy form may be made known to, and inspected by, only those persons counting the secret ballots.

9.9 QUORUM

(a) During the Fall session and Winter session quorum shall be set at fifty percent plus one of the voting members of council;

(b) During the Summer session quorum will be established between the Chair Graduate Program Directors and the Chair of the Dance Department;

(c) In the case where there is less than 4 voting Members of Council serving during the Fall and/or Winter session, then the presence of at least four (3) voting Members of Council shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of Council;

9.10 PARTICIPATING PRESENCE

(a) When all members present or participation in a meeting have consented, any Member may participate in a meeting electronically, counting towards quorum, so long as that person can be heard by everyone, and can hear all proceedings. This may include electronic communication, or speakerphone or verbal.

ARTICLE 10: FINANCES OF COUNCIL

10.1 Council may, from time to time, pass Acts, establishing rules and regulations concerning the financial procedures of Council, provided such regulations/rules do not conflict with the requirements of this Article or any other Article of the Constitution.

10.2 All monies authorized, allocated and spent by Council are the sole gift of the Council, as representatives of the Constituents; it is the right of Council to direct, limit, and appoint in all such decisions, the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations and qualifications of such allocations.

10.3 Council continues to retain authority over all monies until they are spent, notwithstanding that a budget has been approved or that monies have been allocated to any Member or committee of Council, or other person or organization deriving its authority and existence from the Constitution or Council and who/which is directly responsible to Council.

10.4 Any motion to re-allocate funds already allocated in the approved budget requires at least one meeting's notice to all members.

10.5 Notwithstanding that a budget has been approved or that monies have been allocated, no Member of Council may authorize the spending of monies, without the express consent of Council.

10.6 All cheques, bills of exchange, or other orders for the payment of money, shall be signed by the Chair.

10.7 CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

(a) All contracts, agreements, instruments, or other documents requiring the signature of Council shall be signed by the Chair, and at least one other voting Member of Council;

(b) Despite subsection (a), contracts in the ordinary course of Council's operations may be entered into on behalf of Council by any person expressly authorized by Council.

(c) It is affirmed that Council may at any time by resolution direct the manner in which any particular contract, agreement; instrument, document or other obligation(s) of Council may or shall be executed.

10.8 THE AUDIT

(a) Each year, during the Winter session, Council shall appoint the auditor(s) to hold office until the following year, and if an appointment is not so made, the auditor in office shall continue in office until a successor is appointed;

(b) Council may, by a 2/3 vote, and where notice of intention to pass the resolution has been given, remove the auditor(s) before the expiration of the auditor's term of office, and shall, by a majority vote at that meeting, appoint another auditor(s) in the auditor's stead for the remainder of the term;

(c) The auditor's report shall be presented to Council for approval. This report will be available to any student/faculty member upon request.

(d) The fiscal year of Council shall terminate on the 30th day of April in each year.

ARTICLE 11: EMERGENCY POWERS

11.1 The Chair, with the written consent of at least two other voting Members of Council, shall have the power and authority to act for Council in and in relation to any matter which is a matter

which must be dealt with so quickly that time does not permit the holding of a regular or special meeting of Council.

11.2 EXTENT OF EMERGENCY POWERS

(a) In exercising the power(s) authorized by this Article, under no circumstances shall any more power be exercised or action(s) taken than is absolutely necessary to manage and alleviate the purported urgent matter;

(b) Without limiting or restricting the power(s) exercisable under the authority of this Article, the authorized person(s) may make decisions with respect to the following matters as are, on reasonable grounds, necessary for dealing with the purported urgent matter:

- i) The allocation and spending of Council monies up to \$500;
- ii) The placement of a suspension on any member of council which shall last until the next regular council meeting.

11.3 The Chair shall report to Council at its next regular meeting what action was taken under this authority, and must satisfy council that those measures were appropriate.

(a) Where Council finds that the actions of the Chair taken through emergency powers were not appropriate, it is the duty of Council to censure, suspend, impeach or to impose some other reasonable form of disciplinary measure.

11.4 EMERGENCY POWERS DURING LABOUR DISRUPTIONS AT YORK UNIVERSITY

(a) In the event of a labour disruption at York University affecting regular academic activity in the form of academic activity suspension, it is recommended that based on the discretion of the members of the Graduate Dance Association that Council continues to hold regular Council meetings, at which occasion the maximum amount of time between meetings of Council must be no more than two weeks;

(b) In this event, it is also recommended that Council should remain as a functioning, regularly meeting body during a labour dispute, remaining at the discretion of Council, including all sub-committees and programs.

ARTICLE 12: RESIGNATIONS

12.1 Any Member of Council may resign or give notice of intention to resign in writing. Any written notification shall be deemed to be addressed to Council. When it is determined that the written notification is genuine, Council shall declare such seat vacated as indicated in the written notification.

12.2 Despite Article 12.1, Council shall not accept a Member's resignation while a motion of impeachment, suspension or censure is pending, or while any investigation concerning that Member's conduct is pending.

12.3 Despite Article 12.1, Council shall not accept a Member's resignation if Council had reason to believe that such Member was intimidated into resigning and, in such a case, Council shall forthwith cause an investigation of the matter to take place.

ARTICLE 13: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

13.1 No Member is entitled to vote upon any question in which, in the opinion of the Chair or of Council, that Member has a direct financial or political interest.

13.2 The determination of a conflict of interest shall be made by the Chair or Council. Council may only make such determination before the holding of the vote in which the Member is alleged to have a conflict of interest.

13.3 The Council Administrator shall note in the minutes the circumstances of any alleged conflict of interest, as well as the decision and reasons, if any, given by the Speaker or Council as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists.

13.4 A Member shall not use information that is gained in the execution of the Member's office, and which is not available to the general public, to further or seek to further the Member's private interest.

13.5 A Member shall not use his/her office to seek to influence a decision made by another person to further the Member's private interest.

13.6 Where a Member accepts a fee, gift or personal benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of the Member's duties of office, the Member shall, at the next meeting of Council, disclose this information, and indicate the nature of the fee, gift or benefit, its source, and the circumstances under which it was given and accepted.

ARTICLE 14: ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

14.1 All GDA elections shall be administered by Dance Department.

14.2 All Board members shall hold office for a period of one school year, or until a successor is elected. Terms of office commence the first Monday in the month of May.

14.3 FILLING POSITIONS

(a) Whenever a vacancy occurs on council during the Summer session, the position shall be filled during a by-election in the Fall session. The position may be filled immediately as an Acting Position, until the Fall by-election;

(b) Whenever a vacancy occurs on council during the Fall Session, Council may decide whether to fill the position by appointment or by-election;

(c) Whenever a vacancy occurs on council during the Winter Session, Council may fill the position by appointment;

(d) Whenever an elected position is not filled during the annual general elections held during the

Winter session, and the same position is not filled during a by-election in the Fall session, Council may fill the position by appointment.

14.4 ELIGIBILITY TO CANDIDATE:

(a) Every person is qualified to be a candidate in an election to Council who, at the close of the nomination period, would be eligible to be a Member of Council in accordance with the Constitution;

(b) No person shall be nominated and consent to be nominated so as to be a candidate for election as a Member of Council for more than one position at the same time.

14.5 ELIGIBILITY TO ELECT NOMINEES

(a) All students that are associated with the Dance Department through their academia are eligible to elect/vote the selected nominees for their GDA council positions.

(b) All Dance students must be enrolled in a minimum of three credits in each term, in order to be eligible to elect/vote.

(c) Article 15.6 a to b are applicable to all Fall term, Winter term, and Summer term elections and by-elections.

ARTICLE 15: IMPEACHMENT, SUSPENSION, CENSURE

15.1 Council may, for any reason(s) it consider(s) appropriate, impeach, suspend or censure a

Member of Council, provided such motion is approved by a 2/3 vote (including at least a majority of the voting Members of Council), unless it is a motion of censure. A motion of censure must be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting.

(a) Censure shall be a verbal or written statement of displeasure and instruction to desist in the actions leading to censure;

(b) Impeachment means removal from a council position and the revocation of all privileges of council.

15.2 A Member of Council may not be suspended for longer than 14 days.

15.3 Unless Council otherwise declares, where a Member is suspended from Council, that Member is also suspended for the same period of time from all Council duties, including the right to vote and take part in the proceedings of any applicable committees, boards, or otherwise.

15.4 A motion of impeachment, suspension or censure may be applied against any Member of Council.

15.5 Every motion of impeachment, suspension or censure shall be considered in camera unless Council, by a 2/3 vote, determines that consideration should be public.

15.6 The Speaker shall present a list of offenses against the Member to which a motion of impeachment, suspension or censure applies or, if the Member is absent, shall state the offenses to Council when notice is given.

15.7 The Member of Council to which a motion of impeachment, suspension or censure applies may make a statement and, thereafter shall withdraw during the time the matter is in debate.

15.8 One meeting's or seven days' notice must be given for a motion to impeach the accused.

15.9 Any motion of impeachment may, by a 2/3 vote, be amended to be a motion of suspension or censure.

15.10 Any motion of suspension may, by a 2/3 vote, be amended to a motion of impeachment or censure.

15.11 Any motion of censure may, by a 2/3 vote, be amended to a motion of impeachment or suspension.

15.12 Council shall vote by secret ballot on a motion to impeach, suspend or censure a Member of Council.

15.13 When any Member of Council is absent for three consecutive meetings of Council, without having given acceptable regrets, a motion of impeachment shall be deemed to have been moved and seconded at the next meeting of Council, and such motion shall be determined at that meeting unless Council postpones consideration of the motion until the next meeting of Council.

15.14 Where any Member of Council is absent for a total of 6 meetings of Council in either Fall or Winter session individually without having given acceptable regrets, a motion of impeachment shall be deemed to have been moved and seconded at the next meeting of Council, and such motion shall be determined at that meeting unless Council postpones consideration of the motion until the next meeting of Council.

15.15 The Member of Council to which a motion of impeachment, suspension or censure applies shall not have a vote in relation to motions set out in this Article.

ARTICLE 16: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

16.1 Every person shall have access to all public documents of the Council, and Council shall maintain a copy of each for perusal by interested persons in the Council Office or other location(s) designated by Council.

16.2 Every person shall be provided with a photocopy of any public document within a reasonable time of making such request. Council may, from time to time, establish the price for copying, provided that such cost is not more than the regular cost charged for making copies at the Scott Library.

16.3 WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE CONSIDERED PUBLIC

(a) Each of the following shall be considered a public document:

- i) The Constitution;
- ii) Standing Resolutions;

- iii) Minutes of each meeting of Council;
- iv) Every document tabled in Council provided that council was not in-camera;
- v) All financial records of council;
- vi) Annual and Bi-annual reports of Council Members;
- vii) Any other document Council deems fit to declare a public document.

b) The minutes of any proceedings of Council held in camera, including any documents tabled during such time, shall be deemed to have been explicitly declared not public by Council.

ARTICLE 17: CUSTODIAN OF THE CONSTITUTION

17.1 A copy of the Constitution of Council shall be transmitted to and deposited in the office of the Chair's Liaison, and before transmitting such documents, the Chair shall sign such documents attesting to their validity.

17.2 Within twenty-one days of an amendment being made to the Constitution, such amendment or enactment, as the case may be, shall be transmitted to and be deposited in the office of the Chair's Liaison and, before transmitting such document, the Chair and the Council Administrator shall sign such documents attesting to its validity.

17.3 The most recent and up-to-date version of the Constitution , including amendments thereto, which have been transmitted to and deposited in the office of the Chair's Liaison, shall be presumed to be the Constitution then in force, but such presumption may be disproved by evidence to the contrary.

17.4 For greater certainty, the office of the Chair's Liaison shall act only as a repository for a copy of the Constitution, as required by the Board of Governors of the University, and shall have no power to reject or alter or require the alteration of the Constitution, the By-Laws, or any amendments made to them.

17.5 Any document required by this Article to be transmitted, from time to time, to the office of the Chair's Liaison shall be transmitted by the Chair.

APPENDIX : SELECTION PROCESS

Note: This is a generalized selection procedure, suggested for use in most circumstances. If specific need calls for modification council may vote to alter the procedure as they see fit.

(a) Any individuals who wish to pursue a contended position will be given time during a council Meeting to state their intentions and qualifications concerning the position in question. That period should not exceed 2 (two) minutes for each individual;

(b) During the speaking period the other candidates shall leave the room, so that council may ask prepared questions to each candidate in turn;

(c) After all present and interested individuals have announced themselves (see above) the Collective will hold a closed ballot vote, carried by majority, to determine which of the Candidates will assume the position.