

# PhD Environmental Studies Students Association

## Graduate Students Association

### Constitution & Guidelines

Fall 2015

#### **The Purpose of this Constitution is:**

1. To provide a general philosophy and rationale for the Graduate Student Association.
2. To provide a general orientation for the membership.
3. To lend stability and continuity to the Graduate Student Association.
4. To provide an understanding of the operations, practices and procedures carried on within the various parts of the Graduate Student Association.

#### **ARTICLE 1: Name and Compliance**

***I.I Name:*** This organization shall be known as PhD Environmental Studies Students Association (PhESSA) Graduate Students Association, the name under which it is officially registered with York University Graduate Students Association (YUGSA). It will hereinafter be referred to as PhESSA.

***I.II Compliance:*** Faculty of Environmental Studies GSA operates at York University, subject to York University and York University Graduate Students Association (YUGSA) policies and procedures.

#### **Article 2: Preamble**

The Graduate Student Association—hereafter referred to as the GSA—represents and advocates for the collective interests of Environmental Studies PhD graduate students in all matters of departmental policy and action at York University. The GSA seeks to build community among the graduate students, faculty, and larger university, with consideration for diverse experiences and interests. Above all, the GSA works to optimize the environment within which graduate students develop, both professionally and personally.

#### **Article 3: Membership**

The members of the GSA are Faculty of Environmental Studies PhD graduate students. Current enrollment in the graduate program is sufficient for membership. No general membership dues will be collected from members.

#### **Article 4: Meetings**

GSA meetings will be moderated by the co-Chairs and held a minimum of three times per semester during the academic year. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Normally, any voting will take place in the meeting, and members who are not in attendance at the meeting forfeit their

right to vote, unless a proxy vote has been arranged in advance. The GSA does reserve the right to decide by a majority consensus, to put any vote to the entire GSA. In these cases, the issue will be presented via written or electronic memo to all members. In all cases, the votes of all members will be weighed equally.

### **Article 5: Elections and Eligibility**

Elections for GSA offices will be held in the September of every year. Only GSA members may hold official positions. All nominations for elected office will be decided by those members present at the GSA meetings, or submitted by a member via advance proxy, or by email (which will include a brief explanation of the nominee's interest in the committee). Two weeks prior to the September meeting, incoming and current students will be notified about the open positions, with a description of that position. At the September meeting, we decide on positions. If there are multiple interest in a single position, we hold discussions until a decision is met.

### **Article 6: Elected Positions**

The GSA has 18 elected officers: Two co-Chairs, Treasurer, Social Committee Member, Equity Committee Member, CUPE 3903 steward, FGS Council rep, FES Administrative Committee Members, Parental Support Sub-committee. The office of co-Chairs will be held by two individuals of equal authority.

#### *Section 5.1: Requirements of Officers*

The Officers of GSA must attend >75% of regularly scheduled meetings.

- **Co-Chairs**

Requirements: The co-Chairs are responsible for organizing and overseeing meetings [and elections], communicating with other officers, calling special meetings, coordinating members in special tasks

Requirements: The co-Chairs are responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and distributing them to the membership, keeping all records and lists updated, and moderating the departmental listserv.

- **Treasurer:**

Requirements: The treasurer is responsible for drafting the GSA's budget and presenting it to the executive, membership and YUGSA, keeping the membership informed of the GSA's current budget, reporting the amount of expenditures by the GSA at each meeting.

- **Social Chair:**

Requirements: The social chair is responsible for planning and coordinating the social activities of the GSA.

### **Article 7: Replacing Officers and Representatives**

If a member serving in an elected position other than the co-Chairs, resigns or is otherwise unable to fill his or her position, the GSA executive, will appoint a replacement to fill the remainder of the term. If the co-Chair(s) resigns or is otherwise unable to fill her or his term, an election will be held

following all the guidelines and stipulations for a regular election. Replacement members for any position, including those elected, will serve only until the end of the original term of that position.

**Article 8: Finances**

The GSA's money will be primarily acquired through funds allocated to the GSA by YUGSA and the department. Any expenditures of the GSA must be in accordance to the GSA's annual budget, approved by the membership. All monies belonging to the GSA shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for the GSA. All funds must be deposited within one week of collection. No dues shall be collected.

**Article 9: Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees may be created at any time by the decision of the co-Chairs or a majority vote at a GSA meeting. Each ad hoc committee must select a contact person so that GSA members and others can communicate efficiently with that committee. All ad hoc committees are responsible for maintaining records of their activities and for reporting pertinent information to members at the GSA meetings.

**Article 10: Amendments and Revisions**

An amendment can be added to this constitution with a 2/3 vote of all members present at the meeting when the issue arises. The amended constitution must be presented to the YUGSA office in the beginning of every academic year.