

# Geography 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 Geography 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: Geography Graduate Students Association (GeoGSA).

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

### **Article 2: Preamble**

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

### **Article 3: Membership**

The members of the GeoGSA are Geography graduate students. Current enrollment in the graduate program is sufficient for membership. No general membership dues will be collected from members, although members may be expected to pay nominal fees for specific events.

### **Article 4: Meetings**

GeoGSA meetings will be moderated by the President/co-Presidents and held a minimum of two 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 GeoGSA does reserve the right to decide, by a majority vote or the decision of the President/ co-Presidents,

to put any vote to the entire GeoGSA. In these cases, the issue will be presented via written or electronic memo to all members, and members will be given a pre-specified period of time in which to cast their ballots. Before any official action is taken by the GeoGSA, a majority vote must be obtained for those votes taken outside of meetings (as per the stipulations outlined above). In all cases, the votes of all members will be weighed equally.

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

Executive elections (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Communications Officer) will be held in the April of every year, at the end of the Winter semester. General elections for all other GeoGSA offices will be held in the September of every year [the third Friday of the month]. Only GeoGSA members may hold official positions. All nominations for elected office will be [either A) decided by those members present at the GeoGSA meetings (or submitted by a member via advance proxy) or B) sent to the election officer/graduate program assistant]. No individual may hold, or run for, more than one GeoGSA office at the same time. After the nomination period, ballots will be distributed [electronically] to all graduate students, and persons will have a pre-specified period in which to cast their ballots. For each position, the person receiving the largest number of votes will be elected. Ballots will be submitted to and tabulated by the current GeoGSA President/election officer/Graduate program assistant.

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

The GeoGSA has [16-21] elected officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Communications Officer, Social Chair Officer (to form social committee, up to 5 officers), Graduate Student Association representative (2), Alumni Association Representative (2: President and one other person), CUPE 3903 Steward, Graduate Executive Council Representatives (2), CUPE 3903 Representatives (2), FGS Council Representative. The office of President may be held by one individual or by two co-presidents of equal authority who run for the office jointly.

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

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

- **President:**  
Requirements: The president is responsible for organizing and overseeing meetings and elections, communicating with other officers, calling special meetings, coordinating officers in special tasks, will also serve as signing authority in partnership with the Treasurer.
- **Vice President:**  
Requirements: Will support and coordinate with the President in the duties of overseeing meetings, communicating with other officers, calling special meetings, coordinating officers in special tasks.
- **Communications Officer:**  
Requirements: The communications officer is responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and distributing them to the membership, keeping all records and lists updated, and distributing event announcements from members if they so wish.
- **Treasurer:**

Requirements: The treasurer is responsible for drafting the GeoGSA's budget and presenting it to the executive, membership and YUGSA, keeping the membership informed of the GeoGSA's current budget, reporting the amount of expenditures by the GeoGSA at each meeting. Has signing authority for GeoGSA expenses in partnership with the President.

- **Social Chair:**

Requirements: The social chair is responsible for planning and coordinating the social activities of the GeoGSA (Not necessarily funded by GeoGSA but GeoGSA sponsored; Sends invites to GeoGSA listserv; Distributes event announcements on behalf of members if they so wish; Liaison communications representative to update GeoGSA bulletin board.

- **Graduate Student Association Representative:**

Requirements: Attends YUGSA meetings held on the third Thursday of every month from 5:30-7:30pm, acts as Geography Councilor reporting developments to GeoGSA and feedback to the YUGSA, circulates notices (from YUGSA listserv) to GeoGSA listserv, and provides update reports at GeoGSA meetings.

- **Alumni Association Representative:**

Requirements: Responsible for attending alumni meetings, contributing to alumni publications, and communicating updates to graduate student list.

- **CUPE 3903 Stewards/Representatives:**

Requirements: The CUPE 3903 Steward builds a relationship between the union and community. There are separate departmental and union requirements for this position.

Departmental Requirements: Clarifying each unit's Collective Agreement provisions for members in their department or hiring unit; answering questions from members in departments; passing on reminders about union meetings and other information; following through on members' grievances (including attending grievance meetings with members); organizing departmental meetings or actions when collective responses are necessary; informing members about the ways they can participate in and help shape the important political work of the local; encouraging member participation in the union's day-to-day functioning; keeping members informed about issues in the local and important struggles in the broader community.

Union Requirements: Attending Stewards' Council meetings and General Membership Meetings; participation in Stewards' Council sub-committees; participation in union political campaigns.

- **Graduate Executive Council (GEC) Representatives:**

Requirements: Aids in the selection of grad students for following year (read and assess applications); Attends one-hour meetings held once a week (particularly during the winter term); Provides update reports at GeoGSA meetings.

- **FGS Council Representative:**

Requirements: Attends one-hour meetings held on the first Thursday of every month; expresses student opinions on overall graduate program and developments; reports back information and circulates notices to GeoGSA listserv; provides update reports at GeoGSA meetings.

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

If a member serving in an elected position other than the President, resigns or is otherwise unable to fill his or her position, the GeoGSA executive, will appoint a replacement to fill the remainder of the term. If the President 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 GeoGSA's money will be primarily acquired through funds allocated to the GeoGSA by YUGSA and the department. Any expenditures of the GeoGSA must be in accordance to the GeoGSA's annual budget, approved by the membership. Only if the GeoGSA exceeds its budget or needs money for a special event may dues be collected. This must be approved by a majority (50% +1) of the membership. All monies belonging to the GeoGSA shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for the GeoGSA. All funds must be deposited within one week of collection.

### **Article 9: Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees may be created at any time by the decision of the President or a majority vote at a GeoGSA meeting. Appointments to the ad hoc committee will be the responsibility of the executive committee. Each ad hoc committee must select a contact person so that GeoGSA 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 GeoGSA 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.