

Constitution

Constitution of the GRADUATE HISTORY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION of York University

Adopted April 9, 2003

General

1. This association shall be known as the Graduate History Students' Association (GHSA) of York University.
2. The object of the GHSA shall be the advocacy of the educational and social concerns of its membership.
3. The GHSA shall abide by the standards of student conduct as set out in York University Presidential Regulations.
4. The membership of the GHSA shall consist of all part-time and full-time students duly registered in programmes leading to graduate degrees in History at York University.

Executive

5. The executive of the GHSA shall ordinarily consist of two (2) co-presidents; a vice-president; a treasurer; a secretary; an equity officer and, if applicable, the New Frontiers conference chair. A full list of positions and their responsibilities follows.

(1) Both **Co-Presidents** must have successfully completed the PhD qualifying (comprehensive) exams. At least one of the positions must be filled by someone from an equity-seeking group.*

a. In general, it is the duty of the co-presidents to lead the group and act as the GHSA's public representatives; represent GHSA on department and faculty committees; conduct regular meetings (annual general meeting in September January and April; other as required); Plan Historian's Craft series.

(2) The **Vice-President** must be a Masters student.

a. Takes the place of the co-presidents when he or she are unable to fulfill duties.

b. Chairs book sale committee.

(3) The **Treasurer** position is open to any graduate student.

a. Ideally this position is elected by the general membership at the end of the winter semester and before the beginning of the new fiscal year.

b. Manages the organization's monies and keeps detailed records of the group's financial activities

c. Acts as a liaison between the GHSA and the York Graduate Students' Association (alongside the Graduate Students' Association representatives – see below) so as to ensure a smooth transfer of funds to the GHSA.

d. Responsible for any fundraising activities that the membership approves.

e. Responsible for updating the membership on all GHSA financial matters by means of a detailed written report tabled at the general membership meeting in September, outlining all revenues and expenditures from the previous year. Also presents up-to-date financial statements in January and April, as well as oral reports at any general membership meetings, as required.

f. In the interest of creating and preserving institutional memory, the treasurer shall be responsible for orienting their successor and ensuring the smooth transition of the organization's portfolio from one year to the next.

(4) The **Secretary** position is open to any graduate student.

a. Responsible for recording minutes of executive and general membership meetings, and to keep track of the committee requirements of the GHSA.

b. Responsible for circulating publicly the minutes of the general membership meetings within two weeks following a meeting (minutes must be posted on the website, emailed, and a hard copy available in the Grad Room).

(5) Three **Equity Officer** positions available (at least one position must be filled by a Masters student).

a. Must be from an equity seeking group.*

b. Facilitates and advocates for equity and respect for social and cultural diversity and to work towards an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment within the GHSA executive and membership.

c. Coordinates anti-oppression activities for the beginning of the school year.

d. Coordinates and is a resource person for equity information (not a grievance officer) and will direct concerned or interested people to the relevant people and services

(6) **The Unit 1 and Unit 3 3903 stewards** are responsible for organizing information meetings at least once every semester

a. During bargaining, Unit 1 and Unit 3 stewards are responsible for ensuring that at least one representative from each Unit is in attendance at every CUPE 3903 at membership meeting (General Membership Meeting, Annual General Membership Meeting, or Special General Membership Meeting) and report back with an update regarding bargaining, which shall be posted on the Graduate Listserve

- b. If no Unit 1 or Unit 3 steward is available to attend a membership meeting during bargaining, they shall take reasonable measures to ensure that a GHSA member who also holds membership in CUPE 3903 is in attendance and able to report back.
- c. CUPE 3903 stewards shall also make their best effort to ensure that at least one Unit 1 or Unit 3 steward elected by the GHSA membership is available to attend stewards council meetings during both bargaining and non-bargaining years.
- d. The Unit 1 and Unit 3 3903 stewards are responsible for communicating and liaising with their Unit 2 counterpart.

(7) *The Document* Editors

- a. Up to 4 positions available
- b. Maximum 4 full-time MA and PhD students, who may not be members of the executive. At least one editor must be an MA student.
- c. Publish the GHSA newsletter *The Document* monthly,
- d. Free to determine the editorial policy of *The Document*.

(8) *New Frontiers* Co-chairs

- a. Up to 5 positions available (up to 3 PhD [at least 2 of which must be Year 2+]elected in April; up to 2 MA elected in September)
- b. Form and lead an organizational committee for the *New Frontiers* in Graduate History Conference. Coordinate promotions of the conference
- c. Determine all details pertaining to the conference, including dates, locations, themes, registration fees, etc.
- d. Provide financial and organizational reports concerning the *New Frontiers* in Graduate History Conference at the general membership meetings in January, April, and as required.

(9) Admissions Committee Members

- a. 4 positions available.
 - i. Two will work on MA student admissions
 - ii. Two will work on PhD student admissions
- b. Must be post-comps PhD students
- c. Duties include:

- i. Review admission files and score candidates; identify appropriate supervisors.
- ii. Attend review meetings.

(10) TA Liaison Committee

- a. 2 positions available
- b. must be post-comps PhD students holding a ta-ship
- c. meet monthly with faculty members on the committee to discuss issues that affect teaching as well as TA/faculty relations within the Department; report back to GHSA.
- d. maintain “A Quick and Dirty Guide to Being a TA in the Department of History at York” and update as necessary with faculty members of this committee.

(11) Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) Representatives

- a. 2 positions available, plus 2 alternates
- b. Open to anyone
- c. Attend GSA meetings every month in order to meet the requirements for the GHSA to receive their funding from the Graduate Students’ Association.
- d. Report any news from the GSA council meetings back to the GHSA at monthly GHSA meetings and/or via grad-hist list serve.

(12) Communication Officer/Website Administrator

- a. 1 position available
- b. Open to anyone
- c. Facilitate communication of important information between the GHSA executive and the membership.
- d. Responsible for maintenance and update of website and social media

(13) Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Representative

- a. 1 position available
- b. Open to anyone
- c. Attend regular (monthly) FGS meetings.
- d. Report back to the membership at GHSA meetings and through the listserv

(14) Canadian Historical Association (CHA) Graduate Student Committee Representative (GSC)

- a. 1 position available
- b. Open to anyone
- c. Act as a link between the GSC executive and graduate students, forwarding emailing, surveying fellow students, and raising any issues of importance.
- d. Attend the Annual General Meeting of the GSC (held at the CHA during the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences (Congress) in May or June – location changes yearly) and report back to the department.
- e. Attend the meeting at the CHA and report back to the department. For the rest of the year, act as link between the GSC executive and students in the department, forwarding e-mails, surveying fellow students and raising any issues of importance.

(15) Social Officers

- a. Three positions available.
- b. One MA student and two PhD students.
- c. Organize social activities in the Orientation Day and regularly throughout the year, which will be open to all graduate students.
- d. Organize the holiday and end-of-year parties.

*** An equity-seeking group is here defined to include women; visibly racialized peoples; lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans* people; aboriginal peoples; peoples with disabilities; international students; francophones and other non-Anglophones.**

**** Where possible, no member shall hold the same executive position more than once. Priority will be given to newcomers.**

Finances

- 6. All monies accruing to the GHSA shall be held in bank accounts in the name of the Graduate History Students' Association.
- 7. All bank accounts and outgoing cheques shall require the co-signature of two (2) members of the GHSA executive.
- 8. The GHSA shall have no more than three (3) signing officers; preferably two of the co-presidents and the treasurer.
- 9. The organization's fiscal year shall run from 1 May until 30 April.

10. The executive shall ensure that sufficient funds are on hand to fulfil the financial obligations of the GHSA between the semi-annual receipt of funds from the Graduate Students' Association.

11. Any extraordinary expenditure of funds-those which fall outside customary expenses shall be approved by the general membership.

Activities

12. By and with the advice of the general membership, the executive shall plan and organize the functions of the GHSA.

13. These activities may include, but need not be restricted to the following:

a. Orientation Day activities

b. The Historian's Craft lecture series

c. The GHSA book sale; and

d. End of term parties.

14. Members shall be notified in a timely fashion of all forthcoming events.

15. The executive shall be responsible for the provision, care, and maintenance of the refrigerator; microwave; coffee urn; office and activity supplies; and any other GHSA property.

Communications

16. The GHSA shall sponsor a journal, entitled Document, which shall be published periodically during the school year.

17. The executive shall ensure that information concerning all forthcoming GHSA events is posted on the GHSA website.

Elections

18. The co-presidents, the equity officer (PhD only), the treasurer, the editor(s) of Document, CUPE unit 1 Stewards, the social officer (PhD only) and the New Frontiers Conference Chairs shall be nominated from the membership during the general membership meeting at the end of March or April.

19. The other members of the executive shall be nominated from the membership at the annual general meeting in September.

20. In the case that one member of the executive cannot act for an extended period of time, that member shall notify the remaining executive members, who shall then designate one or more members of the GHSA to act in the place of the absent member of the executive.

21. In the event of a request to replace any elected member of the GHSA, the executive members of the GHSA must call an executive meeting (not a general membership meeting). Every effort must be made for all parties involved to be present at the meeting, which is a first-step to address the issue(s) in hopes of a resolution. If the issue(s) is/are not resolved, the elected member may be replaced by a simple majority vote of the executive members present.

22. The co-presidents and a volunteer Chief Returning Officer (CRO) shall be responsible for running elections.

23. The CRO will not seek a position on the incoming executive. They must be approved by the current GHSA executive. In the event the CRO cannot fulfill their duties the co-presidents shall appoint a replacement.

24. The CRO shall not cast a ballot.

25. In the event that one of the co-presidents is facing recall, the vice-president or a disinterested executive member shall run the election.

26. Elections shall be determined by secret ballot using the first-past-the-post system during the week following the nomination meeting.

27. Voting shall be limited to the first consecutive Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after the nomination meeting. The times and location will be determined by the co-presidents and posted in the department and on the list-serve.

28. Voting shall be carried out in person during designated voting times.

29. The location of the polling station must be consistent throughout the duration of the election and be an accessible public space.

30. The ballot container shall be constructed in such a way that it can only be opened once.

31. The CRO shall tabulate the votes in the presence of the president or co-presidents once the poll has closed on the Thursday. The results shall be announced the Friday morning following poll closure.

32. The exact number of votes that each candidate receives shall not be announced, and the ballots shall be destroyed one week after the announcement unless a candidate contests the election. If a position is contested then a recount is done; if there is a tie, then a run-off election is held the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

33. Candidates are free to campaign as a slate if they so choose, but their names will appear individually and alphabetically on the ballots, and they shall be elected as individuals.

34. Prior to the nomination meeting, candidates may campaign however and by whatever means they choose, provided that the image, reputation, status, and financial circumstances of the GHSA are in no way compromised.

35. At the nomination meeting, each candidate will be permitted to give an election speech that shall be no more than five minutes in length. Descriptions of candidates and their interest in the position shall be accessible at the polling station.

36. Candidates' speeches will be followed by a question-and-answer session of approximately 5-10 minutes.

37. The decision of the Chief Returning Officer shall be final.

38. In the event that a student wants to volunteer for a vacant position, they can do so in one of the following ways: a) in a GHSA meeting. b) through an email sent over the gradlist. If done through the gradlist, the position will remain open to other volunteers, over the gradlist or in a GHSA meeting, for 48 hours. After 48 hours the position will either be declared, or elections will be announced by the co-presidents.

Constitution

39. This constitution will be posted on the GHSA website, and will be printed in the school year's first issue of Document. Hard copies will be made available in the Grad Room.

40. This constitution may be amended by a simple majority vote of a meeting comprised of a quorum of ten per cent (10%) of the general membership, provided that the intention to amend and the proposed amendments are announced in writing to the membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.