

**CONSTITUTION**  
of the  
**PHILOSOPHY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
of  
**YORK UNIVERSITY**

*Adopted 20 September 2002, amended 11 November 2002  
and 16 September 2003*

**1. Interpretation**

1. Authority for interpretation of the Constitution shall rest with the members of the Association assembled in a duly constituted meeting of the Association.
2. It is expected that meetings of the Association normally will be conducted in an informal and relaxed manner, and that consensus normally will be sought in decision-making.
3. However, in case of dispute, and/or at the request of any member present at a meeting of the Association, the Association shall make all determinations of construction and interpretation with due regard to Bourinot's Rules of Order.
4. The President of the Association, subject to an appeal to the assembled members of the Association, is generally the first source for interpretation of the Constitution.

**2. Objectives**

1. to promote the building and maintenance of intellectual and social community among graduate students in philosophy at York;
2. to advocate on behalf of its members in any manner that may be appropriate;
3. to elect representatives to all bodies in which philosophy graduate students are entitled representation (e.g., GSA Council, FGS Council) and to determine the mechanism for the exercise of votes to which graduate students are entitled in meetings of the philosophy graduate programme.

**3. Powers**

1. All powers exercised by the Association and its elected office-holders and representatives are contingent on the approval of the members at duly constituted meetings of the Association.

**4. Membership/Voting - Constituency**

1. Full (voting) members: full members of the Association are, exclusively, all registered graduate students in philosophy at York University.
2. Associate (non-voting) members:
  1. Students who have withdrawn temporarily from the graduate programme in philosophy are entitled to attend meetings of the Association as associate (non-voting) members.
  2. All registered students at York University are entitled to attend meetings of the Association as associate (non-voting) members upon application in writing to the President of the Association.

**5. Membership - Council Executive**

1. The Executive consists of a President, a Vice-President (Finance), and a Vice-President (Recording).
2. Any member of the Association is entitled to hold an executive position in the Association if duly elected.
3. The term of office for all executive positions is one year, with no limit on the number of terms that may be served as long as the office-holder remains registered as a graduate student in philosophy.

**6. Duties of executive office-holders and elected representatives**

1. The President shall
  1. have the authority to make executive decisions on behalf of the Association where necessary, in consultation with the other members of the Executive as appropriate.
  2. normally chair meetings of the Association;
  3. together with the Vice-President (Finance), have discretionary power to approve ad hoc expenditures up to \$50 per instance;
  4. together with the Vice-President (Recording), administer the graduate student e-mail list (Aletheia);
  5. together with the Vice-President (Recording), publicize upcoming meetings of the Association;
  6. act as the official representative of the Association where appropriate and where no other representative is specified by this Constitution;
  7. call the first meeting of the fall term.
2. The Vice-President (Finance) shall
  1. prepare the annual budget and submit it to the Graduate Students Association in a timely manner;
  2. together with the President, have discretionary power to approve ad hoc expenditures up to \$50 per instance;
  3. disburse funds, as duly approved, upon presentation of receipts;
  4. keep the financial records of the Association and prepare financial reports as appropriate.
3. The Vice-President (Recording) shall
  1. act as chair of meetings of the Association when the President is unable to do so;
  2. record the minutes of meetings of the Association and post them to Aletheia in a timely manner;
  3. together with the President, publicize upcoming meetings of the Association;
  4. together with the President, administer Aletheia;
  5. ensure that a report on proceedings of graduate programme meetings is posted to Aletheia in a timely manner.
4. The Representative to the Graduate Students Association Council shall represent the concerns and interests of philosophy graduate students to that body as appropriate, and post to Aletheia a report on each meeting in a timely manner.
5. The Representative to the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council shall represent the concerns and interests of philosophy graduate students to that body as appropriate, and post to Aletheia a report on each meeting in a timely manner.
6. The designated student voters in graduate programme meetings shall exercise their votes in accordance with the concerns and interests of philosophy graduate students.
7. The Representatives to committees of the graduate programme shall represent the concerns and interests of philosophy graduate students as appropriate.

**7. Conflict of Interest**

1. A conflict of interest exists when a member's personal or financial interest conflicts with the duties and responsibilities of her or his position and the obligations s/he owes to her or his organization. No member shall engage in activities that create for that member a conflict of interest, whether potential or actual.
2. Activities which create a conflict of interest include but are not limited to:
  1. engaging in any commercial transaction with, or conferring any financial or commercial benefit on a member's immediate family or close personal friends;
  2. using University facilities, supplies, or resources for privately undertaken work or paid work;
  3. accepting gifts (other than minor gifts as token courtesies) from individuals or organizations which are associated with the activities of the member's organization.
3. However, where there has been full disclosure and approval of an activity has been sought and received from the Association, the activity may be deemed not to be a conflict of interest.

**8. Election Procedures**

1. Elections shall be held in the first meeting of the Association in the fall term.
2. The President is responsible for calling the elections meeting, and, together with the Vice-President (Recording), responsible for publicizing it.
3. The elections meetings shall normally be held between seven and twenty-one days after the beginning of the term.
4. Nominations for Executive and Representative positions shall open during the meeting when nominations are solicited by the President; only members present at the meeting may be nominated.
5. A "nomination" is defined as the vocalization of a member's willingness to stand for a particular position.
6. If there is only one nomination for a particular position, the nominee shall be acclaimed.
7. If any position is contested, a volunteer shall be solicited for the position of Chief Returning Officer.
8. If the position of CRO is contested, the CRO shall be selected by random draw.
9. The CRO shall devise and distribute ballots, collect the ballots, and tabulate and announce the results.
10. If, by the end of the elections meeting, there are no nominations for a particular position, that position may be filled by the foregoing procedure at any subsequent meeting of the Association.
11. If the positions of Vice-President and/or Vice-President (Finance) are not filled, the President shall carry out the duties of those positions until they are filled.
12. All members (excluding associate members) present at meetings in which elections are held may vote.
13. In case of a tie vote, a winner shall be selected by random draw administered by the CRO.

**9. Procedures of Council**

1. The President is responsible for calling the first meeting of the fall term.
2. Subsequent meetings shall be called by the President upon request by any member of the association.
3. The President shall endeavour to schedule meetings so as to enable as many members as possible to attend.
4. Meetings shall be publicized by announcements posted to Aletheia and by posters posted in places where philosophy graduate students may be expected to concentrate (e.g., the graduate student locker room, the computer room, and the TA office).
5. Meetings may be held no earlier than the fourth day after the first notice posted to Aletheia.
6. All members (excluding associate members) present at meetings shall have voting privileges; there shall be no proxy votes.
7. If there is a tie vote on any motion, the motion is defeated.
8. For all meetings, quorum shall be met when ten per cent (rounded down) or more of the members of the Association are present.
9. If quorum is not met within thirty minutes of a meeting's publicized starting time, the meeting shall be postponed. If quorum ceases to be met at any time after the beginning of a meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned until quorum is re-established; if quorum is not re-established within thirty minutes, or is not expected to be re-established within thirty minutes, the meeting shall be postponed.
10. Quorum for votes on the removal of elected office-holders and/or representatives shall be met when twenty per cent (rounded down) or more of the members are present.
11. Quorum for votes on the amendment of the constitution shall be met when twenty per cent (rounded down) or more of the members are present.

**10. Financial Responsibility**

1. Financial signing authority is held by the President, the Vice-President (Recording), and the Vice-President (Finance).
2. The Vice-President (Finance) is responsible for striking the budget.
3. The budget shall normally be approved by the membership at a meeting of the Association no later than the end of October, or earlier if so required by the Graduate Students Association.
4. The Vice-President (Finance) shall maintain the financial records of the Association, and shall prepare financial reports and make them available to members in a timely manner upon request. The Vice-President (Finance) is responsible for all financial reporting as appropriate.
5. The Vice-President (Finance) and the President together have discretionary power to approve expenditures of up to \$50 per instance on an ad hoc basis. If a request for approval of such expenditures is rejected, the request may be put to the members of the Association at a subsequent meeting.

**11. Committees**

1. The Association shall have no standing Committees, but may strike Committees, as approved by the membership at a duly constituted meeting of the Association, on an ad hoc basis.

**12. Allegation of Wrong-Doing and Disciplinary Action**

1. Executive office-holders and/or elected representatives may be removed from their positions by two-thirds majority vote, where quorum is met by the presence of twenty per cent (rounded down) of members at a meeting of the Association.
2. By-elections to replace removed office-holders or representatives shall be held at the meeting in which office-holders or representatives are removed.
3. If there are no nominations to fill vacated positions, the President (unless the President has been removed) shall assume their duties until they can be filled.
4. If the President is removed, the Vice-President (Recording) shall assume the duties of the President until that position can be filled.
5. If both the President and the Vice-President (Recording) are removed, the Vice-President (Finance) shall assume the duties of both positions until they can be filled.

**13. Amendment Procedures**

1. Any member may propose amendments to this Constitution.
2. Procedures Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be posted to Aletheia.
3. A meeting at which proposed amendments are considered shall be held no sooner than fourteen days, and no later than twenty-one days, after they are posted to Aletheia.
4. For purposes of voting on amendments to this Constitution, quorum shall be met when twenty per cent (rounded down) or more of the members are present.
5. For an amendment to pass, two-thirds of members present must vote in favour of it. Abstentions shall count as votes against the amendment.

**14. External Affiliations**

1. The Association is a subsidiary of the Graduate Students Association of York University.

**15. Employees**

1. The Association shall have no employees.

**16. Employment Standards Act**

1. If this Constitution is amended to allow the Association to have employees, the Association must conform with the Employment Standards Act.

**17. Custodian of the Constitution**

1. The Custodian of this Constitution shall be the President of the Association. It is the responsibility of the President to ensure that her or his successor receives a copy of this Constitution.

**18. Advisory/Management Boards**

1. The Association shall operate no commercial enterprise and thus shall not establish any advisory/management board.