

# The Constitution of the **Social Anthropology Graduate Association** of York University (SAGA)

The Graduate Students of the Department of Social Anthropology of the School of Graduate Studies of York University, with a view to speaking with a single voice on matters of importance, declare their intent to constitute themselves into an Association. The purpose of this constitution is to provide Graduate Students with written guidelines and principles relating to academic and social aspects of the graduate experience at York University. SAGA upholds a spirit of openness and integrity in its activities, and all Members acting on behalf of SAGA are bound by these rules.

## 1.0 NAME AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. The name of this Association shall be "The Social Anthropology Graduate Association" (SAGA).
- 1.2. The purposes of SAGA shall be:
  - i. to represent the interests of Graduate Students in the Department of Social Anthropology on relevant academic matters, and particularly the form and content of the graduate programme in the department;
  - ii. to represent the interests of Graduate Students in the Department of Social Anthropology on the provision of facilities for Graduate Students;
  - iii. to seek and maintain fair representation for Graduate Students in the administration and decision-making of the Department of Social Anthropology, particularly with regard to those matters which may affect the interests of Graduate Students;
  - iv. to represent the interests of social anthropology in York University should the occasion arise and with regard to matters that may affect their interests;
  - v. to provide such academic and social activities for Graduate Students as are deemed necessary;
  - vi. to encourage and improve co-operation and understanding within the Student body and between the Students and the faculty, Staff Members, and Undergraduate Students of the department;
  - vii. generally, to improve the working conditions of the Students;
  - viii. to foster a spirit of unity and friendship among its Members.

## 2.0 MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Any person registered with the School of Graduate Studies in the Department of Social Anthropology as a full-time, part-time, or special degree Student shall be a Member of SAGA. All Members shall collectively be known as the "Membership".

### 3.0 EXECUTIVE

- 3.1 SAGA shall be governed by an Executive composed of four Members:
- i. President
  - ii. Vice-President
  - iii. Secretary
  - iv. Treasurer
- 3.2 The Executive shall officially represent the Members in all matters affecting their interests (academic, financial and others) within both the Department and the University community.
- 3.3 the general duties of the Members of the executive in general shall be as follows:
- i. to call General Meetings as necessary;
  - ii. to call and announce general elections and by-elections as necessary;
  - iii. to publicize adequately in all constituencies General Meetings and elections or by-elections at least three business days before they are to be held;
  - iv. to establish and hold by-elections for any administrative committees deemed necessary by the executive
- 3.4 the specific duties of the Members of the Executive shall be as follows:
- i. the President shall chair Executive meetings and General Meetings; the President shall represent the Association on any external meetings or committees;
  - ii. the Vice President shall serve as a substitute for the President whenever necessary;
  - iii. the Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings and decisions, and make them available within two (2) business days; inform all Members of the time, location and agenda of all meetings; make sure that every Member of SAGA has a copy of the Constitution and its amendments; and otherwise keep records of the affairs of SAGA and be responsible for any correspondence;
  - iv. the Treasurer shall be responsible for the administering and accounting of the financial matters of the Association; manage SAGA finances, keep accurate records of its state of financial affairs and of all receipts and expenditures; be a signing officer on any chequing or savings account held by or on behalf of SAGA; and submit a financial report at the September meeting listing general areas of expenditures and giving the final balance for the year.
- 3.5 Any Member of SAGA may attend and speak at an Executive meeting
- 3.6 Each Member of the Executive shall have one vote in every decision made at an Executive meeting
- 3.7 A quorum shall consist of at least three voting Members of the Executive present and in person or by proxy.

### 4.0 MEETINGS

- 4.1 A meeting shall be called in September to welcome new Graduate Students to the department and to inform them of the purposes of SAGA. At this meeting, the constitution will be made available to all Members, as well as a summary of important information for Graduate Students in the Department of Social Anthropology. Annual elections shall be held at the initial September meeting.
- 4.2 All Members shall be notified of the time, location and agenda for a meeting at least three business days prior to the date of the proposed meeting
- 4.3 The meeting shall be called to order and proceed according to Robert's Rules (see appendix I for shortened version)
- 4.4 A quorum shall consist of twenty (20%) of the Membership or thirteen (13) Members, whichever is less.
- 4.5 All questions, except as specified in this Constitution or the Bylaws, shall be decided by a simple majority [fifty-percent (50%) plus one (1)] of Members present in person and voting at a General Meeting.

- 4.6 Any Member may attend and speak at a General Meeting
- 4.7 Each Member present and in person at a General Meeting shall have one vote on any matter to decided at the meeting.
- 4.8 If quorum is present at the meeting, the Order of Business shall be as follows:
- i. Minutes, to be read and approved or amended;
  - ii. Correspondence;
  - iii. Reports of the Executive;
  - iv. Reports of Committees;
  - v. Old Business;
  - vi. New Business;
  - vii. Questions from Members.
- 4.9 If quorum is not present at the meeting:
- i. This fact shall be recorded in the Minutes and no further business shall be transacted.
  - ii. The Members who are present shall, upon two days notice to all other Members, call a second meeting. Quorum will not be necessary for this second meeting
- 4.10 A bi-annual meeting shall be called in February to revisit old business, report on activities, present updates on department activities, and generally to provide an official forum for Graduate Students' concerns.

## 5.0 VOTING

- 5.1 Voting shall take place at a General Meeting called specifically for the purpose of the vote
- 5.2 All Members shall be notified by the Secretary of the time, location and agenda for a vote at least three business days prior to the date of the proposed vote
- 5.3 All questions, except those specifically designated in the Constitution, shall be governed by a simple majority [fifty-percent (50%) plus one (1)] of the voting Members at a meeting
- 5.4 Voting protocol will be ensured by a Voting Officer who:
- i is not a Member of the SAGA Executive;
  - ii is responsible for tallying open votes by show of hands, secret votes by ballot, or voting by e-mail;
  - iii in the case of a referendum, shall consult with the executive to define an appropriate and equitable referendum question;
  - iv acts in the spirit of strict confidentiality in the case of a secret ballot or voting by e-mail
- 5.3 Votes conducted in meetings may be by secret ballot or an open show of hands
- 5.4 If a Member cannot be physically present to vote on referendum questions, a vote can be submitted by e-mail to the Voting Officer with the understanding that this vote will not be anonymous, but will be confidential
- 5.5 In the case of a referendum, the vote will be governed by a two-thirds majority of all SAGA Members

## 6.0 ELECTIONS

- 6.1. All Members are eligible for any post. The nominees are requested to give reasonable assurance of their availability for the following year.
- 6.2. The following election procedure shall be used:
- i. The election shall be conducted at the initial September meeting
  - ii. nominations will remain open for any given Office until immediately prior to the time for the election to that Office
  - iii. nominations must be seconded
  - iv. If only one nomination is submitted, the nominee shall assume Office by acclamation
  - v. all Members are entitled to vote in election
  - vi. the New Executive shall take office at the conclusion of the election meeting
  - vii. the term of office shall be one full year

## **7.0 AMENDMENTS**

- 7.1. Any Member may submit a proposed amendment to this Constitution to the Secretary, provided it is seconded by three other Members
- 7.2. The Secretary shall distribute copies of the proposed amendment, including the names of the Members who propose the change, at least three days prior to the General Meeting called for the purpose of discussing and voting upon the proposed amendment
- 7.3. Any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present in person at the General Meeting.

## **8.0 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

- 8.1. Any Member may have their Membership revoked and may be expelled from, or denied participation in, SAGA and activities subsidized or organized by SAGA for such cause as determined to be detrimental to SAGA using the following procedure:
  - i. At least three days notice of a General Meeting called to consider a Member's expulsion or other disciplinary act shall be given to all Members.
  - ii. A list of concerns must be presented at the General Meeting
  - iii. A Member against whom a charge has been laid shall have the right to question those who present evidence against her or him
- 8.2. Any resolution whose intent is to discipline a Member shall pass if two-thirds of those Members voting indicate their approval, but a motion to expel a Member shall require a vote approving expulsion by three-fourths (3/4) of the Members present and voting at the meeting
- 8.3. Any Officer of SAGA may be removed from Office before the expiration of term of Office by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Membership voting at a General Meeting for which notice of intention to present such a motion has been given to each Member at least three days in advance