

# Constitution

Jan 29, 2014

Article I. NAME & AFFILIATION

Section I.1 Name

- (1.a) This association shall be known as the Theatre & Performance Studies Graduate Students' Association (hereinafter referred to as "T&PS GSA") at York University (hereinafter referred to as "York U").

Section I.2 Affiliation

- (2.a) T&PS GSA is an organization representing all students enrolled or affiliated with a graduate program in the Department of Theatre at York U. Students on leave are non-voting members.

Article II. OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

Section II.1 Objectives

- (1.a) To represent the interests of all members affiliated with the T&PS GSA.
- (1.b) To secure resources salient to T&PS students.
- (1.c) To foster student professional development by supporting research and artistic projects.
- (1.d) To build a strong identity as a graduate program for innovative and thought-provoking work.

Section II.2 Principles

- (2.a) The Association shall be democratic.
- (2.b) The Association shall be non-profit.
- (2.c) The Association shall be non-discriminatory.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Section III.1 Membership

- (1.a) Mandate: T&PS GSA belongs to the larger body of the York University Graduate Students' Association (hereinafter referred to as "YUGSA"), which represents all students in all programs in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York.
- (1.b) Eligibility for membership: All graduate students registered or affiliated with the Department of Theatre at York U—whether M.A., M.F.A. or Ph.D., full-time or part-time—have the right to participate in and/or to be represented by the T&PS GSA as members.

Section III.2 Participation

- (2.a) Privileges: Members may vote, hold positions on committees, and participate in the activities of T&PS GSA.
- (2.b) Participation: Members elected to T&PS GSA Council are expected to be in attendance at all council meeting and official T&PS GSA events, and are required to be in attendance at 60% of all council meetings.

Article IV. T&PS GSA COUNCIL, STEERING COMMITTEE, and STUDENT POSITIONS

Section IV.1 T&PS GSA Council

- (1.a) The T&PS GSA Council is comprised of T&PS GSA Members; those members elected to serve in Student Positions on the T&PS GSA Council are referred to as Executives, and collectively referred to as the T&PS GSA Council.
- (1.b) The T&PS GSA Council and all student representatives on sub-committees attend T&PS GSA Council Meetings as part of their duties. All departing Executives are responsible for forwarding relevant information to and training incoming members.
- (1.c) The Terms of Office of the T&PS GSA Council will correspond with the T&PS GSA fiscal year, which runs from September 1 to August 31.

Section IV.2 T&PS GSA Steering Committee

- (2.a) The T&PS GSA Steering Committee is composed of a minimum three members of the T&PS GSA Council – usually the President, Secretary and Student Representative to the Graduate Program Committee, unless otherwise decreed by the T&PS GSA Council. The T&PS GSA Steering Committee oversees the activities of the T&PS GSA as a whole.

Section IV.3 Student Positions

(3.a) President

The President is responsible for managing the activities of the T&PS GSA Council and ensuring that T&PS GSA mandates are being met, as outlined in this constitution.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.a.i.1) Ensuring the smooth running of the T&PS GSA Council and Steering Committee, including ensuring that all Executives are fulfilling their duties as outlined in this document.
- 3.a.i.2) Calling for T&PS GSA Council meetings when needed.
- 3.a.i.3) Attending the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Council meetings as the Theatre & Performance Studies Graduate Students' Representative.
- 3.a.i.4) Keeping up-to-date on YUGSA policies, issues and workings.
- 3.a.i.5) Keeping up-to-date on issues arising within the Department of Theatre.
- 3.a.i.6) Keeping informed of University, Faculty and Department policies.
- 3.a.i.7) Ensuring the soundness of the election process.
- 3.a.i.8) Ensuring the legality and ethics of all T&PS GSA activities.
- 3.a.i.9) Along with the Treasurer, the President is one of two required cheque-signing authorities.
- 3.a.i.10) When consensus is not met in T&PS GSA Council, the President will cast the tie-breaking vote.

(3.b) Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for documenting meetings of the T&PS GSA and communicating with members regarding upcoming meetings and agendas.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.b.i.1) Making sure that accurate minutes of each T&PS GSA meeting are taken and approved. Minutes will always include: date, time, location of the meeting; list of those present and absent; list of items discussed; and, text of any motions presented.
- 3.b.i.2) Distributing meeting minutes within seven days of each meeting.
- 3.b.i.3) Setting up the time and place of meetings in consultation with T&PS GSA membership.
- 3.b.i.4) Requesting contributions for each meeting agenda and then working with the President to establish each meeting agenda.
- 3.b.i.5) Providing notice of meetings times and places and distributing the meeting agenda.
- 3.b.i.6) Archiving meeting minutes online.
- 3.b.i.7) Keeping an up-to-date list of all T&PS GSA members occupying committee positions. The list should be submitted to the Student Representative to the Graduate Program Committee when finalized, as well made accessible online.

(3.c) Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for coordinating funding for the T&PS GSA, for the purpose of allocating monetary resources to T&PS GSA and student organized events, professional development and emergency resources for graduate students.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.c.i.1) Maintaining the T&PS GSA bank account and relaying information and account statements to the members of the T&PS GSA.
- 3.c.i.2) Creating and maintaining the Annual T&PS GSA Budget and relaying budgetary information to the members of the T&PS GSA.
- 3.c.i.3) Applying to YUGSA annually (and biannually if changes occur by February) for Operating Grant Funds (OGF).
- 3.c.i.4) Seeking, petitioning or applying for additional funding for the T&PS GSA as needed.
- 3.c.i.5) Ensuring that all graduate students are aware of any available T&PS GSA and YUGSA funds to them as individuals and/or for student-organized professional development events.
- 3.c.i.6) Along with the President, the Treasurer is one of two required cheque-signing authorities.

(3.d) Student Representative to the Graduate Program Executive Committee

The Student Representative to the Graduate Program Executive Committee is charged with liaising between the T&PS GSA and the Graduate Program Executive for the Department of Theatre (Graduate Program Executive).

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.d.i.1) Reporting, where appropriate, on Graduate Program Executive imperatives, resolutions and motions at monthly T&PS GSA council meetings.
- 3.d.i.2) Relay any requests or inquiries made by the T&PS GSA council and/or T&PS GSA members to the Graduate Program Executive, and seek a resolution to any such requests or inquiries in a timely manner.
- 3.d.i.3) Maintaining an open dialogue between the council and executive committee at other times of the academic session.

(3.e) T&PS Graduate Student Symposium Chair

The T&PS Graduate Student Symposium Chair, as part of the subcommittee to organize the T&PS Graduate Student Symposium, is responsible for keeping the T&PS GSA council informed of the subcommittee's progress and needs during the planning of the symposium event.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.e.i.1) Reporting on T&PS Graduate Student Symposium subcommittee's planning progress and demands at monthly T&PS GSA Council meetings.
- 3.e.i.2) Relay any requests or inquiries made by the T&PS GSA Council to the T&PS Graduate Student Symposium subcommittee, and seek a resolution to any such requests or inquiries in a timely manner.
- 3.e.i.3) Maintaining an open dialogue between the council and symposium subcommittee at other times of symposium planning.

(3.f) Public Relations Officer

The Public Relations Officer is responsible for encouraging awareness around the work of graduate students in the Department of Theatre through department & T&PS GSA web properties and social media.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.f.i.1) Creating and maintaining social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) to be featured on the T&PS GSA and program website.
- 3.f.i.2) Gathering information from T&PS graduate students to be featured under the 'Student Profiles' section on the program website.
- 3.f.i.3) Gathering examples of student artwork and performance documentation to be included on the program website.
- 3.f.i.4) Taking photographs of T&PS graduate students to be featured on the program website.
- 3.f.i.5) Working closely with GPD to create a strong graduate student presence on the program website.

(3.g) Events Convenor

The Events Convenor is responsible for organizing, planning, and/or facilitating research and professional development events for GSA members. These events may have a social component, but their primary purpose will be to contribute to the academic and professional advancement of participants.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.g.i.1) Planning research events that are open to all students in the Department of Theatre.
- 3.g.i.2) Seeking graduate student input for the kinds of events they feel are needed.
- 3.g.i.3) Identifying professional goals and skill development opportunities that are desirable to T&PS GSA Members.
- 3.g.i.4) Planning the annual T&PS Research Days, currently known as “Performance. Discuss.”

(3.h) Social Convenor

The Social Convenor organizes informal graduate student social events. These events are planned for the purpose of establishing and maintaining relationships between students; exchanging ideas; and fostering social support networks. Events are also planned to intersect with the current research interests of T&PS GSA Members.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.h.i.1) Planning social events that are inclusive to all students in the T&PS program.
- 3.h.i.2) Seeking graduate student input for the kinds of events they are interested in attending and graduate student scheduling availability.
- 3.h.i.3) Researching local events such as theatre, performance art, film, art and scholarly presentations that reflect the research interests of T&PS GSA Members and the Department of Theatre.

(3.i) MFA Liaison

The MFA liaison provides a link between the MFA Theatre program and the MA/PhD Theatre and Performance Studies program. The main role of the MFA liaison is to help foster community amongst the MFA, MA, and PhD programs.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.i.i.1) Representing MFA students concerns and needs at GSA meetings.
- 3.i.i.2) Communicating any pertinent information from GSA meetings to MFA students
- 3.i.i.3) Creating opportunities for the MFA, MA, and PhD programs to develop a unified Theatre department community.

(3.j) Two YUGSA Councillors

The YUGSA Councillors are responsible for attending monthly York University Graduate Students’ Association (YUGSA) council meetings (a minimum of five meetings during Terms of Office) in order to represent and convey the interests, questions and concerns of the T&PS GSA to the YUGSA council, and to report on the activities of YUGSA. YUGSA Councillors each hold voting rights. One YUGSA Councillor position is occupied, de facto, by the President; a second councillor is elected from within the membership. Any YUGSA Councillor can appoint a proxy to stand-in at any YUGSA meeting, if need be.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- 3.j.i.1) Representing T&PS GSA interests, questions and concerns at monthly YUGSA Council meetings.

3.j.i.2) Reporting back to the T&PS GSA regarding the activities of the YUGSA Council.

Note: Students can hold more than one student position. Student positions can also be appointed to multiple students.

Article V. PROCEDURE AND POLICIES

Section V.1 APPOINTMENT AND TENURE OF T&PS GSA COUNCIL

- (1.a) The former Council will issue an open call to T&PS GSA members, advertising the positions available, as soon as possible in September preceding the first T&PS GSA meeting of the year. This meeting should be held no later than 30 September. T&PS GSA members interested in volunteering for a given position should contact a member of the Council and inform him or her of the position desired; students can also volunteer for committees at the first T&PS GSA meeting.
- (1.b) Students who are already elected to Student Position(s) have right of first refusal for their positions for one year; students should signal their desire to retain that position as early as possible after the communication of open positions.
- (1.c) In cases where the number of T&PS GSA members interested in filling the positions for a given committee exceeds the number of T&PS GSA representatives required, representatives will share the role, with modifications for those positions with specific requirements. Any such selections will take place at the first meeting of the Terms of Office.
- (1.d) If the T&PS GSA is in an active state, no T&PS GSA member should occupy more than two positions. In cases where committee positions remain vacant even after mid-October due to lack of volunteers, the limits to participation will be waived. The Council should attempt to solicit volunteers and delegate any consenting volunteers to committee positions throughout the year.

Section V.2 T&PS GSA Council Meetings

- (2.a) T&PS GSA Council Meetings are suggested to be scheduled in the third week of every month, or as required
- (2.b) T&PS GSA Council Meetings should be conducted following Robert's Rules of Order.

Section V.3 VOTING POLICY

- (3.a) The Caucus: T&PS GSA representatives on Council function as a caucus; that is, they will vote as a group for or against any given motion. However, this stipulation is not binding: if after discussion, members cannot agree, they are free to vote according to what they perceive to be in the T&PS GSA's best interest.
- (3.b) Lack of Consensus: In cases where there is no consensus among the T&PS GSA Council, a tie-breaking vote is the made by the President. If the President is not in attendance or is not able to cast a tie-breaking vote due to a conflict of interest, the motion is to be tabled at the next meeting.
- (3.c) Conflicts of Interest: A member will abstain from voting on any motion resulting directly in personal gain.

Section V.4 FINANCE

- (4.a) All monies accruing to the T&PS GSA shall be held in bank accounts in the name of the Theatre & Performance Studies Graduate Students' Association.

- (4.b) All bank accounts and outgoing cheques shall require the co-signature of the President and Treasurer. Should one of these persons be unavailable, a proxy signature can be approved with the approval of the T&PS GSA Council and must be accompanied with a registered letter to the bank.
- (4.c) The organization's fiscal year shall run in tandem with the Terms of Office – from 1 September until 31 August. Each year's proposed budget shall be circulated prior to the first T&PS GSA meeting of the year and approved by the membership at the first meeting.
- (4.d) Throughout the fiscal year, the treasurer shall update the membership on all T&PS GSA financial matters by means of:
  - (4.d.i) A detailed written report, tabled at a general membership meeting in September (or October), outlining all revenues and expenditures from the previous year; and
  - (4.d.ii) Oral reports at T&PS GSA Council meetings, as required.
- (4.e) The Council shall ensure that sufficient funds are on hand to fulfill the financial obligations of the T&PS GSA between the semi-annual receipts of funds from the York University Graduate Students' Association.
- (4.f) Any expenditure of funds that fall outside customary expenses, or any alterations to the budget which was approved at the beginning of the year, shall be approved by the T&PS GSA Council.

Section V.5 ALLEGATION OF WRONG-DOING AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- (5.a) Elected representatives may be removed from their positions by two-thirds majority vote.
- (5.b) If there are no volunteers to fill vacated positions, a member of the T&PS GSA Council shall assume their duties until they can be filled.

Article VI. AMENDMENT OF THIS CONSTITUTION

Section VI.1 Procedure

- (1.a) Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be communicated to the T&PS GSA Council; these proposals should highlight the sections of the Constitution that the member desires amended, and provide a rationale for the amendment.
- (1.b) Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be included on the agenda for the next available meeting.
- (1.c) In order for an amendment to pass, two thirds of members present must vote in favour of it. Abstentions shall count as votes against the amendment.