

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**  
**of the Graduate Student Council of New Mexico State University**

**ARTICLE I**

**Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Student Council, hereafter referred to as the Council.

**ARTICLE II**

**Objective**

The objective of the Council shall be to further the aims and goals of students enrolled in the Graduate School at New Mexico State University (hereafter NMSU) and to serve as an intermediary between the students and the University, the Graduate School, and the Associated Students of NMSU (hereafter ASNMSU) for the mutual benefit of all parties involved.

**ARTICLE III**

**Members**

**Section 1.**

The membership of the Council shall consist of all graduate student organizations (hereafter GSOs) composed solely of students seeking graduate degrees.

- a. Every GSO at NMSU is eligible and encouraged to send a representative to attend Council meetings. Each GSO, chartered or in the process of chartering, will have one vote in Council matters.
- b. To become a voting member, a GSO must submit to the Council Secretary a copy of the paperwork required by the Campus Activities office for official university recognition as a chartered organization.

**Section 2.**

Any student enrolled in a graduate program at NMSU shall be permitted and encouraged to attend all meetings of the Council and to participate as a nonvoting member.

**Section 3.**

The ASNMSU Graduate Senators shall be ex-officio nonvoting members, and therefore may not serve as GSO representatives to the Council.

**Section 4.**

The Graduate School's Graduate Assistant shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Council.

**Section 5.**

The Faculty Advisor of the Council shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Council.

**Section 6.**

The Graduate Dean may appoint an ex-officio nonvoting member to the Council.

**Section 7.**

The Graduate Council may appoint an ex-officio nonvoting member to the Council.

**ARTICLE IV**

**Elected Positions**

**Section 1.**

The officers of the Council shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President of Activities, and Webmaster.

- a. The President shall coordinate all activities of the Council, shall impartially enforce the Bylaws, shall serve as the official representative of the Council, shall govern all proceedings during

general meetings of the Council, report unexcused/absent Graduate Senators to the President of the ASNMSU Senate, and shall call regular and extraordinary meetings when necessary.

- b. The Vice President shall be a member of all committees of the Council. In the absence or inability of the President to serve in her/his authorized capacity, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President. In the event the President ceases to be an officer in her/his term of office, the Vice President shall assume the office of the President and all duties thereof.
- c. The Secretary shall keep all records and informal minutes of the Council, keep copies of all minutes of committee meetings, keep an accurate list of voting Council members and chartered GSOs, keep a record of all general meeting attendance, and notify members of meetings and meeting agendas.
- d. The Treasurer shall oversee the disbursement of all funds coming into the possession of the Council, keep an itemized account of all Council monies and expenditures, and subject this account to an open audit by the Council upon request. The Treasurer shall be responsible for documenting financial procedures and providing the information to the membership about financial policies and procedures.
- e. The Vice President of Activities shall organize the Graduate Research and Arts Symposium, hereafter GRAS. They shall coordinate facilities, dates, volunteers, and all promotional events and items associated with GRAS.
- f. The Webmaster shall be responsible for maintaining the Council web site with accurate information, including the dates and locations of general meetings for the members. The Webmaster shall also participate in the gathering of information about the presenters at GRAS, and incorporate this information into a document to be placed on the web site.
- g. Responsibilities shall not be delegated from one position to another (in ways contrary to the bylaws) except by mutual consent of involved parties and with prior approval of the president. (If the president is one of the affected parties, then the prior-approval of the executive council must be sought.) Notice shall be made both verbally and in writing at the next Council meeting after the change. Roles revert back to those stated in the bylaws when a new officer is elected to the affected position.

#### **Section 2.**

The Council shall elect the officers for the following year from among its membership by the second to last meeting of the spring semester. The names of the candidates must be announced at least one meeting prior to voting, and officers shall be elected by a simple majority of the voting members, provided a quorum (Article VI Section 2) is present. New officers will assume their duties no later than the second meeting of the following fall semester.

- a. In the case where no candidate has been nominated despite a reasonably visible call for nominations or all candidates have voluntarily withdrawn, the council may vote to accept nominations from the membership on the election day, provided a quorum is present.
- b. If there are still no nominations or candidates, the president will be allowed to appoint members to fill vacant positions.

#### **Section 3.**

ASNMSU Graduate Senators may not serve as officers of the Council.

#### **Section 4.**

The Council Advisor must be a member of the graduate faculty of NMSU and must be willing to take the position for at least one academic year. The advisor shall be elected by a majority of the voting members present, provided they constitute a quorum. The duties of the advisor are to provide guidance to the Council upon request and to be available for signatures necessary for the accomplishment of Council business.

#### **Section 5.**

An officer may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Executive Committee. The resignation becomes official upon approval by the Executive Committee.

**Section 6.**

Any vacancy shall be filled by a special election to be conducted as in a regular election, with the exception that the new officer takes office immediately.

**Section 7.**

A petition signed by at least 30 percent of the GSO representatives is sufficient to initiate impeachment proceedings. The impeachment investigation shall be conducted by the Council at large. The Council may unseat any elected official with a two-thirds vote, provided a quorum is present.

**Section 8.**

The ASNMSU Graduate Senators shall be ex-officio nonvoting members of the Graduate Student Council.

- a. It is the elected duty of ASNMSU Graduate Senators to attend the Graduate Student Council Meetings or be officially excused by a two-third majority of the Council. Failure by an ASNMSU Graduate Senator to submit an excusal letter to the Council President before the start of the general meeting will result in them being marked absent. President of Council is responsible to report unexcused/absent Graduate Senators to the President of the ASNMSU Senate.
- b. Any vacant seat for ASNMSU Graduate Senator shall be filled by a special election. The open seat must be announced at least one meeting prior to voting, and ASNMSU Graduate Senator shall be elected by a simple majority of the voting members, provided a quorum (Article VI Section 2) is present.
- c. The impeachment investigation shall be conducted by the Council at large upon receiving a referral for any ASNMSU Graduate Senator in accordance to the laws set forth by ASNMSU. The Council with a three-quarter vote, provided a quorum is present may refer the ASNMSU Graduate Senator in question to the ASNMSU Supreme Court.

## **ARTICLE V Committees**

The Council will recognize Standing Committees and Special Committees. While each type of committee will be governed by its own set of rules, all committees must comply with the following set of guidelines: all committee meetings must be open to every member of the Council; meeting times and places must be announced at general Council meetings and posted on the Council web site; any decision made by a committee may be appealed by any member of the Council; and a GSO will be allowed only one voting member per committee.

**Section 1.**

Special Committees may be formed and dissolved by the Council at large at the Council's discretion. All Special Committees are automatically dissolved at the end of each academic year.

- a. **Structure:** Each Special Committee shall select a Committee Chair and a Committee Secretary. The Chair is responsible for calling and conducting committee meetings. The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes and attendance at every committee meeting, and for keeping records of committee business. The Committee Secretary must submit a copy of the meeting's minutes and attendance to the Council Secretary no later than seven days after each meeting. The Chair and Secretary positions may be rotated among committee members at their discretion.
- b. **Duties and Authority.** The duties and authority of a Special Committee shall be determined as the Council sees fit; however, these issues must be resolved within a reasonable amount of time following the creation of each new committee.

## **Section 2.**

Standing Committees may only be formed and dissolved by amendment to the Council Bylaws. The amendment must define the committee's membership, structure, duties and authority, and rules and requirements.

### **a. Executive Committee**

#### **1. Membership.**

- a) Voting membership shall consist of the Council officers.
- b) The Faculty Advisor to the Council shall be considered an ex-officio non voting member of the Executive Committee.

#### **2. Structure.**

- a) The Executive Committee will follow Special Committee structure.

#### **3. Duties and Authority.**

- a) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for overseeing enforcement of the Council bylaws, recommending policy changes or decisions to the general membership, setting agendas for general meetings, coordinating the activities of the Council, and hearing grievances and appeals.

#### **4. Rules and Requirements.**

- a) Quorum for the Executive Committee shall consist of a minimum of four voting members.
- b) All decisions or recommendations of the Executive Committee must be approved by a simple majority of the voting members present, provided they constitute a quorum.
- c) Meetings may be called as needed by the Council President or the Chair of the Executive Committee.

### **b. Finance Committee**

#### **1. Membership.**

- a) Membership is open to any member of the Council.
- b) The Council Vice President is automatically a member of the Finance Committee and votes only as needed to break ties.
- c) The Council Treasurer shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Finance Committee and shall provide information about the funding policy at the request of the Finance Committee.

#### **2. Structure.**

- a) The Finance Committee will follow Special Committee structure.

#### **3. Duties and Authority.**

- a) No money may be disbursed from the Council's general account to the Council, the GSOs, or any person representing the Council or GSOs without the approval of the Finance Committee. Under no circumstances should anyone ever be in a position to approve his/her own request for money; therefore, should the Finance Committee itself request an expenditure, the expenditure must be approved by the Executive Committee.

#### **4. Rules and Requirements.**

- a) Quorum for the Finance Committee shall consist of a minimum of three voting members, not including the Council Vice President.
- b) All decisions in the Finance Committee must be approved by a simple-majority of the voting members, provided a quorum is present.
- c) Meetings may be called as needed by the Council Vice President or Chair of the Finance Committee.

- d) The Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring that all financial matters develop in compliance with the Funding Policy.
- e) The Finance Committee will decide questions concerning the interpretation and application of the current financial policy regulations, and may recommend to the general membership that those rules be amended as needed. Because all changes to the financial policy must be approved by the general membership, the Finance Committee cannot itself change any policies or regulations.
- f) The Finance Committee will approve or reject requests for financial appropriations. Finance Committee members may not vote on appropriations requests sponsored by their own GSO and are encouraged to disqualify themselves from any vote in which they feel there may be a conflict of interest.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1.**

Meetings shall be held at least once per month during the fall and spring semesters. The schedule of meetings for the semester shall be approved at the first meeting of the fall semester by a majority of the voting members, provided a quorum is present. Extraordinary meetings may be called by the President or by a petition signed by at least 30 percent of the voting Council members.

#### **Section 2.**

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the voting membership.

#### **Section 3.**

A majority vote of the voting members present is sufficient to pass a motion or act introduced in the Council, except as otherwise specified herein.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Parliamentary Authority**

The Executive Committee may opt to forego Robert's Rules of Order. Otherwise, the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any additional rules the Council may adopt.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Funding Policy**

#### **Section 1. PURPOSE**

- a. This funding policy establishes procedures to which the Council Finance Committee will adhere when providing funding for graduate student professional development. This policy aims to allow graduate students to determine their own financial needs, to increase the strength of GSOs, and to increase participation in GSOs and in the Council.
- b. The Council may provide partial funding for:
  - 1. Students presenting research at conferences or attending conferences for educational purposes (governed by Sections 1.a and 2).
  - 2. Students traveling to conduct research or receive training (either from a collaborator or at a workshop) (governed by Sections 1.a and 2).
  - 3. Students requesting reimbursement of publication fees (governed by Sections 1.a and 2).

4. GSOs requesting funding for campus-based, student-centered events, to a limit of \$200/semester, as determined on a case by case basis.
  5. Students requesting reimbursement of journal article fees for journals not available through other methods (interlibrary loan, open access, etc) to a limit of \$35, once a semester (governed by Sections 1.a and 2)
  6. Students requesting reimbursement of training fees, and certification/licensing fees (governed by Sections 1.a and 2).
- c. Requests for funding must follow the guidelines in this funding policy. Once a request has been approved, disbursements will not be made until after the event occurs and necessary receipts have been provided to the ASNMSU Fiscal Advisor or Comptroller.

**Section 2. ELIGIBILITY**

- a. To be considered for funding, individuals must:
1. be a member of a GSO that has completed the requirements in Section 2.c,;
  2. be enrolled at least half time as a graduate students at NMSU at the time the event begins,;
  3. attend 2 meetings of the Council or the Council Finance Committee during the semester that he/she applies for funding. This requirement may be completed by attending any combination of meetings (2 Council meetings, 2 Council Finance committee meetings, or 1 of each). If an individual is unable to attend a Council or Council Finance Committee meeting, a representative may be sent in his/her place. The representative must indicate on the sign-in sheet who he/she is representing and may not represent themselves or more than one person per meeting. Distance education students will still need to attend these 2 meetings, either in person, by proxy or via telecommunication;
  4. perform 5 hours of community service. Community service hours are good for funding eligibility up to one year from completion of hours,;
  5. individuals may only receive funding once per semester and must not be in violation of any items described in Section 3.g.
  6. have satisfied GRAS requirements as described in Section 3.d.3, if they have previously received funding from the Council.
- b. No GSO will receive more than 30% of the total amount of money to be disbursed during the academic year.
- c. For an individual to receive funding, their GSO must have had at least one representative act as a voting member of the Finance Committee for the semester in which the individual is applying for funding. During the first two meetings of the Spring semester, the GSO's Finance Committee attendance from the previous semester will satisfy this requirement.
1. For Fall 2016, this requirement is waived for the first two meetings of the semester.
- d. Funding requests will be processed on a first come, first served basis and priority will be given to those not previously funded during the current academic year.

**Section 3. RESEARCH/CONFERENCE DISBURSEMENTS COUNCIL APPROPRIATION ACT**

- a. An act establishing the Council appropriation regulations for graduate students and organizations.
- b. DEFINITIONS
1. "Research Travel" means travel for a group or an individual for the express purpose of conducting research or receiving specialized training for a Master's Thesis or Dissertation.
  2. "Conference Presentation Travel" means travel for groups or individuals for the express purpose of presenting previously conducted research at an academic conference or research related event to which they have been accepted.

3. "Publication-fees" means fees that may be incurred in submitting a research article to a peer reviewed research journal or hybrid scientific journal for the purpose of scholarly advancement
4. "Campus-based" means events occurring on the NMSU main and branch campuses, catering to the student population.
5. "Student-centered" means events put on by the students, for the students
6. "Training fee" is a fee which is charged to GSC members to complete a course in a specific subject or interest area
7. "Certification or Licensing fee" is a fee which is charged to students to attest to a level of status or achievement in an interest area

c. MAIN PROVISIONS

1. The Council shall make appropriations for Conference Presentation Travel according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to four hundred dollars (\$400) for an individual and up to two hundred dollars (\$200) for each additional individual up to one thousand dollars (\$1000) for a group of students to help defray the traveling expenses;
  - b) The number of participants shall be the presenters who have been accepted to present research at the conference;
  - c) Workshops may be funded for all students presenting research at a conference.
2. The Council shall make appropriations for Research Travel according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to four hundred dollars (\$400) for an individual and up to two hundred dollars (\$200) for each additional individual up to one thousand dollars (\$1000) for a group of students to help defray the traveling expenses to conduct research or receiving specialized training for a Master's Thesis or Dissertation;
  - b) The number of participants will be limited to the people conducting research or receiving the training.
3. The Council shall make appropriations for Article Publication according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to four hundred dollars (\$400) for an individual author, and up to (\$200) per additional co-author up to eight hundred dollars (for a group of students).
4. The Council shall make appropriations for GSO-led, student-centered events, according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to two hundred dollars (\$200) for a single GSO, per semester, as determined on a case by case basis.
5. The Council shall make appropriations for reimbursement of scholarly article fees for articles not available through other methods (interlibrary loan, open access, etc) according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to Thirty Five Dollars (\$35) for scholarly article fees, one time per semester.
6. The council shall make appropriations for reimbursement of training fees and certification fees, according to the following procedures:
  - a) The Council may provide up to Four Hundred Dollars (\$400) for certification and training fees.

d. REQUIREMENTS

1. A complete funding request must include:
  - a) Funding Appropriation form
  - b) ASNMSU Community Service Projects form
  - c) A cover letter that explains exactly what the funding will be used for (airfare, lodging, etc.), where the student is traveling, what conference/event the student is attending, why the student is attending, and dates of travel, or the corresponding event for which the GSO is seeking funding.
  - d) A letter of recommendation from an advisor or department chair
  - e) An official conference program (if applicable) or proof of acceptance of presentation, or detailed plans about the event to be held, including an Activity Registration Form.
  - f) Receipts to account for at least 90% of the amount requested.
2. Each individual who requests funding must perform community service as described in Section 2.a.4.
3. Students who are approved for a disbursement must present at the next GRAS, if the student is still enrolled.
4. If a group of individuals (more than one student) from the same GSO are attending the same conference, workshop, or other research-related event, the group must submit one funding request with one Funding Appropriation form and one cover letter. Each individual on the request must attend meetings as required by Section 2.a.3 and present at GRAS as required by Section 3.d.3. Only one check will be cut per request, unless otherwise previously requested. For groups of individuals, the check will be cut to the first name listed on the request.

e. DEADLINES

1. Funding requests must be submitted to the Council Treasurer by the first Council meeting after the individual's trip ends, or at the second to last Council meeting of the semester, whichever comes first. Late applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the finance committee.
  - a) For trips occurring during the summer or winter break the application must be submitted to the treasurer by the second Council meeting of the following semester.
- f. If exact costs (e.g., cost for ground transportation from the airport to the hotel) are unknown at the time the funding request is submitted, cost estimates may be used in the request. However, individuals or groups of individuals who spend less than 90% of the funds indicated on their funding application may have their disbursement adjusted to align with their actual expenses.
- g. The Finance Committee will determine, at their discretion, which expenses are allowable and which applications to approve. They will adhere to the following guidelines:
  1. The Finance Committee will decide whether to approve each request, inform the individual(s) who submitted the request of their decision, and submit approved requests to the ASNMSU Fiscal Advisor or Comptroller.
  2. The Finance Committee will allocate no more than 65% of the allowable Council budget during the Fall semester.
  3. If funds allocated for the Fall semester remain at the end of the Fall semester, they will carry over to the Spring semester. Funds that remain at the end of the Spring semester may be awarded as additional funding for requests that were received during that academic year. Funds available for disbursements depend on the Council's budget, which is provided by ASNMSU, and are therefore subject to change each academic year.



4. The Council will not fund:
  - a) more than one request from any student in a given semester, regardless of whether the request is for an individual or a group of individuals.
  - b) requests from students who were previously awarded funding (as an individual or as part of a group of individuals) but did not present their research at GRAS, unless the individual has a valid excuse for not presenting at GRAS (e.g., an off-campus pre-doctoral research position or another conference that overlaps with GRAS). The validity of an excuse is at the discretion of the Finance Committee.
  - c) any items not in accordance with ASNMSU funding policies, including food, alcoholic beverages, and equipment or supplies solely for one student's research.
  - d) requests from individuals who have tried to bypass any part of the funding application process.

#### **Section 4. DISBURSEMENTS FOR GSC OPERATION AND GSC-SPONSORED EVENTS**

- a. Definition and Eligibility:
  1. An item is the total amount spent per purchase. A single item may include several entities.
  2. The GSC will only fund items for general operations of the GSC and GSC sponsored events (e.g. GRAS, Gradulicious).
  3. Eligible items include but are not limited to:
    - a) Promotional supplies (e.g. posters, pamphlets).
    - b) Office supplies (e.g. pens, clipboards).
    - c) Food (e.g. opening and closing ceremonies, meals for volunteers).
    - d) Room reservations.
    - e) Items to be raffled off and/or given away to event participants.
- b. Approval Requirements:
  1. Funding for items less than or equal to \$200 must be approved by the GSC Executive Council.
    - a) A simple majority vote of GSC Executive Council members is required for approval. The officer proposing the funding is excluded from voting.
    - b) Approved funding will be documented and itemized based on proofs of purchase (e.g. receipts).
    - c) The documented proofs of purchase must be initialed by all voting members to acknowledge the approval of funding.
  2. Funding for items greater than \$200 must be approved by the GSC Executive Council and the GSC Faculty Advisor.
    - a) A simple majority vote of GSC Executive Council members is required for approval. The officer proposing the funding is excluded from voting.
    - b) Approved funding will be documented and itemized based on proofs of purchase (e.g. receipts).
    - c) The documented proofs of purchase must be initialed by all voting members and signed by the GSC Faculty Advisor and the GSC president to acknowledge the approval of funding.
- c. Deadlines:
  1. All purchases must be completed and approved by the completion of the event.
  2. An exception to the above stated deadline can be made with a two-thirds majority vote of the GSC Executive Council.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Appeals**

Any decision made by a committee may be appealed by any member of the Council. The Executive Committee shall hear the appeal first, unless it is the Executive Committee whose decision is being appealed. Further appeal shall be brought before the voting membership of the Council, whose decision is final.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Amendment of the Bylaws**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote, provided a quorum is present. The amendment must have been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Emergency Powers of the Executive Council**

#### ***Section 1: Definitions and Purpose, Invoking Article XI***

In the event that a declared emergency (such as, but not limited to the 2020 novel COVID-19 Pandemic) should cause significant disruptions to standard NMSU operating procedure, the President of the Council may invoke Article XI, granting the officers of the council avenues by which to bypass certain sections of the Council bylaws, as detailed below. Invocation of Article XI must be approved by a simple majority of the Executive Council, defined as consisting of the six officers of the Graduate Student Council. The powers granted by Article XI shall remain in effect for the remaining duration of the academic term in which they were granted, unless terminated prior by one of the following methods.

The powers granted by Article XI may be terminated prior to the end of the academic term by satisfying any of the following conditions:

1. The president may, with assent of the majority of the Executive Council, call an end to Article XI powers, effective immediately.
2. The full Executive Council may, by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote, without the assent of the President choose to call an end to Article XI powers, effective immediately.
3. Any voting member of the Council, as defined in Article III may call a motion to end Article XI powers at any Council Meeting. Such a motion must be seconded, and a simple majority of present voting members shall be sufficient to carry the motion, even in the absence of a quorum of voting members.
4. Impeachment of the President of the Council will end Article XI, effective immediately.

Improper invocation of Article XI may be counted as grounds for impeachment.

#### ***Section 2: Valid Emergency Actions and Restrictions Thereon***

Emergency powers granted by Article XI shall include the following optional actions:

### Special Actions:

1. The President may choose to immediately suspend Robert's Rules of Order without the assent of the Executive Council, and reinstate them if deemed necessary.
2. The President of the Council may, with the written or emailed assent of the Vice President of Activities choose to cancel or postpone GRAS, and waive all funding requirements associated with GRAS.
  1. GRAS funding requirements may be waived retroactive to the beginning of the academic year.
3. The Vice President of the Council may, with the written or emailed assent of the Treasurer, choose to bring funding requests before the Finance Committee that fail to meet the requirements set out in Article VIII. Such funding requests shall still be considered by the Finance Committee, and subjected to a vote before passing to ASNMSU for disbursement. In particular:
  1. The requirement for attendance or presentation at a conference or workshop in particular may be waived, and reimbursement bills may be considered in order to assist students in offsetting costs incurred by sudden cancellations, such as hotel costs, and nonrefundable deposits. The appropriation limits defined in Article VIII, Section III will remain in effect unless special action (4) were invoked prior.
4. The Vice President of the Council may, with the written or emailed assent of every member of the Executive Council, and at least half of all ASNMSU graduate senators, choose to double funding appropriation limits as defined in Article VIII, Section III, for travel impacted by a declared local, state, or national emergency. Members of the Executive Council and ASNMSU Graduate Senators shall still be subject to the original appropriation limits as defined in Article VIII, Section III, even if this action is undertaken.
5. The President may propose and undertake any extraordinary actions not defined within this list, provided they attain the written or emailed assent of every member of the Executive Council and at least half of all sitting ASNMSU graduate senators.