

**Doc. T12-001, as amended**

*Passed by the Board of Trustees on February 7, 2012*

*Revised: 9/19/2012*

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION**

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**PREAMBLE**

Recognizing the necessity of organizing in order to attain the just, cooperative society which alone can be in the absolute interests of graduate students, and further recognizing the necessity for immediate and ongoing action to effectuate cooperation and participation among graduate students, the graduate students of this campus hereby establish a Graduate Student Senate for the University of Massachusetts Amherst (hereinafter referred to as the GSS).

**ARTICLE I. Authority**

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**ARTICLE I. Authority**

- A. Except as provided herein, this constitution shall supersede any other previously existing system of campus wide governance for the University graduate population.
- B. The GSS derives its authority from actions by the Board of Trustees approving this Constitution, as provided in Section 3, Chapter 75 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth.
- C. The GSS, in its responsibilities and relationships with other governing components of the University, shall be governed by the Board of Trustees' Statement on University Governance (Trustee Document T73-098, as amended), and by University policy.
- D. All bylaws, acts, procedures and all other actions of the GSS, shall be consistent with this Constitution and Trustee Document T73-098, as amended.

**ARTICLE II. Purpose**

- A. To ensure the representation of all degree-seeking graduate student members of the campus community in the governance of the Amherst campus and the University as a whole.
- B. To discuss and recommend policies affecting the campus and the University as a whole.
- C. To promote graduate student participation in the development of policies and procedures within the various colleges, schools, faculties, and departments of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- D. To review and make recommendations regarding the Graduate Student Senate Tax.

- E. To enact, amend and repeal Bylaws for its internal functioning.

### **ARTICLE III. Graduate Student Senate Tax**

- A. All regular degree-seeking graduate students charged the curriculum fee shall be assessed the full GSS tax.
  - i. Regular degree-seeking graduate students charged but exempt from paying the curriculum fee will be assessed the GSS tax.
- B. All regular degree-seeking graduate students charged the Continuous Enrollment Fee (Program Fee) shall be assessed the GSS tax at 50% of the current rate.
- C. CPE students will not be assessed the tax.
- D. A recommended increase in the Senate Tax of over 7.5% shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate membership in attendance at a scheduled meeting, and an affirmative vote of the GSS membership through an Action Referendum.

### **ARTICLE IV. Composition**

- A. The GSS consists of the elected senators from the departments or programs laid out in the Bylaws. Representation shall be proportional to the number of graduate students in each department or program. The proportion of senators to graduate students shall be determined by the Bylaws.
- B. The officers of GSS shall consist of the President, the Vice President and the Treasurer, who shall be elected according to the GSS Bylaws. The GSS officers shall perform such duties as are specified in the Bylaws. An officer may be recalled according to the provisions set forth in the GSS Bylaws.
- C. The Executive Committee of the GSS shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, and two representatives elected from the Senate.
- D. The GSS shall also establish other standing and ad hoc committees in accordance with the Bylaws. The GSS shall require regular reports from the standing committees and special reports from its ad hoc committees.

### **ARTICLE V. Senate Meeting**

- A. The GSS shall hold at least one regular meeting each month while in session during the academic year.
- B. A special meeting may be called by:
  - i. The GSS President, at the request of any member of the graduate student body or any representative of the University Administration;
  - ii. Twenty percent of the Senate by petition to the Executive Committee;
  - iii. Ten percent of fee paying graduate students, by petition to the Executive Committee.
- C. Agendas for regular meetings shall be developed by the President under the advice of the Executive Committee, and shall be made available to the membership twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.
- D. A quorum of the Senate for the purposes of a regular meeting shall consist of twenty-five percent of the Senators in good standing as defined in the Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE VI. General Meetings of Graduate Students**

- A. General Meetings of the Graduate Students may be called in one of the following ways:

- i. The GSS President, at the request of any member of the graduate student body;
  - ii. The Senate may call a meeting by a motion duly passed; or
  - iii. The Executive Committee, upon receiving a written petition signed by one hundred and fifty fee paying graduate students, shall call a general meeting within two weeks.
- B. A quorum of the graduate students for the purposes of a general meeting shall consist of ten percent of fee paying graduate students including Senators.
- C. Any action of the GSS may be overruled by a majority vote of those present and voting at a General Meeting of Graduate Students. Rules for voting at such a meeting shall be outlined in the Bylaws.
- D. Agendas for general meetings shall be developed by the President under the advice of the Executive Committee, and shall be made available to the membership twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. Any matters mentioned in the petition described in Clause VI.A.iii above shall appear on the provisional agenda for the meeting, as also shall any motion for recall of a Senate officer. The finalized agenda for each meeting shall include (a) those items mentioned in the provisional agenda and (b) further items added by petition of twenty graduate students received at least *five* days before the general meeting.

**ARTICLE VII. Amendment Procedures**

- A. Amendment to this Constitution may be proposed:
  - i. By a three-fifths (3/5) vote of those present and voting at a Regular or Special Meeting of the GSS provided that the proposed change shall have been presented at a previous Regular or Special Meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot, unless the Senate rules otherwise by a two-thirds (2/3) majority; or
  - ii. By petition of ten percent or more graduate students provided that it contains at least five signatories drawn from each of the colleges or schools.
- B. Ratification of amendments to this Constitution shall be by the general graduate student members and shall be by a majority of those voting by written or electric ballot. Voting eligibility shall be as specified in the Bylaws. The ballot shall be prepared and distributed by the President, under the supervision of the Executive Committee, setting out the proposed amendment in full. Accompanying the written or electric ballot shall be excerpts from the Senate Minutes containing the debate by the Senate on the proposed amendment and the exact vote by which it carried. The ballot shall also include the date, providing for a voting period of at least 14 but not more than 21 days, by which time votes must be received by the GSS Office. Votes shall be counted by the Executive Committee.
- C. Amendments to this Constitution shall be effective only after approval by the Board of Trustees.

**ARTICLE VIII. Bylaws Amendment Procedures**

The Bylaws of the GSS may be adopted, amended, or repealed in accordance with the Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at a Regular or Special Senate Meeting of the GSS; or by a majority vote of the fee paying members present and voting at a General Meeting of Graduate Students. The procedures for such acts shall be specified in the Bylaws.

**ARTICLE IX. Ratification**

This Constitution shall be ratified upon approval of the Board of Trustees and shall be effective as of that date.