

**Doc. T95-095, as amended**  
*Passed by the Board of Trustees*  
*December 6, 1995*  
*Revised 8/6/2003*  
*Revised 3/19/08*  
*Revised 9/19/18 (SGA Temporary Amendment)*

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH  
STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION**

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**ARTICLE I: PURPOSE**

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, consistent with Trustee Policy T73-098 as amended, encourages and endorses the active engagement of students in shared governance. The principles of shared governance require that all constituencies are able to deliberate and express opinions on matters related to their programs and activities and have the opportunity to recommend appropriate actions to the Chancellor.

The complex nature of today's University requires that students have a meaningful voice in shaping the activities and programs that affect them directly. Working collaboratively with the Office of Graduate Studies and the Division of Student Affairs and more broadly with the administration and faculty, the Graduate Student Senate is intended to be a vibrant organization representing the goals, interests, concerns, and professional development of graduate students at UMass Dartmouth.

- A. The official name of the graduate student government organization under this Constitution shall be "The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Graduate Student Senate" (GSS).
- B. The membership of this organization shall be the governing body for all graduate students of The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, as described in the GSS By-Laws.
- C. The GSS shall strive to enrich the quality of academic and social life of the graduate student body of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. To accomplish this, the GSS shall:
  - 1. Serve as a resource and advocate for the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth graduate students;
  - 2. Represent the interests, concerns, and professional development of the graduate student population of the University;
  - 3. Facilitate community and communication among graduate students in different Colleges, Schools, and departments;
  - 4. Identify and address current and emerging needs of graduate students.

## **ARTICLE II: GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The general responsibilities of the GSS shall be as follows:
1. All graduate student legislative power shall be vested in the GSS;
  2. It shall be the purpose of the GSS to promote graduate student activities and professional development and to provide for the student welfare. It may recommend and/or make changes in rules and regulations (By-Laws) as deemed necessary for the accomplishment of these purposes;
  3. It shall be the responsibility of the GSS to foster mutual understanding and cooperation between the administration, the faculty, and the students;
  4. It shall be the responsibility of the GSS to consider all matters that are pertinent to the interests of the graduate student body of The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and take such actions as may be deemed necessary and proper or make recommendations to the administration;
  5. It shall be the responsibility of the GSS to conduct representative elections for its membership;
  6. It shall be the responsibility of the GSS to formulate a graduate student government budget approved by a majority vote of GSS;
  7. In the exercise of its responsibilities, the GSS of The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth shall not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, economic status, or handicap.
- B. The GSS shall have the authority:
1. To elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These positions shall constitute the Executive Board.
  2. To create commissions, committees and boards as needed. Permanent commissions, committees, boards, and their respective chairs shall be subject to majority approval of the GSS membership.
  3. To speak and act in the name of the graduate student body of the University in all appropriate contexts and arenas; which includes, but shall not be limited to, relations with University administrators, trustees, staff, and faculty;
  4. To organize and administer, and/or to join with other groups within and outside the University community in organizing and administering projects and programs benefiting graduate students and building mutual aid and cooperation among graduate students and in the larger society;
  5. To enact, amend and repeal By-Laws for its internal functioning. All By-Laws and other documents approved by the GSS shall conform to Trustee and University of Massachusetts

Dartmouth policies, not contravene this Constitution and are subject to approval by the Chancellor.

### **ARTICLE III: GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE MEMBERSHIP**

All GSS Senators must maintain academic good standing as defined in the appropriate academic catalog for their programs, must not be on disciplinary probation and must be continuously enrolled as graduate degree students during the entire academic year at The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The graduate students in every unit offering a graduate degree or certificate, as recognized by the Office of Graduate Studies, shall have the right to elect members of the Graduate Student Senate based on principles of proportional representation as defined by the GSS By-Laws.

Each representative is charged to vote on behalf of the interests of his/her school, college or program in GSS meetings.

Each representative shall be a graduate student of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, including all satellite campuses that house programs operated under The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

A representative of the Office of Graduate Studies and a representative of the Office of Student Affairs will be ex-officio members of the GSS, without voting privileges.

### **ARTICLE IV: GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board is the leadership body of the GSS.

The Executive Board consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as described in the By-Laws.

The Executive Board shall be elected by the Senators of the GSS in an annual election and shall hold their offices for a term of one academic year.

### **ARTICLE V: VACANCIES**

A vacancy in the office of the GSS President resulting from resignation, change of University status that disqualifies him/her from serving in this capacity, or removal shall be filled by the Vice President;

A vacancy of any other Executive Board position shall be filled by an internal election held at the first meeting of the GSS immediately following said vacancy, as described in the GSS By-Laws;

All replacement Executive Board members shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VI: ADVISOR**

The advisor to the GSS will act as an advocate for the GSS and a liaison between the GSS and the Administration. The Advisor will be annually selected by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies in collaboration with the Executive Board of the GSS.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

The GSS shall hold regular meetings at such times as may be determined by the GSS, but shall meet at least monthly during the academic year. An agenda for all meetings will be prepared, provided to members of the GSS and publicly posted at least 48 hours in advance of each meeting.

The President, with consent of the Executive Board, shall have the power to call special meetings of the GSS, or shall call special meetings on petition of at least three (3) Senators.

There shall be at least one regularly scheduled GSS meeting between the close of elections and the end of the school year.

A quorum for business on the published agenda for either a regular or a special meeting shall require a quorum consisting of fifty-percent plus one (50% + 1) of the total number of Senators on the GSS.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS**

### **A. Spring Elections**

All Senators shall be elected during the spring semester. These Senators-elect shall take office at the first meeting of the new GSS following the spring semester election.

### **B. Special Elections**

Elections for Senators of vacant seats shall be held as necessary, determined by the GSS By-Laws. These Senators-elect shall take office upon acceptance of their seat. They shall serve until the first meeting of the new GSS, which is elected in the spring, or their subsequent termination.

### **C. Elections of Executive Board**

1. On an annual basis, before the first meeting of the new GSS is called to order, Senators shall elect, from within the GSS, the following Executive Board members: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. This election shall be presided over by the GSS Advisor.

## **ARTICLE IX: REGULATIONS FROM OFFICE, REMOVAL, AND IMPEACHMENT**

### **A. Resignation**

Upon submitting an official letter of resignation to the Executive Board, a Senator shall forfeit his or her seat. Any Senator who ceases to be enrolled at The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, as defined in the GSS By-Laws, automatically forfeits his or her seat as a Senator.

B. Removal

Any Senator of the GSS who fails to perform his or her duties for three consecutive meetings, without valid excuse, as described in the GSS By-Laws, shall be dismissed by the Executive Board from membership in the GSS. The dismissal ruling by the Executive Board may be appealed by the Senator and the Senator may be re-instated by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority of the GSS.

C. Recall of an Executive Board member

Any Senator may move for a recall election of an Executive Board member of the GSS at any GSS meeting. This motion must pass by two-thirds (2/3) of the GSS. An election will then be held, at a time specified by GSS by-laws, between any Senators who desire the position, including the incumbent if he or she so desires.

D. Impeachment

Any graduate student may move to impeach a Senator for an impeachable offense, as defined in the GSS By-Laws, by introducing a motion proposing impeachment and having it pass by the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the GSS. Impeachable offenses shall be delineated in the GSS By-Laws.

**ARTICLE X: RATIFICATION OF INITIAL GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION**

A. Process of Initial GSS Constitution Ratification

The Initial GSS Constitution shall be developed by a committee of graduate students representing a variety of the University graduate student programs in collaboration with the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

With the approval of the Provost and Chancellor, the Constitution shall be submitted to all Graduate Students for review and ratification prior to its submission by the Chancellor to the Board of Trustees. The Constitution shall be considered ratified by a majority vote of all students voting. After initial ratification, the Constitution shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

**ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

A. Current Version

This Constitution supersedes any earlier GSS Constitution of The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

B. Submission

Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be submitted to the GSS by any Senator. A proposed amendment shall be adequately advertised for at least one week before being acted upon by the GSS. The adequacy of the advertising shall be determined by the GSS President. A copy of all proposed amendments shall be submitted to the University Newspaper after the submission to the GSS and prior to being voted on by the GSS.

### C. Ratification

Any proposed Constitutional amendment must first be ratified by the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the GSS. Second, it must be passed in a general or special election by the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of those graduate students casting ballots in regard to such amendment. Third, any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be approved by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts. No amendment to this Constitution shall be deemed effective unless and until fully ratified according to the above procedure.

### D. Documentation

All official editions of this Constitution shall bear a current revision date on the title page, which shall coincide with the most recent date of ratification by both the GSS and the graduate student body and approval of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. An up-to-date list of ratified amendments shall be kept in the GSS office. This list shall contain the dates of submission, Chancellor's approval, and ratification by the Board of Trustees.

### E. Constitutional Review

The GSS Constitution will undergo a review, but not necessarily a revision, every year.

## **ARTICVLE XII: COMMITTEES**

The GSS shall have the power to establish and/or appoint such standing and ad hoc advisory committees to the GSS as are deemed necessary for the successful conduct of its business.

The composition, powers and function of each standing committee shall be clearly set out in the GSS By-Laws.

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE**

We the students, to provide an effective, responsible and representative form of government do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Student Senate of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

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**ARTICLE I: AUTHORITY**

Section 1: Senate

The Senate derives its authority from the Board's approval of this constitution, as provided in Section 3, Chapter 75 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Section 2: Governance

The Senate shall be governed by the Board's statement on University Governance, Trustee Document T73-098.

Section 3: Notice of non-discrimination

In the exercise of its powers, the Senate shall not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation/preference, veteran status, economic status, or handicap.

Section 4: Constitution

This constitution supersedes any earlier constitution of the Senate.

Section 5: Revision Dates

All official editions to this constitution shall bear a current revision date on the title page, which shall coincide with the most recent date of ratification by the Board.

**ARTICLE II: NAME**

Section 1: The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Hereafter, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth shall be referred to as the UMass Dartmouth.

Section 2: The Student Senate of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Hereafter, the Student Senate of UMass Dartmouth, shall be referred to as the Senate.

Section 3: The Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts

Hereafter, the Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts shall be referred to as the Board.

**ARTICLE III: PURPOSE**

The guiding principles of the Senate shall be:

1. To act as the students' liaison to UMass Dartmouth, the UMass system, the Commonwealth, The Chancellor, and the Board.

2. To provide guidance in cooperation and understanding among the students and their organizations.
3. To provide an outlet for student views and concerns.
4. To promote student rights, views, interests, and welfare by recommending appropriate policies.
5. To endeavor to provide adequate funding for student needs and interests.

## **ARTICLE IV: STUDENT RIGHTS**

### Section 1: Fundamental rights

The Senate unequivocally recognizes the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and the freedom of assembly on and off campus, for any and all members of the academic community.

### Section 2: Right to privacy

The Senate unequivocally recognizes, and shall not abridge students' right to protection from unauthorized disclosure of any documents or files pertaining to their views, beliefs, or associations.

### Section 3: Right to lectures

The Senate unequivocally recognizes the rights of students to invite to campus and to hear any person of their own choosing so long as observance of routine procedures required for the use of institutional facilities are followed.

### Section 4: Right to judicial hearing

The Senate unequivocally recognizes and shall not abridge the right of students to be protected by just and fair procedural standards in disciplinary actions as set forth by UMass Dartmouth.

### Section 5: Right to choose advisors

The Senate unequivocally recognizes the right of student organizations to choose freely their own faculty or administrative advisors.

## **ARTICLE V: POWERS**

The Senate shall have the following powers in carrying out its purposes as delineated in Article II of this Constitution:

1. To have vested in it all legislative functions of the student government.
2. To ensure the proper functioning of student government at UMass Dartmouth.
3. To make recommendations on any question, including proposed fee and tuition increases.
4. To make recommendations pertaining to the various student affairs, including, but not limited to funding and management of student services, organizations, and activities.
5. To make recommendations regarding standards of student behavior and discipline.
6. To confer recognition on student publications, clubs and organizations. Such recognition will be a prerequisite for funding by the Senate.
7. To establish rules and procedures for funding Senate Recognized Organizations.
8. To manage all student government elections.
9. To establish committees, as delineated in the bylaws, in order to facilitate the performance of its duties. These committees shall investigate issues pertinent to their subject matter and draw up recommendations on these issues.

10. To make any and all acts necessary and proper to enable the execution of the powers vested in the Senate.

## **ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1: Representation

The Senate represents the student body: any student who is currently registered for at least one course bearing a minimum of three academic credits. Only members of the student body are eligible to vote in student government elections.

### Section 2: Qualifications for membership

Any student represented by the Senate (as delineated in Article VI, Section 1), registered for at least 9 credits, and in good academic standing in accordance with the UMass Dartmouth policy may stand for election to the Senate.

### Section 3: Structure

**Temporary Amendment to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Student Government Association Constitution.**

**This amendment to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Student Government Association Constitution shall be in effect until May 2nd 2019. This amendment shall be treated in all purposes as a regular amendment to the constitution. On May 2nd 2019, this amendment will officially be removed from the Constitution.**

The Senate shall consist of thirty-six senators and five non-voting ex-officio members

There shall be:

- Three senators representing each of the four classes;
- Three senators representing students previously enrolled at Mount Ida College;
- One senator representing commuter students;
- One senator representing resident students;
- Twenty senators representing the colleges: the twenty senators from the five colleges (CAS, CCB, COE, CON, AND CVPA) shall be determined on a proportional basis. The proportion shall be based on enrollment at winter break.
- Five ex-officio non-voting members, consisting of the four Class Presidents and the Student Trustee.

### Section 4: Executive Board

There shall be an executive board comprised of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary.

### Section 5: Voting

All senators shall have voting rights at all meetings of the Senate. The Senate President, however, only votes in the case of a tie.

## **ARTICLE VII: DUTIES**

### **Section 1: Primary duties**

Each senator shall serve the interests and welfare of the student body and submit to the Recording Secretary, on a weekly basis, a short summary of tasks performed meeting the above criteria.

### **Section 2: Office hours**

Each senator shall spend at least 1 hour in the office and/or tabling for Senate each week and perform any tasks necessary for the upkeep of the Senate during this time. Such tasks should not be included in the summary, as they do not meet the criteria outlined in Section 1.

### **Section 3: Preparatory reading**

Each senator shall be responsible for reading, reviewing, and correcting the minutes of each meeting, motions for the upcoming meeting, and submitted Senate Recognized Organization constitutions prior to their passing by the general board. All senators should also be well versed in the Senate constitution as well as Robert's Rules.

### **Section 4: Attendance**

Each senator is responsible for attending all their Committee and Taskforce meetings and all Senate meetings.

### **Section 5: Constituency meeting**

Each senator shall meet regularly with members of said senator's constituency in order to understand their specific concerns.

### **Section 6: Schedule**

Each senator is responsible for maintaining an updated schedule of their available hours in the Senate office at all times.

Section 7: Each senator is responsible for maintaining his/her current contact information in public space at all times.

### **Section 8: Duties of the officers**

In addition to the regular duties of a senator, the officers of the Senate shall be responsible for the following:

#### **President**

The president shall be the presiding officer of the Senate, be the chief executive of the student government at UMass Dartmouth, have the power to issue executive orders provided that they are for the purpose of enforcing motions passed by the Senate or assuring the proper functioning of student government at UMass Dartmouth, act with the Treasurer as co-signer for all Senate expenditures, and oversee all student government elections.

#### **Vice President**

The Vice President shall assist the President in his or her duties, take on the responsibilities of the President in his or her absence, make and adjust all committee appointments with the approval of the Senate, assist the committees in carrying out their duties, chair the Policy Committee and the Committee Council.

#### Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for all financial records of the Senate, be responsible for the administration of Senate funds, act with the President as co-signer for all Senate expenditures, audit the Senate financial records once every year, and chair the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall not make any disbursements of Senate funds without prior Senate approval.

#### Corresponding Secretary

The Corresponding Secretary shall assist the President in his or her duties, be responsible for facilitating all Senate communications, keep records of all correspondence, coordinate informational forums, and chair the Public Relations Committee.

#### Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary shall issue constitutions to all new senators, take the minutes of all Senate meetings, be responsible for the publication of those minutes within the week, prompt senators to perform their duties as delineated in Article VII Sections 1 through 6 of this constitution, and keep record of all motions, minutes, activities, and duties performed by the Senate.

#### Committee Chairpersons

The By-Laws shall list and describe the functions of the Senate's standing committees. There shall be Chairpersons to preside over these committee meetings, create taskforces within their committees to complete pertinent projects, divide up committee work among those taskforces, have the power to appoint non-senators to his/her committee, have the power to grant and revoke voting rights from said members, and submit committee meeting minutes and reports to the Recording Secretary. All Committee Chairpersons shall be members of the Committee Council.

### **ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS**

#### Section 1: Spring Elections

All senators except for those representing the incoming freshman class shall be elected between the tenth to twelfth weeks of the spring semester. These senators-elect shall take office at the first meeting of the new Senate.

#### Section 2: Fall elections

Elections for freshman class senators, as well as any other vacant seats, shall be held between the third and fifth weeks of the fall semester. These senators-elect shall take office upon acceptance of their seat. They shall serve until the first meeting of the Senate elected in the spring or their subsequent termination.

#### Section 3: Advertising

Vacancies shall be adequately advertised. The adequacy of the advertising shall be determined by the Senate President.

#### Section 4: Elections of officers

Before the first meeting of the new Senate is called to order, senators shall elect, from within the Senate, the following officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Committee Chairpersons

This election shall be presided over by the Senate advisor.

#### Section 5: Subsequent vacancies

Normal vacancies arising after the fall election and before the spring election shall be filled in special internal elections.

In the event of a vacancy in a Committee Chairperson position, a special internal election shall be held to fill said position.

In the event of a vacancy in the Executive Board (except for the president, who is succeeded by the vice president) the president shall call special internal elections for every Executive Board position. These elections will be presided over by the Senate's advisor.

Internal elections must take place no sooner than one week and no later than four weeks after the vacancy is formed.

#### Section 6: Terms of office

Each senator and officer shall, upon acceptance, serve until the calling of the new Senate or subsequent termination.

#### Section 7: Transition between old and new officers

All officers of the Senate shall take their respective office after the president elect has taken his/her oath of office.

### **ARTICLE IX: TERMINATION**

#### Section 1: Resignation

Upon submitting an official letter of resignation to the Executive Board, a senator shall forfeit his or her seat. Any senator who ceases to be enrolled at UMass Dartmouth forfeits their seat as a senator.

#### Section 2: Removal

Any member of the Senate who fails to perform their duties for three active weeks throughout a semester shall be removed from office. The dismissal ruling by the Executive Board may be appealed and the senator re-instated by a vote of two-thirds majority of the senate. An active week shall be determined by the Senate President.

#### Section 3: Recall of an officer

Any senator may move for a recall election of an officer of the Senate at any Senate meeting. This motion must pass by two thirds of the Senate. An election will then be held between any senators who desire the position, including the incumbent if he or she so desires.

#### Section 4: Impeachment

Any student may move to impeach a senator for an impeachable offense by introducing a motion proposing impeachment and having it pass by a two thirds majority of the Senate. Impeachable offenses shall be delineated in the bylaws.

#### Section 5: Setup for impeachment trial

If the initial motion for impeachment passes, an impeachment hearing will be set up and conducted according to the procedures specified by the UMass Dartmouth appellate board. A majority vote of the Senate will appoint two senators to act as the prosecutors. The rights of the accused are outlined in the Student Judiciary Document.

#### Section 6: Reinstatement

A petition signed by ten percent of an impeached or removed senator's constituency will be sufficient to reinstate a senator as long as his or her seat has not been filled.

### **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

#### Section 1: Submission

Proposed amendments to this constitution may be submitted to the Senate by any member of the student body. A proposed amendment shall be adequately advertised for at least one week before being acted upon by the Senate. The adequacy of the advertising shall be determined by the Senate President. A copy of all proposed amendments shall be submitted to the University Newspaper.

#### Section 2: Ratification

Any proposed amendments must first be ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. Second, they must be passed in a general or special election by two-thirds of those students casting ballots in regard to such amendments. Finally, they must be approved by the Board according to their policies and procedures. No amendment to this constitution shall be deemed effective unless and until fully ratified according to the above procedure.

#### Section 3: Documentation

An up-to-date list of ratified amendments shall be kept in the Senate office. This list shall contain the dates of submission and ratification.

#### Section 4: Constitutional Review

The Senate constitution will undergo a review, but not necessarily a revision, every year.