Preamble

The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) of the University of New Hampshire (UNH) shall serve as an advocate for all matriculated graduate degree students and is developed on the principle of shared governance where all matriculated graduate degree students at the University of New Hampshire have the right and responsibility to participate in this governance.

The purpose of the GSS is to foster the improvement of graduate student life at UNH by providing a framework for graduate student participation in University activities and governance.

Constitution

The Constitution serves to set the structure of the GSS of the University of New Hampshire and to articulate the inherent rights and responsibilities of the GSS. The document ensures, to the best of its abilities, that the GSS represents all graduate students equally; regardless of school, college, degree level, and living arrangement.

The GSS acknowledges the following constitutional priorities in order to serve its purpose:

1. Provide a representative structure for the graduate student body
2. Serve as an advocate for graduate student concerns and a resource for graduate students
3. Establish and maintain an effective means of communication between graduate students, undergraduate students, faculty and administrators
4. Participate in the decision-making process for establishing University policies and/or setting priorities which affect graduate student life
5. Initiate and administer programs and services for the graduate student body and the University, as appropriate
6. Monitor the development of all graduate student mandatory fees and the services which they support
7. Provide the graduate student body regular, open meetings for participation in graduate student governance

Article I. Authority and Responsibility

The authority and responsibilities described below are delegated to the GSS by the President of the University, while administration oversight of the GSS rests with the Graduate School. In order to serve its stated purpose and the interests of the graduate student body, the GSS must be able to speak for its constituents and to exercise the rights and responsibilities granted to it by the University President and the administration, without risk to its integrity, its charter, or its continued operation.

The GSS acknowledges the following rights and responsibilities granted by the University President and administration in recognition of the GSS as a governing body:

1. The GSS shall be granted reasonable access to all information or documents needed to take action on matters within its authority.
2. The GSS shall have the opportunity to appoint representatives to serve on faculty and administrative committees, such as the Graduate Council and its associated committees, when graduate student representation is sought.
3. The GSS shall be the official voice for graduate student input into all decisions or policies made by the University, Graduate School, Faculty Senate or Graduate Council that affect graduate students.
4. The GSS shall ordinarily be notified by the University, Graduate School, or Faculty Senate of any proposal to change university policy at least two weeks before the decision is made final.
5. The GSS shall review all changes to academic policy affecting graduate students prior to final action by the University, Graduate School, Faculty Senate or Graduate Council.
6. The GSS shall be the official voice for graduate student input to the mandatory fee assessment process and shall state their position on all mandatory fees assessed to graduate students.

7. The GSS is notified of all policy changes related to graduate and family housing on the UNH campus.

8. The GSS will operate under the GSS Bylaws as well as the GSS constitution.

Article II: Composition

1. The GSS refers to an over-arching organizational structure containing two distinct branches; the Executive Board to carryout daily operations of the GSS and the Senators to sustain oversight in various Standing Committees. The non-voting general membership of the GSS consists of all UNH matriculated graduate degree students.

2. Executive Board:
   President (non-voting)
   Vice-President
   Treasurer
   Clerk
   Programs Coordinator
   Representative to the USNH Board of Trustees

3. Senators: All Senators shall be voting members of the GSS.

   3.1. Colleges: Senators from each college will be elected by the matriculated graduate degree students of his/her respective college. Number of Senators from each college:
      3.1.1. Engineering and Physical Science (CEPS) -- 2
      3.1.2. Health and Human Services (CHHS) -- 2
      3.1.3. Liberal Arts (COLA) -- 4
      3.1.4. Life Science and Agriculture (COLSA) -- 1
      3.1.5. Whittemore School of Business and Economics (WSBE) -- 1

   3.2. Graduate Housing Units: Senators from graduate housing units shall be elected by his/her respective Hall Council.
      3.2.1. Babcock Hall -- 1
      3.2.2. Forest Park -- 1

   3.3. Manchester Campus: One (1) Senator will be elected by the matriculated graduate degree students at UNHM.

Graduate Student Senate

124 Memorial Union Building   Durham, New Hampshire   03824-3594
www.unh.edu/gss   grad.student.senate@unh.edu
4. Standing Committees:
   Fee Oversight Committee
   Programming Committee
   Governance Committee
   Graduate Research Conference Committee

Article III: Amendments

1. Proposed amendments to the constitution will be submitted to the GSS Governance Committee for approval before presentation to the entire GSS.

2. Recommended constitutional amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of approval from the GSS voting members.

3. Recommended changes to the GSS constitution shall be signed by the GSS President, and Vice President. These changes shall be communicated to the Dean of the Graduate School by the above signees.

4. The Dean of the Graduate Scholl shall, at their discretion, recommend the proposed constitutional amendment to the University President, who has ultimate authority for approval of amendments to the GSS constitution.
Table of Contents

Articles

I. Composition

Section 1. General Membership
Section 2. Senators
Section 3. Executive Board
Section 4. Officer Elections
Section 5. Removal of Officers

II. Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees
Section 2. Ad-hoc Committees

III. Transaction of Business

IV. Nondiscrimination Policy

V. Amendment and Repeal

Article I: Composition

Section I. General Membership

All matriculated full-time and part-time degree-seeking UNH and UNHM graduate students are included in the non-voting general membership of the GSS.
Section II. Senators

Student body representation from each of the following categories will be based on graduate student enrollment:

1. **Colleges**: Senators from each college will be elected by the matriculated graduate students of his/her respective college.
   
   V.1. Number of Senators from each college:
   
   1. Engineering and Physical Science (CEPS) -- 2
   2. Health and Human Services (CHHS) -- 2
   3. Liberal Arts (COLA) -- 4
   4. Life Science and Agriculture (COLSA) -- 1
   5. Whittemore School of Business and Economics (WSBE) -- 1

2. **Graduate Housing Units**: Senators from graduate housing units shall be elected by his/her respective Hall Council.
   
   1. Babcock Hall -- 1
   2. Forest Park -- 1

3. **Manchester Campus**: One (1) Senator will be elected by the matriculated graduate degree students at UNHM.

**Eligibility**: Any member of the general membership in good academic standing is eligible to serve as a senator. Academic standing shall be verified with the graduate school prior to the senator taking office.

**Term of Service**: Senators shall be elected prior to June 1 of each year and are asked to serve for a term of one (1) year, beginning on June 1 and ending on May 31 of the following year. There shall be no limit to the number of terms that an individual senator may serve so long as they continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

**Rights and Responsibilities**: All senators are voting members of the GSS. All senators are expected to serve on at least one (1) GSS committee. All Senators are expected to attend all GSS meetings and all meetings of committees on which they serve. Each senator shall serve as liaison for college/department issues and shall serve as representatives to college/department committees. All new senators shall attend new senator orientation prior to the first regularly scheduled GSS meeting of the academic year.

**Vacancies**: Any vacancy shall be filled by a special election to be held by the affected constituency within four (4) weeks of the position being vacated. In the event that the affected constituency fails to fill the vacant position within the four (4) week limit, the GSS President shall fill the position by appointment or special election.

Section III. The GSS Executive Board

Graduate Student Senate

124 Memorial Union Building   Durham, New Hampshire   03824-3594

www.unh.edu/gss   grad.student.senate@unh.edu
The GSS Executive Board shall consist of the following positions:

1. **President**: The president shall preside over all meetings of the GSS; shall appoint all committee members and committee chairpersons; shall oversee completion of committee objectives; shall have final responsibility for GSS written and oral communications (corresponding with the Clerk); shall serve on the Graduate Council.

2. **Vice President**: The Vice-President shall act for the President at the discretion or in the absence of the President; shall assume the office of President in the event that office becomes vacant.

3. **Treasurer**: The Treasurer shall balance, manage and distribute the GSS budget; shall serve as Chairperson of Graduate Fee Oversight Committee; shall serve as representative to Central Budget Committee.

4. **Clerk**: The Clerk shall keep meeting minutes; shall act as official archivist; shall draft official documents; shall report meeting minutes to various outlets for dispensing across campus.

5. **Programs Director**: The Programs Director shall serve as Chairperson of the Programs Committee; shall plan and coordinate social events; shall coordinate the new GSS member training.

6. **Representative to the USNH Board of Trustees**: The Representative to the USNH Board of Trustees shall attend BOT meetings; shall serve as a member of the USNH University System Student Board; shall report back to the Executive Committee.

**Eligibility**: Any member of the general membership in good academic standing is eligible to serve as an Executive Officer of the GSS. Academic standing shall be verified with the graduate school prior to the Officer taking office. No member of the GSS may simultaneously occupy more than one position on the Executive Board.

**Term of Service**: Officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year, beginning on June 1 and ending on May 31 of the following year. There shall be no limit to the number of terms that an individual Officer may serve as long as they continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

**Rights and Responsibilities**: The GSS President is a non-voting member of the GSS, but retains all other rights and responsibilities of GSS senators outlined above. All other Executive Board members retain all of the rights and responsibilities of GSS senators outlined above. New members of the GSS Executive Board will be required to attend GSS Executive Board Orientation (as described in Article I, Section IV: 3). The GSS Executive Board shall hold meetings at the President’s discretion. A member of the Executive Board who misses more than one-half (1/2) of the GSS meetings without giving prior notice shall be subject to removal from the Executive Board.

Graduate Student Senate

124 Memorial Union Building   Durham, New Hampshire   03824-3594
www.unh.edu/gss   grad.student.senate@unh.edu
During academic breaks, the Executive Board shall be responsible for all official GSS actions.

Vacancies: The GSS President may fill vacancies on the Executive Board from the GSS representatives in the event of a mid-term vacancy. Such Presidential appointments are subject to confirmation by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) at the next GSS meeting. The respective term of service begins immediately following approval by the GSS and the new officer shall undergo new officer orientation (as described in Article I, Section IV: 3) as soon as possible following their confirmation.

Section IV. Officer Elections
1. **Nominations:** The nomination process shall begin two (2) weeks prior to the opening of the election. A call for nominations shall be issued to the general membership. The Governance Committee shall collect all nominations for Executive Officer positions and prepare the online ballot.
2. **Elections:** Executive Officers shall be elected by the general membership by the first meeting in February. Elections shall be conducted via an online survey that shall be distributed to the general membership at least one (1) week prior to the close of the election.
3. **New Officer Orientation:** Executive officers elected to their first term of service shall be required to attend new officer orientation. The new officer orientation will be administered by the GSS Executive Board between the close of elections in February and May 31. This orientation program will instruct new officers on their fiduciary obligations to the UNH graduate student body and the responsibilities specific to their office.

Section V: Removal from Office
Should a voting member of the GSS or the Executive Board fail to fulfill their responsibilities, their removal from office may be initiated by any of the following mechanisms:

1. The GSS may request removal of any GSS representative with a petition of signatures of one-half (1/2) the total GSS voting membership submitted to the GSS President or Vice President.
2. The GSS may request removal of any GSS representative with a petition of signatures of one-hundred (100) matriculated graduate degree students submitted to the GSS President or Vice President.
3. The GSS Executive Board may request removal of any GSS representative with the signatures of two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board.
Prior to removal from office, a written resolution shall be introduced at the following regularly scheduled GSS meeting and removal will require approval by two-thirds (2/3) of the GSS voting membership.

Article II: Committees
Any GSS voting member shall be welcome to serve on any standing committee or any administrative and university committees on which graduate students may serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member, except those committees the President and the Board are required to serve on by the nature of their offices.

Section I. Appointments and General Responsibilities
The GSS President shall appoint all voting committee members and chairpersons. Chairpersons shall report to the Executive Officers. Chairpersons shall form sub-committees as necessary to facilitate the work of the committee. Committees shall review and propose amendments to the committee charter as necessary. Committees shall meet at the chairperson’s discretion.

Section II. Standing Committees
1. Governance Committee: This committee shall consist of the Vice-President, Treasurer, Clerk, and three senators appointed by the President. The Vice-President shall serve as the chairperson of this committee. This committee shall oversee the annual election process and any special elections; shall oversee any removals from office according to Article I, Section V; shall review and propose amendments to the GSS constitution and bylaws as necessary; and shall develop and conduct annual orientation of new GSS senators. In the event of a dispute within the government concerning constitutional matters, the Governance Committee shall resolve the dispute. The committee must agree unanimously on all rulings.

2. Fee Oversight Committee: The GSS Treasurer shall serve as the chairperson of this committee. This committee shall oversee the annual fee oversight process; shall be responsible for coordinating meetings with fee auxiliary units; shall be responsible for communicating fee changes to the GSS; shall be responsible for soliciting input on fee changes from the GSS general membership; shall draft the official GSS position statement to the UNH administration regarding fee changes following a vote on each fee change a GSS meeting.

3. Programming Committee: The programs coordinator shall serve as the chairperson of this committee. This committee shall plan, coordinate and develop professional development and social programs for the benefit of the GSS general membership.

Graduate Student Senate
124 Memorial Union Building   Durham, New Hampshire  03824-3594
www.unh.edu/gss   grad.student.senate@unh.edu
4. **Graduate Research Conference Committee**: This committee shall assist the Graduate School in the planning and execution of the annual UNH Graduate Research Conference.

### Section III. Ad-hoc Committees

1. The GSS Executive Board may create ad-hoc committees to address the immediate needs of the student body. The GSS Executive Board shall develop a charge for the committee at the time of formation. One year after the inception of such a committee, the use of the committee will be reviewed to decide if the committee should continue as an ad-hoc committee or if the committee should cease to exist due to lack of need.

2. **Liaison Committees**: The President shall appoint members of the GSS to serve as liaisons to UNH administrative and university committees as necessary to ensure that the graduate student voice is heard on any issues that may affect graduate student life. GSS members serving as liaisons are responsible for attending all scheduled meetings of the committee or identifying an alternate in the case of their absence, and for reporting the actions of the committee to the GSS at all regular meetings.

### Article III: Transaction of Business

1. **Regular Meetings**: The GSS will hold regularly scheduled meetings no less than once per month during the fall and spring semesters except during academic breaks and exam periods. Meetings of the GSS will be open to the public with the exception of Executive Session.

2. **Special meetings**: Special meetings may be requested by either of the following methods:

   2.1. The GSS President may call special meetings.

   2.2. The GSS may call special meetings by submitting to the President a petition composed of signatures from one-third the voting membership.

   Forty-eight hours of notice must be given for any special meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be communicated to all voting members of the GSS upon calling the meeting.

3. **Quorum**: Sixty (60) percent (rounded to nearest whole number) of the voting membership of the GSS constitutes a quorum necessary for conducting regular business.

4. **Procedures**: The business of the GSS shall be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.
5. **Executive session**: The purpose of entering non-public executive session shall be communicated at the time the session is called. When in Executive Session, Student Senate shall abide by all state laws with reference to public bodies in Executive Session.

6. **Decorum**: All members of the GSS shall endeavor to maintain a congenial atmosphere during meetings. In addition, GSS members shall maintain a civil tone in all official communications with constituents and outside parties.

**Article IV: Nondiscrimination Policy**

The GSS and its members shall abide by the University of New Hampshire’s nondiscrimination policy. This policy shall apply to eligibility for general membership, eligibility for officer positions or the right to participate in GSS functions.

**Article V: Amendment and Repeal**

1. **Inconsistencies**: All previously adopted bylaws of the GSS and all resolutions or orders which are inconsistent with the provisions of these bylaws are hereby repealed.

2. **Necessary Votes**: These bylaws may be amended or repealed at any regular meeting of the GSS, or at a special meeting duly called for the purpose. Written notice of the proposed bylaw amendments shall be given to each GSS voting member at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting. Each amendment shall be subject to approval by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership of the GSS before being adopted.
Dr. Mark Huddleston  
University of New Hampshire President

Dr. Harry Richards  
Dean of the Graduate School

Jessica Knapp  
GSS President

Daniel Budak  
GSS Vice President

Michael Staley  
GSS Clerk

Fathima Muzamil  
GSS Treasurer

Stephanie Bramlett  
GSS Programs Coordinator

Bob Swarthout  
GSS Representative to the University System Board of Trustees

April 18, 2011