



Constitution of the Graduate Student Senate at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

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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.

1.01- The official name of the graduate student government organization under this Constitution shall be "The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Graduate Student Senate" (GSS).

1.02- 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.



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1.03- 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. GSS Responsibilities

2.01- 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.



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2.02- 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. GSS Senator Membership

3.01- 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.

3.02- 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.

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



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3.04- 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.

3.05 - 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. GSS Executive Board

4.01- The Executive Board is the leadership body of the GSS.

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

4.03- 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

5.01- Vacancies

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. All replacement Executive Board members shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI. Advisor

6.01- 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.



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ARTICLE VII. Meetings

7.01- 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.

7.02- 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.

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

7.04- 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

8.01- 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.

8.02- 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.



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8.03- 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. Resignation from Office, Removal, and Impeachment

9.01- 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.

9.02- 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.

9.03- 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.

9.04- 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.



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ARTICLE X. Ratification of Initial GSS Constitution

10.01 – 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

11.01- Current Version

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

11.02- 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.



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11.03- 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.

11.04- 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.

11.05- Constitutional Review

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

ARTICLE XII. Committees.

12.01- 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.

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