

Graduate Association Governing Document
Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Research, UBC
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Last updated: February 9th, 2016

ARTICLE I

Name: Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Research Graduate Association (GRSJ GA)

ARTICLE II

Purpose: The purpose of the GRSJ GA is to provide academic forums and build a community network for graduate students at the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Research at the University of British Columbia.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Membership and participation in the GRSJ GA are open to all enrolled graduate students in the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Research at the University of British Columbia. Members of the Executive are selected solely on the basis of commitment. No graduate student is excluded from membership, executive positions, or participation on the basis of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ability, age, migrant status, Indigeneity, or other forms of exclusion.

ARTICLE III

Organization

The human resource organization of the GRSJ GA consists of:

1. The Executive

a. MA Representative: The role of the MA representative is to ensure that the voices, concerns, and questions of masters' students in the Institute are given space for discussion. The MA Representative will co-chair the biweekly meetings and Annual General Meeting (AGM), in addition to facilitating the three working groups of the GA. The MA Representative is required to attend 90 percent of the biweekly meetings and must attend the AGM. Estimated time per month: 10 hours.

b. PhD Representative: The role of the PhD representative is to ensure that the voices, concerns, and questions of doctoral students in the Institute are given space for discussion. The PhD Representative will co-chair the biweekly meetings and AGM, in addition to helping to facilitate the three working groups of the GA. The PhD Representative is required to attend 90 percent of the biweekly meetings and must attend the AGM. Estimated time per month: 10 hours.

c. Executive Board: The Executive Board shall include the elected MA and PhD representatives of the association, and up to 7 elected board members. They shall supervise affairs of the association between its meetings, make recommendations to the association and perform other duties as specified in the governing document. Executive Board is required to attend 80 percent of the biweekly meetings and must attend the AGM. Estimated time per month: 10 hours.

2. Membership

Any enrolled graduate student at the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice is part of the GRSJ GA and is eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

ARTICLE IV

Duties and Responsibilities

The GRSJ GA has three main duties that are organized into working groups, whose tasks are divided amongst the Executive. The MA and PhD representative will each help facilitate at least two of three the working groups; members of the Executive Board will take the lead on these groups, and decide either one, two, or all three working groups to sit on. In addition to the MA and PhD representatives, each working group must include at least two other members of the GA, as we are conscious that the MA and PhD representatives could be overworked without proper support from the rest of the body. To ensure this does not happen, each working group must be balanced and led effectively by the members of the executive board and members of the body. If the GA feels as though further working groups are needed in order to further the mission of the group, they will need to be decided upon and voted by the body of the GA. Current working groups include:

1. Community building and social support

- a. This might include any number of the following activities, to be amended and shaped as the acting Executive Board sees need:
 - i. Bi-weekly reading group
 - ii. Bi-weekly social activities
 - iii. Orientation activities and/or “buddy system” for incoming graduate students in GRSJ on a volunteer basis

2. Academics & Scholarship:

- a. Canadian Graduate Journal for Social Justice Research
- b. F-Word Conference (name could be changed in 2016-2017) held in collaboration with the GRSJ Undergraduate Student Association

3. Finance
 - a. Maintenance of budget

ARTICLE V

Advocacy & Activism

The GRSJ GA acknowledges that in addition to being students of this Institute and scholars, we are at the same time community organizers and activists striving for social justice. As such, advocacy and activism are to be woven into every part of our structure and work. We realize that activism comes in different forms, but it also requires political strategizing and collaboration with other groups on campus (e.g. the Social Justice Centre, the RAGA Centre Collective, BIPoC Mobilization, UBC Pride Collective, Colour Connected Against Racism, Students for Climate Action, etc.). One form of advocacy, activism, and archiving that the GA should continue to maintain is the socialjustgradstatements.wordpress.com website and statement writing collective, which responds to major events related to social justice at UBC, in Canada, and internationally. The username and password for this website can be accessed by writing to Taq Bhandal (PhD Representative 2015-2016) at bhandalt@alumni.ubc.ca

ARTICLE VI

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to be called by the GRSJ GA and held during the first three weeks of the Fall term. The purpose of this meeting will be to summarize the work done during the previous academic year and to elect new members to the Executive.

Bi-weekly meetings

After the AGM, bi-weekly meetings will be held by the Executive at a mutually agreed upon time. The dates for these meetings will be set for the entire academic term in order for members to work them into their calendars. The purpose of these meetings will be to update progress on the tasks of the three working groups and to make collective decisions.

ARTICLE VII

Elections

The GRSJ GA is a democratically elected and run body. At least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, a call for nominations for the MA Representative, PhD Representative, and members of the Executive Board will be sent out to the GRSJ graduate student listserv. The

nominees receiving a majority of votes for positions on the Executive Board--and noting the needed representation for each of the above working groups--will be elected for the following academic year, beginning immediately. All nominees must be enrolled graduate students in GRSJ, and may submit themselves for nomination or may be nominated by another party. For an election to be valid, at least two graduate students, other than the nominee for each position, must be present at the AGM and provide a vote for the nominee to be elected. While we believe in a fair election process, GRSJ also realizes the importance of collaborative work and de-constructing traditional hierarchies of learning and power within organizations. While the MA and PhD representative will sit on all three working groups, the other elected representatives on the Executive Board will work closely with all persons who wish to be involved in the GRSJ GA. The GA feels strongly that this organization must be a space of teaching and learning, where all responsible for creating a productive and fruitful environment for sharing ideas, engaging in activities, and producing knowledge.

ARTICLE VIII

Graduate Student Society

The GRSJ GA has one voting seat at the UBC Graduate Student Society Council. This position will be filled by either the MA or PhD representative depending on individual capacities. The MA and PhD representatives should get in touch the GSS Council immediately after the AGM (aa@gss.ubc.ca) as the voting member is required to attend an New Councillor Orientation and also fill out an Affidavit of Election to the GSS Council as a prerequisite. In case the voting member is not available for the Council meetings, the other graduate representative can be called to proxy. Regardless, all graduate students are invited to participate in Council and committee meetings as observers.

ARTICLE IX

Terms of Office

Members of the Executive will hold office for the full academic year (e.g. September 1st, 2015 - August 31st, 2016). In the case that a member of the Executive is no longer an enrolled graduate student at the Institute part way through the term of office, or needs to be removed as an Executive a meeting will be held by the executive, followed by a call will be sent out for nominations, and an election will be held at the next proceeding bi-weekly meeting. This position will still be held until the end of the academic year, not a year from the date of election.

ARTICLE X

Finance

The GRSJ GA has been allocated \$1000.00 to be spent each fiscal year (e.g. April 1st, 2015 - March 31st, 2016). This money can rolled over to the following year in case all funds have not

been spent. Due to the incongruence of the financial schedule with the terms, note that 50% of the allocated budget (\$500) must be kept for the incoming Executive Board in September, such that they have enough funding until re-allocation the following April. The spending of funds must have some academic rationale, but it can be interpreted quite broadly. The money cannot be used for alcohol in accordance with UBC policy.

ARTICLE XI

Emails

The GRSJ GA will use the “GRSJ grads” listserv in order to communicate with the general body of the department. At the meeting prior to an email sent, one member of the Executive will volunteer to send an email on behalf of the GA. If email correspondence occurs between meetings, at least three representatives for each working group must approve the email to be sent to the entire GRSJ grads listserv (approval can occur via email, phone, or in-person). Although the MA and PhD Representatives sit on all three working groups, their approval on any email will only represent one working group, thereby requiring input from other members. This is to ensure that all parties of the GA have the opportunity to be justly represented when an email goes out on behalf of the current Executive Board.

ARTICLE XII

Methods to Amend the Constitution

To amend this constitution, a majority of the entire membership must be present during the voting. This number will be determined by the Representatives according to the number of official members, or by determining a majority of the average attendance at meetings.

ARTICLE XIII

Ratification of this Constitution

This constitution will go into effect with two-thirds affirmative votes of respondents from the membership.