

Biomedical Student Association (Formerly the Graduate Student Organization) Constitution and Bylaws

Article I. Name & Purpose

Section A. The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) shall now go by the name of the **Biomedical Student Association (BSA)** of The Graduate School at Augusta University.

Section B. The BSA shall represent the Biomedical Sciences Ph.D students and their student affiliations within the framework of The Graduate School and Augusta University, and to provide leadership and support to the academic as well as the non-academic affairs of the Biomedical Science graduate students. The BSA shall conduct activities which promote an atmosphere of fellowship and social support among the Biomedical Science graduate students, and shall organize their interaction with other institutions and organizations within Augusta University and with the community at large.

Article II. Membership

Section A. All degree seeking students enrolled in the Biomedical Sciences Ph.D program of The Graduate School of Augusta University shall be considered Primary members of the BSA through which they shall be automatically granted Primary membership. Each Primary member has equal rights and privileges.

Section B. Associate membership shall be open to all enrolled students of AU and may be granted by submitting an application for Associate membership as determined by the current acting BSA executive council. Any enrolled student with a stated interest in the Biomedical Sciences who submits an application along with annual dues for the year of application to the BSA executive counsel shall receive Associate membership status and be eligible to vote during elections and BSA meetings.

Section C. Primary membership, through which the student has all rights and privileges, shall include the right to vote during annual BSA elections and quarterly BSA meetings. Only Primary members may hold officer positions.

Section D. *Non-Discrimination Statement:* The BSA shall have no policies that discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, gender, gender identity, disability, handicap, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, marital status, citizenship, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Section E. An annual membership fee (dues) may be charged for dues-paying membership in the BSA. The executive committee shall determine the amount and deadline for payment of these dues based on the projection of the cost of events planned for the upcoming year. Dues shall be used by organization to fund the participation of dues-paying members in the yearly calendar of BSA activities.

Section F. Non-dues-paying members and all guests may be required, at the discretion of the officers, to purchase tickets for or pay admission to BSA activities paid for by the organization's funds.

Section G. The BSA shall make every effort to prohibit its members and officers from engaging in acts of hazing or committing any act that endangers the safety of its members or others.

Article III. Officers, Qualifications, and Duties

Section A. There shall be at least five (5) officers to administrate the BSA. These shall be the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Social Chairperson. The Executive Officers shall assist/share responsibilities with the other officers.

Section B. Officers must be a member in good standing, and have been members of BSA for a minimum of one semester prior to holding office. Officers must be Primary members of the BSA. Associate members cannot hold officer positions, but can vote in the election.

Section C. Officers of the BSA shall be elected annually by all members of the BSA as outlined in Article IV. Election shall be held in the Spring semester.

Section D. Voluntary resignation of an office by an officer shall be accepted by the other officers and the vacancy shall be filled as described in Articles IV and V.

Section E. Any officer whose work for the BSA is considered unsatisfactory may be required to resign their office following the impeachment guidelines set forth in in Article V.

Section F. The duties and powers of the offices shall be:

1. The **President** shall: (a) preside over all meetings of the organization; (b) call meetings of the BSA at their discretion or upon the request of a full member (see Article VII, Section C); (c) develop the organization's agenda at the approval of the other BSA officers; (d) call for committees to accomplish the tasks set forth in the agenda; (e) represent the concerns of the BSA to the Dean of The Graduate School; (f) be responsible for any vacated office; (g) call a new election for any vacated office; (h) be responsible for the management of the organization's assets; (i) collaborate with the Vice-President and Secretary to manage the election process; (j) work with the executive team to develop special initiatives and coordinate events with other officers; and (k) the President shall complete the annual student organization training.
2. The **Vice-President** shall: (a) assist the President in their duties; (b) assume the duties and have the full powers of the President in the absence of the President; (c) be responsible for select special initiatives as deemed fit for the Vice-President (ie: career seminar series, etc); (d) promote or coordinate with other officers on activities or events; and (e) collaborate with the President and Secretary to manage the election process.
3. The **Secretary & Communicator** shall: (a) record the minutes of meetings; (b) provide the organization's official correspondence; (c) be responsible for the distribution of information to the members; and (d) collaborate with the President and Vice-President to manage the election process. Duties may include (but are not limited to) maintaining the BSA email address directory, distribute fliers for meetings and events (including supervising the hanging and taking down in all buildings), making reservation of rooms/locations for meetings and events, head social media presences (Facebook), and share announcements/information with TGS to be posted on the BIOMED webpage.
4. The **Treasurer** shall: (a) be responsible for maintaining the fiscal and material assets of the organization; (b) maintain fiscal accounts; (c) make disbursements from, and receipt for all remittances to, the organization. Only the Treasurer or the President may authorize disbursements of the organization's financial assets. Duties may include (but are not limited to) arranging for payment of goods purchased for meetings, events, etc., working closely with the Social Chairperson and Executive Officers to plan for events that are within the budget, and involvement in any fundraising efforts organized by the BSA officers.
5. The **Social Chairperson** shall: (a) assemble and oversee event committees for the purpose of planning, organizing, and implementing activities for the BSA; (b) recruit other members to chair event committees and to help orchestrate activities; (c) provide leadership and counseling to event committee chairs and follow-up on progression of organization and completion of event project plans and budgets; (d) work with the Treasurer to assure adequate funding is available for proposed activities; and (e) prepare event fliers to be distributed by the Secretary.
6. The **Executive Officers** shall be optional positions available to members seeking to chair special initiative roles (ie: Editor, Humanitarian, etc). There shall be no more than 3 Executive Officer

positions held at any one time. In addition to their special initiative role, Executive Officers shall also assist/share responsibilities with the other officers as needed.

7. The **GSGA** (Graduate Student Government Association) **Representatives** shall: (a) attend one a month Graduate Student Government Association meeting; (b) represent and be the voice of the BSA during GSGA meetings; and (c) relay any concerns to the GSGA and report important information to the BSA from the GSGA. There will be 3 representatives from the BSA.

Article IV. Election of Officers

Section A. Elections for the officers shall be held annually during the month of April, and shall be overseen by the President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

Section B. All offices shall be open for nomination to all Primary members of the BSA. Current presiding officers may be nominated for any executive office, including the present office held, under the following stipulations:

1. No officer may serve more than two full consecutive terms in the same office unless no eligible nominee accepts nomination for that specific office during the nomination period (as outlined in Sections C-D) of the officer's second term.
2. An officer may serve more than two full consecutive terms as an Executive Officer (officer position outlined in Article III, Section 6) if any of the full consecutive terms or the nominated position consist of an alternate role (ie: one year as Editor, one year as Humanitarian).
3. In the event of an individual holding office following a special election as outlined in Sections K-L, the duration of service considered as one full term will be determined as set forth in Section M.

Section C. Nominations will begin to be accepted following the March BSA meeting at which time positions are described and the election process is explained. The presiding officers shall serve as a nomination committee in addition to nominations being accepted from the general BSA student population. Nomination forms (with instructions and deadline for submission) will be made available to all full members of the BSA following the March BSA meeting (typically distributed via email, but may be distributed as the Executive Committee deems fit). If officers are unable to hold such a meeting, an email shall be distributed to all full members of the BSA describing positions and election process and including a nomination form with instructions. Nominations will be accepted until a date determined by the President, Vice-President, and Secretary. The deadline for nominations will be shared with the members of the BSA. No nominations will be accepted after this time.

Section D. Once a nomination is received the nominees will then be queried as best determined by the President, Vice-President, and/or Secretary on this same date, as to their acceptance of such nomination(s). The nominee has one week after the nomination acceptance deadline to accept or decline the nomination. Formal reply must be submitted by e-mail to the Secretary at the BSA email address with all pertinent information required. If this is not received by the decision deadline, that individual's name will be removed from nomination.

Section E. The nominees shall be announced to all members of the BSA via e-mail, or as deemed fit by the President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

Section F. Elections shall commence following announcement of all nominees to the members of the BSA. Balloting will be conducted as determined by the President, Vice-President and Secretary (i.e. via email, online via survey freeware, online via a website, etc.) and no votes shall be accepted after a closing date as determined by the President, Vice-President and Secretary.

Section G. Within two days of the closure of online voting, the President, Vice-President, and Secretary shall count the votes. Nominees will be notified of the results no later than one week following the

closing date, and results shall be published and distributed to the membership (i.e. via e-mail) within the same week.

Section H. Elected officers shall assume a shadow role under the current officer of each individual's elected position at a date following the election no later than June 1. This should serve as a transition period, where newly elected officers meet with the current officers to understand their role. This is to ensure a smooth transition and that ongoing projects are not lost.

Section I. The term of office shall be one year, beginning on the first day of the following Fall semester, at which time all current presiding officers shall hand their position over to the newly elected officers.

Section J. Access to online ballots will be held by the BSA for a period of thirty days following the end of elections. During this time any nominee may examine the ballots in the presence of a BSA officer, and all questions concerning the election must be duly answered by the President or Secretary.

Section K. If an elected officer would like to resign from their position during their elected year, the must notify the President, Vice President and Secretary through the BSA email. Notification of vacating their position must be given 14 days prior to officially resigning, in order for a smooth transition. All correspondences must be through the BSA email and saved for 30 days. By vacating their position, officers forgo any of their rights within the Executive council (voting, etc.).

Section L. Special elections shall be held if a vacancy occurs. A call for nominations must be distributed to all BSA members within 2-3 weeks of the vacancy. Voting as set forth in sections E-G shall occur by a date as determined by the President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

Section M. A special election process shall be held in the event that there are no standing officers on the Executive Committee. In such a situation, an interim ad-hoc committee shall be put into place by the Faculty Advisor. If there is no Faculty Advisor available to make such a decision, BSA members shall be responsible for establishing interim ad-hoc officers amongst the Biomedical Science graduate students. The interim ad-hoc committee shall then establish a voting process as deemed fit, adhering as closely as is possible to the guidelines established in Article IV.

Section N. If an officer(s) is/are elected via a special election process as outlined in Sections K-L, and the time of election is within 5 months of the April voting period, then no nominations nor votes shall be held for the position(s). The elected officer(s) shall hold the position(s) through the following term unless they opt to withdraw from the position(s), in which case nominations and voting shall proceed as normal for said position(s). Any position held under such circumstances shall be considered as one full term (as opposed to the actual, extended period of service). If the time of election is prior to 5 months of the April voting period, then the time served in said office shall be considered to be one full term.

Article V. Impeachment and Vacancies

Section A. Charges (e.g. illegal activity, violation of the Augusta University Student Code of Conduct, misuse of position, failure to perform duties as outlined by these Constitution and Bylaws, etc.) may be brought against an officer by any member of the organization. Following presentation of the charges, the officer will be allowed one week's time to provide defense. A unanimous vote of the Executive Committee, excluding the accused officer, is then required to effect the resignation of the officer.

Section B. All vacancies in elected positions shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term. If one or more officers are unable to assume or continue with their duties, the remaining officers shall hold a special election to fill those vacancies under the guidelines for elections in Article IV. In the event that such an election cannot be held within a reasonable amount of time, the remaining officers shall appoint the replacement with the advice and counsel of the Faculty Advisor.

Article VI. Faculty Advisor

Section A. A Faculty Advisor shall be nominated and elected in the same manner as other officer positions as outlined in Article IV in the event that the current advisor resigns. Nominations for this position are open to all members of the graduate faculty. The Faculty Advisor of the BSA shall be considered a non-voting consultant on important BSA issues. The Faculty Advisor shall be expected to keep current on BSA issues and activities. The advisor serves as an ex-officio member and does not vote. The Faculty Advisor is voted upon yearly by the executive board: nominations are submitted by board members and voted upon.

Article VII. Dues

Section A. An annual membership fee (dues) may be charged for dues-paying membership in the BSA as outlined in Article II.

Section B. Dues will be administered and collected as determined by the current executive committee and appropriated by the Treasurer.

Section C. If the organization becomes inactive or folds, the remaining funds in the account will be donated to a non-profit group/organization as voted on by BSA members. Any funds contributed to BSA by The Graduate School shall be returned to The Graduate School.

Article VIII. Meetings

Section A. Meetings of the BSA may be called at the discretion of the President, and shall be held at least quarterly.

Section B. The meeting place and time shall be determined by the BSA officers and members as to allow maximum participation.

Section C. Any full member may request the President to call a meeting provided they submit a petition in writing, stating the reason and any pertinent facts, to the officers of the BSA, and this request carries the approval of the majority of the officers.

Section D. During meetings, a simple majority of the full members present (including at least 2 officers) is required for adoption of all motions, resolutions, or other questions put to a vote.

Article IX. Rules of Order

Section A. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide by the presiding officers in all situations not covered by the provisions of the constitutions.

Article X. Bylaws and Amendments

Section A. An amendment of the bylaws may be proposed by any full member of the BSA. The amendment must be submitted to the BSA email address at least one month prior to voting. The membership shall be notified via email as to the nature of the proposed amendment and when the vote will be held.

Section B. An amendment must receive at least a two-thirds majority of votes cast by the membership present (or of the total votes received), and a two-thirds majority of all officers, in order to be adopted.

Section C. Amendments to the bylaws so adopted shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.

These bylaws/constitution was adopted on 1/20/2021 and most recent revised on 20 Jan 2021.