

Constitution of the History Graduate Students Association of The University of Western Ontario – Updated: April 15, 2024; Ratified: April 16, 2024.

Definitions:

1. “Graduate students” refers to all full- and part time graduate students enrolled in The University of Western Ontario History Department.
2. “Department” refers to the History Department of The University of Western Ontario.
3. “University” refers to The University of Western Ontario.
4. “Meeting” refers to a meeting of the HGSA.

Article I: Name

1. The name of this organization is the History Graduate Students Association, hereinafter referred to as the HGSA.

Article II: Purposes

1. The purposes of this organization are:
 - a. To provide a forum for discussion of, and action on, issues of concern to graduate students,
 - b. To serve as liaison between Graduate Students and the Departments (and its representatives), other student organizations (ex. SOGS, PSAC Local 610, et al.) and the University.

Article III: Powers and Jurisdictions

1. The jurisdiction and powers assumed by the HGSA in this Constitution (and any amendments) arise from autonomous self-governing authority and do not require the authority of any other than that of the HGSA itself.
2. The association shall decide the allocation of all monies destined for the general graduate student population, including SOGS subsidies etc.

Article IV: Membership

1. All full- and part-time graduate students in the Department are automatically members and have the right to vote in any and all decisions and elections.
2. All members have the right to speak at organization meetings, subject to the discretion of the Chair(s).

Article V: Governance

- 1) Meetings
 - a) The HGSA will meet once per semester (at minimum), or when any pressing business comes up that needs to be discussed and voted on by the graduate student population.

This will be decided at the discretion of the Chair(s), or the signed request of 10 members of the history graduate student population, OR 20%, whichever is less.

- b) All decisions made at a Meeting of the HGSA shall be binding on all other bodies of the HGSA
- c) Official communications shall be through e-mail.
- d) Quorum shall be ten (10) members of the history graduate student population, OR 20% whichever is less.
- e) All financial transactions will be approved by the HGSA Executive Committee (see 3.b.i-ii) in consultation with Treasurer
- f) Proxy voting shall be permitted with written and signed notification to be submitted to the Chair(s);
- g) Attendees are limited to one proxy;
- h) Meeting proceedings shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

2) Elected Officials

a) General

- i) All elected officials shall be voting members of the HGSA;
- ii) Elected positions shall not exceed 12 months, except for the McCaffrey Coordinator;
- iii) Elected officials may occupy the same position for consecutive terms pending either contested or uncontested re-election by the membership at large for every 12 month term, except for the McCaffrey Coordinator.

b) Chair(s)

- i) Shall generally oversee all events, activities and committees of the HGSA, and provide assistance as required;
- ii) Shall maintain the decorum of the HGSA and work to provide an inclusive and efficient student organization;
- iii) Shall act as the chief liaison between the Department and the HGSA, including attending departmental meetings, Advisory Committee meetings, and keeping in regular contact with the Graduate Chair and Graduate Program Coordinator;
- iv) Calls, advertises and chair meetings;
- v) Shall work with the Secretary to solicit agenda items, set the agenda, and distributes the agenda in advance of the Meeting;
- vi) Circulate previous Meeting minutes, and communicates resolutions and proceedings to relevant parties;
- vii) Supervise all elections;
- viii) In the event of the Chair running for an elected position, this duty shall fall to the Secretary.
- ix) Collect and maintain the HGSA's records;
- x) In the absence of Chair(s), the Executive Committee will meet to appoint interim Chair(s). The interim Chair(s), if appointed in the Summer Term, serve until the Fall Meeting when an election can be held. If appointed in the Fall or Winter Term, after the Fall Meeting, the interim Chair(s) serve until the Spring Meeting when an election can be held

- (1) See 3.b.iv.(1) for guidelines regarding the inability of the Executive Committee to select interim Chair(s).
- xi) Shall meet with HGSA members, upon reasonable request, to discuss concerns or grievances;
 - xii) Co-chairs shall be permitted, and shall not exceed two persons.
- c) Secretary
- i) Shall liaison with the Chair(s) to set and distribute a Meeting agenda;
 - ii) Shall take attendance at each Executive Meeting;
 - iii) Shall record, compile and archive minutes from each Meeting;
 - iv) Shall make available Meeting minutes upon request;
 - v) Shall requisition the minutes and records of HGSA committees;
 - vi) Shall serve as Interim Chair in the event of a Chair's vacancy or absence
 - vii) Collect reports from Graduate representatives on various departmental committees (Advisory, Graduate, and Space) as well as a Chair's Report, a PSAC 610 report (from representatives), and a SOGS (from representatives) report for a by- monthly newsletter to be circulated via email to all HGSA members to serve in place of monthly meetings (amended as per Motion 2016-1)
- d) Treasurer
- i) Shall be responsible for overseeing the finances of the HGSA, including verifying and depositing incoming funds related to HGSA activities, and reimbursing HGSA-related expenses in a timely manner;
 - ii) Shall be a signing officer of the HGSA;
 - iii) Shall keep and maintain all financial materials relating to the HGSA. This includes one of the the HGSA cheque book, and receipts of all expenditures. All documentation shall be made available to HGSA members upon request;
 - iv) Shall normally present updates of the HGSA's finances at each Meeting (ex. monies received from SOGS and the Department);
 - v) Shall submit a financial statement to members once per term, at a Meeting;
 - vi) Shall be made aware in advance of any expenditure that is expected to be paid out of society funds to ensure the necessary money is available (ex. conference expenditures, social events, McCaffrey Seminars).
 - vii) Must go with Chair(s) to bank at end of elected term to change over signing authority
- e) McCaffrey Seminar Series Coordinator
- i) Shall organize, schedule, promote, and chair the Bruce McCaffrey Seminar Series;
 - ii) A formal call for papers shall be issued in May;
 - iii) During the Summer term, typically during the months of July and August, the McCaffrey Coordinator must work in conjunction with the Department/faculty coordinators of the Professional Development Workshop (PDW) Series and the Research Seminar Series (RSS) to plan out the Seminar schedule that alternates between the three series;
 - iv) In September, the McCaffrey Coordinator must release a call for presenters. Presentation spots will be filled on a first come, first served basis;
 - v) The McCaffrey Coordinator also has the right to declare whether the Seminar Series is to be exclusively in-person or hybrid with a Zoom/online option;
 - vi) The McCaffrey Coordinator will introduce each speaker at the beginning of each seminar, and at each seminar's conclusion, moderate a short question period;
 - vii) The McCaffrey Coordinator can only present their own seminar presentation if a spot remains open and no other graduate student wishes to present on that date;
 - viii) The McCaffrey Coordinator, as a member of the HGSA Executive, must be in

- attendance at all HGSA Executive meetings;
- ix) If no graduate student runs for the position of McCaffrey Coordinator, or if for some reason the election does not take place, the HGSA Chair(s) in consultation with the current McCaffrey Coordinator will appoint a new Coordinator;
 - x) If the position is filled by appointment, this will be completed through self-nominations via email. This process, resulting in the appointment of a new Coordinator must take place by the last week of June;
 - xi) The incumbent McCaffrey Coordinator has the right to remain in his/her position for a maximum of two years. The decision to remain in this role can only take place if the HGSA Chair(s) and McCaffrey Coordinator agree to a second term.
- f) Graduate Committee Representative
- i) Shall attend meetings of the History Department's Graduate Committee, as permitted by the Department's Bylaws;
 - ii) Reasons for being barred from the Committee's proceedings may include, but are not limited to, departmental scholarship rankings, admissions proceedings, or other matters of a confidential nature;
 - iii) Shall advocate for the best possible scenarios for the graduate student experience on behalf of HGSA members whenever possible, including at the Departmental Graduate Committee meetings;
 - iv) Shall, when appropriate, solicit feedback from graduate students regarding matters of committee business;
 - v) Shall, when appropriate, communicate committee proceedings to the HGSA, normally by presenting reports at HGSA Meetings.
- g) Social Media Coordinator
- i) Shall create promotions and communications material such as advertisements or photographs as needed;
 - ii) Shall promote the activities of the HGSA through social media by maintaining the HGSA's existing social media presence;
 - iii) Shall moderate the content of the HGSA's social media presence to ensure that it reflects positively on the activities and membership of the HGSA;
 - iv) Shall ensure that only the HGSA Chair and the Social Media Coordinator have access to moderate the HGSA's social media presence;
 - v) May adopt new forms of social media or to discontinue the use of existing social media, with the approval of a simple majority vote during a regular meeting of the HGSA.
 - vi) Co-Chairs shall be permitted, but cannot exceed two persons
- i) Undergraduate Liaison
- i) Shall act as a liaison between the HGSA and the Undergraduate History Society (UHS);
 - ii) Plan joint events or assist the UHS with their events where needed;
 - iii) Attend UHS meetings if requested by the UHS.
- h) Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) Councilors
- i) Shall attend all meetings of the SOGS Council, and normally attend all Annual General Meetings and General Meetings of SOGS;
 - ii) Shall speak and vote in accordance with the best interests of graduate students in the History Department at SOGS meetings;
 - iii) Shall regularly communicate to graduate students in the History Department

- concerning the activities, programs and decisions of SOGS;
- iv) If unable to attend SOGS Council, shall designate an alternate from the History Department, using the form provided in the monthly Council package.
 - (1) Any invocation of an alternate must have approval of the Chair(s)
- i) PSAC Local 610 (GTA Union) Stewards
 - i) Shall attend all Stewards' Meetings of the PSAC Local 610, and normally attend all Annual General Meetings and General Meetings of the Union;
 - ii) Shall encourage all GTAs in the History Department to sign their PSAC Local 610 membership cards;
 - iii) Shall serve as a liaison between the members of the History Department; the Stewards of other departments and divisions, and the Local's Officers (including, and especially Divisional Chief Stewards);
 - iv) Shall solicit information from, and represent the interests of the History Department within the Local;
 - v) Shall encourage GTAs in the History Department to follow union guidelines, including tracking hours, observing the hours per workplace health, safety and harassment/equity policies;
 - vi) Shall assist with the PSAC Local 610 grievance process where appropriate;
 - vii) Shall direct members of the History Department to relevant sections of the Collective Agreement, as required.
 - viii) Must hold a GTA position for the entire academic year
- j) Public History Representative
 - i) Must Public History MA Candidate;
 - ii) Responsible for serving as a liaison between the Public History MA Program, housed within the History Department, and the HGSA;
 - iii) Responsible for advertising Public History events to members of the HGSA (can be circulated via bi-monthly HGSA newsletter or stand-alone email);
 - iv) Promote HGSA events and news to Public History students;
 - v) Act as a program representative on the HGSA Executive Committee.
- k) Conference Committee Chair(s)
 - i) Shall be responsible for planning and coordinating the annual History Graduate Student conference;
 - ii) Shall maintain an on-going record of all transactions, proceedings, expenses, and general business;
 - iii) Shall liaise with appropriate Departmental officials (ex. Administrators and Departmental Chairs);
 - iv) Co-Chairs shall be permitted, but cannot exceed two persons.
- 3) Committees:
 - a) General
 - i) Shall be announced and publicized at the first Fall Meeting, including a call for members to be elected at the second Fall Meeting;
 - ii) Shall have a Chair elected by the HGSA;
 - iii) The Chair shall call meetings, set agendas, organize events as required, etc.;
 - iv) Additional committee members may join throughout the year;
 - v) Committee membership should strive for an adequate cross-section of the HGSA membership (PhD, History MA, and Public History MA);
 - vi) Shall submit reports at HGSA meetings.

- b) Executive Committee
 - i) Shall consist of the Chair(s), Graduate Representative for the Graduate Committee (acting as representative for all MA and PhD Students in History), Public History Representative, Treasurer and Secretary
 - ii) The Executive Committee will meet at least once per term, and more frequently as association business permits
 - iii) The Executive Committee may not operate outside of the HGSA Constitution. Any and all business requiring a vote of the membership, must be carried out at a full meeting of the HGSA
 - iv) The Executive Committee can appoint interim Chair(s) in the event of a vacancy. The position shall be filled, on an interim basis from among the Executive Committee membership
 - (1) In the event that a consensus is not reached, the Executive Committee returns to the membership, and a special election is held for the position of Chair(s). At that point, it may elected from anyone within all those in the membership.
- c) Conference Committee
 - i) Shall be responsible for planning and coordinating the annual History Graduate Student conference;
 - ii) Shall maintain an on-going record of all transactions, proceedings, expenses, and general business;
 - iii) Members shall submit a summary of all responsibilities to be included in the Conference Binder at the conclusion of the Conference;
 - iv) Shall liaise with appropriate Departmental officials (ex. Administrators and Departmental Chairs);
- d) Social Committee
 - i) Shall organize social activities and events for the HGSA and its membership. These duties may include communicating with off-campus and on-campus venues, coordinating with the treasurer where HGSA funds are required to run an event, booking event spaces, etc.;
 - ii) Shall solicit input from HGSA membership in order to determine which activities to schedule throughout the year;
 - iii) The Committee shall advertise events via email and appropriate media.
- e) Ad Hoc Committees
 - i) With the approval of the HGSA members, the Chair(s) may appoint ad hoc committees to study and report on issues of interest to the membership.

Article VI: Elections

- 1) Nomination Procedures
 - a) Shall occur at and subsequent to the final Spring Meeting and first Fall Meeting;
 - i) Election of Co-Chairs, McCaffrey Series Coordinator, and Conference Chair(s) must occur at the Spring Meeting, to ensure smooth operation of the HGSA over the summer in planning for the following Academic Year.
 - (1) Pending a vacancy in any one of these positions come September, it can be elected in the Fall Meeting.
 - ii) All other positions, will typically serve from September to the next September, and be

elected in the Fall Term to ensure new membership has a chance to run for election and cast a vote.

- b) Shall be open to all members of the HGSA;
- c) Nominations shall be accepted in writing or from the floor.

2) Election Procedures

- a) Shall occur at the final Spring Meeting AND first Fall Meeting;
- b) All positions shall be elected by simple majority;
 - i) In the event of a tie, the victor shall be decided by a coin flip
- c) All candidates shall be permitted to make a speech, the length of which to be determined at the Chair's discretion;
- d) Elections shall be held by secret ballot upon request (not subject to voting);
- e) Proxy voting shall be permitted in accordance with Article V.1.f.

3) Recall Procedures

- a) All elected officials may be recalled by two-thirds majority at a Meeting.
- b) Recall requests must be submitted in writing and included on the Agenda.

Article VII: Finances and Banking

- 1) The HGSA shall maintain a bank account at a financial institution determined by the membership.
- 2) All banking and financial decisions fall under the sole discretion of the HGSA and are not subject to external oversight (ex. Department Chair, Administrators, et al.).
- 3) The Treasurer or Chair(s) shall submit a financial statement to members once per term, at a Meeting.
- 4) The Treasurer and shall be a signing officer of the HGSA. The Chair(s) shall normally be the other signing officer of the association.

Article VIII: Amendments to the Constitution

- 1) Proposals for any amendment of the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Chair(s) two weeks before any regular meeting.
- 2) The amendment will be discussed at the meeting and approved with a two-thirds majority of the members attending the meeting (subject to quorum).