

Constitution and By-Laws of The University of Texas at Austin Black Graduate Student Association

Article I - Name

This organization shall be known as The University of Texas at Austin's Black Graduate Student Association.

Article II - Purpose

- 1) To promote academic excellence, mentoring, professional guidance, and social support for the scholarly advancement of undergraduate students, graduate students, and professional students of the African Diaspora at The University of Texas at Austin (the university).
- 2) To develop opportunities for leadership by disseminating information to undergraduate, graduate and professional students of the African Diaspora pertaining to academic, financial and social needs.
- 3) To serve as a networking organization for students and alumni.
- 4) To provide counseling and advice concerning graduate and professional programs to students and prospective students.
- 5) To assist the university in recruiting qualified minority students into graduate and professional programs.

Article III - Membership and Dues

- 1) Membership shall be divided into two categories:
 - a) **Associate** (non-voting) membership shall be open to all matriculating graduate and professional students (including faculty and staff) at the university.
 - b) **Active** (voting) membership shall be open to those students who qualify as associate members, and who, in addition, pay an annual assessment to be fixed by the organization at the first meeting of the

academic year. Dues shall be established annually by the Executive Committee.

2) The Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) is committed to promoting good will throughout the university and does not discriminate against any student based on race, color, national origin, religion, sexual preference, sex, creed, or handicap.

3) In the event that this organization becomes inactive, any monies left in the treasury, after all outstanding debts and claims have been paid, shall remain in an interest bearing account until the organization is reactivated.

Article IV - Officers

Section I - Offices

1) The elective officers shall be the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and historian.

2) The volunteer officers shall be the chairpersons of the auxiliary committees and the webmaster.

Section II - Qualifications

Only active members of the BGSA shall have the right to hold office or represent the association in any official capacity. Further the student must:

1) Be enrolled as a graduate or professional student.

2) Not be on university disciplinary or scholastic probation.

Section III - Responsibilities

1) President - Responsible for the external affairs of the organization. This individual shall serve as the official spokesperson of the BGSA and serve as liaison to the university administration. This individual shall also preside over the meetings. The president shall serve as the second signature on financial transactions, and shall attend the treasurer's training required by the university.

2) Vice President - Shall work more closely with the internal activities of the BGSA. This includes receiving progress reports from each committee. This individual shall act as president in the absence of the president.

3) Secretary - Is the primary agent of correspondence for the BGSA. This person shall record all proceedings during meetings, and maintain all records and papers of the organization. The secretary shall also prepare and forward the application for annual official university recognition to the office of student organization services and work with the treasurer in the preparation of documents to accompany the BGSA's request for funding from the university's Graduate Student Assembly. The secretary shall work with the president to prepare the agenda for all general body meetings. This individual is responsible for regularly checking the BGSA mailbox.

4) Treasurer - Shall receive all monies of the organization and promptly deposit it in the BGSA student banking office account. In addition, will make authorized disbursements on requisitions signed by the treasurer and co-signed by the president (when amount is greater than \$50.00). Each requisition shall cite the amount and purpose of the payment requested. Any requisition of \$100.00 or more must be approved by the Executive Committee at a regular meeting, or whenever required by either body, covering the financial condition of the organization showing receipts and disbursements and outstanding accounts unpaid since the last report. The treasurer shall serve as the primary signature on financial transactions, and shall attend the treasurer's training required by the university. This individual is responsible for the timely disbursement of fees incurred for website maintenance. The responsibility of collecting the annual dues is the treasurer's.

5) Historian - Shall be responsible for researching and compiling chapter history. This individual shall record and document the events and activities of the chapter outside of meetings in written and visual form. The historian shall work with the person in charge of the website(s) to make sure that information is regularly updated.

Section IV - Elections

1) Nomination and election of officers shall take place prior to the last general meeting of the spring semester.

2) Voting shall be by secret ballot, except when other authorization is made by a majority of the voting members at the meeting.

3) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared the winner.

Section V - Tenure

1) The term of office shall be one year beginning after the last general body meeting of the spring semester.

2) If, for any reason, an office should become vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an active member to fill that office until the time of the next election.

3) Any member of the executive committee or chairperson of an auxiliary committee who does not fulfill the required duty of the office or committee or who shall be absent from three consecutive meetings without notice, shall be removed from office by the majority of the executive committee members present.

Article V - Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, historian to the BGSA, chairpersons of all committees and webmaster. It shall serve as the policy making body of the organization.

Article VI - Auxiliary Committees and Webmaster

Section I - Appointments

1) All auxiliary committee chairpersons, members and webmaster shall be appointed on a volunteer basis. In the event that more than one person volunteers for the chairperson position of a single committee, the chairperson shall be appointed by the president and vice president.

2) A chairperson position or webmaster cannot be held by an elected or appointed executive committee officer during their tenure.

3) An active member may not hold more than one chairperson/webmaster position during their tenure.

Section II - Responsibilities

1) The Social Committee - Shall coordinate and supervise social functions of the BGSA. This committee shall work to foster a welcoming and communal environment within the organization.

2) The Fundraising Committee - Shall be responsible for organizing events that will serve to raise monies for the organization's general budget. It shall also be responsible for working with the president to solicit funds from departments and offices within the university.

3) Professional Development Committee - Shall be responsible for developing and organizing opportunities for the scholarly and professional advancement of BGSA members.

4) The Community and Political Activism Committee - Shall be responsible for organizing activities designed to stimulate awareness in the university community as well as the Austin, TX community. It shall plan and organize outreach activities to the undergraduate students at the university and members of the Austin, TX community. This committee shall also be responsible for bringing relevant events and affairs of the university and Austin, TX communities to the attention of BGSA and providing suggestions on how the organization can become involved.

5) Webmaster - Shall accurately maintain all BGSA websites and shall work closely with the Historian and Secretary.

Article VII - Meetings and Voting

All active members in attendance shall constitute a quorum. All business of the BGSA shall be conducted and authorized by a plurality of active members present. When a decision must be made between meetings, the executive committee shall conduct business with subsequent notice to be made at the next meeting. Meetings will be held monthly during the academic year. The dates and times of said meetings will be determined by the executive committee at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.

Article VIII

Expulsion, Suspension, or Removal of Officers and Members

- 1) The executive committee, upon satisfactory evidence that an officer or member is guilty of conduct not in accord with the principles, aims, and purpose of the organization as set forth in this constitution and bylaws, or is guilty of conduct inimical to the best interest of the organization, may order expulsion, suspension, or other disciplinary action against such officer or member after a full hearing in accord with the provisions of the constitution.
- 2) A complaint against such officer or member may be initiated by any member(s) of the organization and must be in writing and signed.
- 3) Upon receipt of complaint of charges, the executive committee shall forward copies of the same, by registered mail, to the officer or member involved at the last address on file. Such officer or member shall have fifteen days from the date of receipt of charges to file with the executive committee an answer in writing to said charges. The fifteen day period shall commence to run from the time a copy of the charges should have reached said officer or member by ordinary post.
- 4) The executive committee reserves the right to hear and act upon the charges and the officer or member is entitled to a hearing before the executive committee, if the member so desires. The member may elect to have the matter decided by the executive committee on the basis of the complaint and answers and affidavits. When an oral hearing is requested, such a hearing shall be conducted by the executive committee unless an auxiliary committee is designated by membership.

Article IX - Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern the organization in all cases in which they are applicable.

Article X - Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a quorum or 2/3 vote of the active membership, provided the proposed amendments be submitted to the executive committee at least sixty days prior to its consideration.