The Constitution of the Graduate Student Association  
Western Carolina University

ARTICLE I. NAME  
The name of this organization is hereby entitled the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the Western Carolina University, hereafter referred to as the Graduate Student Association.

ARTICLE II. AFFILIATION  
This organization is not affiliated with any local, state, national, or international organization.

ARTICLE III. ADHERENCE  
This organization shall adhere to all university rules, regulations, and policies, as well as to all local, state, and federal laws.

ARTICLE IV. PURPOSE  
The Graduate Student Association shall serve and represent all graduate students at Western Carolina University. The purpose of this organization shall be to 1) encourage, recognize, and assist all graduate students academically and socially, 2) promote the interests and welfare of graduate students within the university, 3) provide a forum for discussion of issues raised by graduate students, and 4) promote and support the continuous advancement of the goals of the Graduate School.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP  
Section 1. Membership shall be granted to all graduate students, full or part-time, enrolled at the Western Carolina University.

Section 2. This organization does not discriminate against any student, faculty, or staff member based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, handicap, or sexual orientation.

Section 3. Only members with a GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to serve as officers or to vote in matters concerning the organization.

ARTICLE VI. ADVISOR  
The advisor of this organization will be the current Dean of the Graduate School, providing guidance and direction in matters most important to the University in general and the Graduate School in particular.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES  
Section 1. The requirements for nomination as an officer of this organization are as follows: 1) the individual must have been active in the Graduate Student Association in the semester prior to elections, and 2) they must currently be in good academic standing (GPA 3.0 or higher) and available to proactively fulfill the duties of the office for the full
term of office (one full academic year).

Section 2. The officers of the Graduate Student Association shall include a President, Second-Year Vice President, First-Year Vice President, Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Section 3. Representatives from each of the graduate programs/departments will be chosen by the program director/department head of a given college to serve for one full academic year. Representatives shall offer suggestions, advice and serve as the liaisons between a given program/department and the Graduate Student Association.

Section 4. The Executive Board of the Graduate Student Association shall consist of the officers and representatives of the Graduate Student Association. The current Dean of the Graduate school shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Board. Only officers and representatives shall have voting rights.

Section 5. The Executive Board of the Graduate Student Association possesses the authority to call special elections or an impeachment hearing. A two-thirds vote of the Executive Board shall be necessary to call a special election or an impeachment hearing.

Section 6. Only one student from a given program/department may serve as a GSA officer within a given term.

Section 7. Officers may be removed at the request of the Graduate Dean or the Executive Board only. For an officer to be removed, a two-thirds majority shall be necessary.

Section 8. Grounds for removal of an officer includes, but is not limited to, 1) more than one (1) unexcused absence per semester; 2) conduct that is in violation of the policies of Western Carolina University; and, 3) a failure to maintain the GPA requirements of an officer or representative of GSA.

ARTICLE VIII. ELECTIONS

Section 1. Officer nominations will be held at the last meeting of the Graduate Student Association prior to Spring Break. Nominations must be made, in person, at the aforementioned meeting. If any office remains vacant after the elections, the newly elected Executive Board will be responsible for filling that position.

Section 2. Elections of officers will be conducted by paper ballot and held annually in the first week of April, after nominations have been made. Elections will close no later than April 10th and votes made prior to the close of elections will be tallied. Officer elections will require a simple majority vote.

Section 3. Officers shall be inducted at the Graduate Student Association meeting immediately following the receipt of election results.

Section 4. Officer terms shall last for one academic year, beginning with induction and ending with the induction of officers elected in the succeeding year. An officer can hold
a given position for a maximum of two terms.

Section 5. In the event that the President is absent, the Vice-President shall assume the responsibilities of the office of the President in the interim.

Section 6. In the event that it becomes apparent that an office has been vacated permanently or in the event that an officer is impeached and removed from office, the Executive Board will have the authority to call for special elections.

A. Special elections will follow the same procedure as regular elections.

B. The Executive Board shall have the authority to abstain from holding special elections if, in its judgment, an appropriately short period of time remains until the annual elections. In this instance, the Executive Board will vote to elect a temporary replacement for the position, from within the Graduate Student Association membership, until the annual elections are held.

Section 7. If circumstances so warrant, the Executive Board impeach an officer given a dereliction of duties. In this case, a special impeachment hearing will be scheduled. A two-thirds vote of the Executive Board at an impeachment hearing will be required for the removal of an officer.

Section 8. Each term the Executive Board will elect one of its members to serve on the Student Government Association (SGA) Senate to fulfill all the duties required of the position.

ARTICLE IX. EXECUTIVE BOARD DUTIES

Section 1. The President shall be responsible for:
A. Calling to order and presiding at all meetings of the Graduate Student Association.
B. Keeping order at meetings.
C. Approving withdrawals from the Treasury and signing official documentation of the Graduate Student Association.
D. Ensuring that all aspects of this constitution are followed.
E. Appointing committee members and overseeing committee progress and functioning.
F. Actively promoting the welfare of all graduate students at WCU.
G. Being the official representative of the Graduate Student Association.
H. Removing non-elected individuals from positions, subject to approval of the Executive Board.
I. Chairing the Executive Board.
J. All other duties generally required of the office.

Section 2. The First and Second Year Vice Presidents shall be responsible for:
A. Attending all Graduate Student Association meetings.
B. Temporarily serving in the President’s stead in cases of absence or incapacity.
C. Assisting the President in the aforementioned duties.
D. Determining excused versus non-excused absences and recording the numbers of each for officers.
E. Serving as a voting member of the Executive Board.
F. All other duties generally required of the office.

Section 3. The Secretary shall be responsible for:
A. Attending all Graduate Student Association meetings.
B. Maintaining all official documentation of the Graduate Student Association, including this constitution and any amendments.
C. Maintaining accurate records of all meetings and proceedings.
D. Drafting minutes for all meetings and proceedings for approval by Executive Board.
E. Retaining copies of all documentation necessary for holding events.
F. Keeping track of member attendance at meetings.
G. Serving as a voting member of the Executive Board.
H. All other duties generally required of the office.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
A. Attending all Graduate Student Association meetings.
B. Signing all financial-related forms and contracts entered into by the Graduate Student Association.
C. Paying out all funds when authorized by the President.
D. Maintaining a complete, accurate, and up-to-date record of all expenditures, deposits, and receipts.
E. Serving as chairperson of any fundraising committees established.
F. Serving as a voting member of the Executive Board.
G. All other duties generally required of the office.

Section 5. Program/Departmental Representatives shall be responsible for and considered active by
A. Attending Graduate Student Association meetings, with no more than one (1) unexcused absence per semester.
B. Representing the concerns and needs of students in their respective departments.
C. Assisting on committees, both permanent and ad hoc.
D. Providing graduate students in their department meeting minutes upon request.
E. Promoting and advertising Graduate Student Association events and meetings to students within their respective departments.
F. Serving as a voting member of the Executive Board.
G. All other duties generally required of this office.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES
Section 1. Generally, a committee requires at least three members.

Section 2. Ad hoc committees, e.g., “February Social Committee,” may be appointed at the discretion of the President.
ARTICLE XI. OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Section 1. There will be at least one meeting per month during the academic year.
   
   A. All meetings will proceed in the manner of the agenda set forth in Robert’s Rules of Order. The Executive Board maintains the right to suspend the use of Robert’s Rules of Order by a two-thirds vote only.
   
   B. The President maintains the right to keep order in meetings, including the ability to redirect discussion in the event that is strays from the issue at hand.

Section 2. A quorum of one-third of program/departamental representatives must be present to conduct official business and to vote.

Section 3. The Executive Board may vote to hold meetings, special elections, or proceedings as appropriate.

Section 4. Committee chairs shall possess the authority to schedule additional meetings as necessary to accomplish the goals of the committee.

Section 5. Meetings may be held over the summer at the discretion of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE XII. FINANCE
Section 1. In accordance with University and State policy, fiscal year will begin July 1 and end the following June 30, Fall semester shall be defined as July 1 - December 31, and the spring semester shall be defined as January 1 - June 30.

Section 2. All check requests, checks, and other binding financial agreements must be approved by the President, Treasurer, and the current Dean of the Graduate School.

ARTICLE XIII. RATIFICATION
This constitution and any by-laws will be ratified with the approval of a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board at a duly called meeting.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS
This document may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board at a duly called meeting provided officers/representatives have been informed of the meeting and the proposed amendment in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.