

Constitution of the Philosophy Graduate Student Association (PGSA)

Article I – Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization is the Philosophy Graduate Student Association, hereinafter referred to as PGSA, located at the University of South Carolina.

Section 2. Purpose

The purposes of the PGSA include:

- i. Serve as the institutional conduit for expressing the interests, concerns, and will of the graduate students in the philosophy program at USC to administrative officials.
- ii. Develop professional skills and experiences related to the academic life.
- iii. Promote philosophical discourse among graduate students and engagement with the broader academic community.
- iv. Raise funds and host events.

Article II – Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

Membership in the PGSA shall be limited to persons officially connected with the University of South Carolina-Columbia as faculty, staff, or students. Students enrolled in the spring semester under the above conditions who have pre-registered for the fall semester, as well as students enrolled in summer classes, are eligible for summer membership. The PGSA, as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina, agrees to abide by the university's nondiscrimination policy. PGSA, as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina, will not engage in any activities that are classified as hazing under the university's hazing policy. To view updated University Policies, refer to the Policies and Procedures Manual on the USC website. Membership to the PGSA is granted to those students who are enrolled in the philosophy M.A. or Ph.D. program at the University of South Carolina according to the Department Chair or Graduate Director. Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students without regard to race, sex, gender identity, transgender status, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, protected veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

Section 2. Active Membership Definition

Membership to the PGSA is granted to those students who are enrolled in the philosophy M.A. or Ph.D. program at the University of South Carolina according to the Department Chair or Graduate Director. There are no additional requirements, such as GPA standards or attendance standards, to maintain active membership. However, entitlement to vote on all PGSA matters is only granted to PGSA members who pay a \$20 due per semester. This due is nominally collected at the beginning of each semester but can be paid at any time. The PGSA Treasurer is responsible for collecting dues.

Section 3. Member Removal Process

If an active member fails to meet active membership requirements or graduates from the university, their membership with the organization will automatically end. An active member can also be removed from the organization by vote consisting of a 3/4 majority of those voting members present at the meeting.

Article III – Organizational Structure

Section 1. Philosophy Department Graduate Positions and PGSA Officers

Three permanent positions within the philosophy department are filled by members of the PGSA. These positions are elected by the PGSA at the end-of-the-year PGSA meeting. Each position is listed below:

i. Graduate Student Representative

The Graduate Representative is responsible for attending faculty meetings, relaying relevant information from those meetings to graduate students, advocating for graduate student needs, and being the point of contact between the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies and the graduate student body. The Graduate Representative is an elected position with the expectation that the student serves in that position for one year with the possibility of reelection without a term limit.

ii. Colloquium Committee Member

The Colloquium Committee Member is responsible for corresponding with potential visiting speakers when appropriate, attending colloquium committee meetings, and helping with tasks on the day of a colloquium talk. The Colloquium Committee Member can be either an M.A. or Ph.D. student and is expected to be beyond their first year in the program. While the Colloquium Committee Member is an elected position with the expectation that the student serves in that position for one year with the possibility of reelection without a term limit, it is expected that this position rotates each election cycle.

iii. Social Coordinator

The Graduate Social Coordinator is responsible for planning graduate student social events outside the department. This position does not entail specific duties and is not related to any faculty member or the department in a formal capacity. The Graduate Social Coordinator will take the initiative to plan graduate student outings, relay events in town that might interest others, and foster community across graduate student cohorts. To that end, the Graduate Social Coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining a “buddy” system where incoming graduate students are paired with current graduate students who can help answer questions and assist them in integrating into the department. The Graduate Social Coordinator can be either an M.A. or Ph.D. student. Ideally, this position is filled by someone who is still completing coursework. The Graduate Social Coordinator is an elected position with the expectation that the student serves in that position for one year with the possibility of reelection without a term limit.

In addition to the three department-wide positions listed above, there are two officer positions specific to the PGSA. These positions are elected by the PGSA at the end-of-the-year PGSA meeting. Each position is listed below:

i. President

The President is responsible for presiding over meetings and the voting process and seeing that all resolutions of the PGSA are carried into effect. Additionally, this position is the liaison between the PGSA and the Leadership and Service Center at USC. The President has access to the funds of the PGSA and will work with the Treasurer to manage these funds. The Graduate Representative is automatically appointed to the position of President of the PGSA.

ii. Treasurer

The Treasurer (together with the President) is responsible for managing the finances of the PGSA. The Treasurer has access to the funds of the PGSA and may be called upon to collect donations, make deposits, or handle transactions. Additionally, the Treasurer will report on funds at each PGSA meeting. Ideally, this position is filled by someone who is still completing coursework. The Treasurer is an elected position with the expectation that the student serves in that position for one year with the possibility of reelection without a term limit.

Section 2. Qualifications

Any student seeking to hold or holding a position in a student organization must maintain the cumulative GPA requirement for graduation, maintain at least part-time enrollment status, and remain in good standing in their respective college.

Section 3. Election Process

The election procedure shall be as follows:

- i. Nomination or self-nomination of candidates.
- ii. Voting will occur in a PGSA meeting.
- iii. All elections are anonymous, with the option to abstain.
- iv. Decided by a simple majority of those voting members present at a meeting.
- v. A tie will be broken by the President.

Section 4. Removal

An officer may be removed from their position by vote consisting of a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of those voting members present at the meeting. In the case of a vacant position, an election will be held immediately to fill the position.

Article IV – Meetings

Section 1. Quorum

Action on any business, old or new, requires a quorum of $\frac{1}{2}$ of the active membership of the organization.

Section 2. Occurrence of Meetings

The PGSA intends to hold at least three meetings during the academic year: Once at the beginning of the Fall semester, once at the end of the Fall semester, and once at the end of the Spring semester. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the President or called by a quorum.

Section 3. Voting

All matters that need to be put to a vote must occur at officially announced PGSA meetings. Voting on all matters, except for elections, may be conducted by a show of hands or verbally without anonymity.

Article V – Funding

Section 1. Fundraising

The PGSA will undertake fundraising for its own purposes. All fundraising must be conducted in accordance with university policy.

Section 2. Bank Account

The PGSA has an organizational bank account at First Community Bank, 1213 Lady St. For the sake of transparency and accountability, two members of the PGSA must have access to this bank account at all times. By default, these two members will be the President and the Treasurer. Additional members may be given access to the account if the PGSA sees fit. Access to the bank account must be transferred to newly elected members each election cycle. Those who held office previously must be removed from the account.

Section 3. Financial Status

A report on funds will be given at each PGSA meeting.

Article VI – Amendments

Section 1. Amendment Proposals

Amendments to this constitution must be proposed in writing by any active member of the PGSA at a regular meeting. The change may be made only after a vote consisting of a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of those present at the meeting.

Section 2. Emergency Amendments

The President, in line with their role as liaison to the Leadership and Service Center, has executive authority to enact emergency amendments to the constitution in order to minimally comply with requirements set forth by the Leadership and Service Center at USC only in an instance wherein the constitution is found insufficient. If such emergency

amendments are made, then a review, edit, and re-approval of those amendments must be the first order of business on the agenda of the next official PGSA meeting.

Article VII – Ratification

The PGSA, as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina, agrees to abide by the guidelines set forth in this constitution, all university policies as well as local, state, and federal law.

Signature: Joseph Erickson

Ratification Date: 09/01/25