CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
of
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
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PREAMBLE
We, the graduate students of the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York in order to:

- Promote the scholarly atmosphere of the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York, work closely with the University administration, faculty, staff, and other student governments in our mutual endeavor to make the University a truly great graduate center,

- Promote the general welfare of the graduate student body, without discrimination or regard to an individual’s race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, gender, pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, predisposing genetic characteristics, marital status, familial status, veteran status, military status, domestic violence victim status, or ex-offender status and to

- Initiate and maintain all those activities which promote the interests of the graduate student body and exercise the fundamental responsibilities and rights of a democratic society, do hereby create the Graduate Student Association of the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York, and enact this constitution for its government.

Article I Purpose and Power

Section 1. Purpose
A. To act, through its Graduate Student Association Senate, as the agency of the graduate student body in matters affecting graduate student life and affairs.

B. To promote the interests of the University community.

Section 2. Powers
A. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association shall be authorized to initiate, enact, and administer on matters, which concern the graduate student body as a whole and the relationship of student organizations to the welfare of the graduate student body.

B. The Senate of the Graduate Student Association may make recommendations to the proper University authorities on all matters of policy affecting graduate students, and shall have final authority in all matters affecting the graduate student welfare under this Constitution.

C. A referendum may be mandated by a petition of at least 10% of the members of the Graduate Student Association on any questions falling within the scope of GSA activities as described in this Constitution. Such a referendum must be held as soon as practicable and no later than one month after the presentation of the petition. The results of any referendum must be considered binding, unless overturned by a vote of the Graduate Student Association Senate. Such a vote must have the support of at least 2/3 of the voting members present (quorum vote).

D. Committees of the Senate shall act, with the authority of the Senate, in their designated areas of responsibility between regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate.

E. The Graduate Student Association Senate shall, after hearing the recommendations of its Finance Committee, administer all funds appropriated to the Graduate Student Association.

F. The Graduate Student Association Senate shall have all powers necessary to implement the foregoing purposes and powers, as well as those additional responsibilities delegated to it by the proper authority.
Article II Membership

All students presently enrolled in the Graduate School who pay the GSA mandatory student activity fee shall automatically be members of the Graduate Student Association.

Article III The Senate and GSA Officers

Section 1. The Senate

A. The members of the Senate and their alternates (hereafter known as “Senators”) shall be elected by and from the members of the Graduate Student Association as set forth in the GSA By-Laws. The annual election is to be held by the first month of the Fall semester.

B. Each Senator’s term of office shall be one year. Any Senator may be recalled during their term by their club in accordance with procedures set forth in the GSA By-Laws. Members may be eligible for re-election.

C. Representation in the Senate shall be as provided in the GSA By-Laws.

Section 2. The Officers of the Graduate Student Association

A. The Officers of the Graduate Student Association shall be a President, Vice President, and Treasurer. These Officers shall be collectively known as the Executive Committee.

B. Upon taking office these Officers shall become Senators at Large, exercising full voting privileges, and shall remain in this capacity until the next general election of Senators following their replacement as officers of the Senate, unless they resign, become incapacitated, or are removed.

C. All graduate students represented by GSA are eligible to hold office.

D. The Officers shall be elected by a majority of the students voting in any election as set forth in the GSA By-Laws.

E. The election of officers shall be held in the Spring semester in accordance with the procedure set forth in the GSA By-Laws.

Section 3. Duties and Powers

The duties and powers of the Officers and Executive Committee shall be as provided in the GSA By-Laws.

Article IV Meetings

Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held each month of the Fall and Spring semester of the academic year and as otherwise provided in the GSA By-Laws. All regular meetings of the Senate shall be open. A meeting notice and agenda shall be sent out via electronic mail to all Senators at least seven calendar days prior to the day of the meeting.
Article V Amendments

Section 1. Amendment of the GSA Constitution by the Senate

A. Any Senator may propose an Amendment.
B. The proposed Amendment must be read at the regular meeting previous to the meeting on which it is to be voted and published to the graduate student body in the interim via electronic mail and on the GSA website.
C. The proposed Amendment must be approved at a regular meeting by either two-thirds of the elected Senate membership or three-quarters of Senate members present, whichever of the two is the smaller amount (quorum vote).

Section 2. Amendment of the GSA Constitution by the Graduate Student Body

An Amendment may be proposed by petition of at least 10% of members of the Graduate Student Association to the Senate. Upon the receipt of such a petition before the March Senate Meeting, the Senate shall be mandated to hold a general referendum before the close of regular classes that academic year, not including the summer session. Upon receipt of such a petition after the March Senate Meeting, the Senate shall be mandated to hold a general referendum no less than four weeks or more than eight weeks in the immediately following Fall semester. A proposed amendment shall be adopted by affirmative vote of a majority of those voting in said general referendum. This affirmative vote must represent at least 10% of the members of the Graduate Student Association.

Section 3. Amendment of the GSA By-Laws

The GSA By-Laws may be amended by a vote of the Senate membership. Such a vote must have the support of at least 2/3 of members present. The proposed amendment must be listed in the agenda circulated to the full Senate membership via electronic mail seven calendar days prior to the meeting at which it is to be acted.

Article VI Acceptance

This Constitution and attached GSA By-Laws shall be the procedure of government for the Graduate Student Association and shall supersede all previous Constitutions and GSA By-Laws. It shall go into effect on completing the procedures provided in the previous Constitutions for Constitutional Amendment, which it shall then supersede.
BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
of
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Article I GSA Senate Membership

Section 1. Representation

A. All students presently enrolled in the Graduate School who pay the GSA mandatory student activity fee shall automatically be eligible to be Senators of the Graduate Student Association.

B. The sum total of elected Senators from departmental and other eligible clubs shall constitute the Senate of the Graduate Student Association.

C. The Officers of the Graduate Student Association should be considered as Senators at Large. On the election of these officers, any vacated departmental Senate seats shall be filled by the corresponding alternates who shall be their departmental Senators.

Section 2. Non-voting GSA Clubs

A. Any non-voting GSA club may petition the Senate for voting privileges.

B. The Senate shall determine whether the petitioning group faces distinct enough needs and issues as graduate students to legitimize the group’s claim that they cannot be represented through the departmental clubs.

C. Petitions for voting privileges must be read at the regular Senate meeting previous to the meeting on which the petition is to be voted on.

D. Petitions must be approved at a regular meeting by 2/3 of Senate members present (quorum vote).

E. Voting privileges for non-departmental clubs shall be limited to one Senator and one Alternate Senator per club, no matter the number of members of the club.

Section 3. Election of Senators

A. By Departmental Club

1. The members of each department shall elect from amongst themselves their Senators by the first month of the Fall semester as instructed (See GSA Constitution Article III, Section 1). In addition to elected Senators and their alternates, elected club officers will be automatically listed as Alternate Senators, and will have full voting privileges (See GSA By-Laws Article I, Section 3, C).

2. A department having 75 or less presently enrolled graduate students may elect one Senator and two alternates, those with 76 to 175 presently enrolled graduate students may elect two Senators and four alternates, those with 176 to 350 presently enrolled graduate students may elect three Senators and six alternates, those with 351 to 500 presently enrolled graduate students may elect four Senators and eight alternates, and those with 501 or more presently enrolled graduate students may elect five Senators and ten alternates.

3. Two or more small departments in related fields may join together for the purpose of forming a GSA departmental club upon the approval of a 2/3 vote of Senate members present (quorum vote).
B. By Non-Departmental Club

1. Any non-departmental club shall elect from amongst themselves one Senator and one alternate. The election of officers must be completed by the end of the first month following their Senate approval, unless the club has applied for early recognition. Clubs applying for early recognition in the Spring semester must have elected their officers by the end of September.

C. Voting Privileges

1. Each Senator with voting privileges has one vote at Senate meetings. The alternate has voting privileges only when the corresponding Senator is not in attendance.
2. The alternate shall have the same duties and responsibilities at Senate meetings at which the corresponding Senator is not in attendance.

Section 4. Replacement of Senators

A. In the case of a Senate seat being unoccupied for two consecutive meetings, without just cause as determined by the Executive Committee, occupiers of this seat (Senator and alternate and their constituency) will be notified by electronic mail of the absence of representation at Senate meetings and the resultant freezing of club funds. Such funds may be freed upon the resumption of attendance at Senate meetings by club representatives.

B. Actual replacement of a Senator can only be done by the club constituency. A petition to remove by a majority of the voting membership of a club will cause a Senator to be unseated and a new election must be held in that club within two weeks. The unseated Senator is eligible to run in that election.

Section 5. Special Interest and International Clubs

A. The Graduate Student Association encourages, supports, and sponsors the formation, growth, and activities of clubs that benefit the graduate student community with services not already being provided by the GSA, departmental clubs, or any other organization or group at the University.

B. GSA Special Interest and International Clubs allow groups of graduate students who share common interests to carry out activities as organized bodies for educational and recreational purposes.

C. The Graduate Student Association Senate has the authority and responsibility to recognize special interest and international clubs, and to ensure that recognized clubs conform to the policies, which it endorses, and to University rules and regulations.

D. The GSA Senate reserves the right to deny recognition to new clubs or deny continuing approval to existing clubs.

Section 6. Recognition of Clubs

A. Recognition implies that the club has been incorporated into the Graduate Student Association.
B. Recognition allows the club to use University facilities, and services such as rental equipment, advisory services, publicity outlets, and to seek funding from the GSA for its activities.

C. Special interest and international clubs must be recognized by the GSA Senate every year.

D. It is the responsibility of previously recognized clubs to seek annual recognition.

E. In order to be recognized, each club must have a President and Treasurer. In addition, GSA recommends that each club have a Vice-President, Secretary, and Senator.

F. In the event that the Executive Committee revokes a club’s recognition, a club may petition the Senate and be re-instated with the support of 2/3 of the Senate members present (quorum vote).

G. Further requirements for Recognition of Graduate Student Organizations can be found in the Special Interest & International Club Recognition Policy Guidelines.

**Article II The Executive Committee**

Section 1. Executive Committee

A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of three officers: President, Vice President, and Treasurer; each shall be members of the GSA at the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York.

B. No Executive Committee member may be an officer of any other GSA club.

Section 2. Duties of Officers

A. President:
   1. Shall be the chief executive of the Graduate Student Association.
   2. Shall be the Chairperson at meetings of the Senate.
   3. Shall be the primary Graduate Student Association delegate to all activities external to the Graduate Student Association, or shall appoint all delegates except as indicated in these GSA By-Laws.
   4. Shall be one of the Graduate Student Association’s two representatives on the Graduate School Executive Committee.
   5. Shall represent the GSA on the Council of Advocacy and Leadership.
   6. Shall represent the GSA or shall appoint a representative designee to Sub-Board I, Inc.
   7. Shall be bonded.
   8. Shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
   9. The President of the Graduate Student Association shall appoint the Chairperson of all standing and temporary committees, with the exception of the Finance and Election Committees.

B. Vice President
   1. Shall assist the President in executive and administrative duties.
   2. Shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
3. Shall be the Graduate Student Association representative in the absence of or at the request of the President.
4. Shall represent the Graduate Student Association or shall appoint a representative designee to Sub-Board One, Inc. or have the President appoint a representative in their place.
5. Shall supervise, but not chair, the annual election of the Executive Committee, so long as they are not running for office in said election.
6. Shall be responsible for the minutes of the Graduate Student Association and its Senate.
7. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
8. Shall assist the President in originating and developing activities with other student associations.
9. Shall assist organizations recognized by the Graduate Student Association in developing and coordinating their activities and implementing their goals.
10. Shall be bonded.

C. Treasurer
   2. Shall be Chairperson of the Finance Committee.
   3. Shall present at each Senate meeting a complete income statement and balance sheet for the previous months.
   4. Shall present the budget for the following budgetary year at the penultimate Senate meeting of each budgetary year.
   5. Shall assist the President and Vice-President in executive and administrative duties.
   6. Shall be bonded.

Section 3. Election of Officers to the GSA Executive Committee

A. Any student enrolled in a department that is currently represented by GSA and has attended two Senate meetings prior to becoming a candidate shall be eligible to run for office.
B. All students represented by GSA shall be eligible to vote in any election of officers.
C. The election of officers shall be conducted according to an election code. The election code must be approved by the Senate before its implementation. Such approval must take place by the November Senate meeting.
D. The election code shall be in effect for one year or until it is amended or replaced, whichever comes sooner.
E. The election of officers shall be overseen by the Election Committee (See GSA By-Laws Article IV, Section 1, B).
F. All voting shall be done by secret ballot. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, a vote of the Senate shall determine the successful candidate.
G. The officers-elect shall assume their respective positions on June 1st.
Section 4. Impeachment, Removal, Replacement, and Incapacity

A. Impeachment

1. Impeachment may be initiated by a 2/3 vote of Senate members present (quorum vote) at a meeting.

2. When impeachment has been initiated, and while final action is pending, the officer or officers mentioned in these proceedings shall lose the right to exercise any of the duties and powers associated with their office. If the officer mentioned in these proceedings is also serving as the Chairperson of the Senate at the time of impeachment, the Senate shall elect from the willing Senators in attendance a temporary Chairperson whose sole duties will be to chair the meeting during the impeachment and removal proceedings and to conduct the election of Interim Officers should the Senate desire or require such temporary replacements.

3. When an Officer has been impeached, regardless of whether the motion for removal has succeeded or been tabled, the Senate has the option to elect by majority vote Interim Officers who will hold all duties and powers normally associated with the office. These Interim Officers may only be appointed from amongst the willing members of the graduate student body in attendance that have attended and signed in at two Senate Meetings within the past twelve months. They will hold their office only until permanent officers can be elected according to the rules for replacement set forth in the GSA By-Laws, or until their office has been returned to an impeached Officer who has been cleared of the charges against them, or until they themselves have resigned, or until the Senate by a simple majority vote chooses to recall them.

4. Whenever impeachment and/or removal proceedings leave less than two Officers in power, including any offices which may be empty due to matters unrelated to the current impeachment proceedings, the Senate is required to appoint at least enough Interim Officers to assure that two offices are filled. At any meeting thereafter the Senate may reopen the appointment process, including making appointments of Interim Officers to offices left open at previous meetings. No motion to adjourn may be made until a total of at least two offices are filled.

5. If the Senate chooses not to appoint Interim Officers to an open office, the remaining Executive Committee members may either assume the duties and powers of the mentioned offices or appoint a Temporary Officer of their choosing according to rules set forth for Temporary Officers in the GSA By-Laws (See GSA By-Laws Article II, Section 4, C, 4).

6. Upon appointment, an Interim Officer is not required to resign their Senate position, but their voting in the Senate is limited to that of an Officer, not as any club’s Senator. An alternate may take their place in the Senate if they were not an alternate themselves.

B. Removal

1. Any impeached officer can be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the elected Senate (quorum vote).

C. Replacement
1. Replacement of officers who resign during a Senate meeting at which they are being impeached and/or removed from office shall be handled according to the rules that apply to Impeached and Removed Officers.

2. In the case of removal or resignation of any officer, said officer shall be replaced by a vote of the Senate from any willing graduate students in attendance who have attended and signed in at two Senate Meetings within the past twelve months during the meeting at which the replacement election is held.

3. An election to replace a removed or resigned officer may be held at the next regular meeting of the Graduate Student Association Senate provided that a special notice of the vacancy and a call for nominations is included with the regular Senate mailing. The actual notice, meanwhile, shall appear on the GSA website separate from any other Senate business and the news of the vacancy and the call for nominations shall be circulated via electronic mail to the GSA Senate.

4. The Executive Committee may appoint Temporary Officers who will serve with all rights and duties until the next scheduled Senate meeting when permanent replacements can be elected. These Temporary Officers may only be appointed from amongst the willing members of the GSA Senate who have attended and signed in at two Senate meetings within the past twelve months. If a permanent replacement cannot be elected at the next scheduled Senate meeting, the Senate has the option of appointing Interim Officers to all open or temporarily filled offices.

5. Upon election, said officer shall be considered resigned from any and all other GSA Executive Committee offices.

6. If, between Senate meetings, all three Executive Committee offices become simultaneously vacant, the Graduate Student Association’s Office Manager shall have the authority to call an emergency Senate meeting and create an agenda for that meeting whose only purpose will be to elect a Senator to chair the meeting and to elect Interim Officers. If the agenda for a regularly scheduled meeting has already been sent, the Office Manager will instead send an updated agenda whose first order of business will be to appoint a Senator to chair that meeting and to elect Interim Officers until a properly-announced election can be held. If the agenda has not already been sent out, the Office Manager will produce and send that agenda, including election announcements for permanent replacements. In cases where such an emergency Senate meeting cannot be held or cannot achieve quorum, the attending Senators may only appoint Temporary Officers who will serve with all rights and duties until Interim or Permanent Officers can be elected.

D. Incapacity

1. When an Officer becomes incapacitated and unable to perform their duties, the Senate has the option to elect by majority vote an Interim Officer who will hold all duties and powers normally associated with the office until such time as the Officer is no longer incapacitated. These Interim Officers may only be appointed from amongst the willing members of the graduate student body in attendance that have attended and signed in at two Senate Meetings within the past twelve months. They will hold their office only until the Officer is no longer incapacitated.

2. Whenever incapacitation of an Officer leaves less than two Officers in power, including any offices which may be empty due to unrelated matters, the Senate is required to appoint an Interim Officer to assure that a minimum of two Executive Committee offices are filled. At any meeting thereafter the Senate may reopen the
appointment process, including making appointments of Interim Officers to offices left open at previous meetings. No motion to adjourn may be made until a total of at least two offices are filled.

3. If the Senate chooses not to appoint an Interim Officer, the remaining Executive Committee members may either assume the duties and powers of the incapacitated Officer or appoint an Interim Officer of their choosing according to rules set forth for Interim Officer in the By-Laws.

4. Upon appointment, an Interim Officer is not required to resign their Senate position, but their voting in the Senate is limited to that of an Officer, not as any club’s Senator. An alternate may take their place in the Senate if they were not an alternate themselves.

Section 5. Duties of the Executive Committee

A. Shall prepare the agenda for Senate meetings.
B. Shall approve all appointments made by GSA.
C. Shall be responsible for approving the expenditure of funds by the voucher or PO process. All vouchers must be signed by the Treasurer and the President or an official designee of the Graduate Student Association.
D. Shall be responsible for the hiring and contractual relationship of Graduate Student Association permanent employees.
E. Shall be responsible for the annual appointment of the Graduate Student Association staff to realize the goals of the GSA as stated in the preamble. Any student staff position must be held by a member of the Graduate Student Association.
F. Shall be responsible for the review, sanction, or revocation of club status for all GSA clubs. The Vice-President shall be responsible for such a review, sanction, or revocation aided by the Executive Committee.
G. Shall receive an annual stipend as specified in the budget, in accordance with Sub-Board I, Inc. accounting procedures.
H. Officers who in accordance with constitutional responsibility assume the duties of another Officer (e.g., Vice President acting on behalf of the President) shall not be entitled to an additional stipend payment.
I. Shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of the GSA. In managing the GSA the Executive Committee shall be governed by majority decision, which requires a majority vote of the Executive Committee to make a decision. In the event that a majority of the Executive Committee cannot be reached, the President shall be empowered to make a provisional decision. The matter must then be discussed at the next regularly scheduled GSA Senate meeting where the Senate will have final decision-making authority.
J. Shall be responsible for the maintenance of GSA funded student programs. GSA program policy decisions shall be governed by the majority decision rules outlined in the previous clause. Additionally, the Executive Committee shall notify the GSA Senate of any and all policy alterations made to GSA funded student programs at the next regularly scheduled GSA Senate meeting. These policy decisions are considered provisionally enforceable until the Senate approves or rejects of the policy decision with an up or down vote. In the event of a rejection
by the Senate of a provisional policy decision, the previous policy is reinstated unless the Senate chooses to adopt a new policy, at its discretion.

K. Shall be responsible for a smooth transition of duties to the new Executive Committee members, including but not limited to, the keeping of detailed records, updating position duties, and keeping of handbooks.

**Article III Meetings of the Senate**

Section 1. Time of Meetings

A. The Senate shall meet at least once each month during the Fall and Spring semesters. Meetings may be called by the President and must be called by the President upon request of 25% of the membership of the Senate.

Section 2. Announcements of Meetings and Agenda

A. A meeting notice and agenda shall be sent by electronic mail to all Senators and alternates at least seven calendar days prior to the day of the meeting.

B. The Executive Committee in accordance with the other duties shall make the agenda and regulations contained in the GSA Constitution and GSA By-Laws.

C. A majority vote in the GSA Senate can mandate that a matter be added to a subsequent Senate meeting agenda.

Section 3. Quorum

A. A quorum for the purpose of convening a meeting shall be a simple majority of the total membership of the Senate.

B. The membership on which a quorum shall be based is calculated as follows: If a seat is vacant for two consecutive meetings, that seat will be considered on the inactive list and as such will not be counted in the quorum determination. The quorum determination will be made prior to each meeting. Attendance of a meeting by the delegate or alternate of that seat will result in removal of the seat from the inactive list.

C. For the first meeting of the year (September), if a club has not held elections, the Senator(s) from the previous year will be considered and counted towards quorum.

Section 4: Rules of Order

In its deliberations, the Senate shall be guided by Robert’s Rules of Order Revised.

**Article IV Committees**

All committees of the Graduate Student Association must be chaired by a member of the Senate. The committee members may be drawn from the Graduate Student Association at large.

Section 1: Standing Committees

A. Finance Committee
1. The Treasurer of the Graduate Student Association shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. In addition to the Treasurer, the Finance Committee shall consist of 9 (nine) members and 2 (two) alternates. The alternates shall vote only in the absence of a member. Both members and alternates shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and approved by a majority vote of the Senate.

2. Functions

   a. Budget: The Finance Committee shall be responsible for the formulation of the budget of the Graduate Student Association.

      i. The Senate is the final arbiter of the budget of the Graduate Student Association.

   b. Financial Rules and Procedures Governing the Disbursement of Funds:

      i. The Treasurer shall assist the Finance Committee in developing and enforcing any and all fiscal regulations administered by the Graduate Student Association and its Senate. Such regulations must not conflict with applicable Laws, SUNY or UB policies, or contractual obligations of the GSA.

      ii. Modifications of fiscal regulations by the Finance Committee shall be provisional until the GSA Senate either approves or rejects the modified fiscal regulation.

         1. The Treasurer must present any provisional fiscal regulations to the Senate at its next regularly scheduled meeting for an up or down vote.

         2. In the event of a rejection by the Senate, the previous fiscal regulation will be reinstated unless the Senate adopts a new fiscal regulation, at its discretion.

         3. The Senate is the final arbiter of fiscal regulations for the Graduate Student Association.

   c. GSA Funding Requests: The Finance Committee shall review all club funding requests in accordance with such guidelines that the Committee shall set for itself. The recommendation of the Finance Committee will be made to the Senate, which will make the final decision on funding levels.

   d. Capital Equipment

      i. The Finance Committee will review and approve of all purchases of capital equipment. The amount is set by and corresponds to Sub Board I, Inc. regulations.

      ii. The GSA shall retain ownership of all capital equipment purchased with GSA funds, whether or not such equipment is purchased for the use of any GSA club or project.

B. Election Committee

1. The Election Committee shall consist of 5 (five) members, with the responsibility of organizing and promoting the Executive Committee elections. They shall be approved no later than the October GSA Senate meeting.

2. The Election Committee Chair shall be elected from and by the members of the Election Committee, and approved by the Senate. After confirmation the Election Committee
Chair will give a briefing at each Senate meeting. No incumbent Executive Committee member may serve on the Election Committee.

3. No Election Committee member may run for an Executive office without first formally resigning from the committee, and must have Senate approval.

C. Services Committee

1. The Services Committee shall consist of 9 (nine) members. Those members shall include one GSA Officer, one stipend administrator from GSA Editing service, one stipend administrator from MDRF, one stipend administrator from GSA Programming and five GSA Senators.

2. Functions:
   a. To hear grievances and requests for review of all GSA Services.

Section 2: Temporary Committees

A. Temporary Committees may be appointed by either the President or the Senate as the need arises.