



## **Graduate Student Society Constitution**

We, the graduate students of Hillsdale College, considering that there is a constant need to provide for the further promotion of our education and the representation of present and future graduate students in a body assembled and considering further that procedures must be established to guarantee the just and responsible representation of graduate students, hereby form a permanent association for the following purposes:

To vindicate the course of our studies through successful practice of self-government under the Constitution of our Society,

To foster and further our academic growth, both individually and collectively, through sponsoring formal events, including, but not limited to, lectures, debates, or publications of academically serious materials,

To encourage our social flourishing through the endorsement of informal gatherings, which shall serve to bind us together in bonds of civility and friendship.

### **Article I. Name**

§1. This organization shall be called the Graduate Student Society (GSS).

### **Article II. Membership**

§1. Any student enrolled in the graduate school of statesmanship shall be considered a full member of HGSA. All full members shall have the right to run for society offices, vote in society elections, vote in meetings, and participate in any HGSA event.

§2. Undergraduate students shall not be allowed to become members of the GSS.

§3. With regard to powers, duties, and privileges of HGSA members, no distinction shall be made between students in the PhD and Masters programs.

### **Article III. Officers**

§1. HGSA members shall elect four officers: a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a student federation representative.

§2. The president shall be the most senior officer. The duties and powers of this office shall include:

- a) Calling both officer meetings and general membership meetings
- b) Determining the agenda for both officer and general membership meetings
- c) Chairing official meetings, with the power to recognize motions, determine the length and style of debates on a question, to select a method of voting on a motion (although he must always call for a show of hands if so requested by any member), and any other power necessary for the smooth operation of meetings.
- d) Notifying the Graduate Dean of planned society activities and expenditures.

§3. The secretary shall be the second most senior officer. The duties and powers of this office shall include:

- a) Making an official recording of the significant proceedings of any meeting. After an official meeting, the secretary shall email all members and the Graduate Dean a record of the proceedings of the meeting. The report need not be comprehensive (e.g., it does not have to include the lengths of debate or the results of minor motions), but must include pertinent topics discussed, the result of any significant vote, the result of any election, and any appropriation of society funds.
- b) Notifying members of the date, time, and location of a planned meeting or any change thereof.
- c) Keeping an official record of the society's annual membership and any official activity.
- d) Handing over such records to his successor.

§4. The treasurer shall be the third most senior officer. The duties and powers of this office shall include:

- a) Keeping a thorough record of the available funds and past expenditures of the society.
- b) Keeping a record of any planned appropriations.
- c) Researching the cost of potential society events.
- d) Paying all society expenses, unless another individual is chosen at an official meeting.

§5. The student federation representative shall be the fourth most senior officer. The duties and powers of this office shall include:

- a) Representing the GSS in the student federation.
- b) Notifying officers (and members if applicable) of important federation votes so that they may be advised of the position of the GSS.
- c) The student federation representative is authorized to use his discretion when voting on general issues not particularly applicable to GSS to best represent the interests of the Society.
- d) Collaborating with both the student federation and the GSS to petition funds as directed by the President, Graduate Dean, or majority vote of society membership.

#### **Article IV. Electing Officers**

§1. Immediately following ratification of this constitution, the first order of business for HGSA shall be to elect officers.

§2. The office of president first shall be filled, in accordance with the following procedure: Assembled members shall nominate themselves for a particular office. Each candidate shall be allowed a brief statement in support of their candidacy. All candidates for a position shall then remove themselves from proceedings. Remaining members shall then vote, by secret ballot, for their preferred candidate. The candidate with the most votes shall be declared winner. In the event of a tie, a second round of voting shall be held between the tied candidates. If there is still a tie, members will continue to hold subsequent rounds of voting until one candidate has the most votes.

§3. When the president has been chosen, he shall be responsible for presiding over subsequent nominations and elections. These subsequent procedures shall follow that outlined in §2.

§4. Once elected, officers shall hold their respective offices until the beginning of the next semester.

§5. In the event a position becomes vacant, a meeting shall be called to fill the vacancy. The most senior officer remaining shall preside over the election.

#### **Article V. Meetings**

§1. Planning Meetings: The society officers shall hold planning meetings to discuss and plan official society activities.

- a) A quorum of all four officers shall be sufficient to hold a planning meeting. Additional society members may attend.

- b) The secretary shall ensure that an email is sent, notifying all members of a planning meeting and the agenda thereof at least two days in advance.
- c) Any society activity or expenditure may be planned at a planning meeting,

§2. General Meetings: For the purpose of equal and adequate representation, meetings for planning and official votes shall be called by the president when the majority of society members are able to attend. During meetings of the general membership, the president shall inform the society of planned events and open the floor for the discussion of agenda items. A quorum of the general membership is not required to conduct a general meeting. However, the consent of a majority of all society members shall be required to approve a society activity. In the event that the majority of society members are not present at the meeting, votes may be collected via email. If deemed expedient and prudent by the president, an e-mail discussion and/or ballot may replace a general meeting.

§3. Expenditures: All expenditures at or below \$250 shall only require the approval of all four elected officers. Upon approval of the expenditure, notice shall be sent to the general membership and the Graduate Dean for the record. All expenditures above \$250 shall require a majority vote of the general membership. Upon approval of the expenditure, notice shall be sent to the Graduate Dean.

### **Article VI: Amendment Process**

§1. This constitution may be amended at any meeting by a two-thirds majority of all members.

### **Article VII: Accountability to Graduate Dean**

§1. The Dean of the Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship shall have the power to veto any proposed society activity or appropriation, make any change to the constitution, and settle any dispute. The Dean shall be notified of all society expenditures.