



Brock University Graduate Students' Association

Document 015D

The Graduate Students' Association Board of Directors Policy

Name of the Policy

1. This document shall be referred to as the "Board of Directors Policy"

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to outline the structure, role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors ("the Board") of the Graduate Students' Association ("GSA").

Composition and Structure

3. Pursuant to Article Eleven of the GSA Bylaw Document 001, the Directors of the Board ("Directors") shall fall into at least one of the following categories:
 - a. Ex-Officio, Voting Directors;
 - b. Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Directors;
 - c. Elected, Voting Directors
4. Ex-officio, voting Directors of the GSA Board are:
 - a. The GSA President;
 - b. Any Officer of the GSA,
5. Ex-officio, non-voting Directors of the GSA Board are:
 - a. The GSA Executive Director
 - b. The GSA Past-President, as assigned by the Board
 - c. The Vice President, External and University Affairs
 - d. The Vice President, Student Life and Equity
 - e. Any member of the GSA, individual or position, so appointed, in accordance with the GSA Bylaws and relevant Policies. Any such appointment made shall be restricted to non-voting status.
6. Elected, voting Directors of the GSA Board are:
 - a. Faculty Directors, two (2) per faculty, representing the following Faculties:
 - i. Goodman School of Business
 - ii. Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
 - iii. Faculty of Education
 - iv. Faculty of Humanities
 - v. Faculty of Math and Science
 - vi. Faculty of Social Sciences
 - b. In addition, there shall be four (4) graduate student at-large seats open to all faculties.
 - i. A faculty shall only be eligible for at-large seats if both of their faculty seats have been filled and shall be limited to two (2) additional seats.
7. Voting membership of the Board shall not normally exceed twenty (20) Directors.



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Board Mandate

8. The Board is involved in making decisions that define the vision and mission of the GSA, its strategic objectives, priority populations, the organizational values, the strategic priorities and the future course for GSA. It establishes the legal, ethical and financial boundaries within which the Executive and Staff must operate to achieve the mission and strategic goals.
9. The Board defines the roles and responsibilities as well as communication lines between Board, Board Committees, Executive and Staff.
10. The Board shall be accountable to the membership of the GSA. Directors are also accountable to federal, provincial, municipal government funding bodies and any other group that provides financial assistance to the GSA.

Roles and Responsibilities

11. Strategic Governance:
 - a. Establish the vision, mission and values of the GSA,
 - b. Provide strategic leadership and establish strategic goals and priorities,
 - c. Evaluate organizational performance against strategic goals and priorities,
 - d. Contribute to the achievement of organizational strategic goals
12. Operational Oversight
 - a. Carry out its fiduciary role,
 - b. Ensure adequate and relevant policies, procedures and controls are approved and in place,
 - c. Monitor adherence to policies, procedures and controls,
 - d. Approve the hiring and dismissal of the Executive Director.
13. Board Self-governance
 - a. Ensure adequate and relevant governance policies and procedures are in place,
 - b. Ensure Board development and education,
 - c. Evaluate Board performance,
 - d. Ensure Board succession planning and continuity,
 - e. Engage GSA community and community partners to better respond to changes in the external environment, and the community's diverse needs and interests.
14. Community and Partner Relations and Advocacy
 - a. Advocate for the GSA's members and community,
 - b. To advocate for greater graduate student participation,
 - c. To ensure that there are adequate resources available to carry out the work of the GSA.
15. Resource Development:
 - a. To develop guidelines and procedures for fund raising



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Recruitment

16. The Board may task either the Governance, Elections and Nominating (GEN) Committee or the Executive Committee to prepare a posting for any vacant positions of the Board, and upon approval by the Board seek applications from the membership to fill such vacancies.
17. The Committee should consider inclusion and diversity broadly across the whole of the Board. Nominees from across the six faculties should be considered holistically, allowing recruitment to ensure appropriate representation of PhD, Masters, Course Based, Research Based, Full-Time, Part-Time. Consideration should also be given to ensure that the diversity of the graduate student population is reflected within the composition of the Board.
18. The Committee shall normally undertake recruitment with the goal of presenting a slate of Directors at the General Meeting in April of each year, with ongoing recruitment to be undertaken throughout each term on an as needed basis to fill any vacancies as they arise.
19. If no applicants are identified for nomination during the recruitment process, nominations may be taken from the floor of the General Meeting to fill those specific vacancies.

Nomination and Election

20. A list of Directors, shortlisted to fill the vacant seats on the Board shall be presented by the GEN Committee to the Board for approval prior to being presented to the membership at a General Meeting for approval.

Director Qualifications

21. Directors shall satisfy all requirements as laid out in relevant federal, provincial, regional, municipal and institutional legislation as well as the GSA Bylaw and relevant policies;
22. Ex-Officio Directors, both voting and non-voting, must continue to satisfy the requirements of the role which grants them ex-officio status.
23. Elected Directors shall be elected/selected by and from the members of the GSA. They must be enrolled in the faculty they seek to represent and must remain a member of that faculty for the duration of their term.
24. To remain a Director, a student must continue as a Full member of the GSA and their respective faculty or group which they represent, for the term in which they are elected.
25. Staff persons of the GSA, excluding ex-officio Directors, may not serve on the Board.
26. Appointed Directors shall not be a member, director, employee or serve in any capacity of authority on another graduate students' association or undergraduate students' association.



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Attendance Requirements

27. Attendance at Board meetings by each Director is mandatory, unless granted an absence from the Chair or a Director has been granted a leave of absence by the Board. Directors are obliged to inform the Chair and the Board Secretary in advance if they are not able to attend a Board meeting:
 - a. A valid excuse must be presented to the Chair in advance for each missed meeting to be granted an absence from the meeting;
 - b. If there are extenuating circumstances and a Director is not able to contact the Chair in advance to be granted an absence, an excuse may be given after the fact, so long as the Chair is contacted as soon as possible, given the severity of the situation at hand;
 - c. If the conditions of sections 27a or 27b are not met, the absence will count as an unexplained absence from Board meetings in the attendance calculation outlined in sections 28 and 29 below.
28. If a Director misses three (3) consecutive Board meetings, regardless of whether they have presented valid excuses that person shall cease to be a Director, and the vacant seat shall be filled pursuant to Article Eighteen and Nineteen of the GSA Bylaw and Document 040 – Graduate Students' Association Election Policy.
29. If a Director misses four (4) total Board meetings regardless of whether they or have presented valid excuses, that person shall cease to be a Director, and the vacant seat shall be filled pursuant to Article Eighteen and Nineteen of the Bylaw and Document 040 – Graduate Students' Association Elections and Referenda Policy.
30. If a Director has two (2) unexplained absences from Board, that person shall cease to be a Director, and the vacant seat shall be filled pursuant to Article Eighteen and Nineteen of the GSA Bylaw and Document 040.
31. Directors may appeal any disciplinary action issued by the Chair regarding Director absenteeism to the whole of the Board.

Additional Requirements:

32. Directors may be asked to individually submit a 250-word maximum reflection on their experiences on the Board to the Chair before the last meeting of the year. The statements will be kept on file for public perusal and to be utilized to inform incremental improvements for the Board and the GSA.



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Board Mentorship Program:

33. Following the election of Directors at either an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM) the President and the Executive Director shall solicit interest from members in the mentorship program. Newly elected Directors shall be matched with Directors who have served at least half a year on the Board previously.
34. This program shall normally be restricted to non-executive Directors but should the number of new Directors interested in the program exceed the number of returning Directors, members of the executive who have previously served at least half a year on the Board may act as mentors.
35. Mentors should seek to support mentees in acclimating to the Board and should do this through meetings and conversations aimed at informal learning. Mentees should be prepared to ask questions and seek clarification wherever possible.
36. Where possible, a mentor and mentee should come from the same faculty.
37. The Board shall maintain a relevant and updated procedure outlining the process for Board Mentorship within their Standing Orders, as approved annually.

Term of Office

38. Directors shall normally hold office from midnight on the 1st Day of May following their election until midnight of April 30th the following year.
39. Directors who are recruited and appointed between General Meetings shall hold office from the meeting in which they are appointed until the April 30th of that term.

Voting Privileges:

40. Directors defined in Sections 4 and 6 of this policy shall have one vote per Director and shall have the right to vote at meetings of the Board.
41. Directors defined in Section 5 of this policy shall not have voting privileges.
42. No Director shall be permitted to vote by proxy.

Meetings

43. The Board shall meet roughly once per month for the duration of their twelve (12) month term. The Board may recess for one month no more than once throughout the term, at which time the Executive will carry authority for the Board pursuant to the GSA Bylaw.
44. The first meeting of the Board must be held no later than June 1st of each year.
45. Meetings may be held in-person, virtually or as a hybrid depending on the needs of the Board.

Vacancies



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46. Vacancies that arise between General Meetings may be filled by the Board, utilizing the recruitment process outlined in this document. Vacancies shall be filled on a case-by-case basis, and if the positions cannot be filled, they shall remain vacant until the Annual General Meeting.
47. A Special General Meeting for vacant seats must be held within one (1) month if quorum for the Board meetings is less than fifty percent plus one (50%+1) of eligible voting members at any time during the year.
48. Resignations by any Director of the GSA are to be addressed to the Chair in either hardcopy or via email. Upon the receipt of a resignation, the Chair is to confirm to the member that the correspondence has been received and confirm it will be presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
49. Verbal resignations cannot be accepted by the Board unless verbal resignation is made in the presence of a convened session of the Board.
50. All resignations of Directors and related responsibilities must be presented to the Board and accepted before they are considered formal. Any such resignations must be reflected as accepted in the minutes. No resignation shall be reasonably refused by the Board.