

German Graduate Student Association

Date of origin: January 2019

I. Name and Purpose

The organization constituted in this document shall be called *German Graduate Student Association* (hereafter: “the organization”).

- A. The organization shall serve the following purposes:
1. to inform members on career options within the German studies and related fields
 2. to provide members with sources of information and guidance on professional development
 3. to provide members with the opportunity to interact with professionals, alumni, and other students in related fields or with similar interests and goals

II. Membership

The Office of Student Activities rules mandate that: No organization may restrict membership based on characteristics of a student, which are intrinsic to the identity of that student, and are not essential to the potential value of that student as a member of that organization and the Penn State University Community at large. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

- A. At all times, the majority (50%+1) of all active members shall be officially registered Graduate students at University Park.
- B. The membership shall be divided into active and associate members.
1. Only students currently registered in the German department are eligible for active membership. Only active members may hold office, vote, preside, officiate, or solicit funds on behalf of the organization.
 2. All others interested in furthering the purpose of the Organization, including but not limited to, faculty, staff, and community members, shall be associate members.
- C. The Graduate organization shall have at least 10 active student members at all times.
- D. The club reserves the right to expel a member who is not following the policies of the organization with a super majority vote of attending members - quorum is 75% of active members.

E. In the case of violations of constitutional policies and/or a conflict between members within the organization the highest-ranking officer that is not involved in the conflict, with the assistance from the advisor (if applicable), will facilitate an informal mediation procedure

1. The mediator shall:

- a) Arrange for a mediation meeting outside of the regular organization business meeting
- b) Explain their role as the impartial party and the objectives of the mediation
- c) Set ground rules
- d) Allow each party to express their views by allowing the conversation to go where the parties wish it to go
- e) Collect any available resources that might assist in the resolution (financial documents, emails, photos, etc.)
- f) As a third party, do not suggest resolutions but rather leave the responsibility for the resolution with the parties involved
 - i. Facilitate goal setting to reach a win-win resolution

F. New Membership and Recruitment

1. Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during recruitment, including but not limited to the disclosure of the following:

- a) New Membership Manual (if applicable)
- b) Schedule of New Member Events and Activities (if applicable)
- c) A list of responsibilities
- d) A copy of the University Hazing policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations. This document is available upon request by the Office of Student Activities.

2. All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.

3. Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

III. Officers

A. Graduate candidates may be full-time or part-time, officially registered active student members to be selected as officers at the time of the appointment or election.

Officers may change from full-time to part-time, or vice versa, after becoming an officer. Student organizations may establish and apply additional eligibility criteria for appointed or elected leaders/officers, but should first seek approval from the Office of Student Activities.

B. Officers

1. All officers

- a) The term of office for each officer shall be approximately one year, until a successor is elected in the following election.
- b) Only Active Members who are full-time officially registered students shall be eligible to serve as officers in the Club. Further limitations on eligibility are subject to the Office of Student Activities.
- c) The attendance of each officer at all general and executive meetings shall be mandatory.
- d) In the event of an unexpected vacancy in any office, vacancies will be filled by an officer vote. Any active member may apply to the board to be considered to fill the vacancy.

2. President

- a) It shall be the duty of the President to preside over all meetings.
- b) The President shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of agendas for each general membership meeting.
- c) The president shall also serve as chair of the executive committee.
- d) The President shall be particularly responsible for the position of the Club within the University community and to perform her or his duties in such a manner as to maintain the Club in the highest esteem.

3. Vice-President

- a) The duties of the Vice-President shall include all the presidential duties during the absence of the president.
- b) The Vice-President is also charged with the procurement of speakers and other special programming incidental to the regular general membership meetings.

4. Secretary

- a) The duties of the Secretary shall include maintaining all the written records of the Club and particularly the minutes of all regular and executive meetings.
- b) Minutes shall be made available to the general membership via electronic mail, the Club web site, or alternative means.
- c) The Secretary's duties shall also include updating the Club bulletin board.
- d) The secretary shall also be responsible for sending out thank-you cards to speakers and other individuals as directed by the Executive Committee.

5. Treasurer

- a) The duties of the Treasurer shall include receiving all Club funds, keeping full and accurate account of these funds and depositing all money into the account at the Associated Student Activities office, room 240 Hetzel Union Building.
- b) The Treasurer shall also interact with Associated Student Activities personnel on the Club's behalf.
- c) The treasurer shall be obligated to collect dues during the first three meetings of each semester or to make special arrangements with individual members regarding dues payment.
- d) Fund disbursement may not be made except by approval of the President or by a majority vote.
- e) The Club's account shall be current at all times and a full financial report shall be available upon demand of any Club member or advisor.
- f) The Treasurer shall be required to present the account balance and all transactions at each general meeting.
- g) The Treasurer shall arrange transportation to all Club functions that require the services of University Fleet Operations.

C. Filling unexpired vacancies:

1. Nominations are taken at the meeting following the vacancy. Elections also occur at this meeting.
2. If a majority (50%+1) is not obtained by any of the candidates, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and the active members shall vote again.

3. When nominations are being taken to fill unexpired terms, any member of the organization may nominate another member of the organization by simply raising his/her hand and indicating such when recognized.

IV. Meetings

1. Regular meetings

- A. Regular meetings of the Club membership shall be held at least twice per semester.
- B. The specific dates and meeting place will be determined by the Executive Committee in consultation with the members.
- C. Adequate advance notice must be given to all active members. The tentative meeting schedule shall be announced at the beginning of each semester and communicated via the electronic mailing list and the web site.
- D. The President with the consent of the Vice President may change meeting frequency.
- E. The President may call special meetings should he/she see fit.

2. Special meetings

- A. Special meetings, such as guest lecturers or meetings to prepare for activities or events, may be scheduled at the executive committee's discretion. The Executive Committee's shall notify the general membership of such meetings.

V. Voting

- A. Only active members may vote.
 1. Voting may be carried out either verbally or by secret, written ballot.
- B. Quorum for all voting shall be fifty percent (50%) of the active membership.
- C. A simple majority (50% +1) shall be necessary for all voting. This majority shall be derived from the active members present.

VI. Finances

- A. All organizational funds are to be deposited and handled exclusively through the Associated Student Activities (ASA) in 240 HUB.
- B. This organization will not have an off-campus account(s)
- C. This organization shall collect dues that will not be excessive. The amount of dues shall be set by the Executive Committee prior to the start of the academic year.
- D. A member shall be considered an Active Member in good standing for the current semester upon the payment of dues and fulfillment of other responsibilities. Nonpayment of dues shall preclude Active Member status.
- D. Non-payment of dues shall not prohibit attendance at the regular meetings and discussion of matters brought before the membership.
- E. Dues shall be collected during the first meeting of each semester or by special arrangement with the Treasurer.
- G. The Officers of the German Graduate Student Association may spend up to \$50 of the organization's funds without the approval of the general membership.

VII. Elections

- A. Nominations and elections shall take place during the first meeting of the spring semester.
- B. This meeting shall be publicized in the meetings preceding it.
- C. Elections codes:
 - 1. Any member may nominate an active member for any office by raising his/her hand at the appropriate time and being recognized by the presiding official. Next, the active members shall cast secret, written ballots for the candidate of their choice. Each active member shall have one vote per office.
 - 2. A member of the executive committee not running for office shall be responsible for tallying the votes and announcing the decisions.
 - 3. If 50%+1 cannot be obtained, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from consideration, and the active members shall vote again.
- D. In the event of a tie, the ballot will be recast.

- E. All officers serve for a term of one year, beginning in the month following elections and ending the month of elections.
- F. No one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate

VIII. Amendments to the Constitution

- A. Amendments to this constitution may be introduced at the conclusion of any meeting. Voting shall occur at the meeting following its introduction, with the amendment taking effect following Office of Student Activities approval.
- B. Any member may introduce a constitutional amendment at the conclusion of any meeting. At the following meeting, the active members shall vote on the amendment, as outlined in the article on voting. If the amendment passes, it shall be sent to the Office of Student Activities for approval.
- C. All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of Student Activities to ensure that they align with University policies and rules.

IX. Parliamentary Authority

- A. “Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised” by Sarah Corbin Roberts shall be used in all cases not covered by this constitution.

X. Accessibility of this Constitution

- A. Copies of this constitution shall be made available to anyone upon request.

XI. Advisor

- A. This organization must retain an advisor at all times. The advisor will be a full-time Faculty or Staff member of The Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus and will be chosen by the organization. He/ she will sign a statement acknowledging his or her responsibilities and knowledge of the safety guidelines in place.
- B. This organization will choose an advisor through a majority vote.