

Graduate Student Senate Constitution Villanova University

Article 1. Name

This organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Senate of Villanova University, henceforth abbreviated as GSS.

Article II. Purpose

The Graduate Student Senate of Villanova University is a representative body of all graduate students enrolled at the University. Its purpose is to support the academic and non-academic well-being of the graduate student body at Villanova University. The GSS will serve as the representing body of the graduate student community in all manners related to the graduate student experience by acting as the liaison between graduate students and faculty, staff, and University Administration and the University Board of Trustees. The GSS also serves to encourage communication, networking, and social interaction among graduate students through campus-wide events, hosted either by the GSS and through collaboration with others in the Villanova community. The GSS also serves to follow the Augustinian value of Villanova University.

Article III. Membership

Section 1.

Every graduate student currently enrolled in a graduate program is a non-voting (outside of General Elections) member of the GSS. They are considered a member regardless of modality and credit hours until they graduate or if are expelled from the University. The GSS does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.

Section 2.

General Members may earn voting privileges if they are selected by their academic program to serve as a Senator of the GSS. Senators will serve in their role for an academic year unless they resign, they are replaced by their program director or student organization executive board, they graduate from Villanova University, or if they are expelled from the University.

Section 3.

The group of elected officers who oversee the ongoings of the GSS is known as the Executive Board. Executive Board Officers will serve in their role for an academic year unless they resign, they are impeached, they graduate from Villanova University, or if they are expelled from the University. The inaugural Executive Board was selected by a Villanova Committee, but all future officers will be elected by the student body.

Section 4.

The current Assistant Director of Graduate Student Engagement for the Center for Graduate Research and Education will serve as the Advisor of the GSS. The Advisor will serve as a tiebreaker vote when called upon by the Executive Board.

Article IV. Officers of the Executive Board

Section 1.

The Executive Board Officers of the GSS will consist of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Communications Officer, an External Affairs Officer, and an International Student Affairs Officer.

Section 2.

The President will serve as the main representative of the graduate students in all matters related to the graduate student experience at Villanova. The President will call and preside all meetings of the GSS. The President, along with the Vice President, will author the Annual Report of the GSS detailing the academic year in which they served as President. The President will assign any duties they see fit to the other members of the Executive Board.

Section 3.

The Vice President assists the President in the execution of their duties. In absence of the President, they will serve as the acting President and will assume their responsibilities and perform the duties of the President. The Vice President will oversee all internal GSS committees and will act as the main contact for all Villanova student organizations.

Section 4.

The Secretary will be responsible for recording meeting minutes for the GSS General Assembly, Senate, and Executive Board. This includes taking attendance, recognizing active Senators, summarizing meeting minutes to interested GSS members, and maintaining GSS records. The Secretary will work with the President and the Communications Officer to oversee internal and external communication to the Villanova Community.

Section 5.

The Treasurer will be responsible for drafting and maintaining the budget and the other financial records of the GSS. This includes preparing and submitting the final budget with the Office of Student Involvement, reporting any spending, coordinating reimbursements, and assisting with planning of GSS events with the Events Committee. The Treasurer may not be the Treasurer for any other organization while holding this position.

Section 6.

The Communications Officer will be responsible for maintaining communications to the Villanova Community. These communications may include a website, mailing list, all social media, and meeting announcements. The Communications Officer will also be the liaison to the undergraduate student government, Villanova University Student Government Association and will attend their meetings.

Section 7.

The External Affairs Officer will be responsible for coordinating relationships with organizations outside of Villanova University. The External Affairs Officer will be responsible for following national trends that affect graduate students and reporting issues to the GSS.

Section 8.

The International Student Affairs Officer will be responsible for monitoring issues, initiatives, and institutional, domestic, and international policies related to the well-being of the international students at Villanova University. The International Student Affairs must be an international student. The International Student Affairs Officer will assist Villanova with the integration of international students into the academic, cultural, and social life of Villanova and its surrounding communities.

Section 9.

The President, Vice-President, and External Affairs Officer will further serve on the University Council as the three (3) graduate student representatives per the University Council bylaws.

Section 10.

The Secretary and the Communications Officer will serve on the Grad Council as the two (2) graduate student representatives per the Grad Council bylaws.

Section 11.

All members of the GSS Executive Board will work in collaboration with the Center for Graduate Research and Education in preparation for the Fall and Spring Graduate Student Orientation, which includes the virtual orientation, the Graduate Student Kick-Off Picnic, and any other related events.

Article V. Standing Committees

The GSS will have the following standing committees: Social Event Committee, Philanthropy Committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, Budget Committee, Election Committee, International Student Committee. Other committees may be formed as needed.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1.

Members of the Executive Board are required to meet biweekly or when called upon by the President. Quorum is met with four (4) board members.

Section 2.

Senate meetings are held monthly and open to all members of the GSS. Quorum is met with fifty (50) percent of active senators and with three (3) members of the Board members.

Section 3.

General Assembly Meetings, also known as Town Halls, are held at least once per semester. These General Assembly Meetings are open to all members.

Article VII. Amendments and By-laws

Section 1.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority at a Senate meeting. Any senator can submit Amendment propositions with the backing of at least one other senator. The Constitution shall be reviewed and updated as needed at least once every five (5) years.

Section 2.

New and changes to existing by-laws may be passed by a majority vote in General Assembly meetings. By-laws shall be reviewed and updated every year.

Article VIII. Elections

Please refer to the GSS Elections Process Addendum for the guidelines for GSS election matters.