

Graduate Student Senate Bylaws

Approved on March 28, 2024. Effective beginning on said date.

Article I: Membership in GSS

Section 1. Membership is open to all TCU students, faculty, and staff who are interested in TCU Graduate Senate activities and who are willing to participate in the organization's events and meetings actively and will not restrict membership to a student based on their age, race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, genetic information, veteran status and any other basis protected by law.

Section 2. All currently enrolled graduate students at Texas Christian University (TCU), as well as those enrolled in graduate programs formally affiliated with TCU as recognized by the Board of Trustees, are eligible for membership in the GSS.

Section 3. The university shall oversee the collection of GSS fees each academic term. The fee amount shall be determined in accordance with university policy and is subject to the approval of the TCU Board of Trustees.

Article II: Executive Board

Section 1. Duties and Procedures of the Executive Board

- A. The Executive Board shall convene monthly meetings, including both Executive Board-only sessions and committee meetings, to conduct organizational business and ensure continuity of operations.
- B. Executive Board Meeting Procedures
 - a. Call to Order
The presiding Senate President shall officially open each Executive Board session. Attendance shall be recorded to confirm quorum and participation. The President will present the agenda and outline topics to be addressed during the meeting.
 - b. Committee Reports
The Senate President may call upon committee chairs or their designated representatives to report on committee activities, updates, and progress since the previous meeting. Each report shall include a brief summary of actions taken and issues pending.
 - c. New Business: Bring new items before the Graduate Student Council, such as proposed initiatives, resolutions, or policies may be introduced for consideration by the Executive Board.
 - d. Open Forum
An open floor will be provided during which any Executive Board member may

present announcements, raise concerns, or offer updates relevant to the Graduate Student Senate.

e. Adjournment

Upon completion of all agenda items, or when all remaining business has been resolved or tabled, the Senate President shall move to adjourn the meeting. A second motion is required to formally close the session.

Section 2. Committees

A. The Graduate Student Senate reserves the right to establish committees and subcommittees as deemed necessary to effectively support and carry out its responsibilities.

- a. At the first General Assembly of the Graduate Student Senate each academic year, the Senate President shall appoint committee chairs, as deemed necessary, and assign representatives to standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate. The President will collaborate with the Vice Presidents of each committee to ensure appointments align with the goals and needs of the Senate.
- b. As needed and upon confirmation, each committee chair shall have the authority to appoint additional members to their committee as deemed necessary to effectively carry out its responsibilities. The chair may remove a committee member with the approval of a simple majority of the committee's voting members. Furthermore, the chair is empowered to establish subcommittees and to appoint subcommittee chairs and members as needed to support the committee's objectives..
- c. At any time, a new committee may be established to address a specific issue and/or function. At a Graduate Student Senate General Assembly meeting, a new committee and its function may be proposed by any member of the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly with the support of a Graduate Student Senate Officer. Following the proposal, a quorum is needed to confirm the creation of the new committee. The Officer who supported the creation will nominate any Graduate Student Senate General Assembly member to serve as the committee chair, and that person's confirmation will then be immediately approved with quorum by the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly.
- d. At any time, an existing committee may be dissolved. At a Graduate Student Senate General Assembly, any Officer may propose the dissolution of a committee. Following the proposal, the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly may dissolve the committee by a quorum.

B. Committee meetings

- a. Regular Meetings: Each committee shall hold at least one formal meeting at the beginning of each academic year (Fall semester) to introduce the committee chair, review responsibilities, and share general information. Thereafter, committees should meet at least once per month—ideally during the week prior to each scheduled Executive Board and Senate General Assembly meeting—to conduct

committee business. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the committee chair as needed to fulfill the committee's duties.

- b. Meeting Protocols: At each committee meeting, the chair is responsible for recording attendance (as referenced in Article III, Section 3) and for appointing a member to take meeting minutes. These minutes shall be distributed prior to the next Senate meeting to ensure transparency and continuity.
- c. Special Meetings: The committee chair may call special or unscheduled meetings at any time, either independently or upon the request and/or consent of committee members.
- d. A quorum in any standing or ad hoc committee will consist of a simple majority of the committee's current membership.

Section 3. Executive Board

A. Requirements

- a. Be a registered graduate student enrolled in a minimum of 1 graduate credit hour per semester;
- b. Must be in good standing with their respective college or school.
- c. Meet active participation requirements, including:
 - i. Attendance at a minimum of 50% of all GSS meetings.
 - ii. Attendance at 100% of committee meetings for which the officer is responsible

B. Executive Board Officers and Responsibilities

- a. President
 - i. Preside over all Graduate Student Senate General Assembly meetings.
 - ii. Serve as Chair of the Senate and preside at all general assembly meetings;
 - iii. Represent the Senate as an ex officio member of the University's Graduate Council;
 - iv. Serve as the official representative and spokesman of the Senate;
 - v. Have ultimate responsibility for the proper observance of all responsibilities delegated to members of the Senate or of any committee thereof.
- b. Vice President of Elections & Logistics
 - i. Serve as the acting chair of the Senate in the absence of the President and during such time assume all duties of that office;
 - ii. Assist in overseeing Senate duties and coordinate event logistics, including room reservations;
 - iii. Oversee the election of new officers and senators every academic year;
 - iv. Carry out miscellaneous day-to-day administrative needs as they arise, including coordinating event preparation, execution, and staffing.
- c. Vice President of Finance
 - i. Maintain a detailed record of all financial transactions;
 - ii. Coordinate University-administered receipts and all expenditures and financial responsibilities of the Senate;
 - iii. Have charge of all accounts managed by the Senate

- d. Vice President of Student Engagement
 - i. Lead initiatives to foster community among graduate students, enhance graduate student life, and campus connectivity;
 - ii. Handle event coordination to improve student relations and increase graduate student engagement across campus to support and sustain a connection culture at TCU;
 - iii. Act as a liaison between various bodies, organizations and partners across campus to support internal engagement, but also acting as a liaison for external engagements beyond the campus community;
 - iv. Promote and sustain relations with students by advertising events and opportunities to the student body via emails, flyers, social media, and coordination of speaking roles for graduate student orientations as needed.
- e. Vice President of Student Experience
 - i. Identify and implement strategies to improve the graduate student experience at TCU;
 - ii. Collaborate with the Executive Board and related committees to plan and execute Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW) each semester;
 - iii. Serve as the primary contact for GSAW partners and vendors;
 - iv. promoting, with the Committee on Student Engagement, the resources offered to grad students to ensure students are comfortable with or services on campus for academic and intellectual support, as well as helping students make a community wide connection to the university.
 - v. Lead the Graduate Student Experience Survey Committee, which includes TCU faculty and GSS representatives.. Members of the survey committee should include but not be limited to GSS offices of the President, mental health, DEI, data, and analytics.
 - vi. Conduct a survey of graduate student needs periodically (at minimum every two years) and present the results to TCU administrators and stakeholders.
- f. Vice President of Community and Belonging
 - i. Encourage awareness around marginalized populations as well as access to resources for persons in marginalized communities
 - ii. Promote cultural competency through education and advocacy
 - iii. Act as a liaison between GSS and groups on campus that are undertaking concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- g. Vice President of Mental Health & Wellness
 - i. Connect and provide graduate students with resources, mechanisms for advocacy, and a sense of community regarding mental health and wellness resources.
 - ii. Advertise available resources and develop and support programs that are aimed at addressing a graduate student's mental health and general wellness.

- iii. Collaborate with university wellness offices and affiliated programs to enhance awareness and accessibility of available mental health and wellness resources for graduate students
 - h. Vice President of Student Parents
 - i. Advocates for graduate student parents to develop programming that better serves personal and familial needs of graduate students.
 - ii. Promotes representation of graduate student parents in policies, programs, and services
 - iii. Organizes family-friendly events and activities to foster a sense of community
 - iv. Provides a network of support and resources for graduate student parents and their families
 - v. Is dedicated to supporting the unique needs of graduate student parents and their families on campus
 - vi. Collaborate with university wellness offices and affiliated programs to enhance awareness and accessibility of available mental health and wellness resources for graduate students
 - i. Historian
 - i. Maintain and distribute accurate records of all Senate and Executive Board meetings;
 - ii. Archive relevant documentation and meeting notes;
 - iii. Keep an up-to-date roster of Senate members and representatives on internal and external committees and inform committee chairs of appointments.
 - j. Creation of New Officer Position(s)
 - i. The Executive Board may propose new officer roles as necessary;
 - ii. New positions require confirmation by a quorum vote of the full Senate;
 - iii. Existing officer roles may be dissolved by quorum vote of the General Assembly.
- C. Removal of an Officer of the Executive Board
 - a. The President, in consultation with a majority of the Executive Board and following a documented conversation with the officer in question and a neutral third party, may initiate the removal of an officer who is not fulfilling the responsibilities of their position.
 - b. In the event of removal, the President shall appoint a current member of the Graduate Student Senate to assume the responsibilities of the vacated position, including serving as chair of any associated committee, until a formal replacement is elected or appointed in accordance with the bylaws.

Section 4. Officer Elections and Terms

- A. The term of office is one academic year
 - a. The term of office for all Executive Board officers and General Assembly senators shall be one academic year, beginning at the conclusion of the Spring

term in which they are elected and ending at the conclusion of the following Spring term.

- b. Elections for officer and General Assembly positions shall be held during the Spring term prior to May. Nominations may be submitted via email, including self-nominations, during the designated nomination period. Voting will be conducted online and will begin immediately following the close of nominations. Votes shall be tallied within one week of the voting period's conclusion by the Faculty Advisor

Article III: Senators

Section 1. Representation

- A. Senator representation within the Graduate Student Senate shall be determined through proportional allocation based on the previous academic year's graduate student enrollment figures for each college or affiliated graduate program. Each graduate college or affiliate program shall be guaranteed a minimum of one (1) seat in the Senate, with additional seats allocated proportionally based on enrollment.

Section 2. Eligibility Requirements

- B. Be a currently enrolled graduate student registered for a minimum of one (1) graduate credit hour per semester;
- C. Be in good academic standing with their respective college or school.

Section 3. Active Membership Requirements

- A. Adhere to all general membership expectations outlined by the Senate;
- B. Attend a minimum of 50% of all scheduled General Assembly meetings each semester;
- C. Participate in at least 50% of their assigned committee meetings each semester;
- D. Midway through each semester, the Historian shall report attendance records to the Senate President. If a Senator is found to be out of compliance with the active membership requirements, the President will notify the individual via email, outlining the actions required to restore good standing by the end of the semester. Failure to meet these conditions may result in removal from the Senate at the discretion of the President.

Section 4. Ex-Officio Membership

A. Immediate Past President

The immediate past President of the Graduate Student Senate shall serve as a non-voting ex officio member of the Senate for one academic year following the conclusion of their term. The Ex-President shall provide institutional knowledge, support leadership transition, and serve in an advisory capacity to the current Executive Board.

Article IV: Graduate Student Senate Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings: The Graduate Student Senate shall hold at least one formal meeting at the beginning of each academic semester for the purposes of introducing officers, onboarding new members, and disseminating general information. Additional Senate meetings may be convened up to once per month during the Fall and Spring semesters, or more frequently at the discretion of the sitting Senate President. The Senate is required to meet a minimum of four (4) times per academic year.

Section 2. *Special meetings:* Special meetings may be called by the Senate President as necessary. Such meetings must be supported by written requests and consent from members of the Graduate Student Senate. The decision to convene a special session shall be based on the President's assessment of the needs of the Senate as a governing body.

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of current Senate membership and is required to conduct official Graduate Student Senate business.

Section 4. Senate Meeting Procedures

- A. *Call to Order:* Each Senate meeting, regular or special, shall be called to order by the sitting Senate President. Attendance shall be taken to confirm participation and establish quorum for any voting measures. The President will then present the agenda and outline the items to be addressed during the session.
- B. *Committee Reports:* The President may call upon committee chairs or their designees to report on progress, updates, and any developments related to their respective committee responsibilities. Committees may present items for discussion or propose legislation as needed for broader Senate consideration.
- C. *New Business:* Senate members may introduce new initiatives, resolutions, events, or proposals during this portion of the meeting. This serves as the official venue for bringing forward new ideas or agenda items.
- D. *Motions:* Any member of the Senate may introduce a motion, provided that no other motion is currently under discussion. The Senate President shall recognize the motion and, upon receiving a second, open the floor for discussion. Each motion must be resolved, either passed, defeated, tabled, or referred to a committee, before a new motion may be introduced.
- E. *Open Floor:* Any sitting member of the Senate may bring forth any relevant concerns, questions, announcements, etc. during this time.
- F. *Adjournment:* Once all business has been concluded or tabled, and no further items have been brought forward, the Senate President shall move to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn must be seconded to take effect.

Article V: Amendments and Resolutions

Section 1. Any representative to the Senate may propose, with a duly seconded motion, an amendment. If the majority of Senate members present pass the motion, the Executive Board shall then submit a text of the proposed amendment to all members of the Senate.

Section 2. To be adopted, two-thirds of the representatives in attendance must ratify the amendment. Ratification shall be in writing and shall be completed at the next meeting of the Senate.

Section 3. A resolution may be brought before the Senate during the "New Business" portion of the monthly meeting by any member in good standing. A member may also contact the President before the meeting to have their resolution added to the agenda.

Section 4. Resolutions should be brought before the Senate as new motions and must be available for discussion and voting. Motions to discuss new resolutions must be seconded before proceeding.

Section 5. When a resolution necessitates a vote, a vote may be called for at any time. If the motion to vote on the resolution is seconded, the resolution must receive a majority affirmative vote to pass. Votes may be accounted for verbally, visually, or through written communication.

Section 6. Resolutions should be recorded by the historian and numbered according to meeting number and numerical order of presented resolution. I.e., the first resolution at the second monthly meeting within the academic year would be numbered 2-1. Following resolutions at that meeting would be numbered 2-2, 2-3, etc., and the first resolution at the next monthly meeting would be numbered 3-1.

Article VI: Elections

Section 1. Timing and Process:

Election of members to the Graduate Student Senate, with approval of the Executive Board and a majority of the GSS General Assembly, shall be administered by the GSS Faculty Advisor, and supported by the Graduate Student Senate Executive Board.

Section 2. General Assembly Elections and Terms

- A. Elections for General Assembly seats shall occur during the Spring Term prior to May. All enrolled graduate students are eligible to vote for Executive Board officers and their respective college representatives. Nominations may be submitted via email, including self-nominations, during the designated nomination period. Voting will be conducted online and will commence following the close of nominations. Votes will be tallied within one week of the end of the voting process by the Faculty Advisor.
- B. Elected Officers and Senators will begin their terms of office at the conclusion of the Spring term. Terms will last for one year until the conclusion of the following Spring term.

Section 3. Campaign rules

- A. Students are expected to run their campaigns in accordance with the TCU Student Code of Conduct
- B. The Election and Logistics Committee is responsible for updating guidelines for campaigning best practices.

Section 4. Appointments and Special Elections

- A. Fall Term Vacancies: If an officer or representative is removed from their position or resigns during the Fall term, the executive board will have the power to either appoint a new senator or to hold a special election to fill the seat. By June 1st, any open seat, not filled by an elected representative, will revert to being open to:
 - a. Students from the originating college who are previously nominated; or;
 - b. Students from the same college who express a desire to serve.
- B. At-Large Reassignment: On the first day of academic instruction in the Fall term, any seat that remains unfilled by an elected representative shall be designated as an at-large Senate seat. The seat shall return to representing its original college in the next regularly scheduled election.
- C. Spring Term Vacancies: If an officer or representative resigns or is removed during the Spring term, the Graduate Student Senate may choose either to appoint a replacement to complete the term or leave the seat vacant until the next Spring term election.
- D. Special Elections: Must be conducted within a reasonable timeframe. The Executive Board, in collaboration with the General Assembly, may issue a call for nominations. If multiple nominees are received, the Executive Board may hold an internal vote to

determine the appointment. A quorum must be present, and a simple majority vote is required for confirmation.

- E. If a vacancy of a pre-existing position exists, the Executive Board will fill the vacancy, with the consideration of the committee, at the following executive board meeting.

Article VII: Request for Funding

Section 1. All funding requests must follow the procedures outlined in the Graduate Student Senate Finance Committee Guidelines. These guidelines provide the criteria, documentation requirements, deadlines, and approval process necessary for submitting a formal funding application.

President:

Printed name	Signature	Date
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Vice President of Elections & Logistics:

Printed name	Signature	Date
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Vice President of Finance:

Printed name	Signature	Date
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Vice President of Student Engagement:

Printed name	Signature	Date
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Vice President of Student Experience:

Printed name	Signature	Date
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Vice President of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Vice President of Mental Health & Wellness:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Vice President of Student Parents:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Historian:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Faculty Advisor:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Bylaws approved by everyone in attendance.
Bylaws approved on: