GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

Approved on Sunday, March 28, 2021. Effective beginning on said date.

**ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND AFFILIATION**

**Section 1.** The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Senate of Texas Christian University, hereafter referred to as the GSS.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES**

**Section 1.** The purpose of GSS is to serve as the official representative governing body of all TCU graduate students.

1. The Graduate Student Senate is the representative body of TCU Graduate Students designed primarily to express the views of graduate students across the campus.
2. The Graduate Student Senate may discuss and express its views upon any matter affecting the University.
3. The Graduate Student Senate may establish such committees and subcommittees as it chooses to aid in the performance of its duties.
	1. At the first Graduate Student Senate General Assembly of the scholastic year, the President of the Graduate Student Senate will propose committees and committee chairs to the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly for confirmation by a two-thirds vote of approval.
	2. The committee chair, once confirmed, will have the power to fill the committee as they see fit in order to aid in the performance in the duties of the committee. The committee chair may remove any person from the committee with a simple majority approval from members of the committee. The committee chair also has the power to create subcommittees and assign subcommittee chairs and members. The committee chair may be removed by a two-thirds vote to impeach by the Graduate Student Senate Officers.
	3. 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 two-thirds vote of approval 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 a two-thirds vote of approval by the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly.
	4. At any time, an existing committee may be dissolved. At a Graduate Student Senate General Assembly, any Officer may propose the dissolvement of a committee. Following the proposal, the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly may dissolve the committee by a two-thirds vote.

**Section 2.**  The types of activities GSS intends to participate in as a recognized student organization include but not limited to social events (e.g., tailgates, happy hours, Graduate Student Appreciation Week), townhall events (e.g., Graduate Forum with the Chancellor), and organizational meetings (e.g., committee meetings, general assembly meetings.)

**Section 3.**  Membership in the GSS is open to all TCU graduate students. Graduate students who are enrolled in Brite Divinity School are only eligible for representative seats assigned to their schools. The GSS may choose to make other affiliated graduate programs eligible for representative seats by a majority vote of the Full Senate.

1. Elected Members
	1. Membership shall be by general election of the graduate students.
	2. There shall be members representing all schools and colleges.
2. The Chancellor of the University and the Provost shall be invited to attend meetings of the Graduate Student Senate at the discretion of the Graduate Student Senate Executive Committee.
3. Election of members to the Graduate Student Senate, with approval of the Executive Officers and a majority of the GSS General Assembly, shall be administered by the GSS Faculty Advisor, and supported by the Graduate Student Senate Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

**Section 1.**  GSS will not restrict membership to a student based on their age, ability, ethnicity, gender,

veteran status, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

**Section 2.**  GSS membership will be determined by proportional representation for each graduate college on campus. Each college will receive a proportional number of GSS seats based on their number of graduate students. Brite Divinity School will receive two representative seats in the General Assembly at least one of which is part of the master’s program.

**Section 3.** Member Requirements

1. Be a registered graduate student enrolled in a minimum of 1 graduate credit hour per semester;
2. Have a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative grade point average;

**Section 4**. Active Membership Requirements

1. Maintain baseline membership requirements;
2. Attend at least fifty percent of GSS general assembly meetings each semester;
3. Participate in at least fifty percent of assigned GSS committee meetings each semester.

**Section 5.** The University will be responsible for collection of GSS fees each semester. The amount of fees collected from students will be subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 6.** Representatives who do not uphold their duties or maintain active membership requirements are subject to removal by two-thirds vote of the GSS General Assembly.

**ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS**

**Section 1.**  Officers

1. President
	1. Serve as Chair of the Senate and preside at all general assembly meetings;
	2. Sit as a member of the university’s Graduate Council, ex officio;
	3. Serve as the official representative of the Senate
	4. Have ultimate responsibility for the proper observance of all responsibilities delegated to members of the Senate or of any committee thereof.
2. Vice President of Logistics
	1. Serve as acting chair of the Senate in the absence of the President and during such time assume all duties of that office;
	2. Assist the President in the proper observance of all responsibilities delegated to the members of the Senate or any committee thereof as well as reserve all rooms and facilities needed for events, coordinate scheduling when needed;
	3. the responsibility of overseeing the election of new officers and senators;
	4. Carry out miscellaneous day-to-day administrative needs as they arise, including coordinating event preparation, execution, and staffing.
3. Vice President of Finance
	1. Keep a full account of money expended and received and shall make a report of such account as the Senate may desire;
	2. Coordinate University-administered receipts and all expenditures and financial responsibilities of the Senate;
	3. Have charge of all accounts managed by the Senate
4. Vice Present of Student Engagement
	1. Handle event coordination to improve student relations and increase graduate student engagement across campus to support and sustain a connection culture at TCU;
	2. 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;
	3. Promote and sustain relations with students by advertising events and opportunities to the student body via emails, flyers, and coordination of speaking roles for graduate student orientations as needed.
5. Vice President of Student Experience
	1. to focus on finding ways to enhance graduate school experience here at TCU.
	2. promoting 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.
6. Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
	1. to encourage awareness around marginalized populations as well as access to resources for persons in marginalized communities
	2. promoting cultural competency through education and advocacy
	3. act as a liaison between GSS and groups on campus that are undertaking concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
7. Vice President of Mental Health & Wellness
	1. The purpose of the mental health and wellness committee is to provide graduate students with resources, mechanisms for advocacy, and a sense of community in regard to mental health and wellness.  Our committee is aiming to advertise available resources and develop and support programs that are aimed at addressing a graduate student's mental health and general wellness.
8. Vice President of Student Parents & Childcare
	1. to explore areas of development that better serve familial needs to graduate students
	2. to implement strategies that encourage healthy family dynamics while a (the) primary caregiver(s) pursues (is pursuing) higher education to allow for a more robust involvement in academic studies and student engagement
9. Historian
	1. Keep a record of the proceedings of all Senate meetings and meetings of the officers and distribute copies of that record to all senators before the next meeting of the Senate;
	2. Maintain a current file of all notes from Senate meetings with any additional documentation of interest to the Senate;
	3. Keep a current list of the membership of the GSS and its representatives to all internal and external committees and inform the chairs of such bodies following selection of those representatives;
	4. Record and/or photograph events for the Senate website and other publications to be passed down to future bodies in conjunction with the Graduate Assistants in the Office of Graduate Studies.
10. New Officer Positions
	1. The Executive Board may propose that new officer positions be created by GSS. The full Senate must approve new positions with a two-thirds vote of approval. Officer positions may be dissolved with a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.

**Section 2.**  Officer Elections and Terms

1. The term of office is one academic year.

Officer and General Senate elections will occur during Spring Term before May. Persons can be added to the virtual ballot via email nominations and self-nominations during the nomination process. Voting will be conducted online and begin at the end of the nomination process. Votes will be tallied within one week after the end of the voting process by the Faculty Advisor.

**Section 3.**  General Assembly Elections and Terms

1. Elections for General Assembly seats will occur during the Spring Term before May. Graduate students will be eligible to vote for Executive Board officers and their college representatives. Persons can be added to the virtual ballot via email nominations and self-nominations during the nomination process. Voting will be conducted online and begin at the end of the nomination process. Votes will be tallied within one week of the end of the voting process by the Faculty Advisor.
2. 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 4.**  Appointments and Special Elections

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

* + 1) students within the college that the seat is available who were previously nominated
	+ 2) students within the college who are interested in filling a senate seat.
	+ On August 31st, any open seat, not currently filled by an elected representative, will become an at large senate seat. The seat will revert back to the originating college at the next election.
1. If an officer or representative is removed from their position or resigns during the Spring term, the GSS may choose to appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term or leave the seat empty until the annual Spring term elections.
2. Special Elections must be conducted within a reasonable timeframe. The executive board and GSS may call for nominees for a special election. At the executive board’s discretion, if there are multiple nominees, the executive board may hold an internal vote to determine the office holder to fill the seat. A quorum must be present and a simple majority confirms.
3. 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 V – FACULTY ADVISOR**

**Section 1.**  The advisor will be chosen from the Texas Christian University faculty and/or staff. The advisor will be supportive of the goals and mission of the organization. The advisor understands and agrees to the University policies regarding the advising of student organizations. This is outlined in the constitution and/or found in the TCU student handbook. It is entitled Standards Applicable to Faculty and Staff Advisors.

**Section 2.** Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

1. Attend at least one event per semester.
2. Provide continuity as student leadership changes from year to year.
3. Sign or cosign appropriate university forms as necessary.
4. Generally, be available to the Executive Board by email or meeting as necessary.

**ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Graduate Student Senate Meetings**

1. *Regular Meetings:* At least one formal meeting will be held at the beginning of each semester for the purpose of introducing officers, informing new members, and general information sharing. Subsequent senate meetings may be held up to once per month during designated academic semesters (I.e., Fall and/or Spring), or at the discretion of the sitting Senate President. The senate as a body of governance will meet a minimum of four times per academic year.
2. *Special Meetings:* The sitting President of the Senate may elect to hold a special session, as needed, with written requests and consents by sitting members of the Graduate Student Senate. The necessity of calling such a meeting should be determined by the sitting President of the Senate when considering the needs of the Graduate Student Senate as a whole.
3. A quorum will consist of a simple majority of the senate membership to conduct Graduate Student Senate business.

**Section 2. Graduate Student Senate Committee Meetings**

1. *Regular Meetings:* At least one formal meeting will be held by each committee, at the commencement of each new academic year (Fall) to introduce the committee chair, discuss and outline committee responsibilities, and general information sharing. Subsequent committee meetings should be held prior to each formal Senate regular meeting to perform committee related business, or at the discretion of the sitting Chairs of said committees. Committees as a subcomponent of the Senatorial body of governance will meet at a minimum of four times per academic year, in line with minimum Senate responsibilities.
2. *Special Meetings:* The Chair of each committee may elect to hold special or unscheduled committee meetings, at his/her/their discretion with the request and/or consent of the committee membership.
3. A quorum in any standing or *ad hoc* committee will consist of majority of the committee membership present.

**Section 3. Meeting Procedures**

1. *Opening:* The sitting Senate President will call each Senate session (either regular or special) to order. Roll call (attendance) will be taken to assess membership participation and numbers for voting measures. The sitting President will announce orders for the session and items (motions) to be discussed during the session.
2. *Committee Business*: The sitting President may call on and refer to each committee to discuss the business and progress of the given committee's responsibilities since the previous Senate meeting. Each committee chair or representative shall provide a summary of the committee’s business. Each committee may bring larger Senate business and issues to the Senate floor as needed to introduce or discuss legislation.
3. *Motions:* Any sitting member of the Senate may bring a motion to the floor, barring no other motions are currently under discussion or consideration. The sitting President will acknowledge the member and the motion being brought forward and be seconded, to be considered. All motions must be resolved (I.e., passed, defeated, tabled, or referred to committee) prior to introducing a new motion.
4. *Closing:* The sitting President will call each Senate session to a close when all business has been resolved or tabled and no new motions or discussions have been brought to the floor. The motion to close the meeting must be seconded.

**ARTICLE VII – RESOLUTIONS**

**Section 1.**  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 2.**  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 3.** 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 4.**  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 VIII – AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

**Section 1.**  Any representative to the Senate may propose, as 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.

**ARTICLE IX– HAZING**

**Section 1.** The Graduate Student Senate and its individual member commits to upholding the State of Texas’ legal ban and Texas Christian Universities’ institutional ban on hazing, defined in its Code of Student Conduct (section 3.2.2), and will take appropriate disciplinary action against groups or individuals found to have violated the Code.

**Section 2.** The Graduate Student Senate defines hazing as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off the campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule. Such activities and situations include any act of personal servitude; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue, physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities; late work sessions which interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with the regulations and policies of Texas Christian University. Hazing under the statute means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one (1) person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are, or include, students in an educational institution. The term hazing under the statute includes but is not limited to offenses that subject the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of the student.

**Section 3.** Individuals within The Graduate Student Senate as well as the organization itself may be found in violation. Investigations and/or sanctioning of individual hazing offenses will be conducted in collaboration with the office of Campus Life. Individuals who have firsthand knowledge of hazing, including those being hazed, are required by law to report that knowledge to appropriate University officials. Any student who has been hazed or thinks he/she is going to be hazed should report such actions to the University Hazing Hotline at 817-257-HAZE (4293), the Office of Student Organizations, Office of Campus Life or the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

**President:**

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**Vice President of Logistics:**

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**Vice President of Finance:**

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**Vice President of Student Engagement:

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**Vice President of Student Experience:

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**Vice President of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

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**Vice President of Mental Health & Wellness:

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**Vice President of Student Parents & Childcare:

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**Historian:**

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Printed name Signature Date

**Faculty Advisor:**

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Printed name Signature Date

**Constitution approved by everyone in attendance.**

**Constitution approved on: Thursday Meeting in December 2021.**