

Constitution of the Biology Graduate Student Society

Name

This Course Union shall be known as the Biology Graduate Student Society (BGSS).

Membership

Membership in the BGSS is automatically extended to all graduate students in the Department of Biology at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. All members of the BGSS are afforded equal rights and opportunities to participate in all the activities of the BGSS.

Mission Statement

The BGSS is a graduate student body dedicated to improving the experience of biology graduate students by supporting them academically and socially during their time at UBC Okanagan. We aim to foster a collaborative and inclusive environment where students feel both appreciated and informed.

Purpose

The BGSS exists to support the wellbeing of its membership by:

- a. organizing and providing resources for social and academic events;
- b. advocating for the needs of the membership to the Department of Biology and other bodies that control aspects of members lives;
- c. otherwise mobilising the resources and abilities of the course union to the benefit of the membership.

Budgeting

The BGSS shall remain a non-profit entity under the society of the SUO with no profit being allocated towards its members, and any operating surpluses shall be used to further the purposes of the BGSS. This clause is unalterable.

If the BGSS receives more than \$2,000 in student association funding, the Course Union must display the SUO logo on all promotional material, with evidence being provided to the Vice President Internal and Membership Outreach Coordinator upon request.

Executive Members

The Executive Council of the BGSS consists of three signing officers (President, Treasurer, and Vice-President) and three non-signing officers (Senior Student-Faculty Liaison, Junior Student-Faculty Liaison, and Senior Event Coordinator). The Executive Council must meet a minimum of once per month. A minimum of 2/3 Executive Members must be present in order to establish a quorum.

The requirements of an Executive Council include, but are not limited to:

- a. Being knowledgeable of the SUO Student Association Regulations including the ones specific to course unions;
- b. Abiding by the student conduct regulations established by the University;
- c. Conducting the business of the Course Union;
- d. Meeting at least once per month from September through April and publishing the time and location at least seven (7) days in advance; and
- e. Hosting at least five (5) meetings and/or events open to all members of the BGSS per academic year.

The President shall be responsible for:

- a. Preparing, drafting, and presenting the President's report on their operations at the BGSS's AGM;
- b. Acting as the liaison between the BGSS and the Student Union (must be familiar with all SUO bylaws and policies), including submitting the Annual Association Renewal Form and attending the SUO orientation each term;
- c. Acting as a signing authority;
- d. Completing and submitting the End of Term Report in collaboration with the Treasurer.

The Vice President shall be responsible for:

- a. Notifying the membership of upcoming meetings;
- b. Taking minutes at all Course Union meetings;
- c. Acting as a signing authority;
- d. Maintaining the Course Union website;
- e. In the event that the President vacates the position for any reason, the Vice President will, if they so choose, assume the role and an interview process/election will be held to fill the role of Vice President. In the event that the Vice President does not wish to step into the role of President, an interview process/election will be held to fill the role of President.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- a. Overseeing the BGSS's finances;
- b. Collecting and organizing receipts;
- c. Submitting Expense Reimbursement Forms to the SUO Membership Outreach Coordinator;
- d. Acting as a signing authority;
- e. Completing and submitting the Request for Funding during Winter Terms 1 and 2;
- f. Collecting and depositing membership dues, if applicable;
- g. Acting as the primary contact between the BGSS and SUO financial coordinator;
- h. Completing the End of Term Report in collaboration with the President.

The Senior Student-Faculty Liaison shall be responsible for:

- a. Representing the views and interests of the membership by:
 - i. Attending Course Union meetings open to the membership and noting their concerns
 - ii. Attending Departmental meetings and advocating for the needs of the membership
 - iii. Staying informed of activity in the department and providing updates to the membership
- b. Mentoring the Junior Student-Faculty Liaison and facilitating continuity of relationships between the BGSS and faculty members.

The Junior Student-Faculty Liaison shall be responsible for:

- a. Representing the views and interests of the membership;
- b. In the event that the Senior Student-Faculty Liaison vacates the position for any reason, the Junior Student-Faculty Liaison will, if they so choose, assume the role of Senior Student-Faculty Liaison and an interview process/election will be held to fill the role of Junior Student-Faculty Liaison. In the event that the Junior Student-Faculty Liaison does not wish to step into the role of Senior Student-Faculty Liaison, an interview process/election will be held to fill the role of Senior Student-Faculty Liaison.

The Senior Event Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- a. Creating and curating schedules for events in collaboration with the rest of the Executive Council;
- b. Overseeing Volunteer Event Coordinators;
- c. Organizing events, including submitting forms, requesting room bookings, and acquiring

materials for events;

- d. Submitting documentation and reimbursement forms to the signing officials;
- e. Creating promotional materials for events and submitting them to the Vice President for dispersal

If a member of the BGSS raises concerns to the SUO Board regarding actions by an Executive Member, the Board can choose to commence an investigation to determine if the Executive in question is acting in the best interest of the BGSS or shall be removed from office.

Meetings

General meetings shall be held at least once per month to give the membership control of the direction and activities of the BGSS. General meetings shall be scheduled by the Executive Council.

Annual General Meetings must take place in Term 2, and notice must be given to the Vice President, SUO Membership Outreach Coordinator, and membership of the time, date, location and agenda at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

The Quorum for the BGSS's AGM shall be 25 members or 5% of the BGSS's membership, whichever is less.

Special General Meetings may be called when it is necessary to hold a vote concerning the Bylaws or activities of the BGSS. A quorum for Special General Meetings is the entire Executive Council.

All BGSS members are entitled to vote at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings. Special General Meetings may be called at any time by the Executive Council. The President shall prepare the agenda for Annual, General, and Special General Meetings.

Membership Voting

Voting Membership in the BGSS shall be composed entirely of all University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) graduate students in the Department of Biology. Each member of the BGSS is eligible to:

- a. Exercise one (1) vote in the election of the Course Union President and for every other Executive Member.
- b. Exercise one (1) vote in votes/elections held at the Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings.

Elections

All executive positions shall serve a twelve (12) month term of office, and be elected through an annual election in Term 2 carried out in partnership with the SUO and the online Simply Voting platform. If a situation arises where there is conflict between the BGSS's election bylaws and the SUO policies, the SUO election bylaws will take precedence.

Every current member of the BGSS is eligible to seek election to any position within the BGSS, however a candidate may only run for one position within the BGSS Executive team.

The BGSS elections cannot occur while the SUO General Election is taking place. The SUO election will take precedence.

A member of the Executive Council who is not running as a candidate, or, in the event that all members of the Executive Council are running for re-election, a volunteer from the membership, will carry out the election with the following process:

1. Make a survey outlining the positions that are eligible for election and distribute to the BGSS membership to collect the names, student numbers, emails, and position of interest of members who are interested in running for the Executive Council.
2. Submit candidate information to the SUO Membership Outreach Coordinator by the deadline outlined by the SUO. Indicate the desired start date and the number of days for which the election will run (minimum 48 hours), and provide the course union logo.
3. The SUO will prepare the online ballots, send the election materials to the membership, and report the results to the Executive Council.

In the event that an Executive position becomes vacant after the election process has concluded, applications will reopen for the Executive position and the remaining members of the Executive Council must reach a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote after conducting interviews of each applicant.

The BGSS must make a reasonable effort to ensure that every member of the BGSS is aware of the time and location where the election of Executive Members is to take place and how a member can become a Candidate for the election or appointment as an Executive Member position.

If elections are not held in Term 2, this Course Union may not renew active status in the following academic year until an election has occurred in partnership with the Students' Union.

Bylaws

In addition to the rules and procedures outlined in the constitution, the BGSS is governed by Bylaws which may be altered by majority vote at Special General Meetings. These bylaws are meant to ensure that the BGSS is run efficiently, flexibly, and in accordance with the will of its members. Current bylaws are included in Appendix 1.

Ratification and Dissolution

Starting August 1st, of every year, the BGSS shall cease to receive support from the Student Union until:

- a. Submitting a Student Association renewal form to renew their status after July 1st; and
- b. Maintaining a membership of a minimum of thirty-two (32) members, excluding Executives.

The BGSS may submit their renewal form starting May 1st, once the Annual Election has been carried out and ratified during Term 2. These requirements must be met and approved by the Board by the first Friday of Term One classes of each year. If this deadline is not met, the BGSS shall not receive support from the Student Union.

A minimum of one (1) Executive from the BGSS must attend the Student Association Orientation and all Course Union meetings to retain active status.

The BGSS may be dissolved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a Quorate Special General Meeting, or by the SUO Board of Directors after a period of inactivity as outlined in the Student Associations Policy. If the BGSS has been deemed inactive for a period of at least twelve (12) months it may be dissolved by the Board of Directors.

Upon the dissolution of the BGSS, any assets and/or liabilities shall be transferred to the general fund of the SUO.

Limitations

No policy of the BGSS shall be interpreted in a manner contrary to SUO Bylaws & Regulations. If there is a conflict between the course union regulations and SUO regulations and bylaws, the SUO will take precedence.

Constitution

A copy of this constitution must be available to members upon request, and the BGSS must be able to provide such copies through all of the following means:

- a. hyperlink;
- b. email;
- c. paper copy; or
- d. PDF.

An up-to-date copy of any and all governing documents, such as the constitution, must be submitted to the Membership Outreach Coordinator upon ratification and approval of amendments.

Amendments

The Constitution of the BGSS may only be amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority at an Annual or Special General Meeting. Approved amendments shall be enacted immediately.

Appendix 1 - Bylaws

1. Additional Duties of the Executives

President

- a. Scheduling meetings and acting as Chair;
- b. Delegating duties to other executive positions when needed;
- c. Attending and assisting in the organization of new student orientation;
- d. Maintaining the membership list.

Vice President

- a. Running the BGSS social media, including creating content and responding to messages;
- b. Assisting the President in administrative duties.

Student-Faculty Liaisons (Senior and Junior)

- a. Representing the views and concerns of the membership by:
 - i. Regularly communicating with the Biology Graduate Student Coordinator;
 - ii. Maintaining and cultivating relationships with faculty;
 - iii. Communicating department policies and actions to the membership via the monthly

newsletter.

2. Volunteer Event Coordinators

- a. In the event that members are interested in organizing an event or events, they may volunteer by communicating with the President, Vice President, or Senior Event Coordinator.
- b. Volunteers may perform tasks/duties at the discretion of the Senior Event Coordinator.

3. BCGEU

- a. A member of the Executive Council who is interested in facilitating communication between the biology graduate student teaching assistants (TAs) and their union will:
 - i. Introduce themselves to the BCGEU upon election;
 - ii. Meet with the BCGEU as necessary to ensure that the union is aware of TA-related grievances;
 - iii. Be aware of the major rights and responsibilities of TAs, as laid out in the collective agreement.

4. Event Proposals

- a. Events may be proposed both by the Executive Council and by members of the BGSS.
- b. The Executive Council is responsible for ensuring that a reasonable number of events occur regularly, regardless of member participation in proposing events.
- c. If a member would like to propose an event they may:
 - i. Present their idea at a general meeting;
 - ii. Bring their idea to the President, Vice-President, or Senior Event Coordinator of the BGSS.
- d. Members may, if they so choose, present documentation showing wide membership interest when they present their event proposal.
- e. Events proposed by members will be implemented at the discretion of the Executive Council according to budgeting constraints and member interest.

5. Meetings

- a. General meetings open to the members of the BGSS will be held twice per month.
- b. These meetings will be held on different days of the week in order to allow as many members as possible to attend.
- c. General meetings will have a short agenda to update any attendees on BGSS actions and then

will be an open floor for members to bring forward questions, concerns, or event ideas.

- d. One of these meetings each month will be followed by a closed-door meeting of the Executive Council to hold any necessary votes and organizational discussions.