

Article I

Name and Domicile

Section 1. There is hereby established an organization that shall be known as Biology Graduate Student Organization (BGSO).

Section 2. BGSO shall have its seat at the Department of Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University (ODU).

Article II

Statement of Purpose

Section 1. The objectives of the BGSO shall be to increase communication and interaction among the graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University; to make recommendations concerning the policies of the Department of Biological Sciences and the College of Sciences at Old Dominion University; to represent graduate students' interests on Departmental and University committees. The BGSO shall be the formal representative body for all graduate students enrolled in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Article III

Declaration of Principles

Section 1. BGSO is an organization whose authorities derive their power from its constituent members.

Section 2. BGSO recognizes the importance of knowledge to the individual and their awareness of their environment.

Section 3. BGSO believes in the principle of collective leadership as a means of effective governance.

Section 4. BGSO believes that all decisions shall be arrived at in a democratic manner. The will of the majority shall always prevail without infringing the right of the minority.

Section 5. BGSO shall serve the interest of the students in the promotion and advancement of the Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University in activities common to these entities.

Article IV

Membership

Section 1. All duly enrolled graduate students in the following programs will be eligible for membership:

- a. Masters students, Ph.D. students and Ph.D. candidates enrolled in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- b. Ph.D. students and Ph.D. candidates enrolled in the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences

Section 2. The acquisition, suspension and loss of membership shall be prescribed by the General Assembly, in accordance with the Constitution.

Article V

Rights and Duties of Members

A. Rights

Section 1. Every member has the right to express their views and opinions on matters concerning BGSO.

Section 2. Every member shall have the right to equal treatment, opportunity, and protection, without any social, political, religious, or economic discrimination.

Section 3. Every active member shall have the right to vote and be elected officer of BGSO.

Section 4. Every member has the right to information on matters concerning BGSO. Access to official records, acts, transactions, decisions, and fiscal matters, as well as basis for policy formulation shall not be impaired.

Section 5. Every member has the right to due process.

- a. Right of the accused to be informed of the nature of the complaint or accusations against them.

b. Right to meet the complainant and witnesses face to face.

c. Right to examine evidence against them.

d. Right to fair, impartial and speedy trial.

e. Non-impairment of the rights to appeal.

Section 6. Every member shall have the right to file for inactivity due to academic, financial, social, or health reasons only, as recommended by the Executive Committee and upon approval by the General Assembly.

Section 7. Every member shall have the right to file their resignation, to be approved by the General Assembly. Resignation shall relieve them of all rights and duties as member and/or officer of the organization. They shall settle all financial accountabilities and surrender all BGSO properties upon the date of resignation.

Section 8. In keeping with Old Dominion Universities' policy of nondiscrimination, our organization does not discriminate on the basis race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, pregnancy, political affiliation, marital status, and genetic information, or based on any other status protected by law.

B. Duties

Section 1. It shall be the duty of every member to be loyal to BGSO, to uphold its Constitution, and abide by its rules and regulations, and contribute to its welfare and development.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of every member to maintain a general weighted average of 2.50 every semester to preserve the academic standards of BGSO.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of every member to exercise their rights and privileges responsibly.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of every member to settle their financial obligations to the organization promptly.

Section 5. It shall be the duty of every member to directly and actively participate in all meetings, activities, programs and projects of BGSO.

Section 6. It shall be the duty of every member to render assistance to BGSO, in fulfillment of its aims.

Section 7. It shall be the duty of every member to promote the good name of BGSO.

Section 8. Every member has the right to request representation by the Executive Council when unable to attend a BGSO meeting or event due to conflicting requirements from their program of study or personal reasons. Conflicting requirements include, but are not limited to: duties as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA), field work, medical emergency, medical appointment.

Article VI

Composition of BGSO

A. The General Assembly

Section 1. The General Assembly shall be the highest consultative and policy-making body of BGSO.

Section 2. The General Assembly shall be composed of all active resident members of BGSO. Duly enrolled graduate students are considered resident members.

Section 3. The General Assembly shall convene at least once a month of the academic year as specified by the rules and regulations of the Student Government Association (SGA) at ODU for its regular terms. However, it may be called to session, at any time, by the President to consider such subjects as he may designate. Two officers and one-half (1/2) plus one (1) of the General Assembly shall constitute a quorum to do business.

Section 4. The General Assembly shall have the power to:

a. Discuss and decide on vital issues concerning BGSO;

b. Pass resolutions and promulgate rules and regulations in accordance to this Constitution as may be necessary to implement the aims and purpose of BGSO;

c. Formulate, propose and improve plans and programs for BGSO;

- d. Suspend any member of BGSO, by a majority vote of all its members, as provided by the Constitution;
- e. Expel any member of BGSO, by a unanimous vote of its members, as provided by the Constitution;
- f. Remove from office any officer through impeachment, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all its members, as provided by the Constitution; and
- g. Adopt its own rules of procedure, in accordance with the Constitution.

B. The Executive Council

Section 1. The Executive Council shall be the highest implementing body of BGSO.

Section 2. The Executive Council will be composed of the following:

- a. President
- b. Vice President
- c. Secretary
- d. Treasurer
- e. Wetlands Preservation Officer

Section 3. The Executive Council shall be elected according to the manner provided by the General Assembly, for a term of one (1) academic year and shall assume office upon formal induction, no later than end of April of each year. Incumbent officers will preside on 1st of May. All qualified officers shall be entitled for re-election.

Section 4. Election of the Executive Council shall be conducted on the second week of March, with at least two-thirds (2/3) of the General Assembly present.

Section 5. Vacancies may occur in the following situations:

- a. Impeachment
- b. Resignation
- c. Failure to enroll during his term of office

Section 6. In any case of temporary vacancy in the Executive Council, except in the office of the President, an officer-in-charge shall be appointed by the General Assembly. They relinquish the position upon the return of the permanent officers.

Section 7. Any temporary vacancy in the office of the President shall be filled by the Deputy President. They shall relinquish the position upon the return of the President.

Section 8. If a permanent vacancy in the Executive Council occurs, the General Assembly shall elect a new officer to fill up the vacant position, but shall serve only for the unexpired term.

Section 9. The Executive Council shall have the power to:

- a. Make policies, plans and programs of BGSO to be submitted to the General Assembly for approval, and to implement such;
- b. Evaluate all programs and projects, and submit recommendations to the General Assembly;
- c. Create committees for the effective execution of its programs and activities;
- d. Exercise administration over the different committees and departments of BGSO;
- e. Appropriate and administer the funds of BGSO;
- f. Facilitate a gradual turnover of leadership together with all files and records upon which rest all acts of business conducted within the term of office. This shall be administered as soon as the incoming officers have been formally inducted, and should not be later than end of May; and
- g. Exercise such powers necessary to carry out the foregoing provisions.

Article VII

Duties and Functions of Officers

Section 1. The President shall have the duty to:

- a. Enforce the Constitution as well as other rules and regulations of BGSO;
- b. Provide direction and leadership to the Executive Council of BGSO;
- c. Provide direction and leadership to the members of BGSO;

- d. Preside over all meetings of the Executive Council and General Assembly;
- e. Supervise all the affairs and activities of the members of the Assembly;
- f. Re-register the BGSO to remain recognized by the Student Government Association (SGA)
- g. Sign all resolutions and other sets of documents of the Executive Council and the General Assembly;
- h. Attend the budget seminars and hearings required by the Student Government Association (SGA) at Old Dominion University.
- i. Represent BGSO in their capacity as President on occasions or events where the organization needs representation.
- j. Exercise other powers and duties the General Assembly or the Executive Council may authorize, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations.

Section 2. The Vice President shall have the duty to:

- a. Assist the President in the performance of their duties and function,
- b. Assume the powers and duties of the President in an acting capacity in case of temporary vacancy in their office.
- c. Represent BGSO in their capacity as Vice President on occasions or events where the organization needs representation.
- d. Exercise other powers and duties the General Assembly or the Executive Council may authorize, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations.

Section 3. The Secretary shall have the duty:

- a. Call rolls, make announcements, and state the agenda, to open the meeting of the General Assembly and the Executive Council;
- b. Record and attest to the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Council and the General Assembly;
- c. Be the custodian of all records of BGSO, including maintenance of bulletin boards assigned to BGSO in the Department of Biological Sciences located at the first and third floor in the Mills Godwin Building.
- d. Prepare communications and file documents pertaining to BGSO.
- e. Reserve the room for all meetings and other functions of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly, including processing of permits.
- f. Represent BGSO in their capacity as Secretary on occasions or events where the organization needs representation.
- e. Exercise other powers and duties the General Assembly or the Executive Council may authorize, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall have the duty to:

- a. Attend the budget seminars and hearings required by the Student Government Association (SGA) at Old Dominion University.
- b. Prepare and submit budget proposal for the next fiscal year, to be approved by the President
- c. Collect and receive all incoming funds, material contributions, other resources of BGSO.
- d. Disburse funds in accordance with financial procedures approved by the General Assembly;
- e. Supervise all payments, requisitions and liquidation of transactions of BGSO.
- f. Render a financial report to the Executive Committee after every activity, and also give financial report to the General Assembly during each meeting.
- g. Submit to the Executive Council and the General Assembly certified and detailed statements of actual receipts, expenditures, and financial delinquencies after every semester.
- h. Represent BGSO in their capacity as Treasurer on occasions or events where the organization needs representation.
- i. Exercise other powers and duties the General Assembly or the Executive Council may authorize, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations.

Section 5. The Wetlands Preservation Officer shall have the duty to:

- a. Organize and direct wetland cleanups (at least 1 per semester) at Birdsong Memorial Wetland for the Keep Norfolk Beautiful Adopt-A-Spot program
- b. Maintain a relationship with Lafayette Wetlands Partnership and organize volunteers to assist with community wetland restoration and education projects.
- c. Manage and update roster and attendance report for all meetings and/or events in the organizations' co-curricular transcript in the Office of Student Leadership (OSAL) website.
- d. Act as custodian of all properties of BGSO.
- e. Represent BGSO in their capacity as Wetlands Preservation Officer on occasions or events where the organization needs representation.
- f. Exercise other powers and duties the General Assembly or the Executive Council may authorize, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations.

Article VIII

Meetings

Section 1. The Executive Council must decide on a quorum, i.e. the minimum number of officers and members necessary to conduct official business.

Section 2. At least one official meeting must be called per month. The number of meetings required by the SGA must be fulfilled.

Section 3. Minutes and attendance of members shall be recorded for all meetings.

Article IX

Elections and by-elections and group consensus agreements

Section 1. BGSO Executive Committee must be elected from and by the membership with a majority vote, or consensus agreement.

Section 2. An election must be held at least once per year in the spring semester.

Section 3. The BGSO nomination of officers will take place on the second week of March in the spring of each academic year, and will be held for a week. Only active members can nominate, run, and vote. Self-nomination is highly encouraged.

Section 4. The list of candidates for all positions will be posted via email and will be made available to public following closing of nomination. Election will be held for a week following nominations.

Section 5. Executive positions can be held by any duly enrolled graduate student (active) member of the BGSO.

Section 6. Votes will be cast via email to track the eligibility of members.

Section 7. The candidate with the majority of the vote wins.

Section 8. In cases of a tie, the President casts the deciding vote, or the member with the least votes drops out and the votes are recast.

Section 9. If for any reason an Executive position becomes vacant, a by-election or consensus appointment for that position will be held. *(This is not required if less than one month is left before the next scheduled election; instead, a member may be appointed to the position by the Executive Council.)*

Section 10. The SGA must be notified of Executive changes.

Article X

The Functional Committees

Section 1. BGSO Executive Committee shall seek representatives for the following committees that shall derive their members from the General Assembly.

- a. Seminar Committee
- b. Curriculum Committee
- c. Budget and Operations Committee
- d. SGA and/or Graduate Student Organization representatives

Section 2. The representative for the department's Seminar Committee shall function as follows:

- a. Help with advertisements, e.g., getting fliers from the chairperson, posting fliers, removing fliers, reminding students of the upcoming seminars one week before the seminar via email.
- b. Contact the BGSO-hosted seminar speaker(s) for the departmental seminar and conduct logistics (responsible for preparing accommodations; food; travel; schedule of speaker during visit to ODU, including courtesy calls and meeting with students, parking, etc.).
- c. Solicit suggestions from the General Assembly who can be a prospect BGSO-hosted seminar speaker and relay information to the head of the departmental seminar committee.
- d. Attend all departmental seminars and help in logistics during each seminar.
- e. Meet with the departmental seminar committee regularly.
- f. Take responsibilities and duties as directed by the General Assembly and/or the Executive Council.
- g. The volunteer will report to the BGSO Executive Council, upon invitation to attend a monthly Executive Council meeting, and will relay their updates, issues, concerns, questions, suggestion, etc. (To be invited to the BGSO Executive Council meeting, email the BGSO President if you need to give an update or need to meet with the council)
- h. Report to the General Assembly any issues, concerns, announcements related to your committee.

Section 3. The representative for the department's Curriculum Committee shall function as follows:

- a. Take responsibilities and duties as directed by the General Assembly and/or the Executive Council.
- b. The volunteer will report to the BGSO Executive Council, upon invitation to attend a monthly Executive Council meeting, and will relay their updates, issues, concerns, questions, suggestion, etc. (To be invited to the BGSO Executive Council meeting, email the BGSO President if you need to give an update or need to meet with the council.)
- c. Report to the General Assembly any issues, concerns, announcements related to your committee.

Section 4. The representative for the department's Curriculum shall function as follows:

- a. Take responsibilities and duties as directed by the General Assembly and/or the Executive Council.
- b. The volunteer will report to the BGSO Executive Council, upon invitation to attend a monthly Executive Council meeting, and will relay their updates, issues, concerns, questions, suggestion, etc. (To be invited to the BGSO Executive Council meeting, email the BGSO President if you need to give an update or need to meet with the council.)
- c. Report to the General Assembly any issues, concerns, announcements related to your committee.

Section 5. The representative(s) to the SGA/GSO meetings and functions shall have the following duty:

- a. Take responsibilities and duties as directed by the General Assembly and/or the Executive Council
- b. The volunteer will report to the BGSO Executive Council, upon invitation to attend a monthly Executive Council meeting, and will relay their updates, issues, concerns, questions, suggestion, etc. (To be invited to the BGSO Executive Council meeting, email the BGSO President if you need to give an update or need to meet with the council.)
- c. Report to the General Assembly any issues, concerns, announcements related to your committee.

Article XI

The BGSO Adviser

Section 1. BGSO shall have a faculty Adviser. The adviser should be a permanent faculty member at the Department of Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University

Section 2. The BGSO Adviser shall be designated by the General Assembly on the first General Assembly meeting, and shall have a term of one (1) school year.

Section 3. The BGSO Advisers shall have the following functions:

- a. Advise the members on the activities of BGSO.
- b. Serve as a liaison between BGSO and the Department of Biological Sciences
- c. Perform other duties as may be prescribed by the rules and regulations of BGSO.

Section 5. The BGSO Advisers shall have no voting power in the meetings and deliberations of the Executive Council and the General Assembly.

Article XII

Impeachment

Section 1. All members of the Executive Council shall be subject to impeachment under any of the following grounds:

- a. Intentional violation of this Constitution
- b. Dishonesty
- c. Neglect of duty
- d. Abandonment or a misconduct in office
- e. Abuse of position
- f. Graft and corruption

Section 2. Any member of the Executive Council and/or the General Assembly can initiate an impeachment case against an officer of the Executive Council.

Section 3. Cases of impeachment against any Executive Council officer shall be deliberated upon by a body composed of the following:

- a. The President of BGSO as presiding officer. If the President is subject to impeachment, the Deputy President may preside.
- b. At least two-thirds (2/3) of the General Assembly
- d. Faculty Adviser.

Section 4. A two-third (2/3) vote of the General Assembly shall be sufficient to remove an impeached officer from office.

Article XIII

General Provisions

Section 1. This Constitution shall be known as the Constitution of the Biological Graduate Student Organization.

Section 2. This Constitution shall govern every resident member of BGSO.

Section 3. BGSO shall adopt an emblem and such other symbols representative of its ideals, values and principles.

Article XIV

Amendments or Revisions

Section 1. This Constitution shall be amended or revised in any of the following manners:

- a. Through a proposal to amend by two-third (2/3) vote of the General Assembly.
- b. Through a proposal to amend by the previous Executive Council of the BGSO.

Section 2. Amendments or revisions to this Constitution shall be valid when ratified by three fourths (3/4) of all the members of the General Assembly in a Constitutional Convention, with the presence of the BGSO adviser, and presence or written support by any two (2) former Executive Committee beginning AY 2010-2011 (when this Constitution was upheld) not later than thirty (30) days after the formal proposal of such amendment or revision is presented to the General Assembly.

Article XV

Transitory Provisions

Section 1. This Constitution shall take effect immediately upon its ratification by the General Assembly.

Section 2. All incumbent officers of BGSO shall continue to hold office until the formal induction of the new members of the Executive Council, in April of each academic year.

Section 3. Officer transition meeting shall occur immediately following the induction of officers and not later than 30 days from the date of the induction of officers or end of May of the same academic year, whichever is earlier. Incumbent officers and newly elected officers must all be present during the

meeting. All files and properties of BGSO need to be turned over to the newly elected officers on the day of the meeting.

Section 3. Any amendment/s or revision of this Constitution shall only be proposed five years after its effectivity.