

# **Constitution of Graduate Assistant Advisory Council**

## **“GAAC”**

University of Maryland College Park (UMD-CP)

**[Article I - Name](#)**

**[Article II - Purpose](#)**

**[Article III - Structure](#)**

**[Article IV - Members](#)**

**[Article IV - Officers](#)**

**[Article V - Elections](#)**

**[Article VI - Operations](#)**

**[Article VII - Amendments](#)**

**[Article VII - Registration Renewal](#)**

**[Article VIII - Communications](#)**

## **Article I - Name**

- 1) The name of the organization will be “Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee” henceforth referred to as “GAAC”

## **Article II - Purpose**

- 1) GAAC is established for the expressed purpose of engaging in the Meet and Confer (M&C) process with the administration of the University of Maryland, College Park, henceforth UMD-CP. This involves representing the rights and interests of all Graduate Assistants (GAs) at UMD-CP in meetings with the administration.
- 2) GAAC understands and is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities of abiding by University of Maryland, College Park policies.

## **Article III - Structure**

- 1) GAAC shall be divided into two groups of graduate employees:
  - a) Members
  - b) Officers
- 2) Graduate student employees may fill either role only if they are officially connected with UMD-CP as graduate student employees. Students enrolled in the spring semester as well as students enrolled in summer school are eligible for summer membership.
- 3) GAAC does not restrict participation or discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, or on the basis of rights secured by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. (For definitions of “personal appearance” and “sexual orientation,” see the University’s Code of Human Relations (“Code”).

## **Article IV - Members**

- 1) GAAC’s Outreach Coordinator will seek to recruit at least one member for each workplace on-campus, or for several similar workplaces, or each college.
- 2) Members will be responsible for raising awareness of labor conditions within their workplace, several workplaces, or college.

- 3) To this end, members are expected to do at least the following actions each semester:
  - a) Send a one-to-one introductory email to every graduate employee within the first two weeks of the semester
  - b) Plan and promote one social activity, and send personal invitations to every graduate student employee
  - c) Prepare, for GAAC officers, a brief summary of employment concerns no later than the ninth week of the semester.
- 4) Failure to fulfil at least these three tasks will result in the member's removal from GAAC. Removal will be on the advice of the Outreach Coordinator, and will require a majority of GAAC officers present at the meeting where removal is raised.
- 5) Members are not required to attend GAAC officer meetings, but are encouraged to do so as their time permits.
- 6) Members are not required to attend meetings with the administration, but are invited to do so, space-permitting. Officers will extend invitations to members based on their active work in their workspaces or colleges, and/or their attendance of GAAC officer meetings.
- 7) To become a Member of GAAC, interested persons should express their interest to the Outreach Coordinator.

## **Article V - Officers**

- 1) GAAC's office shall be no more than 8, and no less than 5.
- 2) GAAC will strive to include, among its officers, at least one member from each college
- 3) GAAC officers will collectively preside at all meetings between GAAC and the Administration of UMD-CP.
- 4) Officers who are pursuing a PhD shall serve a two-academic-year term, and all officers pursuing a Masters degree shall serve a one-academic-year term.
- 5) Officers will be elected every fall semester by the process described in [Article VI](#). In the event of a resignation, the Co-Conveners may choose to appoint a new officer from the resigned person's same college.

- 6) Terms of office shall begin immediately upon election, and continue until the election two-years (PhDs) or one-year (Masters) after.

## **Article VI - Elections**

- 1) *Voting Eligibility*: All graduate employees at the University of Maryland, College Park, who are employed at the time of election, shall be granted voting privileges.
- 2) *Election Process*
  - a) The PhD Co-Convener will solicit self-nominations in late-August and early-September using the email contacts provided by the University.
  - b) If the number of self-nominations falls between 5 and 8, and at least 8 different colleges are represented, nominees may be appointed as Officer without a vote. This will require a majority vote of returning GAAC Officers.
    - i) If there is a lack of colleges, the PhD Co-Convener will need to work with the Outreach Coordinator to recruit.
  - c) When there are in-excess of 8 nominees, Officers shall be elected by a vote of eligible voting graduate employees. All elections will be held on an annual basis during the month of September. Eligible voters must have at least one week to cast their votes, and they must be reminded to vote at least twice during that week.
  - d) All voting shall be done by anonymous electronic balloting, to be collected and tabulated by the Officers of the GAAC.
- 3) *Removal*
  - a) Any officer of GAAC in express violation of the Organization's purpose or constitution may be removed from office by a majority vote of the other GAAC Officers.
  - b) Any officer of GAAC may be removed if s/he misses at least three meetings, or misses two meetings with the Administration, by a majority vote of the other GAAC Officers.
  - c) *Resignation*: If any member of GAAC is no longer eligible for membership for any reason, they can resign. Depending upon the time of year, GAAC will either hold an election for a replacement, or the Co-Conveners will appoint someone from the former-officer's same college.

## **Article VII - Operations**

### *1) Division of labor*

- a) The officers will divide the workload among them, with outside counsel and help sought from other graduate assistants or from faculty as needed. It is expected that each executive officer take responsibility of at least one project or duty over the course of an academic year.
- b) Required Roles:
  - i) PhD Co-Convener
    - (1) Chosen at the end of the spring semester, to serve for the following year
    - (2) Coordinates monthly meetings (room bookings, major scheduling)
    - (3) Runs Officer meetings
    - (4) Drafts agendas for Officer meetings and Admin meeting
  - ii) Masters Co-Convener
    - (1) Masters student, chosen at the beginning of the fall semester, to serve for the following year
    - (2) Coordinates monthly meetings (room bookings, major scheduling)
    - (3) Runs Officer meetings
    - (4) Drafts agendas for Officer meetings and Admin meeting
  - iii) Outreach Coordinator
    - (1) Ideally chosen at the end of the spring semester, to serve for the following year
    - (2) Recruit, track, and correspond with Members in distinct workspaces and colleges around campus
    - (3) Support Members as needed
    - (4) Consolidate Member reports on workplace conditions for presentation to GAAC Officers, and inclusion in Administration meeting.
  - iv) Communication Director
    - (1) Secures list of graduate student employees (and email addresses) from Administration
    - (2) Manages SIMS listservs--GAAC Officers, GAAC Members, and all graduate employees--ensuring privacy and exclusivity

- (a) Potentially work with Outreach Coordinator to set up college-specific or workplace-specific listservs.
    - (3) Drafts monthly email messages to graduate employees, and other messages as desired
    - (4) Coordinates Facebook page, and posts regularly
    - (5) Oversees and coordinates promotional activities and materials for any GAAC-related events
  - v) Secretary
    - (1) Takes and finalizes meeting minutes
    - (2) Circulates minutes to GAAC Officers and Members
    - (3) Coordinates the semesterly Administrative Meetings with Amanda Strausser (or other admin assistant to the Dean of the Graduate School)
    - (4) Sends meeting agenda and supporting documents to the Admin week before this meeting

c) Recommended Roles:

- i) Director of Financial Affairs
  - (1) Manages the financial affairs of the organization
  - (2) Seeks and secures funding from Graduate Student Government to support GAAC Outreach efforts
  - (3) Renews GAAC's SORC registration in the fall semester, following the appointment of new officers.
  - (4) Coordinates billing and the necessary reporting for the continuance of funding
- ii) Government Coordinator
  - (1) Tracks and proposes state legislation to improve working conditions for graduate employees
- d) Seeks guidance and rulings from the Maryland State Higher Education Board to improve working conditions for graduate employees

2) Meetings

- a) GAAC Officer meetings: At the start of the semester, the Co-Conveners will determine, generally via email or via an app, what members' availability is for the semester. By the end of second week of the semester, a monthly meeting schedule will be set for all Officers. These meetings are required of Officers, and optional for Members.
- b) Meetings with Administration: GAAC meets with the University Administration once a semester. All Officers are expected to attend

both Admin meetings. Failure by an Officer to attend two Admin meetings is grounds for dismissal.

### **Article VIII - Amendments**

- 1) Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed in writing by any voting member of GAAC and presented to the officers
- 2) These amendments will be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the GAAC
- 3) Proposed amendments will become effective following approval of the majority vote of officers.

### **Article IX - Registration Renewal**

- 1) GAAC will apply to the Stamp Student Union for registration on an annual basis one month after new elections of officers

### **Article VIII - Communications**

- 1) GAAC must communicate with ALL constituents (Based on the list acquired each academic year, and any amended lists that are designated by the governing administration: Dean of Graduate School) to best represent the interests of graduate students and to provide information concerning the rights of graduate students. This includes GAAC addressing notices, requests, claims, and other communications received from graduate students.
- 2) Additionally, GAAC will maintain a listserv and social media presence (including website) to disseminate information to graduate students and provide graduate students with open lines of communication to GAAC.
  - a) Based on a preliminary email schedule determined by the GAAC (in 2015-2016) members in the first Fall meeting GAAC will communicate with constituents in a timely and transparent manner, this includes sharing the administrative meeting agendas in advance of meetings and summarizing activities on a bi-monthly basis