

BY-LAWS OF THE
DEDMAN COLLEGE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
(Revised April 2019)

I. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Graduate Student Assembly, herein called GSA or Assembly, shall consist of one representative from each department in Dedman College.

II. OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

A. Officers and Other Elected Positions

1. Officers of the positions of President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected from the body of member representatives during the orientation meeting at the beginning of the academic year and shall be elected for the entire academic year.
2. Representatives to the Graduate Council and to the Dean's Graduate Council shall be elected from the body of member representatives during the orientation meeting at the beginning of the academic year and shall be elected for the entire academic year.
3. Officers and representatives' positions may be combined, and additional officers added, as the Assembly deems necessary.

B. Responsibilities and Duties of Officers

1. The President shall be responsible for:
 - a. **conducting all meetings** in an orderly and efficient manner, including, but not limited to: setting meeting times, arranging room reservations and setting an agenda for activities to be conducted at each meeting
 - b. **verifying that all application forms** submitted by graduate student are completed in full before the application is approved
 - c. **enforcing compliance** with all regulations and responsibilities by recipients of GSA awarded funds, in conjunction with the GSA advisor from the Office of Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.
 - d. **enforcing compliance** with all regulations and responsibilities by GSA representatives.
 - e. in conjunction with the Treasurer, **maintaining a written cumulative record of all recipients of disbursed funds** and ascertaining whether an applicant has fulfilled his/her responsibilities and is therefore eligible to receive funds. An update to this record is to be submitted to each departmental representative at the beginning of each meeting.
 - f. **ensuring that each department** in Dedman College has made provisions for its students to have representation in the GSA.

2. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
 - a. **maintaining the financial records** of the GSA, including but not limited to: proper disbursement of funds to student- recipients, accounting for debits and credits of funds.
 - b. **maintaining a file** of all completed application forms and receipts.
 - c. in conjunction with the President, **maintaining a record** as indicated above.

3. The Secretary shall be responsible for:
 - a. **taking the minutes at each meeting and providing written copy** of the minutes to each member and the sponsor at least five business days prior to the next meeting.
 - b. **disseminating all written materials** necessary for the conduct of an upcoming meeting at least five business days prior to that meeting.
 - c. in conjunction with each departmental representative, **maintaining a written cumulative record of all recipients** of GSA funds for that department. This record should include, at the minimum, information regarding purpose of funding and dates funds were approved for disbursement. An update to this record is to be submitted to GSA president at the beginning of each meeting.

C. Responsibilities and Duties of Representatives

1. The GSA Department Representatives shall be responsible for:
 - a. in conjunction with the Secretary, **maintaining a record** as indicated in Section II.B.3.c above.
 - b. **informing all graduate students** in their department of the activities, purposes and procedures (as appropriate) of the GSA.
 - c. **compiling all forms** as necessary for a successful application by a graduate student seeking funds from GSA. This includes collection of copies of all receipts for expenditures funded by the GSA. Representatives are further charged with verification that said receipts are in accord with the student's stated purpose for usage in his/her application.
 - d. **informing all student applicants** of the responsibilities and regulations regarding appropriate usage of GSA disbursed funds and consequences for inappropriate usage.
 - e. **prioritizing all applications** in accord with the guidelines stipulated in Section V.E of these By-laws.
 - f. **conveying GSA funds** (checks) to successful applicants.
 - g. **verifying the eligibility of applicants** and the representative should not bring before the Assembly applications from students who:
 - i. have not provided receipts for previous funding
 - ii. have not completed all necessary forms
 - iii. are not currently registered as students.

III. MEETINGS

- A. The first meeting of the GSA shall be set each academic year by the newly elected Assembly during the orientation meeting called by the GSA advisor from the Office of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.
- B. Four members and one officer shall constitute a quorum necessary for the conduct of business.
- C. A representative unable to attend any meeting is responsible for appointing a substitute from his/her department for that meeting.
- D. Any graduate student of Dedman College whose department has not sent a representative may contact any representative or officer of the GSA in order to process his/her request for funding.

IV. APPLYING FOR GSA FUNDS

- A. Those applicants receiving funds from their Academic Department must obtain those funds before applying to the Assembly.
- B. Those applicants receiving funds from a source other than GSA (including their Academic Department, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, etc.) must disclose the source of the funds as well as the amount of the funds.
- C. The difference between the applicant's expenses and their total outside funding cannot exceed the amount of funding they receive from GSA.
- D. Applicants who have exhausted all other sources of funding (including their Academic Department and GSA) and have more expenses to be covered can then apply to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies for extra funds.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

- A. At the beginning of each academic year, the Assembly shall review policies that govern the distribution of its funds.
- B. Members of the Assembly shall also be eligible to receive funds according to the policies set forth.
- C. There shall be no limit set on the amount of money distributed each semester to any one department, except for those described in Section V.E., Category III.
- D. To ensure equitable distribution at each meeting, the Assembly, in accord with the budget, shall determine the amount of funds to be allocated to each department. If a department:
 - 1. **has no funding requests** during a particular meeting, the monies allocated for that department are to be returned to the pool of funds available for allocation at that meeting and redistributed equally among those departments with applications for funds.
 - 2. **uses only a portion of the monies allocated** to it at a particular meeting, then the remaining monies are to be returned to the pool of funds available for allocation at that meeting and redistributed equally among those departments with application for funds.

3. **cannot fund all of the applicants at a particular meeting**, the non-funded applications shall be held over for consideration at the next meeting. However, these “hold-over” applications shall not receive special consideration outside the guidelines stipulated in Section V.E. below. That is, all applications to be considered at a particular meeting must be presented according to the prescribed prioritization. Any application and/or expenditure not funded during the previous academic year is no longer eligible for funding (that is, it cannot be “carried over” for consideration during the next academic year).
- E. Prioritization of funding applications (*as approved on 05/05/10, and amended on 04/11/13*): Representatives are responsible for prioritizing and ranking the applications from their department according to the Criteria below.
- Criterion 1: The representative will first prioritize his/her department’s applications according to Category, with Category I receiving highest priority. *Exception (as approved by an amendment on 11/2/07): If a Category I applicant has received funding within the academic year but a Category II applicant has not received money in the academic year, then the Category II application receives priority.*

Category I: Thesis and dissertation related expenditures.

- a. All expenses related to the presentation of a paper/poster at a convention or conference.
- b. All expenses related to travel required for research.
- c. All other thesis/dissertation related expenditures not explicitly mentioned in other categories (excluding book, software, and alcohol).

Category II: Convention expenses not covered in Category I.

Expenses including per mile allowance, lodging and registration fees for attendance of a convention/conference for which the student is not presenting.

Category III: Photocopying.

For students at the thesis/dissertation stage.

Category IV: Fee for one-year membership in professional organization(s) directly related to the student’s field of study.

This includes one-time, one-year subscription to professional journal(s) relating to the student's field of study.

Category V: Miscellaneous awards.

Applications in this Category must meet the criterion that they will benefit the graduate students of the College as a whole. (Such as speaker related expenditures)

Additional guidelines for representative discretion:

- Criterion 2: In situations in which two or more applications are closely matched in one or more of the following criteria, the department representative may present to the GSA a short summary of his or her justification for splitting funds between the applications. The GSA will put the representative's proposal to a vote.
 - Criterion 2a: The applicant that has received the least total dollar amount of GSA funds in the past 2 years shall receive first consideration.
 - Criterion 2b: The applicant with the greatest amount of unfunded budget expenditures shall receive first consideration.
 - Criterion 2c: The applicant who submitted his or her application first shall receive first consideration.
- F. Applications for reimbursement of expenditures that have already been incurred by the student **MUST** be complete upon submission. In other words, the application will not be considered until all forms and supporting materials (including receipts) have been provided. Receipts must support the stated purpose of funding as approved by the GSA. Applications for funding can be approved prior to the date of the expenditure if all conditions for approval are met other than the provision of receipts. However, GSA funds shall NOT be disbursed until the **original** receipts are provided. Receipts must be provided **within 30 calendar days of the date of the expenditure** and support the stated purpose of funding as approved by the GSA.
- G. Recipients of GSA funds who do not satisfy the conditions stipulated in these By-laws will not be eligible for funding at any future date and will be subject to further action by the Office of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.
- H. Guidelines for representatives in accepting (from the applicant) and presenting (to the Assembly) applications (*amended 04/08/19*):
1. Applications for *pre-approval* may be accepted by the representative and presented to the Assembly at any point prior to the date of the expenditure, but **only** within the academic year of the expenditure. An academic year shall be defined as the first day of classes for a given Fall term through to but not including the first day of classes in the subsequent Fall term. Supporting materials for pre- approved reimbursements, including receipts, **must** be provided to the representative **no later than 30 days** after the expenditure and presented to the Assembly at the next meeting.
 2. Applications for *approval*, including all supporting materials, **must** be accepted by the representative **no later than 30 days** after the expenditure, but may be presented to the Assembly at any point within the academic year of the expenditure.

3. Applications for *summer expenditures*.
 - a. Summer expenditures will be defined, according to the University’s official calendar for that year, as those incurred **after** the last day of classes for the Spring term and **before** the first day of the Fall term.
 - b. Applications for activities occurring during the summer period may be submitted and presented to the Assembly at any meeting during the current or next academic year at the discretion of the representative.
 - c. Single **summer funding shall be limited to \$800** regardless of when the funding is approved.

- I. Mileage will be funded at the current University-set rate per mile, with a maximum of \$100 allowed for travel within a single city.

- J. There shall be no limit as to the number of times a student applies to the GSA, but there shall be a **\$400 per meeting limit** and a **\$800 per academic year limit** on the amount received by an individual. These limits apply to funds disbursed during regular meetings during the academic year. The following per-student, per-meeting and per-academic-year funding limits apply to the categories described in Section V.E.:

Category I:	\$400.00	} per meeting limit
Category II:	\$150.00	
Category III:	\$50.00	
Category IV:	\$60.00	
Category V:	\$100.00	

Category I:	\$800.00	} per academic year limit
Category II:	\$300.00	
Category III:	\$100.00	
Category IV:	\$120.00	
Category V:	\$200.00	

VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

At least two GSA meetings are required for discussion and final vote for an amendment to the By-laws. Roberts' Rules of Order apply in bringing a proposal to the table.

- A. At the first meeting, the proposed change(s) are to be discussed including alternatives to the existing By-laws (wording, procedure, etc.). The individual who is proposing the change must supply each representative of GSA his/her proposal in writing. The debate may then continue via campus mail, email, and/or voicemail in the interim between the first and second meeting.
- B. At the second meeting, a final vote can be made on the proposed amendment or the idea can be tabled for more discussion and/or research.
- C. These two meetings can occur anytime during the time period that GSA is in session (Fall and Spring semesters of the school year). The first and second meetings can occur in different semesters (i.e., first meeting in Fall, second meeting in Spring).
- D. A majority of GSA representatives (with at least two officers present) is required for a final vote.