

MEADOWS GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
(Effective August 1, 2026)

I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Meadows Graduate Student Council (MGSC)

II STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Meadows Graduate School Council facilitates the artistic and professional development of students in the graduate programs in the Meadows School of the Arts. The Council does this by financially assisting students through a review of proposals put forth by students to the Council, evaluated on criteria and in accordance with policy established by the Council. Further, the Council serves as a source of interaction and cooperation to enhance a sense of community among the students of the various divisions within the Meadows Graduate Program.

III. THE COUNCIL

A. Elected Officers

1. MGSC officer positions include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relations Officer.
2. The vote weight of each officer except the President is 1. The President has a vote weight of 1.5.
3. At the end of the spring semester, the outgoing MGSC officers shall elect the officers who will serve during the following summer and academic year. The outgoing officers shall make every reasonable effort to provide training before the summer session and promptly transfer all relevant materials and responsibilities to the incoming officers.
4. Officer positions may be combined, and additional officers added, as MGSC deems necessary.
5. Regularly enrolled full-time graduate students from any Division or Department in the Meadows School of the Arts including Advertising, Art, Art History, Arts Management & Nonprofit Leadership, Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, Creative Computation, Creative Technology, Dance, Design and Innovation, Film & Media Arts, Journalism, Music, and Theater are eligible to be on the Meadows Graduate Student Council.
6. Elected officers will serve one full academic year unless the officer fails to meet the required duties listed below. All officers must be in good academic standing according to their departmental standards.

B. Responsibilities and Duties of the Council

1. Evaluate funding proposals and grant funding to approved proposals according to MGSC guidelines.
2. To facilitate the interaction of the different schools in the Meadows School of the Arts.
3. To establish and maintain proper procedures by adhering to the Council's by-laws.

4. To maintain contact with the Office of Student Affairs, the Student Association Accountant, and the Council's Advisor.

C. The Advisor

1. The current Advisor to the Council is the Associate Dean for Students, Meadows School of the Arts
2. The Advisor's responsibilities include:
 - a. Providing access to mgsc@smu.edu.
 - b. Forwarding promotional emails created by the Council to the entire graduate body of the Meadows School of the Arts.
 - c. Approving and signing payment requests of approved funds.

D. Responsibilities and Duties of Officers

1. The President shall be responsible for:
 - a. Facilitating the monthly review process, including reviewing student submissions on the 15th of each month (or on the preceding Friday if the 15th falls on a weekend), distributing application materials to the officers, and coordinating the approval or denial process. Officers shall have two business days from receipt of the materials to submit their votes or recommendations.
 - b. Verifying that all submitted applications are completed in full before the application is reviewed by the Council and approved.
 - c. Communicating with graduate applicants including confirming application submissions, notifying applicants of approval or denial, notifying approved applicants their check is available for pickup.
 - d. Preparing for their role as President in the beginning of the academic year by gaining access to mgsc@smu.edu and filling out the authorized student signature form from the Student Association Accountant.
 - e. Preparing for other officer roles in the beginning of the academic year including granting them access to mgsc@smu.edu.
 - f. Functioning as a liaison between the Council and exterior bodies
 - g. Facilitating the election at the end of the spring semester for MGSC officer positions for the next academic year.
 - h. Attending all meetings.
 - i. Fulfilling any job duties of any roles not filled during the academic year.
2. The Vice President shall be responsible for:
 - a. Overseeing any of the President's tasks if the President is unavailable to do so.
 - b. Assisting President in organizing monthly meetings.
 - c. Implementing all updates to MGSC application documents as requested by the council.
 - d. Reviewing all submitted applications prior to monthly review.
 - e. Preparing for their role as Vice President by gaining access to mgsc@smu.edu and filling out the authorized signature form from the Student Association Accountant.

- f. Assessing new MGSC officer applicants at the end of the academic year.
 - g. Attending all meetings.
- 3. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
 - a. Managing MGSC funding and awards.
 - b. Maintaining the financial records of MGSC, including the proper disbursement of funds to student-recipients, the account for debit and credits of funds, and files for all approved and completed applications and reimbursements.
 - c. Updating ledger amounts each meeting.
 - d. Reviewing all submitted applications prior to monthly review.
 - e. Communicating with graduate applicants including confirming application submissions, notifying applicants of approval or denial, notifying approved applicants their check is available for pickup.
 - f. Processing reimbursements including filling out check request forms and submitting them to the Student Association Accountant, picking up finalized checks from the Student Association Accountant, placing finalized checks in the MGSC mailbox (in the Meadows Facilities Office) or mailing them to recipients, notifying applicants if approved or denied awards, and notifying approved applicants that their checks are available for pick-up.
 - g. Providing a monthly report to the Advisor that lists the name, division, and degree program of each applicant, the amount requested by each applicant, the decision of the Council (approval or denial), and for those approved for funding, the amount approved.
 - h. Preparing for their role as Treasurer by gaining access to mgsc@smu.edu and filling out the authorized signature form from the Student Association Accountant.
 - i. Assessing new MGSC officer applicants at the end of the academic year.
 - j. Attending all meetings.
- 4. The Secretary shall be responsible for:
 - a. Maintaining official records of the application review process, including documenting all submissions received, officer votes or recommendations, final approval or denial decisions, and the reasons for each decision. The Secretary shall maintain these records in an organized and accessible format for future reference and shall ensure that documentation accurately reflects the outcomes of each monthly review cycle.
 - b. Reviewing all submitted applications prior to monthly review.
 - c. Preparing for their role as Secretary by gaining access to mgsc@smu.edu.
 - d. Assessing new MGSC officer applicants at the end of the academic year
 - e. Attending all meetings.
- 5. The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for:
 - a. Constructing a bi-annual newsletter to promote the activities of MGSC (once at the beginning of the fall semester, and once at the

- beginning of the spring semester)
 - b. Distributing the newsletter to all Meadows graduate students
 - c. Creating a call-for-applications flyer at the end of the academic year
 - d. Reviewing all submitted applications prior to monthly review.
 - e. Assessing new MGSC officer applicants at the end of the academic year.
 - f. Attending all meetings.
- E. Removal of an Elected Officer
1. The failure of any of the above-mentioned officers to fulfill their duties as stated above shall constitute grounds for removal. Upon petition by a member of the Meadows Graduate Council, a vote will be taken for the removal of the respective officer. A passing vote should consist of a quorum of assembled members excluding the officer in question.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

- A. The Council shall conduct a monthly virtual application review process during the duration of the academic year and throughout the summer. The Council President shall review submitted applications on the 15th of each month, or on the preceding Friday if the 15th falls on a weekend. The President will distribute application materials to Council officers for review, and officers shall have two business days from receipt of the materials to submit their votes or recommendations for approval or denial.
- B. A majority of Council officers shall constitute a quorum necessary for the conduct of business and the approval or denial of applications. If quorum is not met within the designated review period, the President may extend the review period until sufficient responses are received.
- C. Officers are expected to participate in each monthly review cycle. Failure to provide votes or recommendations for more than one review cycle per semester may result in the loss of voting privileges for funding decisions or removal from the Council.
- D. The Council Secretary shall maintain official records of the application review process, including all applications received, officer votes or recommendations, final approval or denial decisions, and the rationale for each decision. These records shall serve as the official documentation of Council proceedings.
- E. The Council President may call meetings or executive sessions as necessary to address Council business, procedural matters, or other organizational concerns. The faculty advisor shall be notified of Council activities and may attend meetings or review Council proceedings as appropriate.

V. APPLYING FOR MGSC FUNDS

A. Eligibility and General Principles:

1. At the beginning of each academic year, the Council shall review policies that govern the distribution of its funds.
2. The Council evaluates a funding proposal based on how well the project advances the artistic and/or professional development of the student. Because artistic and professional development varies for the diverse graduate student body of the Meadows School of the Arts, the Council will assess each application on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the project itself, strength of the application, and the financial

constraints of the Council's budget.

3. Students can apply multiple times throughout the semester.
4. To be considered for funding, Applicants must demonstrate that they have first sought funding from other available sources (e.g., their academic department).
5. Officers of MGSC shall also be eligible to receive funds according to the policies set forth. The Council officer cannot participate in the Council's deliberation of the officer's application.
6. There shall be no limit set on the amount of money distributed each semester to any one department.

B. Application Process

1. Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on the 15th of each month for consideration during the monthly MGSC review cycle. When the 15th falls on a weekend, the submission deadline shall be 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Friday. Application materials and funding guidelines are available on the MGSC website.
2. Applications must include Part I) Project Proposal Form, Part II) Letter of Request and Supporting Documents AND Part III) Budget and Supporting Documents. The Council will not consider incomplete applications and may ask the applicant to resubmit. Any request for funding must be accompanied by appropriate materials supporting the existence of the project and the projected costs.
3. Applicants receiving funds from a source other than MGSC (including their Academic Department, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, etc.) must disclose both the funding source and the amount received.

C. Funding Restrictions

1. MGSC cannot fund:
 - a. Food or beverages.
 - b. Projects or expenses that have already occurred. However, the council may consider reimbursement requests for eligible expenses incurred before the project takes place, provided the application is submitted and approved before the project date.
 - c. Projects sponsored by Southern Methodist University.
 - d. Standard building maintenance.
 - e. The bringing of speakers or visitors to campus
 - f. Projects undertaken for academic credit, including:
 - Tuition.
 - Textbooks.
 - Thesis or dissertation research or related projects.
 - Any project completed to fulfill course, degree, or university credit requirements.
 - g. *Policy Rationale:*
 - *The purpose of this policy is to support graduate students' participation in extracurricular professional development opportunities that contribute to their long-term academic and career goals, rather than activities that are part of their required coursework or are already supported by the University.*
 - *Exception*

- *This policy does not prohibit funding for activities that originate from coursework but extend beyond course requirements. For example, if a student chooses to present a paper or artwork originally completed for a class at a professional conference, MGSC funding may be used to support conference participation because presenting at the conference is voluntary and is not required for academic credit.*
2. MGSC typically does not fund:
 - a. Projects that would only have a limited professional or artistic impact on the student.

D. Funding Limits

1. Students may receive no more than \$5,000 in MGSC funding during an academic year.
2. Students may receive no more than \$500 per semester to attend professional events at which they are **not** presenting, performing, exhibiting, or otherwise actively participating.
3. Students cannot receive more than \$500 per semester for supplies, including technology, for specific projects.
4. Students cannot receive more than \$125 per academic year for membership fees to professional organizations related to that student's field of study.
5. Students cannot receive more than \$500 for domestic travel expenses, including flights and ground transportation.
6. Students cannot receive more than \$1000 for international travel expenses, including flights and ground transportation.
7. Students cannot receive more than \$200 per night for accommodations.

E. Summer Funding

1. Students can apply for funding for projects that will take place during the summer (after the last day of the Spring semester and before the first day of the Fall semester).
 - a. The amount of summer funding an applicant can receive will be considered based on the academic year that the applicant applied and will be subject to Section V. E. For example, if the student applied for funds for a project in Summer 2022, that amount would be applied to the 2021-2022 school year and the student could still apply for up to \$5,000 in the 2022-2023 school year beginning in August.
 - b. Students who are nearing or have exceeded the maximum of \$5,000 are encouraged to still apply for summer funding. Their application will be considered. However, it will not receive a high priority compared to applications by students who have received a low or no amount of funding.

VI. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

- A. Applicants must submit the following materials to mgsc@smu.edu within 14 days of the completion of their project as one attachment.
 1. Request for Reimbursement Form, available online <http://smu.edu/mgsc>

2. Scans of every receipt with their name clearly included on each
- B. The Council reserves the right to withdraw an award if reimbursement is not requested within two weeks after the project concludes.

VII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

At any meeting, the Council may amend or rescind the by-laws or any article or section thereof by a quorum vote of the full membership. Laws may be amended at a single meeting, assuming a quorum is present and the amendment is accepted by a two-third vote. Such amendments shall be attached to or incorporated in all new copies of these by-laws and included in MGSC files.