

Constitution of the Psychology Graduate Student Council

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# Constitution of the Psychology Graduate Student Council

## **PREAMBLE**

The Psychology Graduate Student Council (PGSC) was established February 4, 2020 after formalizing and amalgamating existing student representative roles within the Department of Psychology. The PGSC strives to give graduate students a voice and a venue to be involved in matters affecting their graduate program experience in the Psychology Department at the University of Victoria.

Website:        <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/pgsc/>  
Email:            [pgsc.uvic@gmail.com](mailto:pgsc.uvic@gmail.com)

## **ARTICLE I. NAME AND MANDATE**

**Section 1.01**    The name of this council shall be the *Psychology Graduate Student Council*, henceforth referred to as the *PGSC*.

**Section 1.02**    The purpose of the PGSC is to promote and represent graduate student interests within the Department of Psychology, pursuant to the mandate herein:

- (a)    Hosting monthly meetings, open to all psychology graduate students, to discuss issues and voice concerns related to the graduate student experience
- (b)    Advocating for graduate student interests both at departmental meetings and by bringing forward students' issues of concern to the GEC
- (c)    Organizing and facilitating orientation events for new students in collaboration with the department and administrative staff
- (d)    Fostering community among psychology graduate students by promoting social events, professional development events, seminars, workshops, and research collaboration
- (e)    Promoting and advancing graduate student work, in collaboration with the department

## **ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 2.01**    Any student registered in the graduate program in psychology for the duration of the academic year may serve on the PGSC

- (a)    Both Masters and Doctoral students are encouraged to serve on the PGSC; a balance of both Masters and Doctoral students on the PGSC is preferred

**Section 2.02**    Students who are not serving in a PGSC position are encouraged to stay involved and informed through PGSC events, monthly meetings, and correspondence through the PsycGrads LISTSERV

### **ARTICLE III. ELECTIONS PROTOCOL**

- Section 3.01** Elections shall occur in April, with May serving as a transition month for outgoing and incoming PGSC members
- Section 3.02** All elections information shall be communicated via the PsycGrads LISTSERV
- Section 3.03** Voting in the PGSC election shall occur via online voting platform
- Section 3.04** All psychology graduate students who are registered at the time of a PGSC election are eligible to vote in the election
- Section 3.05** 30% of eligible voters must participate for a PGSC election to reach quorum
- Section 3.06** A PGSC member who is not seeking re-election to the PGSC shall serve as the Elections Officer and oversee the nominations and elections procedures
- (a) Should all serving PGSC members be seeking re-election, a student not serving on the PGSC, and who is not seeking to serve on the PGSC in the subsequent year, shall serve as Elections Officer
- Section 3.07** All students interested in serving on the PGSC shall complete a self-nomination form and indicate their desired position(s), in rank order of preference
- (a) The Elections Officer shall review all nomination forms and provide confirmation to each candidate of the candidate's nomination at the end of the nomination period
- Section 3.08** If, at the end of the nomination period, there is any PGSC position for which no nomination has been received, the Elections Officer shall put out a second call for nominations for that position, before moving to the election period
- Section 3.09** If, by the election period, there is a single nomination put forward for a PGSC position, that candidate shall be elected by acclamation
- Section 3.10** If, by the election period, there are multiple nominations put forward for a PGSC position, the Elections Officer shall notify all candidates and proceed with holding an election
- Section 3.11** If, by the election period, there is both one or more contested position(s) and one or more vacant position(s), the election(s) for the contested position(s) shall occur prior to appointment(s) to any vacant position(s)
- Section 3.12** Should a vacancy in a PGSC position occur partway through the position's term, another nomination procedure and election shall be held for the vacant position, with either Co-President or Secretary and Treasurer serving as Elections Officer
- (a) The newly elected or appointed member shall serve for the extent of the position's original term, (i.e., until the next regularly scheduled election pursuant to Section 3.01)

## **ARTICLE IV. COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

### **Section 4.01** Council Executive

- (a) The Council Executive is made up of the Co-Presidents (2), the Secretary and Treasurer (1), and the Events and Student Engagement Coordinators (2)
- (b) The Council Executive may meet more frequently than or independently from the General Council as necessary

### **Section 4.02** General Council

- (a) The General Council comprises all members of the Council Executive, as well as: the Departmental Representatives (Clinical [1], Lifespan [1], and CaBS, SP, INDV [1]), the GEC Representative (1), the Graduate Student Ombuddy (1), the CPA Representative (1), the GSS Representative (1+) as well as those with Affiliated Positions (see Section 4.03).

### **Section 4.03** Affiliated Positions

- (a) Affiliated positions include the Teaching Assistant Consultant (TAC; 1), the CUPE 4163 Representative/Steward (1+) and the SCCT Representatives (2)
- (b) Students holding these positions are members of the General Council, however are hired or elected externally (i.e., by groups other than the PGSC)

### **Section 4.04** Holding Multiple PGSC Positions

- (a) A student may hold no more than one position on the Council Executive
- (b) A student may hold a General Council position concurrently with a Council Executive position, particularly in cases where there are fewer students nominated to serve in PGSC positions than the total number of PGSC positions
  - (i) Any one student may hold only one position on the General Council concurrently with only one Council Executive position
- (c) A student may hold an Affiliated Position in addition to a General Council position, Council Executive position, or both (pursuant to Section 4.04a and Section 4.04b)

### **Section 4.05** Summary of Council Structure and Position Terms

<b>Council Executive</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Co-Presidents (2)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
Secretary and Treasurer (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
Events and Student Engagement Coordinators (2)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election

<b>General Council</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Clinical Representative (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
Lifespan Representative (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
CaBS, SP, INDV Representative (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
GEC Representative (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
Graduate Student Ombuddy (1)	1 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
CPA Representative (1)	2 yr.; May-Apr.	PGSC election
GSS Representative(s) (1+)	1 yr.; May-Apr. (GSS onboarding in Sep.)	PGSC election
<b>Affiliated Positions</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Teaching Assistant Consultant (TAC) (1)	Aug. – Apr.	Hired by department
CUPE 4163 Representative(s) (1+)	1 yr.; Sep. start	External vote at union meeting
SCCT Representatives (2)	1 yr.; Sep. start	External vote of clinical students

## **ARTICLE V. COUNCIL POSITIONS**

### **Section 5.01 Co-Presidents**

The Co-Presidents are the representatives of the PGSC and its membership to the Department Head, GEC, and other members of the faculty and department administrative staff. The Co-Presidents are sensitive to student issues and concerns, and play a key role in promoting community and academic success of psychology graduate students through visibility, accessibility, and advocacy in their roles. Co-Presidents work in tandem to facilitate distribution of work load.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Calling and chairing PGSC Executive and General Council meetings
- (b) Facilitating and overseeing the activities of elected PGSC members to ensure organized, coordinated, and timely action
- (c) If a PGSC member is unable to attend their respective committee or departmental meetings due to an extenuating circumstance, a Co-President may attend by proxy

- (d) Managing and regularly updating the PGSC website
- (e) Regularly monitoring and responding to emails via the PGSC Gmail account
- (f) Preparing and presenting an annual report to PGSC members and to the GEC or department at large
- (g) Transitioning the incoming Co-Presidents, ensuring timely and complete transfer of transition materials

### **Section 5.02** Secretary and Treasurer

The PGSC Secretary and Treasurer is integral to the timely functioning and transparency of the PGSC. In this role, the Secretary and Treasurer will ensure clear communication among all elected representatives and the graduate student body, and will oversee and manage the financial operations of the PGSC.

#### Secretary Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) In cooperation with co-presidents and other representatives, outlining and distributing agenda for all meetings (PGSC executive meetings and meetings of the general membership)
- (b) Taking minutes during PGSC Executive and General Council meetings
- (c) Distributing meeting minutes to Executive and/or General Council for approval within a reasonable time frame (i.e., one week) of Executive/General meeting; and circulating approved minutes to graduate student body within 3-5 business days of Executive/General Council meetings
- (d) Transitioning incoming Secretary, ensuring timely and complete transfer of transition materials

#### Treasurer Duties and Responsibilities:

- (e) Creating a budget in collaboration with PGSC members, to be voted on and approved by the General Council (over the summer)
- (f) Submitting a report to the General Council (usually in September) outlining estimated income for upcoming year and projected expenditures
- (g) Making bank deposits as required; withdrawing funds as required
- (h) Maintaining account books
- (i) Submitting monthly reports to PGSC members outlining current financial standing and account balances, and budget expenditure updates as required
- (j) Providing a year-end report for incoming and outgoing PGSC representatives (usually in May during transition)
- (k) Transitioning incoming Treasurer, ensuring timely and complete transfer of transition materials

### **Section 5.03** Events and Student Engagement Coordinators

The role of the Events and Student Engagement Coordinators is to foster and facilitate community building among psychology graduate students. The Coordinators organize and host orientation for new students to the department, as well as plan and execute regular social events for psychology graduate students.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Coordinating the buddy system for incoming students in the summer (i.e., before their first fall on campus, usually in July)
- (b) Organizing and running elements of the orientation of incoming students, including at least one practical orientation event and one social orientation event; working closely with the department administrative staff, the TAC, and avoiding conflict with GSS events
- (c) Facilitating and working with the department's administrative staff to facilitate ice-breakers/activities and raffle prizes at the annual full department welcome event (held in September)
- (d) Organizing and hosting one event per semester (fall, spring, summer) for all psychology graduate students
- (e) Ensuring that all events hosted under this portfolio are inclusive, anti-oppressive, safe events for all graduate students in the department
- (f) Working closely with the Treasurer to ensure responsible spending and budgeting for all social events
- (g) Engaging with and including graduate students in planning and running of social events whenever possible
- (h) Providing summary of attendance and feedback from events at Executive meetings to aid in planning of future events and budgeting
- (i) Preparing and presenting an annual report at year-end to PGSC members, and incorporating elements of this report into the Co-Presidents' annual report to the department and/or GEC as necessary
- (j) Transitioning incoming coordinators, and ensuring timely and complete transfer of transition materials

#### **Section 5.04** Departmental Representatives

There are three Departmental Representatives: one representative for the Clinical program; one representative for the Lifespan program; and one representative for the CaBS (Cognitive and Brain Sciences) program, SP (Social Psychology) program, and INDV (Individualized/Environmental) program. Each representative is responsible for attending to and advocating for the needs of graduate students within their respective streams at department meetings, which are typically held the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-4:00pm.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Regularly attending and participating in PGSC meetings
- (b) Informing the PGSC of upcoming department meetings and agenda items, soliciting feedback on relevant topics or agenda items from graduate students within the representative's respective area

- (c) Attending regularly scheduled department meetings on which the representatives hold voting privileges
- (d) The Clinical program representative is asked to establish and maintain communication with the SCCT representatives (see Section 5.10) throughout the academic year

### **Section 5.05** Graduate Student Ombuddy

This position is usually served by a senior graduate student. The Ombuddy is available both as a peer support and as an advocate for all graduate students in Psychology. On a strictly confidential basis, the Ombuddy may discuss student problems or concerns, offer advice or guidance, serve as an advocate on behalf of a student (if requested to do so) in relevant meetings, and bring forth complaints or issues to the Department to pursue equitable resolutions for the student(s) and/or graduate student body in Psychology.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Being familiar with and knowledgeable of departmental and University policies as outlined in the Graduate Student Training Handbook
- (b) Acting as a liaison with the UVic Ombudsperson, for guidance and as necessary
- (c) Meeting with students upon request, and maintaining strict confidentiality when discussing student concerns
- (d) When requested to do so, attending meetings with students and acting as an advocate
- (e) Soliciting and monitoring anonymous student complaints and feedback, taking up issues with the PGSC, the Department, and prompting action where appropriate and/or necessary

### **Section 5.06** GEC Representative

This student sits as a representative on the Graduate Executive Committee (GEC) within the Department of Psychology. The GEC representative serves primarily in a consultative role.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Regularly attending GEC meetings and providing a student perspective on relevant matters, reporting issues identified by the PGSC
- (b) Regularly attending PGSC meetings and reporting issues of relevance from the GEC to the PGSC
- (c) Initiating or assisting the PGSC in polling graduate students about various issues as requested by the GEC – e.g., annual evaluation process, graduate funding, annual review of the Graduate Regulations – and reporting on poll results to the PGSC and GEC

### **Section 5.07** GSS Representative

The GSS Representative advocates for the interests of psychology graduate students at the Graduate Student Society (GSS). They attend and have voting privileges at GSS assembly meetings, and provide input to the GSS on matters relevant to the experiences of graduate students at UVic.



#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Attending GSS assembly meetings and representing psychology graduate students' interests
- (b) Regularly attending PGSC meetings and reporting on relevant GSS updates

#### **Section 5.08** CUPE 4163 Representative(s) and Steward(s)\*

\*The role of representative and steward may be held by one student or separately by two or more students.

Both the CUPE 4163 Representative and Steward roles are established at the first union meeting in September (which is mandatory for all students holding TA positions in the upcoming academic year).

The CUPE 4163 Representative is the Psychology department's representative to the CUPE 4163 union (TA union). The CUPE 4163 representative is well-versed in the collective agreements between both the TAs and sessional instructors and the University of Victoria and liaises between psychology TAs and the union.

#### CUPE 4163 Representative Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Attending union meetings
- (b) Being familiar with all terms of the collective bargaining agreement for TAs and sessional instructors
- (c) Attending PGSC meetings and informing the PGSC executive/general membership of updates from union meetings, to be included in PGSC meeting minutes and circulated to student membership

The Steward is approachable and visible within the department and attends psychology TA events. The steward is a sounding board for TAs and sessional instructors, providing validation and support. The steward is aware of TA trends within the department and provides support for students on matters that do not necessarily require union intervention.

#### Steward Duties and Responsibilities:

- (d) Attending steward meetings to report on trends within the department
- (e) Communicating and coordinating with the department's CUPE 4163 Representative and PGSC representatives as necessary
- (f) Attending TA events and training sessions whenever possible

#### **Section 5.09** CPA Representative

The CPA representative is responsible for providing graduate psychology students with information regarding CPA membership and relevant psychology-related news. This is a 2-year term and the individual who holds this role receives the CPA membership at no charge.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Regularly attending general PGSC meetings to inform executive/general membership of relevant CPA updates as necessary
- (b) As per the CPA program requirements for this position, and in collaboration with the undergraduate CPA rep (if present) and/or PsiChi (if applicable), the CPA rep must organize and implement one event relevant to psychology students and the CPA within the academic year. In our department, this has typically been an information session for undergraduate students on the process of applying for graduate programs in psychology.

**Section 5.10** SCCT Representatives

The Standing Committee on Clinical Training (SCCT) has two student representative positions, one for a student with a clinical neuropsychology emphasis and one for a student with a clinical lifespan emphasis. SCCT student representatives are responsible for ensuring that clinical graduate students' opinions, issues, and voices are heard and considered within all decision-making processes of the clinical program.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Attending SCCT meetings and providing faculty members of the SCCT with a student perspective, and advocating for student interests related to aspects of the clinical training program including decisions about admissions requirements, course sequencing, course work, and relevant policies and procedures
- (b) Soliciting clinical students' feedback when needed, and consolidating and presenting student feedback to the SCCT
- (c) Planning and organizing events, tours, and accommodations for interviewees/prospective students of the clinical program

**ARTICLE VI. COUNCIL MEETING PROTOCOLS**

**Section 6.01** PGSC meetings shall be held once each month

**Section 6.02** All PGSC members shall provide notice of agenda items one week in advance of a scheduled PGSC meeting

**Section 6.03** All graduate students in attendance at PGSC meetings shall hold voting privileges, including but not limited to members of the Council Executive and General Council

- (a) Any PGSC member who holds more than one position, where at least one position is on the Council Executive or General Council, shall retain the voting privilege of only one position

**Section 6.04** A simple majority of PGSC members present at a PGSC meeting is required to pass a motion (except for motions pertaining to the PGSC Constitution, see Section 6.05)

**Section 6.05** Protocol for Changes to the PGSC Constitution

- (a) Any PGSC member may present a motion to amend the Constitution
- (b) The mover shall provide advance notice to all other PGSC members of their intended motion to amend the Constitution, and indicate their rationale for offering the amendment
- (c) The mover shall present all PGSC members with the proposed amendment, which shall include both the Constitution section or sub-section as it is currently written, and the Constitution section or sub-section as it will read if the amendment is adopted
- (d) A two-thirds majority of all serving PGSC members is required for a Constitutional amendment to pass
- (e) If passed, the amended Constitution must be posted on the PGSC website prior to the following PGSC meeting