

# Harvard Graduate School of Education

## Student Council

### Bylaws

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# PREAMBLE

(February, 1989)

WHEREAS: Students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) have made substantial temporal, financial, and psychological investments in this institution, and;

WHEREAS: the realization of the full benefits of the educational experience requires student participation of a substantive and meaningful nature, and;

WHEREAS: a vehicle for the representation of student concerns, interests, and needs is essential to the maintenance of the highest standards of academic excellence and professional leadership;

We, the students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), do hereby form the HGSE Student Government Association, the function of which shall be to:

1. Improve the quality of students' academic, professional, social, and personal development while at HGSE;
2. Act as liaison between the students and the faculty/administration;
3. Advocate the incorporation of student views and opinions in the formulation of policies and procedures governing HGSE and Harvard University
4. Promote and fund student-initiated academic, professional, personal development and social programs, and

We further resolve to adopt the following bylaws to govern our internal and external affairs.

# BYLAWS

(Revised May 29, 2017)

## ARTICLE I - STRUCTURE

### **Section 1. Membership**

#### **A. Eligibility.**

Students must be in good standing in the school to be members of Student Council. The Director of the Office of Student Affairs will determine eligibility and/or questions of eligibility.

#### **B. Statement of Nondiscrimination.**

Membership in Student Council shall be open to eligible students regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability status, and age or veteran status.

#### **C. Term of Membership.**

Membership shall last for one academic year. Student Council membership shall end on graduation day for those members who graduate or the day before the next Student Council election for those members who return the following academic year. Students returning for the following academic year may run for re-election as long as they remain a student in good standing.

### **Section 2. Roles**

#### **A. Voting Roles.**

The HGSE student body will be represented by two types of voting members.

1. Program Senators. Students from each academic program will elect a Senator to represent them on the Student Council. Masters and certificate programs will be represented by one Senator each, and doctoral programs may be represented by up to two senators each.
2. Harvard Graduate Council Voting Representative. A member of the student body elected by students in all academic programs will serve as an at-large voting member of the HGSE Student Council and represent HGSE at the Harvard Graduate Council (HGC).

#### **B. Committees.**

The Student Council will be comprised of four standing committees: the Executive Committee, the Programming & Events Committee, the Communications & Outreach Committee, and Student Advocacy & Issues Committee. All Senators serve on at least one Committee. Each committee will have at least two additional Council member officers, in addition to the Chair. Committee membership will be determined based on Senator's interests. The HGC Voting Representative must serve on the Student Advocacy & Issues Committee. (See Article III for more information about Committee jurisdiction).

#### **C. Leadership Positions.**

Following the general election, Senators will elect members from within the Student Council to serve in the following leadership positions: Executive Chair, Vice Chair, Programming & Events Chair, Communications & Outreach Chair, and Student Advocacy & Issues Chair. (See Article III for more information).

#### **D. Student Council Counselor(s)**

Any Student Council officer(s) who served in the prior academic year and studies or works at HGSE in the current academic year is eligible to serve as a non-voting Student Council Counselor(s). The Student Council Counselor(s) will serve as the primary source of prior knowledge for the incoming Student Council

as needed.

**E. Interim Council**

An Interim Council may be created at the end of the academic year, if necessary. The Interim Council will consist of Council members who live in the area, who are accepted to another degree program or the CAS program, or who are committed to communicate via email and/or telephone. The Interim Council is responsible for the affairs and activities of Student Council that may occur between graduation and the next Student Council elections, including in administering elections. The Interim Council shall work with the HGSE Office of Student Affairs in fulfilling its duties and expenditures of funds.

**Section 3. Election Process**

**A. Nominations and Candidacy.**

Nominations and elections will be conducted through an online tool. A nomination form must be submitted by the candidate for all elected positions by the stated deadline.

**B. Candidacy for Multiple Positions.**

A student may run simultaneously for a Senate position and the HGC Representative position. If a candidate is elected to both positions, the candidate will be given the option of which position they would like to accept and the runner-up for the other position will assume the role.

**C. Election of Student Council Leadership Positions.**

The Office of Student Affairs will designate the time, place, and protocol for leadership position elections, including the process by which Senators declare their candidacy. Once a quorum is established, voting may commence. For each position, each Senator will cast one vote. For each position, the candidate with a simple majority of votes will be declared the winner, or in the event that no candidate receives a majority of votes, a runoff will be held between the two candidates who received the most votes until there is a winner.

**D. Vacancies**

In case of vacancies after the general election, the alternate candidate(s) who were not elected, in order of the number of votes received in the general election shall be considered to fill the vacant position(s). If there was a tie between two or more alternates in the number of votes received in the general election, the Council will use a ballot to elect the new Council member. In the event there are no alternates, all interested student(s) at HGSE may apply for the open position(s). The student(s) will be elected to the Council upon a majority vote within appropriate parameters.

**ARTICLE II - RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Section 1. Obligations**

**A. Statement of Obligation.**

Each member is required to sign a Statement of Obligation (see Appendix) upon acceptance of her/his elected office.

**B. Academic Standing.**

Student Council members must be in good academic standing. Any member who is not in good standing will have their membership reviewed by the Director of the Office of Student Affairs to determine appropriate course of action, which may include the officer resigning from the position.

**Section 2. Representation.**

It shall be the right and responsibility of every elected Student Council member to address issues brought before the Council either in writing or at Council meetings. In exercising Student Council voting privileges, each Student Council member should endeavor to represent the views of all HGSE students and the

members of the program they represent to the best of their ability. In addition, Student Council members are authorized to work with members of the HGSE faculty, staff, and administration on behalf of Student Council, without fear of threat to their academic careers.

**Section 3. Participation.**

Expectations for all Student Council members include:

- **Retreat Attendance:** Student Council members are expected to attend both the Fall and Spring Student Council Retreats, if the Council decides to hold such events.
- **Meeting Attendance:** Members are expected to miss no more than two meetings per semester (barring any extenuating circumstances). Student Council members are expected to contact the Council, using agreed upon protocols, before meeting time if an absence is imperative. Even in the event of absence, all committee members are expected to perform the duties and responsibilities of their office. After the second absence, the member’s continued participation is subject to review by the Student Council staff advisors.
- **Event Attendance:** Student Council members should attend Student Council sponsored events as appropriate.
- **Committee Participation:** All Senators are expected to actively contribute to at least one Committee’s activities. Committee chairs will communicate with the Executive Committee regarding any members who are not performing the duties and responsibilities of Committee membership.

**Section 4. Resignations and Removal**

**A. Resignation.**

Any representative may resign his/her seat at any time, by notifying the Council and staff advisors in writing. Such resignation shall take effect at the time therein specified. Unless otherwise specified, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

**B. Removal**

A representative may be removed from the Council for failure to carry out the responsibilities of his or her office as listed in the Statement of Obligation (see Section 3 of this article) or for violation of University policy. In the case of academic standing, removal is determined by the Director of the Office of Student Affairs. In the case of a violation of University policy, the Director of the Office of Student Affairs will consult with the appropriate administrative office for the determination of appropriate course of action. Removal shall require a two-thirds vote of the entire Council. A Council member who is being considered for removal must be notified in advance that s/he is being considered for removal and informed of the reason. Also, s/he has the right to be granted a fair hearing before the entire Student Council body.

**ARTICLE III - COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

**Section 1. Committees**

**A. Standing Committees**

Each of the following Committees will include at least two and no more than seven members, in addition to the Chair.

Committee	Duties
Executive Committee	Shall be responsible for coordination of Student Council meetings and governance; engagement with administration, faculty, and staff; and liaising with the Student

	Council staff advisors from OSA. See Executive Chair and Vice Chair descriptions for more information.
Programming & Events Committee	<p>Shall be responsible for coordinating academic, social, and wellness activities and programs to benefit the HGSE community and members of the HGSE student body, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibly managing programming and event budgets;</li> <li>• Maintaining records and templates for reference, including planning documents, venue information and speaker contacts, attendance records, and historical budgets;</li> <li>• Conducting evaluations of events;</li> <li>• Coordinating joint events co-sponsored by other student groups or schools; and</li> <li>• Overseeing ticketing procedures, including Eventbrite accounts.</li> </ul>
Communications & Outreach Committee	<p>Shall be responsible for coordinating communication between the Student Council and the student body, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing visibility of Student Council activities through all available channels by communicating in an exciting and engaging manner;</li> <li>• Managing Student Council weekly email and maintain Student Council website</li> <li>• Managing and actively engaging with Student Council social media accounts;</li> <li>• Overseeing the marketing of and recruitment for events, including both electronic and printed materials;</li> <li>• Maintaining internal or external graphic design capability in order to generate necessary materials on request;</li> <li>• Developing and maintaining mechanisms for student body communication with Student Council; and</li> <li>• Engaging with HGC’s communication officer to coordination dissemination of information.</li> </ul>
Student Advocacy and Issues Committee	<p>Shall be responsible for ascertaining student opinion and concern on academic, social matters, and community issues and and engaging Student Council members in conversations about potential action to advocacy on behalf of students with faculty, staff, or other stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acting as an advocate for student concerns that affect the Harvard graduate student community across multiple schools;</li> <li>• Assisting in constructing and coordinating dialogue and action on issues affecting the HGSE student community;</li> <li>• Promoting dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation across traditional lines of division;</li> <li>• Supporting action based on Student Council’s overall advocacy priorities, as determined by the Student Council; and</li> <li>• Engaging with other student organizations at HGSE and across Harvard schools.</li> </ul>

**B. Special Committees**

The Council may appoint members to a special committee to carry out important functions as the need arises. Special Committees can request the appointment of a HGSE student(s) to the committee in order to carry out committee projects; these appointees will have non-voting status.

**Section 2. Leadership Positions.**

### **1. Executive Chair.**

The Executive Chair's duties include:

- Serving as primary liaison to the Office of Student Affairs and administration regarding Student Council;
- Facilitating the development of the Student Council's Strategic Plan and annual report,
- Work with Committee Chairs to establish agendas for each meeting;
- Presiding over all meetings of the Student Council,
- Planning any Student Council retreats, and
- Overseeing changes to the Constitution and By-Laws.

### **2. Vice Chair.**

The Vice Chair's duties include:

- Serving as a thought partner to the Executive Chair,
- Overseeing meeting logistics, including scheduling, space reservation, and calendar invitations;
- Recording attendance at and minutes of all Council meetings;
- Organizing shared drives and maintain and preserve a historical archive;
- Maintaining official, current copies of the Constitution and By-Laws;
- Managing votes and elections, ensuring everyone is aware of and follows regulations and a proper record of vote counts is kept;
- Monitoring the flow of Council meetings and suggest procedural changes in the interest of fairness and efficiency;
- Coordinating the annual budgeting process, and
- Monitoring the budget to ensure that expenses do not exceed resources.

### **3. Committee Chairs.**

The Chairs of each Committee shall be elected from within the Council by Senators following the general election directly to office during the general election of the student body and will serve as chairs of these committees. Committee Chairs are responsible for facilitating the establish of the Committee's vision and operating procedures, coordinating Committee meetings and tasks, reporting to the Council, and documenting Committee activity.

### **4. Harvard Graduate Council Representative**

**A. Representation.** The HGC Representative shall serve as HGSE's voting representative on the HGC. In discussing, and voting on, HGC business, the HGC Representative represents the opinions and attitudes of the HGSE community. As such, the HGC representative is responsible for obtaining input from Student Council members or the broader HGSE community before voting on HGC business, when feasible, including by garnering such input electronically when needed.

The HGC Representative shall attend regular HGC meetings and disseminate information to the Student Council and the HGSE community as appropriate. The HGC Representative is responsible for ensuring HGSE is represented at all HGC meetings and in all HGC votes. If the HGC Representative may not participate in a specific HGC meeting, he or she must designate one of the additional representatives (See below) to serve in a proxy role at the HGC meeting via email designation to that individual and the Executive Chair and Vice Chair.

**B. Additional Representatives.** Per the HGC Bylaws, in addition to the HGC Representative, the Student Council may designate up to three additional representatives entrusted with representing its interests on HGC. These representatives will not formally vote on matters before the HGC, except in the case of the voting member's absence, but may fully engage in Council discussions and participate in any other ways.

## ARTICLE IV - ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

### **Section 1. Engaging with HGSE Staff and Administration**

#### **A. Relationship to the Office of Student Affairs.**

The Student Council will receive support and guidance from the Office of Student Affairs. Committees may invite the OSA staff advisors to their meetings.

#### **B. Communication with the Administration**

Members shall contact HGSE faculty and administrators regarding Student Council business, consistent with the stated roles and functions, and only with the approval of the Council or Executive Committee. Student Council will meet with faculty and the Deans as necessary and keep them informed on issues and concerns brought to the body.

### **Section 2. Finances**

#### **A. HGSE Finances**

Financial support, guidance, and information will come from the OSA to the Vice Chair, who serves as the Budget Officer for the Student Council.

#### **B. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Student Council shall coincide with the University's fiscal year, beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30.

### **Section 3. Governance**

#### **A. Parliamentary Authority.**

Student Council meetings shall be run using Robert's Rules of Order unless a motion to suspend is passed by a majority vote.

#### **B. Electronic Voting.**

Student Council members shall establish a procedure for conducting votes electronically, using Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Section 4. Meetings**

#### **A. Date, Time, Place, and Frequency**

Meeting time, place, and frequency shall be determined by the Council. The first meeting of a newly elected Council shall be held within two weeks after its election as the representatives may conveniently assemble. This meeting will be convened by the Office of Student Affairs.

#### **B. Notice of Meetings**

Notice stating the place, day, and time of any meeting of members shall be communicated by to all Student Council members as soon as possible before the meeting, at the direction of the person(s) calling the meeting via the communication avenue designated by Student Council. In case of a special meeting, the purpose(s) for which the meeting is called shall be stated in the notice. A reminder of any Student Council meeting shall be part regular communications.

#### **C. Quorum.**

A simple majority of members present shall constitute a quorum, with one more member than 50% of the Student Council board in attendance.

**D. Voting.**

Student Council shall vote when a quorum is present. All votes must follow parliamentary procedures.

**E. Virtual Meetings and Virtual Participation**

Student Council members shall determine agreed upon protocols virtual meetings and virtual participation.

**F. Proxy Representation.**

Any Senator may authorize another Student Council member to act for him/her by electronic proxy in all matters in which that representative is entitled to participate, whether by voting or participating at a meeting. The authorizing Senator must send an email message detailing the terms of the proxy arrangement to the full Student Council. The proxy must accept the proxy status via email or verbally. Each proxy shall be valid for a given meeting only and shall be submitted to the Council at least 1 hour prior to its taking effect.

**G. Special Meetings**

No less than a simple majority of the members of Student Council may call special meetings of the members.

**H. Closed Discussions**

No less than a simple majority of the members of Student Council, may call closed discussions of the members.

**Section 5. Documentation and Transparency.**

The Student Council shall keep correct and complete records of its proceedings. Student Council members shall establish a procedure for making the bylaws, membership, meeting minutes, activities and decisions of the Council transparent to the Student Body. Additionally, each Council should document its efforts via end-of-year reports and other materials which shall be kept on file in the Office of Student Affairs and may be inspected by any member at any reasonable time.

**ARTICLE V - AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership. Any proposed bylaws changes will be presented and/or emailed to Student Council members following the meeting at which they are proposed. Alternatively, members may vote to allow a vote on bylaw alterations to be conducted electronically.

**APPENDIX - Student Council Statement of Obligation**

**STUDENT COUNCIL STATEMENT OF OBLIGATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to uphold the requirements of my position as set forth in the Student Council bylaws. I understand that I may be removed from my position if I fail to fulfill the responsibilities required of me in the Student Council bylaws.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Office \_\_\_\_\_