

Version 1.0  
Ratified by a Majority Vote  
\_\_\_\_ Yay  
\_\_\_\_ Nay  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ST. JUDE CHILDREN’S RESEARCH HOSPITAL GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**Article 1: Name and Association**

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Graduate Student Association (GSA).

Section 2: The GSA is recognized as a student organization affiliated with the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (Graduate School).

**Article 2: Objectives and Purposes**

Section 1: The GSA was created within the guidance of the GSA Constitution to support Graduate Students and the best interests of the Graduate School. The GSA facilitates engagement among students, workers, faculty, staff, and the community at large. In collaboration with these groups, the GSA acts in support of community needs both on and off campus. The GSA holds itself and those it works with responsible for improving and maintaining high standards of accountability and transparency.

Section 2: This organization will provide a structured forum in which to open avenues for student interests, contribute to maintaining an optimal graduate school culture, and offer opportunities to accept leadership roles.

Section 3: This organization will serve as a resource for communication among the student body and the Graduate School staff, faculty, Graduate Council, and Board of Trustees.

Section 4: The elected Executive Board Officers of this organization will be tasked with voting as representatives of their respective constituencies on matters pertaining to the Graduate School.

**Article 3: Membership, Qualifications, and Executive Board**

Section 1: The GSA welcomes all students enrolled in the Graduate School.

Section 2: The GSA Executive Board Officers are comprised of a President, Vice President, Chair of Diversity and Inclusion, a Class Representative from each PhD program cohort by year of matriculation (Years 1-5), and one Class Representative from the Master’s Program (Together “Executive Board” or “Officer”).

Section 3: Candidates eligible to be Executive Board Officers shall be students enrolled and in good standing in the Graduate School, as confirmed by the Registrar.

Section 4: Only students enrolled in the Graduate School Master’s program(s) are eligible to hold a Master’s Officer position. Only students enrolled in the Graduate School PhD program(s) are eligible to hold a PhD Officer cohort position. Only students enrolled in a full time on-campus program of the Graduate School are eligible for the remaining positions.

Section 5: The position of President is limited to a doctoral student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year or higher who is in good standing and has served in a GSA executive position previously.

The position of Vice President is limited to a doctoral student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year or higher who is in good standing. The position of Chair of Diversity and Inclusion is limited to a doctoral student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year or higher who is in good standing and may concurrently serve as a Class Representative.

**Article 4: Elections**

Section 1: All members of the student body may participate in Executive Board elections for the positions of President, Vice President, and Chair of Diversity and Inclusion. Elections will occur within each PhD class for Class Representatives. Elections will occur within each Master’s program for the election of Master’s representatives.

Section 2: Candidates for an Executive Board Office may be identified by self-nomination or by acceptance of a nomination during the first two weeks of December each year for all positions. Candidates will submit confirmation of “good standing” status and a platform statement of up to 500 words to the current President, who will share them with the applicable cohorts. The current President will create a ballot to be circulated to the applicable cohorts during the third week of December. Votes will be cast and counted before the end of December. The current President will collect election results and announce the newly elected Executive Board Officers. Students enrolled in a Master’s program(s) will follow the same process and submit platform statements and candidate nominations for Representatives.

<i>PhD Program Sample Election Timeline</i>	
December 1-7	Candidates submit and/or accept nominations for Executive Board positions along with platform statements and “good standing” status
December 7-14	President compiles platform statements and curates ballot

December 14-21	President circulates platform statements and ballot to all students
December 31	Votes are cast, counted, and given to the President and Executive Board Officers are announced

Section 3: Transition from current to newly elected Executive Board Officers will occur annually during the month of January. Newly elected Officers will attend a training event and be given the opportunity to meet with their former counterparts and become acquainted with the other elected Executive Board Officers.

Section 4: The President and Vice President positions are limited to one (1) one-year term each through the duration of the student’s tenure, with the exception of students serving as an interim President/Vice President who may run for either of these positions at the conclusion of their interim term. Previous Presidents and Vice Presidents, having not served in an interim position, may run for a different position (Chair of Diversity and Inclusion, Class Representative) at the conclusion of their term. Representatives (PhD and Master’s) and the Chair of Diversity and Inclusion may be reelected and have no term limits associated with these positions.

Section 5: In the event that the President is unable to complete his or her term of office, the Vice President will serve as interim President for the remainder of that term. In the event that the Vice President is unable or ineligible to serve as interim President, i.e. in their 2nd year of study, one of the PhD Class Representatives from years 3-5 will be elected to the position of interim President. This election will occur by the Executive Board. In the event that the Vice President is unable to complete his or her term, a Class Representative from years 2-5 will be elected by the Executive Board to serve as interim Vice President. If a Class Representative is elected to interim President or Vice President then that cohort will hold a secondary election to appoint a new Class Representative.

**Article 5: Elected Executive Board Officer Responsibilities**

Section 1: The President of the GSA is the direct contact between the Graduate School staff and the GSA. He or she will: plan and execute all GSA meetings; communicate with committee Chairs to provide assistance if needed and ensure that tasks are being completed efficiently; oversee expenses; formulate budgets; communicate with the Associate Dean regarding budgetary matters; assign budgets to each committee Chair; meet monthly with Graduate School staff following each GSA meeting to discuss and effectively address issues and information regarding the student body; represent the Graduate School student body when necessary (i.e. meet with applicants and academic visitors, speak at events); and serve as the student body representative on the Graduate Council and the Board of Trustees.

Section 2: The Vice President will serve as substitute if the President is not available for a meeting, event, or is unable to finish his or her term; act as the alternative representative on the Graduate Council and the Board of Trustees; prepare the agenda for each GSA meeting; maintain a record

of all GSA meeting minutes and events; and distribute GSA meeting minutes to the appropriate parties, including the Registrar who will maintain a file of approved minutes of each GSA meeting.

Section 3: The Chair of Diversity and Inclusion will raise awareness for minority groups and students with unique circumstances within the Graduate School to be taken into consideration when making decisions pertaining to the student body; and partner with the St. Jude Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer to provide diversity and inclusion training. This role may be held by a Graduate Student who also serves as a Class Representative on the GSA.

Section 4: The PhD Class Representatives (Years 1-5) are responsible for communicating matters pertaining to their classes to the GSA; act as the representative voice for their cohort; be responsible for their cohort receiving all relevant information from the GSA by completing the newsletter template and circulating it monthly; schedule meetings between their cohort and the Dean when necessary; and record minutes at these meetings and report to their cohorts.

Section 5: The Master's Representatives will attend GSA meetings as time in their schedule allows; communicate matters pertaining to the Master's students to the GSA; relay information obtained by the GSA to the Master's students; work with the Executive Board during the Officer transition to establish how best to maintain communication throughout the year. A Master's Representative may choose to select in writing another member of the Executive Board to vote for him or her by proxy as necessary.

Section 6: No Executive Board Officer is authorized to incur any obligation, financial or otherwise, binding upon the Graduate School or St. Jude or in their names, unless he or she is authorized in writing by the Graduate School and St. Jude.

## **Article 6: Committees**

Section 1: Each GSA standing committee is comprised of one Committee Chair and additional Activity Heads for individual activities as deemed necessary by the Chair. All students enrolled in a Graduate School on-campus program must serve on one committee (as all Graduate School students are members of the GSA per Article 3 Section 1), excluding members of the Executive Board, and the PhD/Master's Representatives and Chair of Diversity and Inclusion may elect to join committees. Each committee will elect its Chair by nomination or acclamation at the first meeting and subsequently elect the Activity Heads.

Section 2: Each standing committee will have minimum expectations set by the Executive Board and will be assigned a budget by the President.

Section 3: The standing committees and their current minimum expectations are as follows:

- Community Service: The Community Service Committee must hold two community service events (i.e. St. Jude Trick or Treating, Tri Delta Place Dinners) and communicate volunteer opportunities to the student body as they arise (i.e. Marathon water stations, MLK day community service).

- **Social Events:** The Social Events Committee must hold two social events per semester. Social events must be scheduled and announced to the Student Body one month prior to the event.
- **Outreach:** The Outreach Committee must hold one event that interacts with each of the following groups: APO Graduate Students, Post-Docs, and Graduate Faculty. This can be a social event or a constructive interaction (i.e. Career development, poster session, guest speaker)
- **Recruitment:** The Recruitment Committee will organize a social event with interviewees and the student body and help the Graduate School staff organize second visit itineraries.

Section 4: The opportunity to sign up for standing committees will occur following Executive Board Officer turnover in January. The GSA reserves the right to form new committees comprised of students of the Graduate School as needed throughout the year.

Section 5: The Activity Heads are responsible for communicating regularly with their Chairs. Each Chair will communicate progress and concerns from the committee to the Executive Board as needed. Following the conclusion of events, Activity Heads will complete a template report documenting the event details. The report is to be filed by the committee Chair to the GSA Vice President and may be used as items in the GSA newsletter.

## **Article 7: GSA Meetings**

Section 1: The GSA will meet monthly during the academic year or more frequently as needed. GSA meetings will be coordinated with Graduate School events to effectively plan or debrief when assembled.

Section 2: Meetings of the GSA may be called by any Executive Board Officer. The purpose of the requested meeting is to be described in advance in writing and the inclusion of an additional meeting must be approved by a simple majority vote of the Officers.

Section 3: Special meetings of the GSA may be called by the President or by formal petition of at least twenty-five percent of the GSA membership with at least 48 hours written notice to the Executive Board Officers.

Section 4: GSA meetings shall conform to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order at the discretion of the President. Meetings shall be informal without objection.

Section 5: Members of the Graduate Faculty or other invited guests may attend GSA meetings as non-voting observers after approval by the President.

Section 6: The Vice President shall keep a record of meeting attendance and include attendance in the meeting minutes. To receive credit for meeting attendance, a member must sign the attendance sheet, which shall serve as the official list of members present. Failure to properly sign in will be documented as an absence.

Section 7: All persons eligible for GSA membership shall have speaking rights at GSA meetings. Additional meeting participant speaking rights (e.g. attending Graduate Faculty or other invited guests) may be provided at the discretion of the Executive Board or by majority vote of the GSA.

Section 8: Students of the Graduate School may put forth concerns to Class Representatives in advance of a GSA meeting and request matters to be added to the agenda. The student may be invited to attend a GSA meeting to present the matter(s) and then will be excused. A student who wishes to remain anonymous may ask his or her Class Representative or the Chair of Diversity and Inclusion to present their matter.

Section 9: The agenda for an upcoming meeting must be circulated to Executive Board Officers at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. General Business will be discussed first on the agenda and is open to attendance by all Graduate School students. Following General Business, Executive Board Officers will adjourn the meeting to a closed executive session consisting of only Executive Board Officers.

Section 10: A quorum must be physically present to transact official business. The quorum must include at least 2/3 of the voting members, including the elected, appointed, and ex-officio members, and excluding Master's Representatives who may not be readily available.

Section 11: Each Executive Board Officer has one vote in the GSA. All matters will be decided by a simple majority vote. Motions with tied votes will be automatically rejected having not reached a favorable majority. Voting matters shall be announced to all Officers upon distribution of the upcoming agenda. Should any Officer be unable to attend a meeting, they may submit their vote to the President prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be held. Any Officer may make a motion to table a vote if that Officer believes more discussion is needed to make an educated decision. Motion to Table requires a Second and the motion must be passed by a simple majority. The Chair of Diversity and Inclusion may make a motion to table a vote to consult with the St. Jude Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Motion to Table for consult with St. Jude Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer does not require a Second but must pass by a simple majority vote.

## **Article 8: Amendments**

Section 1: The GSA Constitution will be reviewed, and after debate, may be amended depending on the vote of the GSA. At minimum the GSA Constitution will be reviewed annually in the final two months of the Executive Board Officers' term to discuss how to improve or modify operations and for amendment as needed.

Section 2: Amendments may be suggested by any Executive Board Officer at any point during the academic year. Proposed amendments must be circulated in writing to the Officers at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. Amendments will require a Second and considered only after a 2/3 secret ballot vote of the Executive Board.

Section 3: Amendments that pass Executive Board consideration shall then be circulated to all GSA members two weeks prior to holding a general election for acceptance and ratification. Amendments will require a 2/3 vote from GSA members for adoption.

## **Article 9: Ratification**

Section 1: The Constitution and Bylaws shall be ratified after discussion based upon a motion by an Executive Board Officer to ratify, a second from another Officer, followed by 2/3 vote to approve the motion to ratify by the Graduate Student Association members in attendance.

Section 2: The newly adopted Constitution or Constitution and Bylaws Amendments shall supersede any previous Constitution and Bylaws and shall be the sole Constitution and Bylaws of the GSA.