

**SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY  
FAIRFIELD, CT  
COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS (COGS) CONSTITUTION  
2011 – 2012**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the part-time & full-time graduate students of Sacred Heart University, to provide for the general welfare of the graduate student body, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution. As an extension of the Student Life Department and as our own organization, we serve:

1. To provide the social, physical, intellectual, career, emotional, and spiritual interests of individual graduate students, the graduate student body collectively, and the University community;
2. To establish representative systems which embrace all facets of co-curricular and extra-curricular campus life, and articulates views regarding graduate student related concerns;
3. To provide significant opportunities for the development of the individual graduate students through leadership, as well as fostering of community responsibilities among the graduate student body;
4. To help fulfill the University's mission as a Catholic institution of higher education.

**ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

The name of the organization will be the Sacred Heart University Council of Graduate Students, also referred to as COGS.

**ARTICLE 2 – MISSION STATEMENT**

The Sacred Heart University Council of Graduate Students (COGS) fosters support and interaction among graduate students, faculty, the University, and community at large through intellectual and social events. COGS provides a voice on campus for the graduate student body by embracing the academic, social, cultural, and general diversity of its members.

**ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1 – General Membership**

- A. Membership to COGS is open to all part-time and full-time graduate students. Leadership positions and general membership within COGS are defined herein.
- B. No graduate student will be denied membership in COGS on any discriminating variable, including, but not limited to sexual orientation, race, or creed.

**Section 2 – Leadership Roles**

- A. Any part-time or full-time graduate student may hold a leadership position in COGS.

- B. To hold a leadership position as President, Vice President, or Secretary, graduate students must be voted into position by the existing COGS members.
- C. COGS membership also contains at least one appointed graduate student from each graduate discipline to represent their respective program.
- D. Ex-Officio Members include University President, Vice President for Enrollment Planning & Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of the College of Health Professions & Education, and the Student Life staff.

### **Section 3 – Qualifications of Students Serving in Leadership Roles**

- A. Members in leadership positions must be part-time or full-time graduate students in good academic standing. Good academic standing is maintaining a 2.0 GPA (semester & cumulative).
- B. Members in leadership positions must be in good disciplinary standing in accordance with the University Judicial System, which is stated in the University Student Handbook. Any member sanctioned for disciplinary probation (or any more severe sanction) will be considered a loss of good standing, and thus a loss of their COGS position.
- C. Members in leadership roles must be present on the main Fairfield campus for all meetings and events.
- D. The COGS Advisor(s) shall be deemed overseer of these qualifications for members.

### **ARTICLE 4 – EXECUTIVE BOARD COMPOSITION**

- A. The steering body of COGS is the Executive Board, which will consist of at least 17 graduate students, each holding one of the following positions:
  - 1. President
  - 2. Vice President
  - 3. Secretary
  - 4. Graduate Assistant (2)
  - 5. Department Representatives (12)
    - Education
    - Business
    - Chemistry
    - Physical Therapy
    - Occupational Therapy
    - Nursing
    - Applied Psychology
    - Exercise Science
    - Computer Science & Information Technology
    - Environmental Science
    - Religious Studies
    - Criminal Justice

## **ARTICLE 5 – ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1 – Officers**

- A. The President and Vice President elections for the upcoming academic year are to be held at the last general meeting of the spring semester.
- B. The Secretary election is to be held by the second general meeting of the current fall semester.

### **Section 2 – Terms of Office**

- A. The President and Vice President will serve for a period of one calendar year. No graduate individual shall be elected as President for more than two consecutive one-year terms.
- B. The Secretary will serve until the end of the academic year for which they were elected.
- C. At least one Department Representative is appointed by the program directors by the last general meeting of the spring semester, and can serve for any number of semesters while either a part-time or full-time graduate student.
- D. It is the Representatives responsibility to notify the COGS President and their program directors about their status for the upcoming year before the last general meeting of the spring semester. Program directors must be notified by the Representatives about the cessation of their positions. The COGS President may contact program directors to inform them about the requirement of appointing new representation for their programs.
- E. Each graduate program gets one vote performed by the respective program Representatives.

### **Section 3 – Election Process**

- A. Any member of COGS not running for an office will serve on the Elections Committee under the coordination and supervision of the COGS President and Advisor(s).
- B. If the President is running for re-election, the COGS Advisor(s) will select a chairperson.
- C. Creating of ballots and tabulation of results will be handled by the COGS Graduate Assistant(s).
- D. Election results will be determined by the end of the current meeting.

### **Section 4 – Vacancy**

- A. In the event of a vacancy in the COGS Executive Board, the Board can fill the vacancy at either a regular or special meeting called for such a purpose.
- B. Elections will run in the same manner as the elections that occur at the end of a term.
- C. All appointments are subject to approval of 2/3rds vote of the existing Executive Board.

- D. Any member elected to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the term of their predecessor, until the time of the next election ceremony.

**Section 5 – Resignation & Removal of Officers**

- A. Any officer may resign or be removed at any time for violation of these bylaws or other policies of COGS.
- B. An officer who intends to resign shall provide written notice thereof to the Executive Board in care of the Academic Advisor(s). Such resignation shall become effective immediately upon receipt, unless otherwise specified therein.
- C. Removal of any officer may only be affected by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Executive Board at a regular or special meeting called expressly for the purpose of considering such removal.
- D. The Executive Board may remove any officer for misfeasance or malfeasance in office or upon conviction of a crime which the Executive Board determines, in its sole discretion, to be of moral turpitude, violation of University policy, or which tends to bring discredit and disrepute upon COGS as a whole organization.

**ARTICLE 6 – RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL COGS MEMBERS**

**Section 1 – Duties of General COGS Members**

- A. Every COGS member will have the right to freedom of speech, of the press, of peaceful assembly, and to organize/join associations promoting their common interests provided the exercise of these rights does not present a conflict with the mission statements of Sacred Heart University or COGS.
- B. All COGS members and academic programs have a series of privileges afforded to them by Sacred Heart University through the Student Life Department and the Council of Graduate Students.
- C. Every graduate student in a leadership role within the COGS has the responsibility to maintain their personal email account on a daily basis to ensure that service is open and available for all graduate students.

**Section 2 – Duties of the Executive Board**

- A. The Executive Board will meet on a monthly basis with an agenda established by the COGS President in consultation with the COGS Advisor(s) and Graduate Assistant(s).
- B. Executive Board members will be required to maintain their personal email account on a daily basis to better ensure service to the graduate students and communication with the University.
- C. COGS Executive Board members will be required to meet with the COGS President to ensure they are performing adequate duties.

### **Section 3 – Duties of the President**

- A. The President of the Executive Board shall be the chief volunteer officer of COGS and chief representative voice of COGS to the University and wider community.
- B. The President shall preside over all regular and special meetings of the Executive Board.
- C. The President shall appoint, in consultation with the Executive Board, the chairpersons of any committees within COGS.
- D. The President is responsible for making an agenda for the upcoming meetings.
- E. The President shall have the right at any time at any regular or special meeting of the Executive Board to address any issue, which is believed to affect COGS. Issues, which are subject of a vote of the Executive Board, need to have been placed on the agenda prior to the meeting.
- F. The President may exercise the right to vote on any issue directed for a vote of COGS. Such vote may only be exercised if no Department Representative from the President's academic program is a member of the Executive Board.
- G. The President shall be the last member to cast any vote on any issue.
- H. The President shall be an Ex-Officio Member of all committees of COGS.
- I. The President shall perform other such duties as may be prescribed by these bylaws or as the Executive Board may direct.

### **Section 4 – Duties of the Vice President**

- A. The Vice President shall be a volunteer officer of COGS and shall have authority to perform such duties as the President of the Executive Board, or those duties as assigned by the Executive Board. These duties shall be performed as prescribed by these bylaws.
- B. At the request of the President, or in case of absence or the President's inability to act, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President of the Board.

### **Section 5 – Duties of the Secretary**

- A. The Secretary shall be a volunteer officer and shall take all minutes of regular and special meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Committee, and shall record upon the books and records of the COGS the proceedings of the Executive Board.
- B. The Secretary will be required to post the minutes to the COGS Website within 1 week of the meeting.
- C. The Secretary is required to take attendance at each meeting and keep track of each Department Representative's attendance record.
- D. The Secretary is required to print and distribute the agenda made by the President for each meeting.
- E. The Secretary shall be assisted by the Graduate Assistant(s) as deemed necessary and appropriate by the President.

- F. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be required by these bylaws or as may be prescribed by the Executive Board, the President of the Executive Board, or the Academic Advisor(s).

### **Section 6 – Duties of Department Representatives**

- A. Each of the 12 academic departments can appoint at least one Department Representative per the Program Director.
- B. The Representative is responsible for attending all meetings, voting on matters at the meetings, and sharing the events of the meeting with their respective programs.
- C. If the Representative cannot attend a meeting for any given reason, they must notify the Secretary as soon as possible before that meeting.
- D. Low attendance of a Representative will affect potential funding for their program.
- E. The Representative is responsible for submitting any financial requests for their respective department.
- F. The Representative shall promote COGS events within their respective departments.

### **Section 7 – Duties of the Graduate Assistant(s)**

- A. The Graduate Assistant(s), also referred to hereafter in these bylaws as the “GA(s)” of COGS, shall serve as the chief paid representative of COGS, and shall be responsible for reporting to the chairperson as outlined in the University approved GA(s) employment description.
- B. The GA(s) will work in the Office of Student Life under the Dean of Students and the COGS Advisor(s) to plan and implement Graduate Student programming.
- C. The GA(s) will also be responsible for tracking the allocated COGS budget for social events.
- D. The GA(s) will also be responsible for other duties as determined by the GA(s) and their supervisor.

## **ARTICLE 7 – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

### **Section 1 – Meetings**

- A. The meetings will be run informally using the designed agenda provided by the COGS President.
- B. A majority vote will rule except in certain cases, labeled in this Constitution, where a 2/3rds vote is needed.
- C. A majority ( $1/2 + 1$ ) of the members constitutes a quorum. No motion may be officially passed if quorum is not present.
- D. A consensus vote is an informal majority vote. This type of vote will be called for by the President/leader, or motioned upon by another elected member of the board. Consensus voting can be used to include committee chairpersons/members in making decisions as a pre-vote to a motion to gain

insight of what a formal vote will be, or in less serious matters that do not require a formal vote.

- E. COGS General Meetings will take place multiple times per month as scheduled by the President. A 24-hour notice must be given in a case when a special meeting is called. Only one meeting can be called to order within a 24 hour period.
- F. All meetings of the COGS General Members will be open to the University community at all times, unless designated "closed" in advance for the following reasons: (Not applicable to the Ex-Officio members).
  - 1. Should the agenda include discussion of the candidacy of any graduate student(s) for any position. The candidate(s) will not be present at the time of discussion or voting for his/her candidacy;
  - 2. Should the agenda include discussion on the conduct, performance, or action of a COGS voting member, the meeting will be closed to graduate students who are not voting members of that body;
  - 3. Should any voting member wish to address a topic which he/she deems to be sensitive, he/she may motion to close the meeting at any time to all students who are not voting members. This motion will be subject to the approval by a 2/3rds vote of that body;
- G. All votes of the COGS will be recorded and published by the Secretary. By request of any voting member, the ballot of each voting member will be listed in the official minutes.

## **Section 2 - Standing Committees**

- A. Each branch of the COGS will be empowered to form committees within their respective branch for the purpose of conducting the work, responsibilities, and concerns of that branch.
- B. The Executive Board will officially affirm each new committee at the meeting in which the respective voting member requests formal approval.
- C. Each Executive Board Member will appoint committee chairs within their respective branch.
- D. Membership to any committee will be open to the current graduate student population at large.

## **Section 3 – Signing Contracts**

- A. No COGS member has permission to sign any kind of contract without approval from the Dean of Students or the COGS Advisor(s).
- B. In the event that a contract is signed by a COGS member, without approval, it may result in personal financial liability on the part of the person or group of persons who signed the contract. It is not the responsibility of COGS to facilitate money to the club/organization for the fulfillment of the contract in such an instance. COGS will either have to cancel the contract, if possible, or absorb the cost themselves.
- C. It is in COGS best interest to speak to someone in the Student Life Department before putting COGS in jeopardy or at a risk for such a loss.

- D. Only the Dean of Students and COGS Advisor(s) has the authority to sign any and all COGS contracts.

**Section 4 – Fixed Budgets**

- A. Any Graduate Level Academic Program can request a fixed budget.
- B. Graduate students will need to apply for and print out a list of all the expenditures that the academic department may need, however, it is done for the entire school year, and some of the same guidelines would not apply.
- C. Graduate Level Academic Programs are able to apply for use of their allocated budget for any expense deemed appropriate by the COGS Executive Board.
- D. The allocated budget for each Graduate Level Academic Program is \$2,000 for the 2011-2012 academic year.