**Biology Graduate Student Council (BGSC) Constitution**

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**Section 1- Name of the Society**

*The name of the Society is the Biology Graduate Student Council, “BGSC” herein referred to as “The Society”.*

**Section 2- Purpose of the Society**

*The Society aims to represent the interests and needs of biology graduate students and to keep them informed about university and departmental issues. The Society provides a forum for all biology graduate students to voice their opinions on matters important to them: consensus-based decisions are then carried forward by Society-elected and appointed representatives to the relevant university bodies. The Society also seeks to foster interactions between biology graduate students on both social and academic levels.*

**Section 3- Membership**

*Membership in the Society will be limited to graduate students of the Biology Department. All graduate students currently registered (full and part-time) in the Department of Biology are automatically considered members of the Society*.

**Section 4- Members of the Executive Committee**

*The Executive Committee will consist of eleven elected representatives, and any appointed coordinators of* Adhoc *Committees.*

*Elected Representatives*

1. Co-Chair (2)
2. Secretary, Treasurer, and IT Representative (1)
3. Academic Coordinator (1)
4. QUBS Representative (1)
5. Biology Graduate Research Symposium Planning Committee Chair (1)
6. Faculty and RTP Committee Representative (1)
7. SGPS Representative (2)
8. Union Representative (1)
9. Alumni and Graduate Committee Representative (1)
10. Social Coordinator (2)

**Section 5- Duties of the Executive**

*Members of the Executive fulfill specific needs within the Society. These members are expected to attend monthly Society meetings, monthly Executive meetings, and always have the interests of the entire Society at heart. If the Society feels a member of the Executive is not fulfilling his/her obligations, he/she may be removed by the Society by a motion as outlined in Section 7.*

**Section 5.1**

**Elected Representatives**

*All elected representatives are required to attend monthly Society meetings and monthly Executive meetings.*

*Council Co-Chair (2 individuals)*

* Circulates agenda and moderates monthly Executive meetings and monthly Society meetings
* *(Co-Chair with Academic Focus, 1 individual)* Oversees the development of academic initiatives (ex. Graduate Student Resource Database, Biology Graduate Research Symposium) and coordinates project implementation alongside other Executive members
* *(Co-Chair with Social Focus, 1 individual)* Establishes a timeline of social events (ex. Orientation events, Elbow Lake Retreat, Holiday Party) for their term, and implements events alongside other Executive members
* Ensures that consensus-based decisions reached at Executive and Society meetings are carried out by relevant members
* Collects BGSC documentation (including meeting agendas) from Executive members using a suitable online platform (ex. Google Drive through queensbgsc@gmail.com)
* Ensures that incoming Executive members are adequately transitioned by October of their term
* Maintains Departmental Student Council registration status under SGPS regulation
* Ensure adherence to Section 6 of the Constitution during the electoral period

*Secretary, Treasurer, and IT Representative (1 individual)*

* Develops and ensures adherence to Society budget for their elected term, alongside Council Co-Chairs
* Maintain online database of receipts and expenditures (ex. in Google Drive through queensbgsc@gmail.com)
* Records meeting minutes for bi-annual Society meetings and bi-weekly Executive meetings on a suitable online platform (ex. Google Drive through queensbgsc@gmail.com)
* Collects and posts content on Society website, blog, and Facebook platforms, alongside other Society members

*Academic Coordinator (1 individual)*

* Develops and maintains academic initiatives to assist Society members with technical skills, communication skills, and teaching (ex. Graduate Student Resource Database, TA Database, tutor list, hosting workshops)
* Develops graduate student recruitment events and online campaigns (ex. orientation information for new students, blog posts highlighting open graduate positions and student profiles)
* Organizes and presents the annual Graduate Teaching and Mentorship Award

*QUBS Representative (1 individual)*

* Represents the Society on matters pertaining to the management and operation of the Queen’s University Biological Station (QUBS)

*Biology Graduate Research Symposium (BGRS) Planning Committee Chair (1 individual)*

* Recruits for, forms, and leads the BGRS planning committee
* Acts as liaison between the BGRS planning committee and the Executive
* Performs and/or assists in duties pertaining to the planning and execution of the BGRS

*Faculty and RTP Representative (1 individual)*

* Represents the Society’s concerns at monthly Departmental meetings, and is entrusted with a full vote on behalf of the Society
* Represents the Society’s concerns at Renewal, Tenure, and Promotions (RTP) committee meetings, and is entrusted with a full vote on behalf of the Society
* Receives equity training from the Department of Biology and becomes familiar with the collective agreement governing academic professionals at Queen’s
* Only Society members with no conflicts of interest (e.g.: a candidate’s supervisor is up for tenure or review) during the following year are eligible
* Promotes discussion of departmental and university policies affecting graduate students at aforementioned meetings (ex. QGA policies, moderation of external and internal award applications, changes to teaching assistantship contracts)

*SGPS Representative (2 individuals)*

* Attends and represents Society’s concerns at monthly SGPS Council meetings
* Submit written or verbal reports to Executive summarizing monthly SGPS Council proceedings
* Submit written updates to SGPS Council regarding BGSC proceedings

*Union Representative (1 individual)*

* Attends and represents Society’s concerns at monthly Steward’s Council meetings, and is entrusted with a full vote on behalf of the Society
* Submit written or verbal reports to the Executive and the Society pertaining to PSAC 901 proceedings (ex. details of collective bargaining)

*Alumni and Graduate Committee Representative (1 individual)*

* Maintains a database of former Society alumni
* Develops initiatives to educate Society members and foster discussion about career opportunities (ex. maintain LinkedIn group, develop blog posts pertaining to specific careers or alumni interviews)
* Represents the Society’s concerns at monthly Graduate Committee meetings, and is entrusted with a full vote on behalf of the Society
* Promotes discussion of departmental and university policies affecting graduate students at aforementioned meetings (ex. QGA policies, moderation of external and internal award applications, changes to teaching assistantship contracts)

*Social Coordinator (2 individuals)*

* Develops and implements student-centered social events for Society members and associated Department members (ex. Orientation events, Elbow Lake Retreat, Holiday Party)
* Coordinates Department participation in intramural sports activities

***Ad hoc* Committees**

*Ad hoc Committees may be struck by the Society on areas of special interest to members that are not covered by Executive positions, or in which the Society feels a dedicated committee would be more effective. As these committees are primarily interest-driven, its directors are appointed by the Society at general meetings on a case-by-case basis. Areas of special interest could include: community outreach, sustainability-related issues, and hobby-related groups. As* *with elected positions, ad hoc committees are expected to represent the interests of the Society and committee directors will be considered members of the Executive.*

**Section 6 – Electoral Process**

1. By September 1st of each year, a notice of elected positions available for the following year will be served to Society members. All positions are for one-year terms, and if an executive member is unable to complete their full term, a proxy must be appointed to fulfill the remainder of their duties. This proxy must be approved through vote of confidence by the existing Executive.
2. To be considered for a position, candidates will submit a written notification of their candidacy along with a minimum of five signatures from Society members supporting their nomination to the current Secretary by September 15th. Candidates may be nominated for more than one position simultaneously, but may only hold one position for the given year, unless in years of little interest in the Society.
3. In the week of September 15th, a meeting of the Society will be called where the candidates will answer questions from Society members and present their reasons for seeking nomination. By this time, written notifications of candidacy will be posted on the BGSC website.
4. Elections shall be held by secret ballot at the all-candidates meeting. For positions requiring more than one person, the top ranked candidates will be considered the winners. If there are only as many nominees as positions available for a role, a simple yes/no (alternatively 1/0 ranking) vote will be listed on the ballot to determine the outcome of the election for that role.
5. By September 30th, election results will be announced to the Society by the current Secretary.
6. Elected executive members will begin their term on October 1st. During the month of September, they will be considered the executive-elect and will meet with the current executive members to discuss the requirements of their positions.

**Section 7 – Society Meetings**

*Society Meetings*

*Society meetings serve as the primary forum for establishment of Society policies, positions and discussions. It is during these meetings that new concerns are brought forward and future directions are discussed.*

1. Society meetings are held monthly. Meeting location, times, and agendas are advertised to the Society by the Council Co-Chairs, and are open to all members.
2. Decisions made by the Society are primarily consensus-based. In the event that substantial consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a vote at the next meeting. Motions will be considered accepted if passed by a 2/3 majority. Each Society member will receive one vote. Proxy votes may be cast with written permission from the absentee members in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting.
3. A quorum shall consist of three-quarters of the Executive in addition to 5 general Society members.

*Executive Meetings*

*Executive meetings serve to execute projects brought forth through Society meetings and by elected Executive members. It is during these meetings that specific initiatives will be undertaken to better the experiences of Society members.*

1. Executive meetings are held monthly. Meeting location, times, and agendas are advertised to the Executive by the Council Co-Chairs.
2. Decisions made by the Executive are primarily consensus-based. In the event that substantial consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a vote at the next meeting. Motions will be considered accepted if passed by a 2/3 majority. Each Executive member will receive one vote. Proxy votes may be cast with written permission from the absentee members in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting.
3. A quorum shall consist of three-quarters of the Executive.

**Section 8 – Amendments to the Constitution**

*Amendments to the Constitution can represent fundamental shifts in the operation of the Society. As such, every step should be taken to ensure that the entire society membership is aware of proposed changes and has a voice in deciding their fate.*

1. Proposed amendments to the Constitution must be brought to the Council Co-Chairs at least fifteen working days before a Society Meeting, and be signed by at least ten Society members.
2. No later than ten working days prior to the Society Meeting, a notice of the proposed amendment will be circulated to Society members.
3. During the Meeting, time will be allotted to discuss the proposed amendment and a vote will be held according to the guidelines in Section 6.

**Section 9 – Adoption of This Constitution**

This Constitution will come into effect as of September 1st, 2018, contingent on acceptance by a two-thirds majority of Society members. The Constitutional referendum will be held according to the same procedure as outlined in Section 6, with the exception that the ballot will be a Yes/No question and no nominations will be held.

This constitution will be revisited annually and updated as necessary.

**Section 10 – Dissolution of the Society**

The Society can be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of Society members, following the guidelines of Section 9.