

# Engineering Graduate Student Council Constitution

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## Article I – Name and Purpose

### Section 1

The name of this organization shall be the Engineering Graduate Student Council (“EGSC” or the “Council”) and shall consist of graduate students enrolled in the Columbia University Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (the “School” or “SEAS”).

### Section 2

The Council shall be the student governing body of the graduate students of SEAS (the “Students”).

### Section 3

The Council shall:

- A. Serve the Students as a representative body to discuss their issues and concerns.
- B. Foster interaction, friendship, and respect among the Students by sponsoring and organizing events of interest.
- C. Maintain a dialogue with the Administration and Faculty of the School and other graduate schools within Columbia (the “University”), advocating for Student interests when appropriate.
- D. Communicate with other recognized student organizations of the University and the University Senate (the “Senate”), and represent the Students in these organizations.
- E. Appropriate allotted funds to Student organizations recognized by the Council.
- F. Maintain communication with alumni, alumni organizations, and career services to help Students in their professional development.
- G. Disseminate information relevant to the interests of the Students.

### Section 4

The Council shall have any authority necessary and proper to carry out its enumerated purposes in accordance with the rules and procedures of the School set forth by the Administration.

## **Article II – Membership**

### **Section 1**

The Council shall be composed of the Executive Board, a University Senator, department representatives (the “Members” or “DRs”) from each department within SEAS (in addition to the MS in Data Science Program and the Dual MBA/Executive MS in Engineering and Applied Science program), and At-Large members.

### **Section 2**

The number of department representatives per department for the current academic year shall be determined by the graduate student enrollment in each department in the previous year. The Executive Board shall determine the exact number of department representatives for the upcoming academic year during a summer meeting of the Executive Board. The number of at-large members shall be determined by majority vote of the Executive Board.

### **Section 3**

The President shall have final authority on department representative membership in the event of an unanticipated vacancy or Officer term expiration.

### **Section 4**

Each department shall have no fewer than 2 department representatives and no more than 7 department representatives. At least 1 department representative from each department shall be a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD, Masters leading to PhD or Doctoral Track) student or candidate.

### **Section 5**

Members shall be graduate students enrolled in the School for at least one academic semester during the year they are elected.

### **Section 6**

Department representatives shall serve on the Council after election until a new department representative is elected the following fall semester, provided the Member a) does not resign from their position of department representative early b) is not elected to an Officer position or c) remains a student in good academic standing at SEAS.

### **Section 7**

All department representatives shall join, attend, and contribute to at least one committee of the Council.

### **Section 8**

Department Representatives Duties:

- A. Serve as student liaisons between the Council and their respective departments.
- B. Attend departmental meetings and bring up Student issues to these meetings whenever appropriate.
- C. Attend and participate in all Council meetings on behalf of the Students in their department.
- D. Assist and participate in Council events and functions including, but not limited to, those enumerated in this Constitution and By-Laws.

- E. Volunteer and assist at EGSC-sponsored events as designated by the President, for a minimum of 4 hours each semester.
- F. Disseminate information about EGSC events to the Students in their departments.

## **Section 9**

Among the department representatives for each department, there will be one Lead Department Representative ('Lead DR'). The Lead DR will work with the other department representatives and the Council, and be a point person to communicate with the department administration. For departments having Departmental Student Organizations as in Article VIII, the Executive Board will offer the Lead DR position to the President (or equivalent) of the Departmental Student Organization. The organization may also choose to nominate one of their members for this position. If they accept this position, the Lead DR is automatically a Department Representative for the Council as defined in Article II and other by-laws, with applicable duties and responsibilities and the number of Department Representatives determined in Article II Section 4 includes the Lead DR position.

# Article III – Officers

## Section 1

The Executive Board of the Council shall consist of the following Executive Board Officers (“Officers”) and the University Senator, each with responsibilities including, but not limited to, those listed below.

## Section 2

Each Officer shall be elected by the Council as required by Article VII.

## Section 3

The Executive Board term shall begin on the day of the first meeting of the spring semester and end on the day of the first meeting of the following spring semester, except for the University Senator.

## Section 4

Executive Board Officers and duties:

### A. President

- i. Chair the meetings of the Council and Executive Board
- ii. Be responsible for the execution of all resolutions passed by the Council
- iii. Represent the Council at official functions and serve as primary spokesperson of the Council
- iv. Advise the committee chairs to help guide their priorities and agendas
- v. Prepare the agenda for each Council meeting in consultation with the Executive Board
- vi. Conduct all correspondence for the Council as necessary
- vii. Interface with other EGSC-recognized student groups, student councils and organizations to foster dialogue between them and EGSC
- viii. Recruit student representatives for each of the external University-wide committees and work with them to accomplish action items throughout the year

### B. Vice President

- i. Perform the duties of the President in their absence
- ii. Succeed the President in case of vacancy
- iii. Facilitate interactions between student groups (e.g., President’s dinner for orgs)
- iv. Review and approve events for EGSC-recognized organizations

- v. Be the main point of communication with EGSC-recognized organization leaders
- vi. Schedule probationary and full recognition presentation

#### C. Treasurer

- i. Be responsible for all allotted and generated funds of the Council, including the Student Activity Fee
- ii. Keep all financial transactions according to standard accounting procedures
- iii. Prepare a financial report for the Council at the end of every semester
- iv. Inform the Officers and Council about the budget upon request
- v. Request semesterly budgets from all EGSC recognized student groups and approve them as detailed in the Budget Approval Procedure By-Laws
- vi. Chair the Professional Development Scholarship Decision Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee, particularly anonymization of applications prior to the Committee's review and the sending of final allocation notices to applicants.

#### D. Student Affairs Chair

- i. Be responsible for the collection of Student feedback and regularly meet with the Administration of the School to voice Student issues
- ii. Execute of the Quality of Life survey
- iii. Hold the Quality of Life Town Hall
- iv. Correspond with the EGSC chairs and SEAS offices to evaluate the student experience in different categories of the Quality of Life Survey
- v. Chair the Academic Affairs Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee

#### E. Social Chair

- i. Coordinate the organization of all Student social events organized by the Council
- ii. Present a calendar of upcoming social events to the Council at all meetings
- iii. Chair the Social Events Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee

#### F. Career & Alumni Chair

- i. Coordinate the organization of career & alumni events
- ii. Maintain contact with career services and alumni organizations of the School and the University
- iii. Inform the Council about upcoming career-related & alumni-related events
- iv. Chair the Alumni & Career Affairs Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee

#### G. Communications Chair

- i. Determine quorum of half (1/2) of the Council's voting Members at the beginning of each meeting
- ii. Keep complete and accurate records of all Council meetings including, but not limited to, attendance, minutes, and resolutions
- iii. Present such records to the Council when asked
- iv. Arrange for food and beverage to be provided during Council meetings, if appropriate
- v. Chair the Communications Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee
- vi. Coordinate the maintenance of EGSC website content as determined by the Council
- vii. Manage the EGSC Events Google Calendar
- viii. Take the lead on any redesigns of the EGSC website and/or logo

#### H. Interschool Chair

- i. Act as external liaison of the Council to all other student governing bodies of the University
- ii. Maintain relations with University recognized groups and promote cooperation and collaboration in all activities
- iii. Coordinate the organization of interschool events
- iv. Chair the Interschool Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee

#### I. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Chair

- i. Act to support DEI initiatives and events in Graduate SEAS
- ii. Chair the DEI Committee and be responsible for all the duties of the committee

## **Section 5**

The University Senator shall:

- A. Represent the Students in the Senate.
- B. Be elected pursuant to University Statutes and Senate Elections Code.
- C. Be a registered Student of the School for the entire Senate term.
- D. Attend all meetings and assemblies mandated by the Senate.
- E. Report all Senate debates and discussions relevant to the Students of the School at all Council meetings.

## **Section 6**

Additional responsibilities of all Officers:

- A. All duties, regulations, and restrictions as required by the By-Laws of this Constitution.
- B. Attendance at all Executive Board meetings.
- C. Attendance at all Council meetings.
- D. Volunteer and assist at EGSC-sponsored events as designated by the President, for a minimum of 4 hours each semester.
- E. Perform timely transitions to their successors as Officers, no later than two weeks after election. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing of documents, processes, and methods.

## **Section 7**

The 9 Officers and the University Senator shall constitute the Executive Board of the Council.

## **Section 8**

The Executive Board of the Council shall meet at least once a month during the academic year.

# Article IV – Committees

## Section 1

All Members are required to serve on at least one committee during the academic year.

## Section 2

The President shall assign Members to committees after the Members have made their preferences known.

## Section 3

Committees shall meet at least once a month during the academic year.

## Section 4

Students who have joined committees shall have the right to vote at committee meetings.

## Section 5

Committees and duties:

### A. The Student Affairs Committee

- i. Chaired by the Student Affairs Chair
- ii. Maintain connections with the Administration.
- iii. Raise student concerns to the proper authorities.
- iv. Prepare and conduct the annual Student survey.
- v. Prepare a report on the Student survey results to be made public at the annual Town Hall meeting.
- vi. Organize and moderate the annual Town Hall meeting.
- vii. Jurisdiction: All matters pertaining to educational issues and student interaction with faculty and administrators.

### B. The Professional Development Scholarship Decision Committee

- i. Chaired by the Treasurer.
- ii. Convenes once per semester to decide winners of each cycle of the Professional Development Scholarship. Applications shall have been anonymized by the Treasurer before review.

### C. The Social Events Committee

- i. Chaired by the Social Chair.
- ii. Plan, organize, and sponsor recurring and one-time social events (minimum 4 per semester).
- iii. Plan, organize, and volunteer at all Signature Events, as required.

D. The Alumni & Career Affairs Committee

- i. Chaired by the Career & Alumni Chair.
- ii. Keep an updated list of graduating engineering alumni and their contact information.
- iii. Cooperate with the School and University alumni organizations and career services in order to promote the professional development of Students.
- iv. Organize career and alumni events in cooperation with the School and University alumni organizations and career services (minimum 1 per semester).
- v. Organize and prepare Tech Talks during the year.
- vi. Communicate regularly with the SEAS Office of Alumni and Development.
- vii. Communicate regularly with the Columbia Engineering Alumni Association (CEAA) and the Columbia Engineering Young Alumni (CEYA).
- viii. Communicate regularly with the Graduate Career Placement team

E. The Interschool Committee

- i. Chaired by the Interschool Chair.
- ii. Maintain good relations with all University affiliated student bodies by promoting cooperation and collaboration.
- iii. Organize Interschool events in cooperation with other student governing bodies (minimum of 1 per semester).

F. Communications Committee

- i. Chaired by the Communications Chair
- ii. Maintain complete and accurate records of all Council meetings, including, but not limited to, attendance, minutes and resolutions.
- iii. Maintain and update the EGSC website with current or upcoming event flyers, membership, contact information, and all other relevant content as determined by the Council.
- iv. Assist in any redesigns of the EGSC website and logo, including the organization of any School-wide competitions or solicitation of professional work.
- v. Design posters and flyers to advertise events

G. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee

- i. Chaired by the DEI Chair
- ii. Develop and implement programs that foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the Engineering community (Eg. Culture Day food festival, Black History Month Apollo Night).
- iii. Organize workshops, panels, and discussions that raise awareness of issues related to identity, accessibility, and representation (Eg. Women's History Month Panel, LGBTQ+ Lunch and Learn Discussion)
- iv. Interface with EGSC-recognized affinity groups to co-sponsor events

## **Section 6**

The Council may form and dissolve *ad hoc* committees for any purpose, as it deems necessary. The President shall appoint the Chair of *ad hoc* committees.

# **Article V – Meetings**

## **Section 1**

The Council shall hold weekly meetings consisting of Members as defined in Article II.

## **Section 2**

All Members shall be notified of all Council meetings at least five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting.

## **Section 3**

The President or a simple majority vote of the Executive Board may call a special meeting of the Council to discuss issues that need specific and immediate attention.

## **Section 4**

No regular and special meetings shall be convened on weekends or holidays.

## **Section 5**

The agenda for all Council meetings shall include an opportunity for all Members to raise any issues before the Council. The President shall initiate and present these issues to the Council as he/she sees fit.

## **Section 6**

In the event of an emergency that requires immediate action prior to a meeting of the Council, the President, consulting the Executive Board if possible, shall act on behalf of the Council. The President shall be responsible to the Council for these actions.

## **Section 7**

All meetings of the Council shall be open to all Students of the School.

## **Section 8**

No voting shall be conducted or considered binding unless conducted by a duly constituted quorum, defined as at least half (1/2) of voting Members.

## **Section 9**

A simple majority shall constitute the right to pass resolutions and close meetings except for amendments to the Constitution. Amendments to this Constitution and the By-Laws shall pass by simple majority of the Council or two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board. All resolutions and amendments to this Constitution and the By-Laws shall be in effect immediately until repeated unless otherwise stated.

## **Section 10**

All meetings of the Council shall be governed by this Constitution and the By-Laws. The Council may declare special rules consistent with the Constitution and the By-Laws. All other rules of order shall be determined by the President.

## **Section 11**

Attendance to regular and special meetings shall be compulsory for all Members.

## **Section 12**

In the event that a Member is unable to attend a Council meeting, that Member shall contact the President or Communications Chair at least forty-eight hours prior to the scheduled start of the meeting and assign a proxy to represent them during the meeting if necessary.

## **Section 13**

Failure to excuse oneself prior to the start of a Council meeting shall be deemed an unexcused absence and result in a warning regarding Member status by the President or Communications Chair.

## **Section 14**

Two unexcused absences without a proxy in one academic semester may result in removal as a Member and replacement by a newly elected representative, as outlined in Article VII.

## **Section 15**

Members may be represented by proxies up to four (4) times in a given semester; an unexcused absence will count against this four (4) times total.

## **Section 16**

A proxy may be a current Member.

## **Section 17**

A proxy designated by a Member shall not be eligible to vote on any Council resolutions, even if the designated proxy is a current Member.

## **Section 18**

A member shall be considered absent without excuse if they are more than 20 minutes late past the meeting start time.

## **Section 19**

The President or a simple majority vote of the Executive Board shall determine the Council meeting schedule for the summer academic term.

## **Section 20**

During the summer academic term, quorum shall consist of those Members who attend the meeting.

## **Section 21**

During the summer academic term, a simple majority vote shall constitute the right to pass resolutions or close meetings except for the amendments of the Constitution. Amendments to the By-Laws shall pass by simple majority of the Council or two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

# **Article VI – Voting**

## **Section 1**

Voting shall be conducted under the rules and regulations mandated by Article V.

## **Section 2**

The President shall hold the discretion to end any and all debate on a resolution and shall initiate voting procedures as required.

## **Section 3**

The Council shall first vote on the appropriate voting method for the resolution being discussed. This voting method will be a show-of-hands vote, unless otherwise indicated by the President.

## **Section 4**

Appropriate voting methods are:

- A. Voice vote: The President calls for the affirmative vote first, negative vote is called for second and abstentions are called for third.
- B. Show-of-hands vote
- C. Ballot vote: This vote is to be conducted by secret ballot administered by the Vice President. Primarily conducted to protect a voter's right to secrecy.
- D. General consent vote: Informal agreement of the group.

# **Article VII – Elections, Vacancies, Impeachment**

## **Section 1**

Elections for department representatives will take place at the beginning of both the fall and spring semesters, according to the binding agreement between the Council and respective departments. Elections in the spring semester are to be carried out as needed based on vacancies from the previous fall semester, decided upon by the incoming executive board.

## **Section 2**

All department representative candidates will submit applications through the Council. If the number of applicants is less than or equal to the number of available department representative positions for a given department, those applicants will be appointed to the position of department representative for their respective departments. If the number of applicants is greater than the number of available department representative positions for a given department, the current Students of that department will elect their department representatives from the current term's applicant pool (voting method to be determined by the Executive Board).

## **Section 3**

During any semester in which the EGSC holds elections for Department Representatives in any department, students who are graduating at the end of that semester may apply to become Department Representatives. In every department having more applicants than the number of open Department Representative positions, if any of the applicants are not graduating at the end of that election-cycle semester, those applicants will be appointed to the position of department representative, while the remaining applicants will be listed on the ballot as long as a vacancy is available. However, if the number of applicants is less than or equal to the number of open positions, all applicants will be listed on the ballot, regardless of graduation date. Furthermore, students who apply for Department Representative but do not qualify to be listed on the ballot because of graduation restrictions may actively participate in EGSC as nonvoting members, and active participants may apply for At-Large membership in accordance with Article VII, Section 9.

## **Section 4**

For departments where the Departmental Student Organization chooses not to take up the offer outlined in Article II Section 9, and for all other departments, the Lead DR is chosen as follows. Within the fourth meeting of the Fall and Spring semester, after the election of department representatives outlined in Article VII Section 1, the President shall call for open nominations within the department representatives for each department. A selection method (interviews, voting, etc.) determined by the Executive Board shall be used to determine the Lead DR within two weeks of the call for nominations and once appointed, the names shall be announced at a Council meeting. Lead DR selections in the spring semester are to be carried out as needed based on vacancies from the previous fall semester, decided upon by the incoming executive board. The Executive Board can choose to replace the Lead DR with another department representative anytime during the academic year. This decision will be communicated in a Council meeting within two weeks of the change.

## **Section 5**

The Council shall hold elections for Executive Board Officer positions during a regular Council meeting as detailed in the Election By-Laws.

## **Section 6**

Elected Officers shall begin their term of office on the first meeting of the spring semester and end their term on the first meeting of the following spring semester.

## **Section 7**

No member shall hold two offices simultaneously.

## **Section 8**

If a department representative becomes an Officer, their department representative membership shall become vacant except if they are elected as an interim Officer.

## **Section 9**

At-Large members shall be elected by internal election after a probation period of 5 meetings. At the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Council will determine the election of the at-large nominations.

## **Section 10**

In the event of a vacancy in a department representative position, At-Large members serving from the same department shall immediately assume the position of Department Representative. If more than one At-Large member is serving in the same department as the vacancy, an internal election will be held, and the position will be filled by the candidate that receives a majority vote.

## **Section 11**

Department representatives and At-Large members who have taken over a vacancy shall have full voting rights and responsibilities of an elected department representative.

## **Section 12**

If an Officer wishes to remain a Member after their Executive Board term has expired, the President shall reserve the right to name additional department representatives as required.

## **Section 13**

In the event of a vacancy in the Office of the President, the Vice President shall immediately become the President, and the Office of Vice President shall become vacant.

## **Section 14**

For vacancies in other Offices, the President shall appoint a department representative or Executive Officer to serve as an interim Officer until an election may be held. The Council shall follow the voting procedure as detailed by the By-Laws. Interim officers shall serve until December 31.

## **Section 15**

Members who fail to fulfill their responsibilities as stated in Articles II, III, IV, and V, may be issued a Warning by the President. Each subsequent infraction by a Member may result in Second and Third Warnings. Upon receiving a Second Warning, the Member is immediately placed on Probation for the remainder of the semester. If the Member receives a Third Warning, impeachment proceedings will immediately commence.

## **Section 16**

Members may be impeached and removed from office for unethical behavior, failure to adhere to the regulations of the Council, and not fulfilling the responsibilities of the office. Three Warnings need not have

been issued by the President for a Member to be impeached.

### **Section 17**

Motions to impeach a member shall only be introduced by a written memo stating the reasons for removal. All Members shall be notified at least one week prior to impeachment proceedings. The decision may be given by simple majority vote of the Council or two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

# **Article VIII – Revenues and Expenditures**

## **Section 1**

The Council shall have the right to receive allotted funds by the School and the University including, but not limited to, Student Activity fees.

## **Section 2**

The Council may, with the consent of the Administration of the School, introduce concessions or hold events for the Students of the School in order to generate revenue. The Council reserves the right to sell, rent, subcontract, or franchise the proceeds and/or management of such revenue-producing operations.

## **Section 3**

The Council shall exercise exclusive control over the spending of funds obtained under Sections 1 and 2 of this Article. The Council shall spend such funds to further the purposes of this Constitution.

## **Section 4**

The Council shall delegate the right to send its funds to Student organizations.

## **Section 5**

To receive funding, Student organizations shall apply for formal recognition by the Council.

## **Section 6**

Student organizations shall not be recognized by more than one governing body of the School.

## **Section 7**

To apply for Council recognition, Student organizations shall consist mainly of graduate students of SEAS.

## **Section 8**

Recognized Student organizations shall directly foster a strong academic and personal community for Students of SEAS.

## **Section 9**

Recognized Student organizations shall have a membership minimum of at least 10 degree-seeking candidates of the School with the Presidents being degree-seeking candidates of the School.

## **Section 10**

A Student organization shall not duplicate the function and/or stated purpose of any other Student organization recognized by the Council.

## **Section 11**

Any event that is sponsored or co-sponsored by the Council shall be publicized and open to all graduate students in the School.

## **Section 12**

A student organization that is recognized by a department in the School as the sole representative graduate student government for that department shall be referred to as a *Departmental Student Organization*.

## **Section 13**

Funding allocated to Departmental Student Organizations shall not be subject to Section 11 unless the event is co-sponsored by the Council. For these organizations, any event that is sponsored or co-sponsored by the Council shall be open to all graduate students in their respective departments.

## **Section 14**

For Departmental Student Organizations that receive annual funding allocations from the Council, the Council shall advocate for students of the departments to the Administration such that departments provide supplementary funding to the Departmental Student Organizations.

## **Section 15**

Student organizations recognized by another governing body of the University may apply for co-sponsorship of events on an event-by-event basis.

## **Section 16**

Student organizations applying for Council co-sponsorship shall directly foster a strong academic and personal community for Students of SEAS.

## **Section 17**

Recognized Student organizations and student organizations applying for Council co-sponsorship shall be willing to assume financial responsibility for damage caused by the organization to any space or equipment to University facilities, and be willing to accept the Constitution, By-Laws, and decisions made by the Council and attend the necessary training.

## **Section 18**

Recognized Student organizations and student organizations applying for Council co-sponsorship shall provide the Council with any information requested with regards to the organization's sources and uses of funding, be open to all members of the Columbia community regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, veteran's status, or physical ability, and accept all rules mandated by University policy and local, state, and federal law.

## **Section 19**

Recognized Student organizations and student organizations applying for Council co-sponsorship shall give appropriate acknowledgement to the Council as the source of their funding and support in any and all programming and/or promotional material.

## **Section 20**

Recognized Student organizations and student organizations applying for Council co-sponsorship shall be explicit in any and all programming and/or promotional material that the views and opinions of the Student organization do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Council or its Members.

# **Article IX – Ratification, Amendments, Temporary Provisions**

## **Section 1**

This Constitution takes effect as of May 1, 2009 after it has been ratified by a simple majority vote of the Council.

## **Section 2**

Amendments to the By-Laws shall pass by simple majority of the Council or two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

## **Section 3**

For renewal of the Constitution, a ratification vote shall be conducted. All Officers and department representatives have the right to vote. The renewed Constitution shall be in effect by a simple majority vote of the Council or two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board for ratification.

## **Section 4**

The members of the 2008-2009 Council shall elect an Interim Executive Board by no later than May 15, 2009. The election shall be carried out in a regular meeting by a simple majority vote. All of these elected officers shall carry the title of 'Interim' and they shall serve until December 31, 2009.