

**Constitution of the
Graduate Student Assembly,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University,
Blacksburg, Virginia**

September 2000

(Last revision April 7th, 2016)



Preamble

We the graduate students of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, in order to establish representation in University Governance, ensure graduate student welfare, provide programs for graduate student development, promote interdepartmental dialogue, and secure impact and excellence beyond the graduate student body, do establish this Constitution for the Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Article I – Names, Definitions, and Mission

Section 1: Name

This organization shall be known as the Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, hereafter referred to as the “GSA.”

Section 2: Definitions and Governing Documents

- i. The home institution of the GSA, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, shall hereafter be referred to as “Virginia Tech” or the “University.”
- ii. “Graduate students” shall refer to all students enrolled in a graduate or post-graduate professional program in a Department at Virginia Tech.
- iii. A “Department” shall refer to all academic units that offer a degree-granting graduate program and/or a graduate-level professional program as governed by the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, including but not limited to Departments within a College, subunits within a School, interdisciplinary programs administered by multiple Departments and/or Colleges, or a supra-Departmental entity such as a School, a College, or the Graduate School, as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.
- iv. A “GSA Member” shall be a graduate student who meets the definition described in this Constitution.
- v. “Majority” shall be defined as any number of votes that is more than one-half (1/2) of the voting members being in accord.
- vi. “Two-thirds majority” shall be defined as two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present being in accord.
- vii. “Three-fourths majority” shall be defined as three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present being in accord.

- viii. The Constitution of the GSA shall be the governing document in which the purpose, function, mission, powers, and limitations of the GSA are defined. The GSA shall abide by this document when identifying its vision, performing its functions, and fulfilling its mission. If there are any conflicts with other governing documents this Constitution shall take precedence. The final interpretive authority of this Constitution shall be delegated to the Legislative Branch, where its function and process is described in this Constitution. Amendments to this Constitution shall be made in the manner described in this Constitution.
- ix. The Bylaws of the GSA shall be the governing document that enumerates the procedural function of the GSA, the powers and responsibilities of GSA personnel, and other detailed regulations and procedures which the GSA shall abide by while pursuing its mission. The final interpretive authority of the GSA Bylaws shall be delegated to the Legislative Branch of the GSA, where its function and process is described in this Constitution. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be made in the manner described in this Constitution.
- x. Certain personnel, programs, and entities within the GSA may generate their own Codes of Operation. These documents shall serve as recommendations and guidelines concerning operation of those GSA entities. They shall not be binding, but serve as guidance for the proper functioning of the specific GSA entity to which they pertain. Interpretations and changes to these documents rest with the leadership of the GSA entities to which the documents pertain.

Section 3: Purpose, Function, and Mission

The GSA represents the graduate student body of Virginia Tech. The purposes, functions, and missions of the GSA are:

- i. To represent the interests of graduate students in all university activities and to facilitate the exchange of information between the University and Graduate Students;
- ii. To solicit, compile, and promote graduate student opinions and concerns and to develop and recommend policies concerning Graduate Students to the University;
- iii. To cooperate and communicate with the Graduate School of Virginia Tech and other appropriate University administrative bodies to improve the quality of graduate educational programs, graduate academic activities including research, and graduate teaching programs;
- iv. To provide and develop relevant programs for the augmentation of graduate student life and welfare.

Section 4: Membership

- i. All graduate students that meet the definition as described in Article I, Section 2 shall be members of the GSA and are entitled to the services and programs that the GSA provides. GSA members are also eligible to be appointed and elected to leadership positions within the GSA.
- ii. Members of the GSA who are appointed and/or elected to a GSA leadership position in any of its branches shall aspire to support the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

Section 5: Structure

The governing structure of the GSA shall consist of two branches based on the principle of the separation of powers: the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. Judicial matters shall be resolved by the Legislative Branch with advice by the Executive Branch via Judicial Procedures as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

Section 6: Oversight

The GSA receives funding from various sources within the University and therefore shall be subject to financial oversight by those funding entities. The GSA shall maintain a close relationship with the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, and shall engage in dialogue regarding the state of graduate studies at Virginia Tech. The GSA shall receive oversight from the appropriate body within the University, as defined by University Policies pertaining to Student Organizations.

Section 7: Parliamentary Authority

The proceedings of the Legislative Branch of the GSA shall adhere to the appropriate Parliamentary code as described in the GSA Bylaws to ensure effective and fair operations.

Article II – Legislative Branch

Section 1: Legislative Powers

Legislative powers of the GSA shall be vested in the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Assembly, a legislative body consisting of Graduate Students representing their home Departments or non-academic communities, as well as the Executive Council. The Assembly shall exercise its power through

Acts of the Assembly at the advice of its Committees and the Executive Branch, as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

Section 2: Eligibility

- i. All members of GSA shall be eligible to serve as Delegates in the Assembly.
- ii. Any members of the Assembly who no longer fulfill the requirement of GSA membership shall be immediately removed from their positions in the Assembly and its committees and forfeit all duties, privileges, and powers thereof.

Section 3: Composition

- i. Voting members of the General Assembly shall be limited to Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, and Delegates-at-Large, hereafter collectively referred to as the Delegates. Alternates may vote in place of their Delegates if that power shall be temporarily delegated to them, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. All members of the GSA Executive Council, including but not limited to the members of the GSA Executive Board, shall be non-voting members of the Assembly. Non-Executive Board members of the Executive Council who are concurrently voting members of the Assembly shall retain their voting rights.
- iii. Members of the Executive Board shall never have voting rights within the Assembly.
- iv. Other non-voting members of the Assembly may be designated via procedures described in the GSA Bylaws.
- v. Guests attending General Assembly meetings shall be welcomed and their presence recorded and acknowledged by each meeting's minutes, as described in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 4: Representation, Selection, and Terms of Office

- i. Each individual Department, as defined in this Constitution, shall be allotted two (2) voting seats in the Assembly. The Department, after informing its constituents, shall select two (2) GSA members to serve as Departmental Delegates to the Assembly, each occupying one (1) voting seat in the Assembly, according to the selection method described in the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. The selection of Delegates from non-traditional Departments, including but not limited to School Subunits, Interdisciplinary Programs, and Graduate Programs administered by a supra-

- Departmental entity, may be governed by exceptions of the representation regulation described in this Constitution. Such exceptions shall be enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. Each Departmental Delegate shall have one (1) vote in the Assembly, except for the cases noted in this Constitution.
 - iv. In the event that a Department, as defined in this Constitution, is unable to select two (2) voting Delegates to the Assembly, it may, after informing the Executive Board of the GSA, opt to select only one (1) voting Delegate to the Assembly. The Delegate under this exceptional circumstance shall occupy both of the two (2) voting seats allotted to that Department in the Assembly, where it shall have two (2) votes in the Assembly.
 - v. Special Delegates represent graduate student constituents or communities that are significant and distinct from those represented by Departmental Delegates. These communities must be ratified by Majority in the Assembly no less than once (1) every academic year as Department-equivalents, after which they may select and send Special Delegates to the Assembly in a similar way as a Department. If a community fails to be ratified, the Special Delegate seats allocated to that community shall be removed, and the relevant Special Delegates shall forfeit their duties, privileges and powers thereof immediately. Student communities that are designated by the Assembly as Department-equivalents shall be allotted two (2) voting seats. Further related regulations shall be described by the GSA Bylaws.
 - vi. In the event that the Executive Board shall appoint a graduate student who is not a Departmental Delegate, a Special Delegate, or an Executive Board member as a representative of the GSA to the University Council and its Commissions and Committees, the Graduate Student appointee shall be a Delegate-at-Large of the Assembly. Delegates-at-Large shall retain all rights and privileges as a Departmental Delegate, each occupying one (1) voting seat within the Assembly. The creation of each Delegate-at-Large shall be approved by the Assembly as described in the GSA Bylaws, and the total number of the Delegates-at-Large shall never exceed ten percent (10%) of the total voting Delegates of the Assembly.
 - vii. In the event voting Delegates are unable to attend an Assembly meeting, they shall inform the Vice Chair of the Assembly and other relevant Officers of the Assembly of any upcoming absences, and shall provide Alternates, who must be GSA members from the same Departments or communities, to attend in their place. If Delegates are unable to select Alternates from their Departments or communities to attend the Assembly meeting, they may vote by proxy by informing the appropriate Assembly officers before the beginning of the Assembly meeting of their vote on business on the meeting agenda, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. In accordance with this Constitution, amendments to the Constitution and the Bylaws of the GSA shall only be approved by Delegates and/or Alternates in person.
 - viii. Non-voting members within the Assembly shall be granted their seats due to their positions. Other non-voting seats may be created and their occupants selected as described in the GSA Bylaws.
 - ix. Delegates shall take their seats immediately after their selection has been communicated to the Executive Board. The Delegates shall serve in their roles until the day preceding to the first day

of class in the subsequent academic year. Delegates may serve unlimited terms for as long as they are eligible.

Section 5: Officers

The officers of the Assembly are the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Parliamentarian, the Recorder, and the Chairpersons of the Assembly's Standing Committees and Special Committees.

- i. The President of the GSA shall serve as Chair of the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Chair of the Assembly, and shall chair each meeting in accordance with the Parliamentary Authority defined in this Constitution. The Chair of the Assembly shall not participate in voting. The Chair shall remain neutral and impartial to all business before the Delegates, and if unable to do so, be recused from the Chair. If the Chair is unable to perform the duties of the Chair, these duties shall be carried out by the Vice Chair of the Assembly. If both officers are unable to perform the duties of the Chair, the voting Delegates shall elect by majority vote among the present Delegates and Executive Council members a person to serve as Chair pro tempore for that Assembly meeting. The Chair pro tempore, if a Delegate, shall forfeit voting rights for the duration of the tenure as Chair pro tempore.
- ii. The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs of the GSA shall serve as Vice Chair of the General Assembly of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the Vice Chair of the Assembly. The Vice Chair of the Assembly shall assist the Chair of the Assembly during each Assembly meeting. The Vice Chair shall, together with the Parliamentarian, verify attendance of Delegates, and any circumstances involving Alternates, and votes by proxies. In the Chair's absence or in a case in which the Chair is recused, the Vice Chair shall assume full authority and perform all duties of the Chair until the end of that meeting or when the Chair is restored by the Assembly.
- iii. The Parliamentarian of the Assembly shall be responsible for the adherence to the appropriate parliamentary procedures during Assembly meetings. The Parliamentarian shall, together with the Vice Chair, verify attendance of Delegates, and any circumstances involving Alternates and votes by proxies. The Parliamentarian shall concurrently be the chair of the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly with the purview of judicial affairs, and be elected according to the procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. In the event that the Parliamentarian is recused from the Parliamentarian's duties or is otherwise unavailable, the duties of the Parliamentarian of the Assembly shall be delegated temporarily by the Assembly, who will elect by majority a Parliamentarian pro tempore among the present Assembly members.
- iv. The Director of Communications and Secretary of the GSA shall serve as the Recorder of the Assembly and shall prepare agendas and minutes of all Assembly meetings, which shall be made available to all members of the GSA. If the Director of Communications is unable to perform the duty of the Recorder, then the Assembly shall elect a temporary Recorder of that Assembly meeting by majority vote.
- v. Committee Chairpersons shall be elected according to procedures as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws, and shall be responsible for convening and presiding over the Committees, as well as reporting the Committees' work to the Assembly.

- vi. In the event of perceived conflicts of interest of Assembly Officers in the business at hand, the Assembly may compel the Officers in question to recuse themselves for the duration of the deliberations of the business at hand by two-thirds majority.
- vii. All Assembly members with leadership positions as described in this Constitution shall wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 6: Duties and Powers of the General Assembly of the GSA

In accordance with this Constitution, the General Assembly of Delegates shall:

- i. Be the primary deliberative and representative body of the GSA. The Assembly shall represent the diverse voices of graduate students and act in their best interests;
- ii. Elect members of the Executive Board as well as Assembly leadership personnel, and abide by their leadership for as long as they hold the Assembly's confidence. The Assembly shall retain the power to remove Executive Board members and Assembly leadership personnel from their positions via procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws;
- iii. Advise and give its consent to executive appointments made by the Executive Board, whether into the Executive Council or to external entities. The Assembly shall retain the power to withhold consent to executive appointments by Acts of the Assembly;
- iv. Propose and vote upon Acts of the Assembly. These include Resolutions of the GSA, which are legislations detailing the will of the GSA, including but not limited to proposed changes in University Policy, GSA structure, procedure, and programming, which shall be pursued into fruition via the appropriate means;
- v. Retain power to fill, form, and dissolve its Committees. The Assembly shall also retain power to elect as well as dismiss leadership of its Committees. The Assembly shall hear reports from the Committees, and advise the Committees on their business;
- vi. Advise and compel Departmental Delegates, Special Delegates, or Delegates-at-Large who are representing the GSA in University Governance to vote in accord to the Assembly's will in University Council and its Commissions and Committees;
- vii. Advise and approve the GSA annual budget as well as any amendments to the budget according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- viii. Review GSA governing documents and propose amendments according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform further powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 7: Duties and Powers of the Delegates

In accordance with this Constitution, the Delegates of the Assembly shall:

- i. Attend Assembly meetings;
- ii. In the event that they shall be unable to attend an Assembly Meeting, inform the Vice Chair and other relevant Assembly Officers of the upcoming absence, and be represented by Alternates at the meeting, or failing at that, inform Assembly Officers of their vote by proxies;
- iii. Support and perform the duties and powers of the Assembly, as described in this Constitution;
- iv. Inform constituents of GSA proceedings, including and not limited to legislation and programs;
- v. Solicit input from constituents on policies and legislation;
- vi. Be available to their constituents and communicate their concerns and issues to the Assembly;
- vii. Actively participate in at least one (1) service within the GSA including but not limited to the Executive Council, University Governance, Assembly Standing or Special Committees, and Executive Programming Committees, in addition to their services in the Assembly as a whole;
- viii. Have full rights and privileges of speaking, voting, and proposing motions and legislation at all Assembly meetings;
- ix. Be held accountable by the Assembly as a whole on their performance and participation in their duties as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws;
- x. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 8: Duties and Powers of the Alternates

In accordance with this Constitution, the Alternates of the Delegates shall:

- i. Together with the Delegates they are representing, inform the Vice Chair of the Assembly and other relevant Officers of the Assembly of the circumstances of the temporary substitutions;

- ii. Perform and wield all duties and powers of a Delegate only when the Delegate is unable to attend an Assembly meeting, or any other services the Delegate is committed to;
- iii. Vote as directed by the Delegate in absence. An Alternate may choose to vote differently from that direction, without any repercussion, but shall inform the Delegate as to the reasons for the deviation.
- iv. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 9: Duties and Powers of Non-Voting Members of the Assembly

In accordance with this Constitution, the non-voting members of the Assembly shall:

- i. Have full speaking rights and privileges, as well as making proposals through motions during Assembly meetings;
- ii. Not have the power to cast votes in all motions, legislation, and elections under consideration by the Assembly;
- iii. Wield and perform additional powers and duties as enumerated in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 10: Removal and Vacancies of Assembly Members

- i. An Assembly member shall be under consideration for removal from the position if found to be failing to perform the duties described in this Constitution and in the GSA Bylaws. The Executive Board shall make available all appointments, attendance records, and meeting minutes to the rest of GSA. The Assembly member shall be notified at the first available opportunity of the consideration for removal. The removal process, from notification to resolution, shall proceed within a reasonable timeframe not exceeding two sessions of Assembly Meetings, unless an extension is granted by Majority of the Assembly. The member under consideration for removal shall have opportunity to be heard before the Assembly.
- ii. Removal proceedings shall be conducted as a motion of the Assembly, consistent with procedures as defined in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. If removed, the Assembly Member shall immediately forfeit all of the duties and powers given by the position.

- iv. If a Departmental or Special Delegate vacancy is created by any circumstance, the respective Alternate shall fill the vacated seat until such time as a replacement is selected from the represented Department or organization.
- v. If a Delegate-at-Large seat is vacant by any circumstance, the seat shall be removed entirely. The Executive Board may create a new Delegate-at-Large seat subject to approval by the Assembly via procedures as described by this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- vi. Delegates and Alternates who fill vacancies in the middle of an academic year shall only serve until the end of the academic year.
- vii. If members of Standing Committees and/or Special Committees shall be found to be not fulfilling their duties, they may be removed from the Committee by two-thirds majority of the Committee. Such removal shall be recorded and reported to the Assembly.

Section 11: Assembly Meetings

- i. The Assembly as a whole shall meet no less than four (4) times per semester (fall and spring). The Assembly is at recess when the University is not in session during the ordinary academic year.
- ii. The exact meeting time, date, and place shall be determined by the Chair of the Assembly as advised by the Executive Board, and be communicated to all members of the GSA no less than seven (7) days before each meeting.
- iii. All Assembly meetings shall follow a predetermined agenda, as prepared by the Director of Communication as recommended by the Executive Council with advice and consent of the Assembly.
- iv. Special meetings of the Assembly can be convened by the Chair of the Assembly, and shall be scheduled in a manner that allows Delegates no less than seven (7) days of notice in advance.
- v. Quorum shall be met and during the meeting as specified by the GSA Bylaws. In the event a regularly scheduled meeting fails to convene due to the lack of quorum, the Chair of the Assembly shall convene a special meeting in replacement. The quorum requirement shall be not suspended either through Executive action or Assembly action.
- vi. Assembly meetings shall be announced to the rest of the Graduate Students and the University, and be open to all GSA Members and the public. The Assembly may move to enter a closed session by a Majority vote.
- vii. The agendas and minutes of all open meetings of the Assembly shall be made readily available to Members of the GSA as well as the public no later than five (5) days after the conclusion of the

Assembly Meeting. Records of closed meetings shall be classified until made public by action of the Assembly in a Majority vote. Classified Assembly record can be made available to any interested party via legal action.

- viii. In the event of extremely time sensitive business that arises when the Assembly is not scheduled to meet, and a Special Meeting cannot be scheduled in a timely manner, the Chair of the Assembly shall have the authority, with the advice and aid of the Executive Board, to conduct emergency votes electronically as described by the GSA Bylaws. All outcomes of an emergency vote shall be subsequently ratified by the Assembly through the appropriate majority mechanism, depending on the subject matter, in an Assembly meeting in a physical setting. If the emergency vote fails to be ratified, the outcome of the subject matter shall be considered unresolved, and be deliberated within an Assembly meeting. No Constitution and Bylaws changes shall be conducted by electronic votes.

Section 12: Committees of the General Assembly on Delegates

Committees of the Assembly shall be created and perform their functions and duties in accordance to this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

- i. Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be permanent Committees established by the GSA Bylaws. A Standing Committee performs functions vital to Assembly operations. They shall deliberate and report their findings to the Assembly regularly. Voting members of a Standing Committee shall also be voting Delegates of the Assembly.
- ii. Special Committees of the Assembly shall be created and dissolved by Acts of the Assembly by a majority vote. Each Special Committee shall deliberate and report on a specific matter deemed necessary by the Assembly. The composition of each special committee shall be determined by the Assembly. Voting members of a Standing Committee shall also be GSA members.
- iii. All Committees of the Assembly shall be subordinated to the Assembly itself. All outcomes of Committee deliberation shall be subjected to review, confirmation, referral, and rejection by the Assembly.
- iv. All deliberations of Committees shall be recorded in the minutes, which shall be made available to all GSA Members and the public. The Committees may decide to classify their records. Classified Committee records shall be made public if the Assembly votes to do so with a majority vote. Classified records shall be made available to any interested party via legal action.
- v. All Committees of the Assembly shall operate in accordance to procedures as specified by the GSA Bylaws.

Section 13: Referendums and Petitions

- i. Any business of the Assembly may be referred to a general referendum to the entire membership body of the GSA if so motioned and thereafter confirmed by a majority Assembly vote. The outcome of the referendum, if it shall be found valid, shall be considered equivalent to an Act of the Assembly. Referendums shall be conducted in accordance to the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. Any Members of the GSA may submit petitions to the Assembly provided they collect sufficient verified representations as described in the GSA Bylaws. The Assembly shall be compelled to deliberate the subject matter addressed by such petitions and reach a reasonable outcome in each case.

Article III – Executive Branch

Section 1. Executive Powers

Executive powers of the GSA shall be vested in GSA Executive Council, headed by an Executive Board comprised of Officers elected by the Assembly. Executive powers are granted by the will of the elected General Assembly of Delegates, who, as the legislative branch of GSA, represent the will of all GSA members.

Section 2: Composition of the Executive Council

In accordance to this Constitution, the Executive Council shall be composed of:

- i. All voting members of the Executive Board, with the President of the GSA acting as Chair;
- ii. The Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors;
- iii. The Chairpersons of all Standing Committees of the Assembly;
- iv. The Chairpersons of all active Special Committees of the Assembly;
- v. The Chairpersons of all Executive Programming Committees;

- vi. Additional GSA members as appointed by the Executive Board.

The Executive Council may regularly invite guests to its proceedings to serve in advisory roles, including but not limited to staff support as provided by the University.

Section 3: Functions and Duties of the Executive Council

Executive Council members shall hold no additional powers except for those that are granted by the virtue of their positions. In accordance to this Constitution, the Executive Council shall:

- i. Meet at a minimum once (1) before each Assembly meeting to deliberate the agenda of the Assembly meeting and other relevant businesses, no less than seven (7) days before each Assembly meeting;
- ii. Record all deliberations of the Executive Council on minutes, which shall be made available to GSA Members and the public. The Council may decide to classify its records. Classified Council records shall be made public if the Assembly votes to do so with a Majority vote. Classified records can be made available to any interested parties via relevant legal action;
- iii. Invite guests to Executive Council meetings as appropriate;
- iv. Perform further functions and duties as described in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 4: Composition of the Executive Board

The Executive Board is comprised of all elected officers of the GSA, as well as the Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. Positions within the Executive Board shall not grant voting rights within the Assembly. The members of the Executive Board, in order of succession, shall be:

- i. The President;
- ii. The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs;
- iii. The Director of Programs;

- iv. The Director of Finance and Treasurer;
- v. The Director of Communications and Secretary;
- vi. The Director of Events.

The Graduate Student Representative to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors is a full member of the GSA Executive Board, but shall not be listed in the order of succession. Staff as provided by the University shall participate in the activities and proceedings of the Executive Board in a manner appropriate to their individual roles.

Section 5: Election and Eligibility of the Executive Board Members

- i. Each member of the Executive Board shall be a member of the GSA.
- ii. Members of the Executive Board may not be voting Delegates of the Assembly. In the event that voting Delegates of the Assembly shall be elected as members of the Executive Board, they shall forfeit their positions as voting Delegates, and surrender all rights from those positions when they assume office.
- iii. Members of the GSA shall not concurrently run for election for more than one (1) Executive Board post except when given consent by the Assembly in a two-thirds majority vote.
- iv. The terms of elected Executive Board officers ends on June 1st of each year. Newly elected Executive Board members take office immediately after their predecessors' terms end.
- v. All members of the Executive Board may not serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms in the same posts. Consent shall be given by the Assembly in a two-thirds majority if outgoing Executive Board members wish to run for election for the same post beyond their term limits.
- vi. All members of the Executive Board will be elected by the General Assembly of Delegates no later than the last Assembly meeting of the academic year, in accordance with the election procedure described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

Section 6: Powers and Duties of the Executive Board

The Executive Board of the GSA is vested with executive power by the Assembly to ensure the effective operation of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Executive Board as a whole shall:

- i. Be collectively responsible for the effective operation of the GSA and for fulfilling the purpose, function, and mission of the GSA as described in this Constitution;
- ii. Report to the Assembly individually with respect to each member's responsibilities at each Assembly meeting;
- iii. In the event of diverging opinions, come to a decision by compromise, consensus after deliberation, or majority vote, and thereafter be collectively supportive of and responsible for the final decision;
- iv. Keep records of Executive Board meetings, and make records available upon request, and, in the case of closed session records, make them available upon Acts of the Assembly;
- v. Be responsive to inquiries and recommendations from Assembly members pertaining to all operations of the GSA;
- vi. Operate under the leadership of the President and be held accountable to the Assembly regarding the performance of the Executive Board's duties;
- vii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 7: Powers and Duties of the President

The President of the GSA, hereafter referred to as the President, shall be the representative voice of all GSA Members. As the chief executive officer of the GSA, the President communicates on the behalf of all GSA Members to University administrators, faculty, staff, undergraduate students, the Blacksburg community, and other external bodies. The President sets the tone and overall strategic plan of the GSA as advised by the Executive Council, and is accountable to as well as empowered by the Assembly. With assistance from the rest of the Executive Board, the President shall identify, communicate, and pursue graduate student interests within the University. In accordance to this Constitution, the President shall:

- i. Represent the GSA and graduate student interests at all official functions and meetings as appropriate;
- ii. Lead each Executive Council meeting and with its advice generate agendas for Assembly meetings;
- iii. Act as Chair of the Assembly and conduct Assembly Meetings as an impartial chairperson;
- iv. Coordinate the duties and responsibilities of other Executive Board members;
- v. Lay out the strategy and execute all Resolutions adopted by the Assembly;
- vi. Provide information to the Assembly regarding matters of graduate student welfare and University policies;

- vii. Represent the GSA on University Council Commissions and Committees;
- viii. Be in close contact with relevant University entities, including but not limited to the Graduate School and the Division of Student Affairs;
- ix. Work closely with the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors and attend Board of Visitors meetings to ensure effective communication of graduate student issues to the Board of Visitors;
- x. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific topics relevant to the GSA, and reporting their findings to the Assembly;
- xi. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of all Committees and Working Groups of the GSA;
- xii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of the GSA.

Section 8: Powers and Duties of the Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs

The Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs, hereafter referred to as the Vice President, shall be the chief administrative officer of the GSA, and also the chief advisor to the President and the Executive Board especially in matters of University governance. The Vice President shall be responsible for ensuring effective internal operation within the GSA, including and not limited to executive appointments, maintaining the Delegate roster, and recording and encouraging Delegate participation. The Vice President shall partner with and assist the President in fulfilling the purpose, function, and mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Vice President and Director of Legislative Affairs shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President, especially on matters related to University policies;
- ii. With the consent of the Assembly and the advice of the Executive Board, make all executive appointments and nominations except for personnel pertaining to GSA Programs;
- iii. With the consent of the Assembly, nominate GSA members as representatives of the GSA to University governance bodies, including the University Council, its Commissions, and its Committees, subjected to final appointment decisions made by the University administration;
- iv. Coordinate the activities of the representatives to University governance bodies, collect all information about University governance activities from the representatives, and compile the relevant information into University Governance Reports to be presented at each Assembly Meeting;
- v. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific University policy development, and report their findings to the Assembly;

- vi. Ensure that there is adequate representation in the Assembly of all Departments of the University, and oversee and maintain information about their participation and activities in the GSA;
- vii. Serve as the Vice Chair of the Assembly;
- viii. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees;
- ix. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of all Committees and Working Groups of the GSA;
- x. Perform all presidential duties described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws if the President becomes unavailable;
- xi. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 9: Powers and Duties of the Director of Programs

The Director of Programs shall be the chief operating officer for all programs, including but not limited to funding programs organized by the GSA. In this context, GSA Programs shall be defined as participation-based services and events that require long term planning and budgeting, in accordance with this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The Director of Programs shall be ultimately responsible for the effective operation of all programs provided by the GSA pursuant to the mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Programs shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to GSA programs and events;
- ii. With the assistance of the Chairpersons of Programming Committees, report relevant activities to the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- iii. Coordinate the efforts of the Chairpersons of Programming Committees;
- iv. Be ultimately responsible for the execution and development of all GSA Programs;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees;
- vi. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to review and discuss specific GSA Programs and potential new programs that adhere to the mission of the GSA, and report findings to the Assembly;
- vii. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of relevant Committees of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;

- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 10: Powers and Duties of the Director of Finance and Treasurer

The Director of Finance and Treasurer, hereafter referred to as the Director of Finance, shall be the chief financial officer of the GSA. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for all financial matters within the GSA, and advise both the Executive Council and the Assembly of the financial situation of the GSA as appropriate. The Director of Finance shall work closely with other members of the Executive Board to ensure there are sufficient funds for the effective operation of all aspects of the GSA. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for identifying funding sources, and the drafting of the GSA annual budget, to be approved and adopted by the Assembly. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Finance and Treasurer shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Council on all matters related to the finances of the GSA;
- ii. Maintain accounts and records of all GSA financial transactions, deposits, and disbursements;
- iii. Draft the annual budget for the GSA to be approved by the Assembly according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws;
- iv. Report to the Assembly at each meeting the financial situation of the GSA, while advising the Assembly on all matters related to GSA finance;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committee;
- vi. With the aid and advice of the Executive Board, explore and maintain external funding sources as appropriate in order for the GSA to adhere to its mission;
- vii. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to explore and discuss specific topics related to the finances of the GSA, and report findings to the Assembly;
- viii. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of relevant Committees and Commissions of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 11: Powers and Duties of the Director of Communications and Secretary

The Director of Communications and Secretary, hereafter referred to as the Director of Communications, shall be the chief communications officer of the GSA. With the advice of the Assembly and the Executive

Board, the Director of Communications shall be responsible for all official communications originating from the GSA. The Director of Communications shall ensure activities within the GSA are communicated in an effective manner to all interested parties, and maintain an appropriate public relations campaign, including but not limited to letters, websites, and social media. The Director of Communications shall also be responsible for the archival of all GSA documents. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Communications and Secretary shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to the communications and public relations of the GSA;
- ii. Maintain the archive of all GSA documents, including but not limited to Assembly agendas and minutes, governing documents, and resolutions;
- iii. Draft official communications of the GSA, subject to approval by the appropriate bodies within the GSA;
- iv. Serve as the Recorder of the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees;
- vi. Maintain an appropriate presence of the GSA in the media, including but not limited to, the University Relations publications, the GSA Website, and social media;
- vii. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to explore and discuss specific topics related to public relations of the GSA and report findings to the Assembly;
- viii. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of relevant Committees and Commissions of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- ix. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 12. Powers and Duties of the Director of Events

The Director of Events shall be the chief operating officer for all GSA Events, which in this context shall be defined as attendance-based events and services that further the GSA Mission, including but not limited to social and intellectual development events organized by the GSA. The Director of Events shall be ultimately responsible for the effective operation of all GSA Events organized by the GSA in pursuant to the mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, the Director of Events shall:

- i. Advise and assist the President and other members of the Executive Board on all matters related to GSA Events;

- ii. With the assistance of the Chairpersons of Event Committees, report relevant activities to the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- iii. Coordinate the efforts of the Chairpersons of Event Committees;
- iv. Be ultimately responsible for the execution and development of all GSA Events;
- v. Represent the GSA in University Council Commissions and Committees;
- vi. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to review and discuss specific GSA Events and potential new Events that pursue the mission of the GSA, and report findings to the Assembly;
- vii. Provide information as needed for the effective operation of relevant Committees of the GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws;
- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 13. The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors of Virginia Tech

The Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors, hereafter referred to as the BoV Representative, shall be the representative voice of all graduate students to the Board of Visitors of the University. Guidelines for the nomination of BoV Representatives candidates shall be outlined in the GSA Bylaws. While appointed by the Board of Visitors, the BoV Representative shall be an integral part of the GSA by participating in relevant discussion and planning so as to effectively and accurately report the state of graduate students' lives to the Board of Visitors as well as advocate for the adoption of University Policies and activities that adhere to the mission of the GSA. While a part of the GSA, the BoV Representative has responsibilities and duties as administered elsewhere in the University, which are not enumerated in GSA documents. In accordance with this Constitution, the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors, in addition to the duties and powers granted through the position, shall:

- i. Report relevant activities of the Board of Visitors to the Assembly at each Assembly Meeting;
- ii. With the advice of the Assembly and the Executive Board, draft and present the Graduate Student Constituency Report to the Board of Visitors at each of its meetings;
- iii. Advise other members and participate in the strategic planning of relevant GSA activities, and be able to utilize resources accessible by the Executive Board, including but not limited to staff support provided by the University;
- iv. Partner with the President as the representative voice of graduate students, primarily to the Board of Visitors, advocating for the betterment of graduate student life;
- v. With the advice of the Executive Council, create and convene Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific topics relevant to the GSA, and report findings to the Assembly;

- vi. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 14: Executive Working Groups

Members of the Executive Board may form Executive Working Groups as they see fit to facilitate their functions and duties. These Working Groups shall not make any binding decisions; their activities shall be considered as an extension to those performed by the Executive Board, subject to Assembly scrutiny.

Section 15: Removal and Vacancies of Elected Executive Board Members

- i. Removal of an elected Executive Board member shall be initiated as a motion of no confidence by an Assembly member and approved by majority, consistent with procedures as defined in the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. An elected Executive Board member who fails to maintain the confidence of the Assembly shall receive written notice of the charges and shall have an opportunity to be heard before the Assembly. All investigation and initial hearings shall be conducted by the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the GSA Bylaws.
- iii. The final removal decision shall be determined by an Act of the Assembly by two-thirds majority. The removal procedures, from notification to removal or acquittal shall not exceed ten (10) days unless an extension shall be granted by majority of the Assembly.
- iv. If removed, the Executive Board Officer shall immediately forfeit all of the duties and powers given by the position.
- v. If an Executive Board position shall be vacant by any circumstance, the duties of the removed officer shall be temporarily assumed by the officer next in the line of succession, unless the Assembly shall decide otherwise via majority vote, or the officer next-in-line shall refuse. If the officer next-in-line accepts, that person shall carry out both the previous duties and the duties of the vacant officer post.
- vi. A special election shall be scheduled at an upcoming Assembly meeting, as soon as possible, no later than ten (10) days after the vacancy was created, with the option of an extension to a total of thirty (30) days after the vacancy was created if consent is given by the Assembly via majority vote.
- vii. The incoming Executive Board member, filling a vacancy in the middle of a school year, shall only serve until the end of the current Executive Board term.

- viii. The Graduate Representative to the Board of Visitors cannot be removed from that position by Acts of the Assembly. However, the Assembly retains the right to bar the Graduate Representative to the BoV from involvement, powers, and duties within the GSA following a similar process as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.

Section 16. University Staff Support to the GSA

University policies guarantee staff support from the University to the GSA as a student organization of the appropriate category. The appropriate University unit shall provide a staff advisor to the GSA, who shall serve as a resource to GSA student leaders to advance the mission of the organization. Additional personnel support may be provided at the discretion of the University.

Section 17. The Dean of the Graduate School

The Vice President for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School of the University, hereafter referred to as the Dean of the Graduate School, shall be the strategic advisor and partner for the advancement of the mission of the GSA for the Executive Board. The Dean of the Graduate School shall share with the Assembly developments, initiatives, and activities within the Graduate School and solicit input from Assembly Members as appropriate.

Section 18. Delegates selected to represent the GSA within University Governance

Delegates selected to represent the GSA in the University governance bodies, including the University Council and its Commissions and Committees, shall wield and perform executive powers and duties additional to those granted by their positions as Delegates. These Delegates shall be the primary representing voices of graduate students in specific aspects of University governance. They shall report to the Vice President as well as to the Assembly all relevant activities from the University governance bodies in order to advocate and pursue the Mission of the GSA. In accordance with this Constitution, Delegates selected to represent the GSA within University Governance, in addition to the powers and duties granted by their position as Delegates, shall:

- i. Be appointed by the Executive Board at the recommendation of the Vice President and with the consent of the Assembly according to the procedures described in the GSA Bylaws, and may be dismissed from their position as representatives by the Executive Board if found to be performing in an unsatisfactory manner;

- ii. Attend University governance meetings, including meetings of the University Council, and/or its Commissions and Committees, as appropriate to their appointments;
- iii. Actively participate in all discussions in meetings of the University governance bodies, advocate for graduate students when appropriate, and offer graduate student perspectives in all other deliberations;
- iv. Communicate all information and activities that they are aware of in University governance to the Vice President of the GSA and report to the Assembly as appropriate;
- v. In the case of an imminent vote on a University Resolution, report and deliver all relevant information and documents to the Vice President of the GSA in a timely manner for distribution within the GSA;
- vi. With the advice of the Assembly, vote according to the will of the Graduate Students;
- vii. Immediately inform the Vice President of the GSA if unable to attend a meeting, such that Alternates from the GSA might be selected according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws to attend in their place.
- viii. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Section 19. The Chairpersons of Committees of the Assembly

Delegates selected to chair Committees of the Assembly, including Standing Committees and Special Committees, in addition to their legislative responsibility as Delegates as well as Committee Chairpersons, shall wield and perform additional Executive powers and duties for the effective cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of the GSA. They shall serve as the legislative advisors to Executive Board members, according to their role as described in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 20. GSA Programs and Events

GSA Programs shall be created to promote the mission of GSA as described in the GSA Bylaws, and may only be created or removed by Acts of the Assembly and amendments to the GSA Bylaws. GSA Programs shall be participation-based services and events that require long term budgeting. In this context, participation-based services and events shall be defined by their requirement of a formal application to the GSA in order to participate in the GSA Program.

GSA Events shall generally be attendance-based events and services provided by the GSA to further its Mission, and may be created or removed by the Executive Board at the advice of the Director of Events, subjected to budgetary and financial constraints as prescribed by the Assembly, in accordance to the

procedures as described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. Attendance based events and services are defined by their lack of a required formal application in order to attend the GSA Event.

Section 21. Executive Programming Committees

Executive Programming Committees of the Executive Council shall be responsible for operating each GSA program as specified in the GSA Bylaws. Members of Executive Programming Committees shall be recruited from Graduate Students by the Program Chairs via procedures described in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 22. The Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees

The Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees, hereafter referred to as Program Chairs, shall be the managers of each GSA Program, responsible for the day-to-day preparation and development of GSA Programs. Program Chairs shall be appointed by the Executive Board according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws. The Program Chairs shall report to the Director of Programs and the Executive Board on the preparation and execution of the GSA Programs they are responsible for. In accordance with this Constitution, the Chairpersons of Executive Programming Committees shall:

- i. Recruit from the GSA Executive Programming Committees members for the effective operation of GSA Programs;
- ii. Develop and execute GSA Programs in an effective manner to enact the Mission of the GSA;
- iii. Report to the Director of Programs and the Executive Board, and cooperate in amending GSA Programs operation procedures;
- iv. Report to the Assembly relevant GSA Programs activities and information, and solicit input;
- v. Wield and perform other powers and duties as described in the Bylaws of GSA.

Article IV – Judicial Procedures

Section 1. Judicial Powers

Judicial Powers of the GSA shall ultimately rest with the Delegates of the Assembly, who collectively represent the will of the diverse Graduate Student population in the University. The Parliamentarian, in the role of the Chair of the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly with the main purview of judicial matters, shall advise the Assembly on interpretation of this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The Assembly as a whole shall delegate initial judicial jurisdiction to the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly, according to procedures described in the GSA Bylaws, while the Assembly as a whole shall hold final appellate jurisdiction.

Section 2. Initial Jurisdiction

All judicial disputes, including but not limited to the constitutionality of all GSA activities and removal procedures, shall be delegated to the relevant Assembly Standing Committee as described in the GSA Bylaws, which holds initial jurisdiction. Members of the relevant Assembly Standing Committee holding initial jurisdiction shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and recuse themselves or otherwise be removed by Acts of the Assembly. Those who hold initial jurisdiction shall be responsible for the investigation and synthesis of information related to the dispute. They shall report all findings and recommendations to the Assembly, who may ratify the recommendations. Upon ratification, the recommendation shall be enacted as an Act of the Assembly. Initial judicial process shall adhere to procedures as detailed in the GSA Bylaws.

Section 3. Appellate Jurisdiction

Any involved party within the dispute may appeal the ratified recommendation put forth by the Standing Committee of the Assembly with initial jurisdiction, no later than seven (7) days since the ratification by submitting a formal appeal to the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly. The appeal shall state reasonable grounds, which shall only be the introduction of new evidence, or failure to adhere to proper procedures during prior Judicial Procedures. The appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly shall notify the Assembly of the appeal, and the Assembly shall determine the validity of the appeal. If the appeal is found valid, the Assembly may refer the case to the original Standing Committee, refer the case to a Special Committee, or by Acts of the Assembly determine the fate of the case. If the appeal is found invalid, the previous decision shall stand. The appeal process shall adhere to procedures detailed in the GSA Bylaws.

Article V – Election and Appointment Procedures

The Assembly, acting as the represented will of all GSA members, shall grant executive powers to the members of the Executive Board, as well as leadership responsibilities in the Assembly to the Officers of the Assembly, by electing them to their positions, according to procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The Executive Board shall make all executive appointments, and shall report these appointments to the Assembly.

- i. All members of the Executive Board, with the exception of the Graduate Representative to the Board of Visitors, shall be elected by the General Assembly of Delegates in person, no later than the last Assembly meeting of the academic year in accordance with the election procedure described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws. The vote shall be rescheduled only if given explicit consent by the Assembly.
- ii. Executive Board members shall be elected by majority vote at the Assembly via secret ballot. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the two candidates receiving the largest pluralities will immediately participate in a run-off election, the winner of which shall be determined by a majority vote.
- iii. Executive Board election shall be conducted by one or more Election Officers, nominated by the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly, and confirmed by the Assembly, as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- iv. Candidates running for Executive Board positions shall reveal their intent no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting immediately prior to the Assembly Meeting when the election shall take place. Candidates shall be admitted to the election past this deadline only if given explicit consent by the Assembly.
- v. Candidates of Chairpersons of Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be nominated by any members of the Assembly during the first Assembly meeting of the fall semester. They are elected by majority vote of the Assembly, no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting immediately subsequent to the Assembly meeting when nominations take place. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the two candidates receiving the largest pluralities will immediately participate in a run-off election, the winner of which shall be determined by a majority vote.
- vi. Chairpersons of Special Committees may be nominated at the Committee's formation, or by its members during its first meeting. The Chairperson of any Special Committee shall be confirmed by the Assembly no later than the regularly scheduled Assembly meeting subsequent to the Assembly meeting when the Special Committee was formed.
- vii. Other officers of Standing Committees and Special Committees of the Assembly shall be elected by the Committee's membership, and reported to the Assembly, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- viii. Delegates selected to represent the GSA within University governance shall be nominated by the Executive Board, and confirmed by the Assembly, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws.
- ix. The Executive Board shall make executive appointments to leadership positions in Executive Programming Committees, according to procedures as described in the GSA Bylaws. These auxiliary appointments shall be reported to the Assembly.

- x. The Executive Board shall make other executive auxiliary appointments to external bodies not part of the University governance structure as described by the Constitution of the University Council. These auxiliary appointments shall be reported to the Assembly.

Article VI – Amendments and Replacements

Section 1. Amendments

- i. All amendments to this Constitution shall only be enacted by Acts of the Assembly in accordance with procedures described in this Constitution and the GSA Bylaws.
- ii. Amendments to the Constitution shall be considered no earlier than the second Assembly meeting of the academic year, and approved no later than the Assembly meeting prior to elections.
- iii. Amendments shall not be both proposed and voted on within the same Assembly meeting, unless such requirement is waived by a two-thirds majority vote.
- iv. Once proposed, amendments shall be voted on by the Assembly within sixty (60) days; otherwise, the amendment dies.
- v. Constitutional amendments shall always be proposed and approved in person in an Assembly meeting, and never electronically.
- vi. The Graduate School and the relevant University governance Commission and/or Committee whose main purview is matters related to graduate academics shall be notified of the proposed amendments, where recommendations may be deliberated.
- vii. All amendments shall require a three-fourths majority in the assembly to be approved.
- viii. The amended Constitution shall be considered by the relevant oversight Commissions and/or Committees within the University governance structure, whose main purview is student life and student organizations, which may approve it, refer it back to the Assembly with comments, or reject the proposed constitution in its entirety, in accordance with University policies.
- ix. Upon approval by the appropriate body within the University governance structure the amended Constitution shall take effect immediately, unless specified otherwise by the amendment itself.
- x. Once adopted and approved, the amended GSA Constitution shall be provided to all members of the Assembly, and be made available to all graduate students and the public.

Section 2. Replacement

If this Constitution shall be replaced by a new document, it is subject to the same procedures as if it were amended.