

Graduate Student Council Constitution Outline

I. Preamble

In order to better facilitate communication and organization amongst the graduate students of the University of Washington, Department of Physics and between the students and the department at large, we the undersigned propose to form a student council. Only through regular discussion between students about issues pertaining to the graduate experience can we find a way to give voice to the opinions of all students. By interacting with a body that formally represents student views, the department can adequately ascertain and serve the needs of all students. We recognize that creating an avenue for structured interaction with the department's administration can alleviate frustration students may feel while working toward their advanced physics degree as well as empower students to actively pursue projects that might improve their overall experience. This council will serve as a forum for students to share ideas and concerns with each other and their elected representatives. In addition it will provide a framework for launching student initiatives. By opening a space within the department of which we can take ownership, we hope to foster a greater sense of community and satisfaction.

II. Scope

The primary mission of the Physics Graduate Student Council (PGSC) is to focus on issues that are of interest or concern to the graduate student body at large. The PGSC may also choose to discuss and address issues which pertain primarily to a subset of graduate students (e.g. theorists, women, students of color, non-academic-track students, international students, students with families, etc.). The council shall work under the premise that making physics accessible and accepting to people from all backgrounds benefits the department, its members, and the field as a whole.

III. Membership

A. Spokesperson

- i. The Spokesperson has the following responsibilities:
 - To prepare agendas for and run meetings of the council
 - To act as the point-of-contact for communication between the students and the Physics Department Chair
 - To bring to the attention of the students administrative requests for student assistance
 - To represent the interests of the physics graduate students
 - To uphold the guidelines put forth in this constitution
- ii. The Spokesperson is to be elected annually by physics graduate students through a simple majority of the votes cast

- iii. In the event that the post of Spokesperson becomes vacant, a special election will be held and a new Spokesperson elected by physics graduate students through a simple majority of the votes cast

B. Secretary

- i. The Secretary has the following responsibilities:
 - To take meeting minutes and collect reports from the elected committee representatives
 - To synthesize written committee reports
 - To report the above information to the physics graduate students after each council meeting
 - To archive minutes and other communications
- ii. The Secretary is to be elected annually by physics graduate students through a simple majority of the votes cast
- iii. In the event that the post of Secretary becomes vacant, a special election will be held and a new Secretary elected by physics graduate students through a simple majority of the votes cast

C. Committee Representatives

The following physics students are expected to attend each general meeting of this council:

- one Graduate Committee representative
- one Qualifying Examination Committee representative
- the Teaching Assistant Committee representative
- one Faculty Observer
- one Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) senator

D. General Membership

Meetings of this council are open to all physics graduate students

IV. Procedures

A. Meeting Preparation

- i. Reports
 - a. Each elected member of the PGSC shall prepare a brief report enumerating recent events concerning their respective committee/organization
 - b. These reports should be transmitted to the PGSC Secretary not less than twenty-four hours before each PGSC meeting
- ii. Additional agenda items should be transmitted to the PGSC Spokesperson not less than twenty-four hours before each PGSC meeting
- iii. The PGSC Spokesperson should compile and distribute the agenda for each meeting by close of business on the day before each PGSC meeting

B. Meeting Structure

- i. Bi-weekly council meetings will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Reports from elected representatives
 - Discussions of student initiated proposals/projects
 - Discussions of items brought to the Spokesperson by the Department Chair
 - Proposal of special topic and working group meetings
- ii. Special topic meetings will be used to:
 - Discuss issues of concern to the majority of graduate students (e.g. qualifying examination, time to degree, course requirements/offerings, advising, etc.)
 - Provide a forum for all graduate students to share their opinions on specific issues
- iii. Working group meetings will be small group discussion used to:
 - Plan student activities
 - Create solutions to particular issues brought up in other meetings

V. Amendment

Amendments to this constitution shall be approved by physics graduate students through a simple majority of the votes cast.

IV. Ratification

This constitution shall be ratified by two-thirds of all physics graduate students.