# GSA Representative Handbook 2015-2016

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Welcome to the Baylor Graduate Student Association!

Thank you for committing your time and energy to GSA! During the 2014-2015 academic year, the GSA Executive Cabinet and representatives worked hard to ensure that graduate students became recognized as good citizens of both the Baylor and Waco communities. To that end, we successfully implemented many new programs that increased graduate student involvement within the university and the city, such as two graduate student weekends at the Waco farmers market and the Graduate-Undergraduate Mentorship Program. We also experienced unprecedented attendance rates for the Tailgate, 3-Minute Thesis Competition, and the Graduate Student Appreciation Picnic.

The incoming Executive Cabinet is committed to strengthening GSA's new vision for fostering good citizenship among graduate students and encouraging a holistic approach to graduate education. Your involvement as a representative or alternate representative is crucial to GSA's success. Your ideas and support will enable GSA to continue moving forward to even greater achievements in the coming year. We look forward to working with you!

Elise Leal, President
History, 3rd Year Ph.D. Student

Channing Cochran, Vice-President
Clinical Psychology, 2nd Year Psy.D. Student

Alyssa Gerhardt, Director of Operations
History, 4th Year Ph.D. Student

Marjorie Jeffrey, Director of Outreach
Political Science, 4th Year Ph.D. Student
GSA Mission Statement

The Baylor University Graduate Student Association is a community that strives to enrich the quality of academic and social life for students of each graduate program of Baylor University as well as advocate the rights of these students and voice their concerns.

Your Responsibilities

The GSA constitution stipulates that as a GSA Representative you must attend three-fourths of the monthly Assembly meetings. Your department will be required to appoint a replacement if you are unable to attend at least this many. On dates you cannot attend the Assembly, you should ensure that your Alternate is in attendance. Please inform the President if you or your alternate will be unable to attend meetings due to scheduling conflicts, so that a new representative can be appointed immediately.

You are required to serve on one of the standing committees, and to assist with any activities or events planned by your committee. There is a page at the back of this book for you to enter the contact info of your fellow committee members.

You will have the responsibility of voting on motions proposed before the Assembly, and electing officers to the Executive Cabinet.

If you are an alternate Representative, you are not required to attend Assembly meetings except in the absence of the Representative. However, you are encouraged to come as often as possible and to actively participate on one of the committees. In the absence of the Representative, you are required to attend the Assembly and vote on behalf of your department.

For more details on this, please see the GSA constitution below.

Beyond your constitutional duties, both Representatives and Alternates share the responsibility of ensuring that their department receives communications from the GSA Executive Cabinet, and that the particular needs and concerns of the department are being brought to the attention of GSA. You will frequently receive email updates from the President to share with your department. We ask that you share this information within one week of receiving the initial email, and that you also CC the President and Vice-President to these emails to help us ensure that information is being dispensed in a timely manner.

Your consistent and enthusiastic participation is crucial to GSA’s success. Please try to stay involved throughout this coming academic year and encourage the other members of your department to take advantage of the many benefits GSA has to offer.
GSA Constitution

ARTICLE I – The Graduate Student Association

1. The name of the organization shall be the Baylor University Graduate Student Association (GSA).

2. The membership of the organization shall consist of all graduate students enrolled at Baylor University.

3. The GSA shall be governed by an Assembly of Representatives and an Executive Cabinet consisting of a President, Vice-President, Director of Operations, and Director of Outreach.

ARTICLE II – The GSA Assembly

1. The GSA Assembly shall be composed of one Representative from each graduate department at Baylor University, chosen by the graduate students of that department for a term of one academic year.

   An Alternate Representative, who shall attend the Assembly in the absence of the Representative, shall be chosen by the graduate students of that department for a term of one academic year.

   Every Representative and Alternate shall be a graduate student enrolled in the department they represent.

   The times, places, and manner of choosing Representatives and Alternates shall be prescribed by each graduate department by the graduate students thereof.

   Each Representative shall be required to attend three quarters of the Assembly meetings during the term of office.

2. The GSA Assembly shall meet at least once monthly during the academic year, with the exception of the month of December.

3. Assembly procedure shall be determined by Robert’s Rules of Order, most recent edition, unless otherwise specified by this constitution.

   The GSA President shall preside over the Assembly, but shall have no vote, unless the votes be equally divided.

   Each Representative shall be allowed to speak and make proposals to the Assembly.

   Each Representative shall have one vote on any proposals or elections submitted to the Assembly.
4. The Assembly shall determine GSA policy. It shall propose, plan, and approve any public events or endeavors sponsored by the GSA.

The Assembly shall investigate complaints and concerns of graduate students and make recommendations to the University on such issues.

The Assembly shall hear reports pertinent to the graduate student body from graduate students and University officials.

The Assembly shall elect the officers of the GSA.

5. Any graduate student, including Alternates, may attend the Assembly as a non-voting observer, but the Assembly shall go into a closed session upon a majority vote.

6. The Assembly shall include three standing committees: an Academic Affairs Committee, a Social Life Committee, and a Policy Committee.

Each Representative shall be required to serve on one standing committee. A Representative may be transferred to a different committee at the discretion of the GSA President.

Temporary committees may be formed by the order of the President.

Additional standing committees may be formed with the approval of a majority of the Assembly.

At its first meeting, each committee shall elect a Chair, who shall serve for a term of one academic year. Committee Chairs may be required at the discretion of the President to meet with the Executive Cabinet.

ARTICLE III – Executive Cabinet

1. The Executive Cabinet shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Director of Outreach, and Director of Operations, and shall meet weekly during the academic year, and at such other times as are necessary for the execution of the business of the GSA.

2. The President and Vice-President shall be elected by a majority vote of the Assembly during the latter half of the spring semester.

The President and Vice-President shall serve for a term of one year, beginning at the final Assembly meeting of the academic year, and ending at the final Assembly meeting of the following year.

No one shall be eligible for the offices of President or Vice-President who is not enrolled as a graduate student at Baylor University for the duration of the term of office.
In case of the removal of the President from office, or in such cases as the President is unable to perform the office, the powers and duties of said office shall devolve to the Vice-President, until such time as the President can resume the office or a new President is elected by the Assembly.

The President and Vice-President shall enforce this constitution and any resolutions of the GSA Assembly and Executive Cabinet.

The President and Vice-President shall act as the official spokespersons of the GSA, address the student body at the graduate student orientation, at the Assembly meetings, and at such other times as are necessary.

A GSA Chaplain may be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Assembly at the beginning of each academic year. The Chaplain shall be charged with leading prayer at GSA Assembly meetings and other GSA events.

3. The GSA Director of Outreach shall be chosen for a term of one academic year by a majority of Representatives present at either the same spring Assembly during which the President and Vice-President are elected, or at the first Assembly of the fall semester.

No person shall be eligible for the office of Director of Outreach who is not enrolled as a graduate student at Baylor University for the duration of the term of office.

The Director of Outreach shall record minutes of Assembly meetings and Executive Cabinet meetings, which shall be published on the GSA website as deemed necessary by a majority of the Executive Cabinet.

The Director of Outreach shall maintain and update the GSA website and social media accounts.

The Director of Outreach shall assist the President with correspondence and other communication as necessary. Additional duties, such as involvement with the Title IX committee, may be assigned to the Director of Outreach by a majority of the Executive Cabinet.

4. The GSA Director of Operations shall be chosen for a term of one academic year by a majority of Representatives present at either the same spring Assembly during which the President and Vice-President are elected, or at the first Assembly of the fall semester.

No person shall be eligible for the office of Director of Operations who is not enrolled as a graduate student at Baylor University for the duration of the term of office.

The Director of Operations shall work with the Social and Academic Affairs Committees to organize and implement events throughout the academic year. The Director of Operations shall assist the Committee chairs with delegating tasks to the rest of the Committee
members, coordinating additional participants (catering, facilities, etc.), and supervising setup and breakdown on the day of events.

The Director of Operations shall assist the President and/or the Vice-President with formulating, managing, and reporting on the GSA budget in accordance with Baylor University accounting policies.

5. Each GSA Officer may be removed from office of serious infractions or misdemeanors by a vote of two-thirds of the Assembly.

6. The voluntary resignation before the end of the term of office of any GSA officer shall be submitted to the Executive Cabinet, and an emergency election shall be held at the following Assembly meeting.

**ARTICLE V – Amendment**

Amendments to this constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Cabinet at least one month prior to ratification.

A proposed amendment shall be deemed valid upon receiving a vote of two-thirds at a regular Assembly meeting.

**ARTICLE VI – Ratification**

A vote of two-thirds at a regular Assembly meeting shall be sufficient for the establishment of this constitution as the supreme governing document of the GSA.
Committees

Social Committee

The Social Committee organizes and plans events that encourage community among Baylor graduate students. In particular, this includes GSA’s two largest events – the Football Tailgate Mixer in the fall and the bi-annual Graduate Student Weekends at the Waco Farmers Market in the fall and spring. In addition to those GSA traditions, the Social Committee is encouraged to plan other social events for graduate students after consulting with the GSA Executive Cabinet.

Academic Affairs Committee

The Academic Committee deals with matters directly affecting the academic life of the graduate student body. This has included planning workshops or interdisciplinary collaboration. It is also responsible for choosing the recipient of the annual GSA Awards each spring semester. It is the responsibility of the Academic Affairs Committee to plan the Three-Minute Thesis Contest in the fall and the picnic during Graduate Student Appreciation Week in the spring.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee works to enhance Baylor University policies in order to better serve the unique needs of graduate students. This includes health insurance and parental leave, parking accommodations, library access, email storage space, etc. The Committee is encouraged to submit proposals in writing to the Executive Cabinet for approval, so that they can be voted on by the Assembly or sent to the appropriate Graduate School or University administrators.
### Committee Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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GSA Events Dates

New Graduate Student Orientation – August 19, 2015

Graduate Student Weekend at the Farmer’s Market – August 22, 2015, spring event TBD

GSA Tailgate – October 17, 2015 (tentative)

3-Minute Thesis Competition - November 12, 2015 (tentative)

Graduate Student Appreciation Picnic – April 7, 2016 (tentative)

GSA Assembly Dates
  - August 19, 2015
  - September 1, 2015
  - October 6, 2015
  - November 3, 2015
  - January 12, 2016
  - February 2, 2016
  - March 1, 2016
  - April TBD
  - All Assemblies are held from 12:30-1:30pm in the Cowden Room at the SUB