

# Graduate Association of Political Science (GAPS) Constitution

## **Mission**

The Graduate Association of Political Science (GAPS), shall actively represent and promote the political science and public administration graduate students of Northern Arizona University in Department, College, University, and other affairs. GAPS will also pursue an active leadership role in all areas of Politics and International Affairs department graduate student interest.

## **Article I: Membership**

1. Any person enrolled as a graduate student at Northern Arizona University who is classified as a political science or public administration major and who is an active graduate student in good standing, as defined by the graduate student handbook, with NAU and its Politics and International Affairs department is automatically a member of the GAPS.
2. No person shall be denied membership or the benefits thereof on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender, culture, or marital status.

## **Article II: Governing Body**

1. The Governing Body of GAPS shall consist of its Officers elected by GAPS members.
2. The Governing Body shall be recognized as the official representatives of NAU PIA Department graduate students (GAPS members) in any venue, including the Department, the College within which it is housed (Social and Behavioral Sciences), and Northern Arizona University at large.
3. Elections
  - a. Officers include the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. These officers compose the GAPS Governing Body.
  - b. Elections will take place near the end of each spring semester. Nominations will be made in the last month of the spring semester. A vote of all GAPS members will commence within one week of the nominations.
  - c. Officers will hold their post, while in good standing, for approximately one academic year. Newly elected officers will begin their terms in the Fall of the following academic year.
  - d. To be eligible to run for an elected position, a person must have been a member of GAPS for at least one semester prior to the election.
4. Election Procedure

- a) One month prior to the end of the spring semester, an official announcement will be made to all GAPS members by the incumbent leadership of the GAPS, indicating the commencement of the election season and the upcoming transition. Following this announcement, a call for nominations will be issued, inviting members to nominate themselves or others for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary in the form of a list. All list nominations must be submitted in writing to the Election Committee (incumbent leadership) two weeks before the elections. All nominees in the list must accept their nominations to be eligible to run for office, ensuring that all candidates are willing and prepared to assume their potential roles.
- b) This communication must be sent via email or a similar direct method to reach every student individually. Relying solely on announcements during GAPS official meetings, which not all may attend, is not sufficient. This approach guarantees that every eligible student is informed and has the opportunity to engage in the democratic process of the association.
- c) Elections shall be conducted through a secret ballot system to ensure the privacy and security of each member's vote. The voting process will be overseen by an Election Committee, which will consist of at least two current board members who are not running for office. This committee is responsible for counting the votes and announcing the results within 48 hours after the voting period ends. The proposed list receiving the highest number of votes for each position will be declared the winners. In the event of a tie, a run-off election will be held within two weeks of the initial election.
- d) In instances where there is only one list, a vote of confidence shall be conducted. Instead of electing between multiple candidates, GAPS members will cast a "yes" or "no" vote to either support or oppose the nominee's assumption of the role. A simple majority of "yes" votes is required for the nominee to be declared elected. If the nominee does not receive the majority of "yes" votes, the nomination process will be reopened.
- e) In the event that no nominations are received, the current Governing Body must take proactive steps to encourage participation among the membership. This may include, but is not limited to, direct outreach to potential candidates, hosting informational sessions about the roles and

responsibilities of the positions, and extending the nomination period if necessary to ensure a diverse pool of candidate lists.

- f) The Election Committee is responsible for keeping a written record of each election, which includes details such as the election date, nominees, and vote outcomes. This record must be signed by all members of the Election Committee and stored in the GAPS archives for transparency and historical reference.
- g) To ensure a smooth transition of leadership, there will be a transition period that begins immediately after the election results are announced and continues until the end of the current academic year. During this period, the newly elected officers will work closely with the outgoing officers to familiarize themselves with their responsibilities, ongoing projects, and the operational aspects of the association.
- h) The outgoing leadership is tasked with introducing this Constitution to the newly elected board. This ensures that the incoming officers are fully informed about their duties, rights, and the governance framework they are entering. This process is critical for maintaining the continuity and integrity of the GAPS governance structure and ensuring that all actions taken by the association's leadership are in accordance with its established rules and principles.
- i) It is strictly prohibited for professors, chairs, coordinators, or any individuals outside of the GAPS membership to intervene in election outcomes or to request the removal of any GAPS members from their positions. The integrity of the election process is paramount, ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and solely by and for GAPS members, without external influence. However, the professor serving as the official GAPS advisor may offer constructive solutions in cases of conflict, aiming to support the association's governance and conflict resolution processes.

## 5. Officers

### a. President Duties

- i. Speaking rights at all official meetings
- ii. Schedule regular meetings so to be inclusive of all GAPS members
- iii. Prepare agendas for meetings unless otherwise designated  
Agendas shall be made in accordance with GAPS member input as much as possible

- iv. Call special sessions if needed, inviting all GAPS members with at least 72 hours notice
  - v. With approval from the Governing Body, create any committee or program or project as deemed necessary to promote the interests of GAPS members
  - vi. Request reports from any committee of GAPS member as needed
  - vii. Address concerns of GAPS members within the PIA Department's College, SBS
  - viii. Function as the ultimate fiscal representative of GAPS unless otherwise designated.
- b. Vice President Duties
- i. Serve as President in the absence or vacancy of the President
  - ii. Serve as liaison to NAU organizations exterior to PIA Department or its College
  - iii. Serve as chair of GAPS affiliated boards, committees, or agencies, unless otherwise designated
  - iv. Other duties as assigned by the President or required by GAPS members
- c. Secretary Duties
- i. Take and distribute minutes of all official GAPS meetings
  - ii. Attempt to make aware all GAPS members of meetings and minutes
  - iii. Prepare and distribute all nomination and voting ballots, unless otherwise designated
  - iv. Tally and make official all voting results and communicate those results to all GAPS members
  - v. Maintain, and distribute as needed, all official GAPS documents
- d. Treasurer duties
- i. Supervise and maintain accountability of all GAPS budgets and accounts under the direction of the Governing Body
  - ii. Serve as the liaison to all NAU and related budgeting organizations as needed to improve the fiscal situation of GAPS, including fund solicitation
  - iii. Prepare and submit annual budget to the Governing Body for approval
  - iv. Other duties as assigned by the President, or as required to maintain or improve GAPS's fiscal situation

### **Article III: Advisor**

1. The advisor is selected by GAPS officers and must be affiliated with the Politics and International Affairs department
2. The advisor is responsible for signing off on institutional forms including institutional excuses and funding requests
3. As stated in Article II, subsection 4, part i, professor serving as the official GAPS advisor may offer constructive solutions in cases of conflict, aiming to support the association's governance and conflict resolution processes.

#### **Article IV: Meetings**

1. Meetings shall occur at least monthly, but not more than weekly. Their time and place should be as convenient as possible to as many GAPS members as possible
2. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the Governing Body and two-thirds of the total membership
3. The President may call a special meeting if needed, giving at least 72 hours notice to as many GAPS members as possible
4. Meetings are open to all GAPS members
5. Minutes of each meeting should be recorded for future records and to help establish an archive of documents that would help the next leadership to familiarize themselves with the meeting process

#### **Article V: Removal from Office**

Any Governing Body Officer may be removed from office if:

1. The Officer is not in good standing with NAU or the PIA Department for an extended period of time, or is not otherwise eligible as a GAPS member
2. A charge of impeachment is moved against any officer during an official meeting. If a majority present vote to approve the articles of impeachment, the charges will be assigned to a special committee. The committee will be impartial, deliberate, and investigate the charges, and make a formal recommendation to GAPS members, who will vote on the Officer's impeachment. The Officer shall be removed from office immediately upon the confirmation by the Secretary of a two-thirds vote of the GAPS membership to impeach the officer.

#### **Article VI: Constitutional Amendments and Bylaws**

1. A Constitutional Amendment may be proposed by any GAPS member, and will be considered by the GAPS membership.
2. If an Amendment is officially proposed, GAPS will place the item on the next meeting's agenda and deliberate the Amendment.
3. Following the meeting where the Amendment is debated, it shall be voted on by the GAPS membership, and approved by a two-thirds vote

4. The Amendment shall take effect on the date specified in the Amendment, or immediately upon confirmation of the approving vote if not specified
5. Bylaws shall be adopted by GAPS when they are in best interests of the GAPS membership and in accordance with the GAPS constitution
6. Bylaws shall be deliberated and on the agenda of at least one official GAPS meeting, and can be passed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting, or by a majority vote of all GAPS members

#### **Article VII: Initiatives and Agenda Items**

1. Any GAPS member can require an initiative be taken or an item placed on the next official meeting's agenda by obtaining five signatures of GAPS members agreeing with the proposal
2. If verified by the Secretary, the agenda item will be placed on the next meeting's agenda.
3. If verified by the Secretary, the initiative shall be voted on at the GAPS meetings where it has been placed on the agenda. This would be approved with a simple majority.

#### **Article VIII: Faculty Committees**

1. GAPS is invited to participate in three faculty committees: Undergraduate Committee, Graduate Committee, and Full Faculty Meetings.
2. Each committee allows for one GAPS representative to attend committee meetings
3. Any member is eligible to be the sitting representative on any of these committees and is confirmed by the rest of the GAPS membership.

#### **Article IX: Vacancies**

1. If a permanent vacancy occurs in the Presidency, the Vice President shall become acting President until a special election can be held.
2. If another Officer position becomes vacant, it will be filled by Presidential appointment until a special election can be held
3. Nominations for the special election will be finalized within two weeks of the position becoming officially permanently vacant
4. Special elections based on those nominations will be held no more than one week after the nomination process is over
5. Immediately after official results are declared, the appointment of acting Officer shall step down and the specially elected officer shall will take office until the next regular election

6. If the permanent vacancy does not appear until there are four weeks left in the current semester, the special election may be postponed until the earliest possible date in the next semester
7. If the advisor position becomes vacant, it falls under the same protocol used when officers select an advisor.

### **Article X: Constitutional Enactment**

This Constitution of the Graduate Association of Political Science shall become binding and have full force and effect immediately upon approval by two-thirds of the GAPS membership present at the open and official GAPS meeting whereby Constitutional issues were placed on the agenda and discussed.

It is obligatory for the President, as well as other officers of the GAPS, to be fully knowledgeable of this Constitution. Ignorance of its contents or claiming unawareness is not acceptable as an excuse for non-compliance. This ensures that all officers are accountable for governing in accordance with the rules and guidelines established herein.

*Ratification Date: April 10, 2024*

Total Number of Students: 25

Voting Results:

Votes in Favor (Yes): 18

Votes Against (No): 1

Note: The remaining 6 students either abstained, or did not vote.