

CONSTITUTION

Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
University of Pennsylvania

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the “Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly” at the University of Pennsylvania do hereby establish this constitution to formalize the principles and procedures of this Organization.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this Organization shall be “Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly,” henceforth referred to as “BGAPSA.”

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of BGAPSA shall be to enhance the quality of life for graduate and professional students of the African Diaspora at the University of Pennsylvania through a centralized, campus-wide organizational structure that addresses their academic, social, political and cultural needs and concerns. BGAPSA seeks to act as a support mechanism that will assist these students in becoming acclimated to the university. Further, BGAPSA shall act as their advocate, lobby and political voice campus-wide.

BGAPSA understands and is committed to upholding and abiding by all policies and requisites set forth by University of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

While BGAPSA is an Organization designed to represent and meet the needs of African-American students, membership in BGAPSA is open to any graduate or professional student at University of Pennsylvania.

Membership can be established through email, posting to BGAPSA web site, or attendance at any meeting or special event. Members are entitled to entrance into all BGAPSA events and meetings, and access to all services provided by the Organization.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP will be designated as:

- Membership in BGAPSA
- Current enrollment in the University
- Attendance at more than 50% of general body meetings in a given academic semester, as recorded by the BGAPSA Recording Secretary.

In addition to entrance into all BGAPSA events and meetings, and access to all services provided by the Organization, ACTIVE MEMBERS will be granted Organization voting privileges and access to special amenities, e.g. double-representation in BGAPSA drawings and raffles, special

events admission, early access to giveaways, etc. as determined by the BGAPSA Executive Board.

BGAPSA openly admits students to its membership and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, or on the basis of rights secured by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

ARTICLES IV: OFFICERS

BGAPSA will be governed by an Executive Board comprised of the following:

1. BGAPSA will elect a Chairperson. The Chairperson will:
 - Ensure that all BGAPSA actions and decisions are aligned with the Organization mission and ideals;
 - Preside at all meetings of BGAPSA and present all motions to the body present
 - Represent BGAPSA on committees and panels as designated by the Graduate and Professional Student Association, the University, the Executive Board or General Body membership;
 - Maintain the power to appoint all committee chairpersons, with the majority consent of the Executive Board;
 - Attend at least 90% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings.
2. BGAPSA will also elect a Vice Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson will:
 - Preside at all meetings and functions in the absence of the Chairperson;
 - Assume all responsibilities of the Chairperson should that person be removed or step down for any reason;
 - Direct BGAPSA recruitment and retention efforts to cultivate a continuous active Organization membership;
 - Oversee all committee actions to ensure they are on task and aligned with the Organization mission and ideals;
 - Chair a committee dedicated to recruitment and retention efforts, should need require;
 - Attend at least 75% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings.
3. BGAPSA will also elect a Corresponding Secretary. The Corresponding Secretary will:
 - Initiate email, written, and/or oral communications, as required, will all BGAPSA members to ensure maximum access to information and participation in meetings and functions;
 - Maintain and consistently update the BGAPSA web site to reflect the most current information regarding the Organization;
 - Maintain and consistently update the BGAPSA listserv, in coordination with the University, to represent the most accurate list of active and general membership;
 - Lead promotional and marketing efforts for general body meetings and special events;
 - Attend at least 75% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings.
4. BGAPSA will also elect a Treasurer. The Treasurer will:
 - Manage all fiscal transactions and records on behalf of BGAPSA;
 - Maintain diligent and accurate financial records for reference and use by the Executive Board and University;

- Liaise with the University Budget Officer to conduct the Organization budget and ensure that all non-accruable fiscal allotments are expended by the end of each academic year;
 - Keep the Executive Board, and as needed, the General Body, informed of all BGAPSA balances, debits, and credits;
 - Attend at least 75% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings.
5. BGAPSA will also elect a Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary will:
- Maintain accurate and comprehensive minutes for all General Body and Executive Board meetings;
 - Generate and maintain accurate attendance records at all meetings and functions to establish member and Active Member rosters;
 - Publish all minutes and attendance tallies in electronic and/or written form at his/her discretion to keep the General Body and Executive Board informed;
 - Lead all Historian efforts, including but not limited to electronic photographic, video, anecdotal, formal records of meetings and special events, and the proper materials to transition the incoming executive board;
 - Attend at least 75% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings;
6. BGAPSA will also elect a Graduate and Professional Student Association Representative. The GAPSAs Representative will:
- Attend 100% of GAPSAs meetings in person, or by sending and retrieving complete records from a designated proxy;
 - Represent BGAPSA as needed at GAPSAs functions, or at other special events hosted by other organizations or the University, contingent upon availability;
 - Report all actions and information pertinent to BGAPSA from meetings and events attended to the Executive Board and/or General Body;
 - Attend at least 75% of BGAPSA Executive Board and General Body meetings.
 - If a Representative is not elected in the spring, one may be appointed in the fall by the Executive Board.

Executive Board members will be elected annually and hold office for one academic year, and can be re-elected by majority vote of the Active Membership. All Executive Board members must be currently enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

The standing committees of BGAPSA shall be:

1. Community Service

Committee Leads will be selected by spring election. If no Lead is elected in the spring, a Lead can be appointed in the fall by the Executive Board.

Additional committees may be formed and dissolved by the Chairperson, with consensus approval of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VI: OPERATIONS

Voting Eligibility

Those members meeting all requirements of ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP as set forth in Article II will be granted voting privileges.

Election Process

All officers will be elected by a majority vote of eligible voting members of BGAPSA. All elections will be held on an annual basis during the month of March.

Procedure

1. The President will take nominations from the Executive Board and General Body in person, by proxy, or advance notice, nominations will be closed and the movement seconded. Nominees will be allowed to vote.
2. All voting shall be done by secret ballot to be collected and tabulated by the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries and one voting member of BGAPSA, to be selected by the outgoing Chairperson.
3. Beginning in April of each year, incoming Executive Board members will be invited to attend Executive Board meetings to facilitate smooth transition. In addition, the Executive Board will conduct a formal transition for the new Board, including handing over any paper materials, files, and other pertinent information.

Removal

Any officer of BGAPSA in violation of the Organization's purpose or constitution, or in dereliction of his or her stated duties, may be removed from office by the following process:

- A written report by at least three members of the Organization, including at least one Executive Board member;
- Written notification to the officer of the call for removal, asking the officer to be present and prepared to speak at the next General Body meeting;
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is necessary to remove the officer.

Any open position, by removal or resignation, shall be filled by election within thirty days of vacancy. If extenuating circumstances preclude election within thirty days, an interim officer may be appointed by the Chairperson, with consensus from the Executive Board. Any interim officer must be either ratified or replaced by Active Member election within thirty days of appointment.

Meetings

Executive Board meetings will occur on a bi-monthly (twice a month) basis at a time selected by the Board and will follow the procedure set forth below:

- Attendance
- Review of minutes and Action Items
- Officer reports
- Guest reports
- Decisions
- Adjournment

All General Body meetings will occur on a monthly basis at a time selected by BGAPSA and will follow the procedure set forth below:

- Attendance
- Current Event or Cultural Infusion
- Officer Reports
- Committee Reports
- Decisions
- New Business from the Board or Body
- Announcements
- Adjournment

General Body or Executive Board format may be pre-empted by special events with Board consensus. All General Body meetings must be publicized by multiple methods beginning two weeks in advance of designated days and times.

ARTICLE VII: FINANCES

BGAPSA will finance its activities by the following means:

- Operating costs will be covered by the annual budget allotment from GAPSA;
- Special events and those events that would unnecessarily expend the BGAPSA budget will be subsidized, if possible, by University special allotment or cosponsorship with other organizations(s);
- All budgetary allotment from GAPSA will be expended for the benefit of the Organization and its members by the end of each academic year.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

The constitution is binding to all members of BGAPSA. However, the constitution is not binding unto itself.

- Amendments to the constitution may be proposed in writing by any Active Member of BGAPSA at any meeting at which two-thirds (2/3) of Active Membership is present.
- These amendments will be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the Executive Board.
- Proposed amendments will become effective following approval by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Active Members

ARTICLE IX: RATIFICATION

The BGAPSA constitution shall be established by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Organization.

The BGAPSA constitution shall be reviewed every two years by the Executive Board to ensure that it still accurately and comprehensively represents the mission and procedures of BGAPSA.