

# The Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Association (ChE GSA)

Date of origin: February, 2013

## I. Purpose

- A. The purpose of the Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Association (ChE GSA) is to promote the development of Chemical Engineering graduate students while stimulating intra-departmental camaraderie and collaboration by:
  - i. Assisting in the planning, preparation and execution of annual graduate recruitment weekends
  - ii. Organizing and executing the annual Chemical Engineering Research Symposium
  - iii. Holding career inquiry, development and networking events with representation from both academia and industry
  - iv. Organizing and executing periodic departmental social events (e.g., potlucks, picnics, social gatherings, etc.)
  - v. Acting as a liaison between the graduate student body and faculty on departmental topics and events
  - vi. Providing a venue for graduate students to share research successes and failures, practice presentation skills and build potential collaborative research relationships
  - vii. Encouraging a high level of academic integrity and safety in academic research

## II. Membership

- A. At all times, the majority (50%+1) of all active members shall be full-time, officially registered graduate students at University Park.
- B. The membership shall be divided into active and associate members.
  - i. Only currently registered graduate students are eligible for active membership.
  - ii. All others interested in furthering the purpose of the ChE GSA, including but not limited to, faculty, staff, and community members (e.g., alumni), shall be associate members.
  - iii. Only active members may hold office, vote, preside, officiate, or solicit funds on behalf of the organization.
- C. At all times there shall be at least 10 active student members
- D. Membership Removal
  - i. The ChE GSA reserves the right to expel a member who is not following the policies of the organization with a super majority vote of attending members - quorum is 75% of active members.
    - 1. Expulsion should be sought as a last resort after proper mediation procedures (see II.E. below)
    - 2. Conditions for membership removal (expulsion) include, but are not limited to, repeated inappropriate physical conduct, repeated use of racial, sexist, etc. remarks or gestures, repeated violation of constitutional policies as described herein or other recurring behavior deemed inappropriate/disrespectful/unlawful/unsafe by the officers and/or advisor
- E. In the case of violations of constitutional policies and/or a conflict between members within the organization the highest ranking officer that is not involved in the conflict, with the assistance from the advisor, will facilitate an informal mediation procedure
  - i. The mediator shall:
    - 1. Arrange for a mediation meeting outside of the regular organization business meeting
    - 2. Explain their role as the impartial party and the objectives of the mediation
    - 3. Set ground rules
    - 4. Allow each party to express their views by allowing the conversation to go where the parties wish it to go
    - 5. Collect any available resources that might assist in the resolution (financial documents, emails, photos, etc.)
    - 6. As a third party, do not suggest resolutions but rather leave the responsibility for the resolution with the parties involved
    - 7. Facilitate goal setting to reach a win-win resolution
- F. New Membership and Recruitment

- i. Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during recruitment, including but not limited to the disclosure of:
  1. ChE GSA Constitution
  2. Schedule of Events and Activities
  3. A list of officer and member responsibilities
  4. A copy of the University Hazing policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations (These documents will be available upon request by the Office of Student Activities).
- ii. All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.
- iii. Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

### III. Officers

#### A. Eligibility

- i. Only full-time, officially registered active student members shall be eligible to serve as appointed or elected officers.

#### B. Offices

- i. The President is the spokesperson for the organization. The President presides at all meetings.
- ii. The Vice-President shall serve as President when the President is unable to do so.
- iii. The Treasurer shall be charged with handling all organizational finances.
- iv. The secretary shall be charged with communicating the organizational activities of the ChE GSA on the ChE graduate student list-serv and maintaining the ChE GSA events calendar.
- v. The Web Team Coordinator shall be charged with managing the posts on the ChE GSA website.
- vi. Laboratory representatives (1 per lab group) are responsible for acting as a liaison between the ChE GSA and their respective labs.

#### C. Committees

- i. The executive officers (e.g. President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Web team coordinator) will lead committees that coordinate ChE graduate student events. Each executive officer must serve on at least one committee per academic year. Committees must consist of at least two executive officers.
- ii. The executive officers leading a committee will publicly solicit the opportunity to participate on a committee to all active ChE GSA members.
- iii. It is the duty of the executive officers leading a given committee to successfully plan, coordinate, assign, and implement tasks required for a given event.
- iv. Standing committees include: ChE Graduate Recruitment, ChE Graduate Student Research Symposium, First Year Student Bald Eagle Picnic, ChE Graduate Student Selected Seminar Speaker.
- v. Additional committees can be formed at the discretion of the executive officers or by the suggestion of any active ChE GSA member.

#### D. Filling unexpired vacancies:

- i. Nominations are taken at the meeting following the vacancy. Elections also occur at this meeting.
- ii. If a majority (50%+1) is not obtained by any of the candidates, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and the active members shall vote again.
- iii. When nominations are being taken to fill unexpired terms, any member of the organization may nominate another member of the organization by simply raising his/her hand and indicating such when recognized. Self-nominations are allowed.

#### E. Activities

- i. The executive committee (President, Vice President and Treasurer) is responsible for approving organization activities and may appoint activity committees as they see fit.

### IV. Meeting

- A. The ChE GSA will meet at least two times per semester.
- B. Adequate advance notice must be given to all active members.
- C. The President with the consent of the Vice President may change meeting frequency.
- D. Members shall be notified of all meetings by e-mail.
- E. The President, Vice President and Treasurer may call special meetings should he/she see fit.

#### V. **Voting**

- A. Only active members may vote.
- B. Quorum for all voting shall be thirty-three percent (33%) of the active membership.
- C. A simple majority (50% +1) shall be necessary for all voting. This majority shall be derived from the active members present.

#### VI. **Finances**

- A. All organizational funds are to be deposited and handled exclusively through the Associated Student Activities (ASA) in 240 HUB.
- B. This organization will not have an off-campus account(s)
- C. The ChE GSA does not collect dues, however, the organization reserves the right to collect dues as a necessary requirement for membership if deemed appropriate by the executive officers (President, Vice President and Treasurer) and successfully voted upon by active members (voting as described in Section V). If so, reasonable annual dues will be collected at the beginning of each academic year starting the year following the successful vote.
- D. The Treasurer, with the consent of the President and Vice President will determine the amount for dues.
- E. The Officers of the ChE GSA may spend up to \$100 of the organization's funds without the approval of the general membership.

#### VII. **Elections**

- A. Elections will be held on the third Monday of May.
- B. Nominations for executive board positions are due two weeks before the election day.
- C. A meeting will be held one week before Election Day for the nominees to campaign for their respective positions.
- D. The nomination form, campaign meeting, and election day shall be publicized at least month before the each event..
- E. Elections codes:
  - i. Any member may nominate an active member (including themselves) for any office by raising his/her hand at the appropriate time and being recognized by the presiding official. Next, the active members shall cast secret, written ballots for the candidate of their choice. Each active member shall have one vote per office.
  - ii. If 50%+1 cannot be obtained, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped from consideration, and the active members shall vote again.
  - iii. In the event of a tie, the ballot will be recast.
- F. All officers serve for a term of one year, beginning June 1 and ending May 31.
- G. No one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate

#### VIII. **Amendments to the Constitution**

- A. Amendments to this constitution may be introduced at the conclusion of any meeting. Voting shall occur at the meeting following its introduction, with the amendment taking effect following Office of Student Activities approval.
- B. Amendments to this constitution may be present by any currently active members including all officers. Amendments may be presented to the organization by a currently active member on behalf of a currently associate member by stating this caveat prior to introducing the amendment.
- C. Amendments shall be presented to the organization in the form of a short written document which describes the amendments in detail and a short verbal explanation of the purpose of the amendment.
- D. All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of Student Activities.
- E. Amendments will take effect immediately following approval by the Office of Student Activites.

**IX. Parliamentary Authority**

- A. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, by Sarah Corbin Roberts shall be used in all cases not covered by this constitution.

**X. Accessibility of this Constitution**

- A. Copies of this constitution shall be made available to anyone upon request.

**XI. Advisor**

- A. This organization must retain an advisor at all times. The advisor will be a full-time Faculty or Staff member of The Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus and will be chosen by the organization.
- B. This organization will take Advisor nominations at the same meeting for which officer nominations are held (see Section VII above). Potential advisors must have previously agreed to take on the role prior to their nomination.
- C. The Advisor will be chosen through a majority vote in which at least two of the three executive officers (President, Vice President and Treasurer) vote yes.
- D. The selected Advisor will be notified as soon as possible following the vote by one of the executive officers.
- E. The Advisor position must be renewed each year during officer elections by majority vote as stated above. Advisors may, however, retain the position for a period of up to 5 years if successfully voted upon each year.