## RURAL SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE ASSOCIATION

Date of origin: February, 2010

## I. Purpose

To advance the graduate program in Rural Sociology by:
A. facilitating the involvement of graduate students interested in rural sociology in conferences and similar events.
B. furthering the academic and professional development of graduate students interested in rural sociology
C. developing activities in four areas of specialization: (1) agriculture and food systems, (2) natural resource and environment, (3) rural social demography, and (4) community \& international development

## II. Membership

A. There are two categories of membership: active and associate
1.Currently registered graduate students interested in rural sociology are eligible for active membership. Only active members may hold office, vote, preside, officiate, or solicit funds on behalf of the organization.
2.All others interested in furthering the purpose of the Rural Sociology Graduate Association including but not limited to, faculty, staff, and community members, may be associate members.
B. At all times, the majority $(50 \%+1)$ of all active members shall be full-time, officially registered graduate students at University Park.
C. At all times, there shall be at least 10 active graduate student members.
D. New Membership and Recruitment. At the start of each academic year, all incoming graduate students in the program of Rural Sociology will be invited to attend an informational meeting. Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during recruitment, including but not limited to the disclosure of:

## 1.New Membership Manual

## 2.Schedule of New Member Events and Activities

3.A list of responsibilities
4.A copy of the University Hazing policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations (This document will be available upon request by the Office of Student Activities).
5.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.
6.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.
E. Mediation Procedure. 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 will facilitate an informal mediation procedure. 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 suggestion resolutions but rather leave the responsibility for the resolution with the parties involved
7.Facilitate goal setting to reach a win-win resolution
F. Membership Removal. The club 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.

## III. Officers

A. Only full-time, officially registered active graduate student members in the program of Rural Sociology shall be eligible to serve as appointed or elected officers.
B. Terms. Officers will serve on a yearly basis beginning in January.
1.Current officers will send out an open call for self-nominations at the end of fall semester. Officers will be elected at the final meeting of the fall semester.
2.Officers can serve no more than two years.
C. Offices
1.The President is the primary spokesperson for the organization
2.The Vice-President shall serve as President when the President is unable to do so.
3.The Secretary shall be responsible for record-keeping.
4.The Treasurer shall be charged with handling all organizational finances.
5.The four officers shall function as a non-hierarchical committee, sharing responsibilities amongst themselves and with other active members when appropriate.
D. Filling unexpired vacancies:
1.Nominations are taken via email before the next meeting, when elections will occur.
2.If a majority $(50 \%+1)$ of active members present at the meeting 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.

## IV. Meetings

A. The Rural Sociology Graduate Association will meet at least three times per semester.
B. Adequate advance notice will be given to all active members.
C. The secretary will send out notification of the next meeting to all other members.
D. The frequency of meetings may be changed by a majority vote of active members.
E. Members shall be notified of all meetings by e-mail.

## 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 in attendance at the meeting.

## 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. This organization will not collect dues as a condition for membership.
D. The Officers of the Rural Sociology Graduate Association may spend up to $\$ 50$ of the organization's funds without the approval of the general membership.

## VII. Elections

A. Nominations and elections shall take place during the third meeting of the spring semester.
B. This meeting shall be publicized in the meetings preceding it.
C. Elections codes:
1.Any member may nominate an active member for any office.
2.Each active member shall have one vote per office.
3.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.
4.In the event of a tie, the ballot will be recast.
D. All officers serve for a term of one year, beginning in the month following elections and ending the month of elections.
E. Officer elections will be open to all active members, but it is the desire of the Rural Sociology Graduate Association to encourage representation across cohorts within the Rural Sociology Program at Penn State University.
F. Active members are eligible to serve a maximum of two one-year terms as officers of Rural Sociology Graduate Association. These two terms may be non-consecutive.

## 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. Any member may introduce a constitutional amendment at the conclusion of any meeting. At the following meeting, the active members shall vote on the
amendment, as outlined in the article on voting. If the amendment passes, it shall be sent to the Office of Student Activities for approval.
C. All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of Student Activities.

## 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

G. 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.
H. This organization will choose an advisor by consensus when possible or through a majority vote.

