The Geography Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary

Constitution

As Proposed on September 19, 2008

ARTICLE I – NAME
1. The organization shall officially be known as “The Geography Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary”, hereinafter referred to as the “Association”.

2. Commonly the Association may be referred to as “GEOGSA”.

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVES
1. The objectives of the Association shall be:
   i. to promote and serve the intellectual, academic, cultural, social and recreational interests of the graduate students of the University of Calgary’s Department of Geography, hereinafter referred to as the “Department”;
   ii. to officially represent the interests of the graduate students of the Department;
   and
   iii. to foster interaction between graduate students of the Department.

ARTICLE III – GOVERNANCE
1. The government of the Association arises from, and shall always follow, the principle of democratic rule.

2. The Association shall have two branches of governance: the Executive, and the Graduate Council, hereinafter referred to as the “GC”.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP
1. Membership in the Association shall consist of a single group of members, as defined in the Association’s By-Laws (By-Laws 1, 2).
ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE

1. The Executive shall be elected by Active Members, acclaimed if only one person seeks an office, or appointed by the Executive with due diligence in the event that no persons seek an office and no nominations arise from a General Meeting.

2. (a) The Executive of the Association shall consist of the following officers: (i) President, (ii) Vice President – Course Based, (iii) Vice President – Thesis, (iv) Treasurer, and (v) Secretary. The Past President of the Association, if still an Active Member, may be an ex-officio non-voting officer of the Association if approved by the Executive by majority vote.
   (b) No officer shall hold more than one of the Executive offices at any time. Only Active Members may serve as Executive officers.
   (c) The Executive may appoint one or more Active Members as a Director-at-Large, as non-voting officers of the Executive.


4. If any elected, acclaimed or appointed office of the Executive becomes vacant, other officers shall assume the duties of that office as directed by the Executive or by the GC if necessary, until such time as the vacancy is filled.

5. (a) If the President resigns, is impeached or is otherwise unable to continue in their role, the order of succession is as follows:
   - Vice President A (* see (b), below)
   - Vice President B (* see (b), below)
   - Treasurer
   - Secretary
   (b) The Vice President, Thesis or Course-Based, which has been a registered graduate student in the Department the longest shall be deemed the immediate successor to the President, and the remaining Vice President shall succeed after that person.
   (c) The person so designated will assume the office of Acting President, fulfilling all duties of the President – while still fulfilling the duties of their original office – until such time as a by-election can be held to fill the position of President.
ARTICLE VI – GRADUATE COUNCIL

1. The Graduate Council (GC), shall consist of the Executive as well as all Active Members of the Association.

2. The GC shall be the policy-making body of the Association. All Executive officers, all committees, and other groups formed by the Association, and all representatives to Graduate Student Association (GSA) or other University of Calgary organizations, boards or other bodies are accountable and answerable to the GC.

3. (a) Except where the Constitution or By-Laws, or a Standing Resolution or policy of the Association has authorized precedence, the GC shall have all authority to resolve all business of the Association.

   (b) The GC has the authority to enforce appropriate behaviour by all representatives of the Association. If it is deemed necessary by the GC, a representative of the Association (including a member of the Executive) may be removed from his or her position by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a GC meeting at which quorum is present.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. A General Election for all elected Executive offices shall be held each year during the month of September. The term of the newly elected Executive shall begin at the first Executive meeting following the General Election, and shall end when the subsequent Executive assumes office the following year.

2. Elections shall follow the procedures outlined in the By-Laws (see By-Law 6).

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCES

1. The Executive, in consultation with the GC, shall have the power to invest monies in the name of and on behalf of the Association while having due regard for the security of such investment.

2. (a) The Executive shall prepare an annual budget of revenues and expenditures for the Association. Once this budget has been approved by the GC, the Executive shall expend such monies within the limits of the budget. Any extra-budgetary expenditures of Association monies shall require the approval of the GC, and any revenue shortfalls must
be reported to the GC at its first subsequent meeting.

(b) The Treasurer shall prepare a financial statement for the Association at the end of the Association’s fiscal year, for presentation at the annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE IX – GENERAL MEETINGS

1. A regular General Meeting of the Association shall be held each year during the Fall term, no later than September 27. This General Meeting shall be referred to as the Annual General Meeting, hereinafter referred to as the AGM.

2. A Special General Meeting may be called as outlined in the By-Laws (see By-Law 5).

ARTICLE X – REFERENDA

1. A question shall be submitted for decision by Referendum only upon (i) resolution by the Executive, (ii) resolution by the GC at a General Meeting, or (iii) by receipt by the VP (Thesis) of a petition to hold a Referendum on such question, signed by at least ten (10) Active Members.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDING/CREATING OFFICIAL ASSOCIATION DOCUMENTS

1. Proposals to amend the Constitution or By-Laws must be submitted, in writing, to the VP (Course-based) no later than five (5) business days prior to the date of the GC meeting for the first reading. The Executive shall ensure that the wording of each duly proposed amendment is clear and unambiguous. The proposed amendments shall be made available to all members of the Association as per regular GC motions (see By-Laws 5, 8).

2. (a) Amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws may be made by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote at any General Meeting, with a single reading for information and ratification. They may also be made by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote in a Referendum, in accordance with Article X.

(b) Proposals to amend the Constitution or By-Laws at a General Meeting must be submitted, in writing, to the VP (Course-based) no later than five (5) business days prior to the date of the General Meeting. The Executive shall ensure that the wording of each
duly proposed amendment is clear and unambiguous. The proposed amendments shall be made available to all members of the Association at this time.

3. (a) Amendments made by Referendum shall take effect immediately upon receipt of the report by the VP (Course-based) to the Executive.

(b) Amendments passed at a General Meeting shall take effect fourteen (14) days after the meeting unless a request for a Referendum on the amendment is made in accordance with the By-Laws before then. Under such circumstances, the decision of the General Meeting shall remain pending, and shall be subject to the results of the Referendum, taking effect in accordance with subsection 3(a).

4. (a) Standing Resolutions may be established, and policies of the Association may be created or amended, as per Sections 1 to 3 of this Article.

(b) For the purpose of interpretation, a Standing Resolution of the Association shall mean a binding directive of indefinite duration, established by a General Meeting or Referendum, and does not include Standing Resolutions of the Executive or any other body within the Association.

(c) For the purpose of interpretation, a policy of the Association shall mean a general statement of principle, established by a General Meeting or Referendum, and does not include policies of the Executive or any other body within the Association.

ARTICLE XI – DETERMINING A “MAJORITY”

1. The following rules shall be used to determine a majority vote, unless specifically noted otherwise in a By-Law, Constitutional Article or Standing Resolution.

   i. A simple majority is to be greater than 50%.

      a. For example, in the case of twenty (20) voting members, ten (10) ‘yea’ votes would not be sufficient to pass, while eleven (11) votes would pass.

   ii. A two-thirds majority is to be greater than 66.666%.

      a. For example, in the case of sixty (60) voting members, forty (40) ‘yea’ votes would not be sufficient to pass, while forty-one (41) votes would pass.
BY-LAW 1 – MEMBERSHIP

1. All persons registered as graduate students in the Department of Geography, hereinafter referred to as the “Department”, at the University of Calgary who pay full- or part-time fees to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, hereinafter referred to as the “FGS”.

2. Active membership in the Association shall cease at the end of the student’s final registered year as a graduate student in the FGS at the University of Calgary.

BY-LAW 2 – RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

1. Active Members of the Association shall have the following rights:
   i. to be represented on the Graduate Representative Council (GRC), Department meetings, and other bodies of the University through the Association’s duly elected or appointed representatives; and
   ii. to participate in the Association through its structures, services, and By-Laws.

2. Active Members of the Association shall have the following obligations:
   i. to observe the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association; and
   ii. to pay fees levied by the Association in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws.

BY-LAW 3 – EXECUTIVE

1. The duties of the Executive shall be:
   i. President:
a. The office of the President shall be open to any student who has been an Active Member for a period of not less than one academic semester at the time they would take office, and who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.

b. The President shall chair all Executive Meetings, and all meetings of the Graduate Council unless absent, in which case another member of the Executive shall chair the meeting upon majority (greater than 50%) vote.

c. The President shall enforce due observation of the Constitution, By-Laws, policies, and Standing Resolutions of the Association and undertake all presidential duties described therein. If he or she meets the requirements set forth by the Graduate Students’ Association (GSA), the President shall be one of the Department’s graduate student representatives on the GRC; and shall sit as the graduate student representative at Department meetings as an ex-officio member.

d. The President shall act as chief communications officer with all University and Department organizations, except where another officer is so appointed by the Executive.

ii. Vice President (Course-based):

a. The office of the VP (Course-based) is open to any Active Member who is enrolled in a course-based graduate program in the Department, and who intends to remain an Active Member in such a program until the end of the usual term of office.

b. The VP (Course-based) shall act as an advocate for all course-based members.

c. The VP (Course-based) shall, if he or she meets the requirements set forth by the GSA, be one of the Department’s graduate student representatives on the GRC.

d. The VP (Course-based) shall be responsible for receiving and informing the Executive about written proposals to amend the Constitution or By-Laws of the Association as per Article XI of the Constitution.
iii. Vice President (Thesis):

a. The office of the VP (Thesis) is open to any Active Member who is enrolled in a thesis-based graduate program in the Department, and who intends to remain an Active Member in such a program until the end of the usual term of office.

b. The VP (Thesis) shall act as an advocate for all thesis-based members.

c. The VP (Thesis) shall, if he or she meets the requirements set forth by the GSA, be one of the Department’s graduate student representatives on the GRC.

d. The VP (Thesis) shall be responsible for receiving and informing the Executive about written petitions for Referenda as per Article X of the Constitution.

iv. Treasurer:

a. The office of Treasurer is open to any Active Member who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.

b. The Treasurer shall be the senior budgeting officer for the Executive and shall oversee all financial operations of the Association. This is to include the financial state of the Association as well as any committees who are authorized to spend Association monies on behalf of the Executive.

c. The Treasurer shall report on the financial state of the Association at all Executive and Graduate Council (GC) meetings, and to examine the financial statements of the Association on a monthly basis.

d. In addition, the Treasurer shall prepare a draft budget for approval by the GC, and monitor the budget throughout the year to ensure that monies are invested wisely and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a not-for-profit organization.

e. The Treasurer shall participate in committees as described in the policies manual.

v. Secretary:
a. The office of Secretary is open to any Active Member who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.

b. The Secretary shall act as the primary communications officer on behalf of the Association with graduate students and graduate student groups, and shall be responsible for communication within the Association, announcements of all meetings, shall ensure that the minutes of meetings are taken and duly submitted, and shall maintain custody of all minutes of the Association.

c. The Secretary shall be responsible for reviewing the Association By-Laws, Constitution and Policies.

d. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of Active Members through coordination with staff in the Department.

e. The Secretary shall participate in committees as described in the policies manual.

2. Executive officers shall perform additional duties in accordance with the By-Laws as directed by a General Meeting (see By-Law 8), or Referendum (see By-Law 9).

3. Any officer of the Executive may resign at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the President (see By-Law 5). The President may resign at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the VP (Course-based) (see By-Law 5). The resignation takes place after seven (7) days and is irreversible. The resigning Executive officer may not run in a by-election for the vacant office resulting from his or her resignation. An Executive officer must resign from office upon the termination of his or her registration at the University of Calgary.

4. Meetings of the Executive shall be held at a minimum three (3) times per year, or at the discretion of the President, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least two (2) other voting members of the Executive. A motion duly proposed at a meeting of the Executive shall be deemed passed by the Executive if it receives three (3) or more affirmative votes.
BY-LAW 4 – GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

1. The GC shall consist of all Active Members of the Association.

2. The GC shall have the authority to assign members to act on their behalf on the Executive as outlined in By-Law 6.

3. The GC shall have the authority to remove any member of the Executive or any committee of the Association by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at any formally announced meeting at which at least ten (10) Active Members of the Association are present. In such an event, the VP (Course-based) shall be notified forthwith; the position shall be filled by the GC at its earliest possible convenience via a by-election (see By-Law 6).

BY-LAW 5 – GC MEETINGS

1. All meetings of the GC shall be run in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, unless provisions of the By-Laws, resolutions of General Meeting (see By-Law 8), Referendum (see By-Law 9), or by vote of the GC otherwise. A minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote by those present shall be required in the GC to pass a resolution modifying the roles of order for the duration of that meeting.

2. The Speaker of the GC shall be the President of the Executive, or another member of the Executive appointed by the GC as Speaker pro tem by majority (greater than 50%) vote should the President not be available. While fulfilling the role of Speaker, the President (or other Executive) will continue to hold a vote on any motions or resolutions, and shall hold an additional tie-breaking vote in the event of a tie vote of the GC.

3. All Active Members of the Association may attend GC meetings, participate in discussions and vote. The GC may resolve by majority (greater than 50%) vote to discuss any matter in camera as necessary.

4. The GC shall meet at least once per year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Executive may call additional meetings by a majority vote.

5. The business of each meeting of the GC shall include the following:
   i. the reading, considering, and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting of the GC;
ii. a report by the Speaker, including presentations by visiting speakers/presenters;

iii. reports by officers of the Executive, including a financial report by the Treasurer;

iv. committee reports and reports by any other representatives of the Association; and

v. other business as the GC deems appropriate.

6. (a) Quorum for GC meetings shall be satisfied by the attendance of at least ten (10) Active Members, excluding officers of the Executive. Active Members may be represented in person only.

(b) If quorum is not achieved at a meeting of the GC, the quorum for the next meeting shall be met by five (5) Active Members, excluding officers of the Executive.

7. A motion passed at a meeting of the GC may be rescinded as per Robert's Rules of Order, by a motion at a General Meeting, or by Referendum.

8. The Secretary shall ensure that notice of all GC meetings and the agendas thereof is given by appropriate means to all Active Members not less than three (3) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

BY-LAW 6 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. General Elections shall take place in the Fall semester of each year. The Executive is responsible for setting the date of other elections as necessary in accordance with Article VII.

2. (a) Every April the GC shall elect a Chief Returning Officer, hereinafter referred to as the CRO.

(b) The CRO shall be an Active Member of the Association, who shall remain impartial and non-partisan as pertains to all elections, and who shall be answerable to the GC for proper conduct of the General Election.

(c) All campaign materials must be approved by the CRO prior to public dissemination. In the event that campaign materials are to be displayed or distributed, these materials cannot contain misinformation, slander, inappropriate endorsements, or discriminatory content. The CRO, at their sole discretion, has the authority to order removal of any campaign materials he or she deems inappropriate or in violation of the Constitution or
By-Laws of the Association. The CRO may remove any candidate from the election for violation of these standards after a suitable warning. Appeals of the CRO’s decision will be filed with the current President of the Executive. Only a unanimous vote by the Executive can overrule the CRO’s decision.

3. (a) The CRO shall announce the holding of an election at least fourteen (14) days prior to the opening date of the election. This announcement must include the procedures for nominating and for voting, including the time period for each.

(b) Nominations shall be opened fourteen (14) days prior to the opening date of the election, and will be officially closed by the CRO in a pre-election General Meeting of the GC after taking any nominations from the floor.

(c) If an insufficient number of nominations have been made by the end of this period, the nomination period for that position can be extended by seven (7) days at the discretion of the CRO. If an extension is granted and no additional nominations come forward, the Executive shall appoint a member to the position in accordance with Article V.

(d) After the nomination period is closed by the CRO in a pre-election General Meeting, members will have a period of up to three (3) business days to vote by secret ballot in a manner clearly stated in the announcement of the General Election given under Section 3(a). Ballots received after this prescribed period shall be invalid.

4. (a) Nominations for all elected Executive offices prior to the pre-election meeting shall be in writing and shall be signed by the nominator, who must be an Active Member, and shall bear the signature of the nominee signifying acceptance of the nomination. No Active Member may nominate more than one person for each elected office.

(b) Nominations from the floor of the pre-election General Meeting shall be moved by an Active Member, and may include the nominee him or herself, and must be agreed to by the nominee in person.

5. (a) After the end of the voting period, the ballots shall be counted by the CRO. Each candidate has the option of appointing a scrutineer to witness the counting.

(b) A majority (greatest number, 50% + 1 in the case of two candidates) of votes shall constitute election to office in the case of all Executive offices. A nominee shall also be elected to a given position by acclamation if no other nominations are made for such office. In the case of a tie, the GC shall cast a deciding vote based on a majority (greater
than 50%) vote at a Special Meeting to be called by the CRO. The CRO shall make public the names of the successful candidates and shall submit a written report at the earliest opportunity, including the election tallies, the number of spoiled ballots and any irregularities that may have taken place, to the incoming President.

6. Officers elected in September shall have a term of one (1) year, beginning October 1.

7. Should a vacancy in an elected, acclaimed or appointed position arise during the usual term of office, the GC shall hold a by-election according to the following procedures.

   i. For a vacancy occurring between October and March: Nominations for by-election will follow the procedures set out in Section 4.

   ii. For a vacancy occurring between April and September: The Executive shall, at their discretion, open nominations for by-election as set out in Section 4, or appoint an Active Member to hold the vacant position until it would naturally end in September.

   iii. Any by-election will include a Special Meeting, to be called by the Executive, as outlined in Section 4 to allow for nominations from the floor. Only those who are eligible to vote in the GC shall be permitted to vote in a by-election.

8. The term of office for Executives elected in a by-election shall commence immediately upon declaration of a successful candidate, and lasts until the next regular Executive is installed, as per Article VII.

**BY-LAW 7 – FINANCES**

1. Any withdrawal of funds from an Association account shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the President or a Vice President.

2. The financial records of the Association shall open to examination by the GSA, the Department, or any Active Member after due notice has been given to the Treasurer. The Treasurer, with the President, shall establish a suitable time and place, with the examination taking place on the University of Calgary campus in the presence of at least one member of the Executive.
BY-LAW 8 – GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The Secretary shall ensure that all General Meetings are announced by appropriate means no later than seven (7) days prior to the date of the General Meeting. This announcement shall include:
   i. a proposed agenda;
   ii. a summary of proposed amendments to the Standing Resolutions, Policies, Constitution or By-Laws received in accordance with Article XI of the Constitution; and
   iii. a description of where the complete text of such proposed amendments may be viewed by the membership.

2. Special General Meetings may be called by either a decision of the Executive, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least 5% of the Active Members requesting such a meeting.

3. A Referendum result (see By-Law 9) may be reversed at a General meeting only if the percentage of all Active Members who cast a vote on the reversal at the General Meeting exceeds the percentage of all Active Members who cast a ballot on the relevant Referendum question.

4. The business of each General Meeting shall include the following:
   i. the reading, consideration, and approval of the minutes of the previous General Meeting;
   ii. the consideration of each proposed amendment to the By-Laws, Standing Resolutions, Policies, or Constitution, when due notice of such proposed amendments has been received in accordance with Article XI of the Constitution;
   iii. any business not requiring notice that the General Meeting wishes to consider; and
   iv. reports of Executive officers, including the financial report by the Treasurer.

5. (a) The quorum for all General Meetings shall be ten (10) Active Members, excluding the Executive. All Active Members present in person shall count towards quorum and be eligible to vote. Proxy votes are not permitted.
(b) In the event that quorum is not achieved, the Meeting may proceed; however the only resolution which may be passed will be the setting of the next Meeting date.

6. The Secretary shall ensure that, when a vote is cast, the minutes include the number of votes for and against and any abstentions of any motions considered at a General Meeting.

7. The President of the Executive shall chair all General Meetings as Speaker. In the absence of the President, another member of the Executive shall be appointed by a majority (greater than 50%) vote of the GC as Speaker pro tem in accordance with By-Law 5, Section 2.

**BY-LAW 9 – REFERENDA**

1. Once a referendum has been initiated under Article X of the Constitution, the Executive shall, at its first subsequent meeting, set the date of the Referendum. If the Referendum was initiated by a petition, the Referendum date must be no more than thirty (30) days later.

2. A member of the Executive (excluding the President) shall act as Chief Returning Officer for the Referendum, shall have the rights, responsibilities, and liabilities in the Referendum equivalent to those described under By-Law 6 for the General Election, and shall not have a vote on the Referendum question.

3. The CRO, in consultation with the Executive, shall ensure the wording of the Referendum is clear and unambiguous and that it does not seek to unfairly influence the result of the Referendum. Final wording of Referendum questions shall be approved by the Executive.

4. (a) The CRO shall announce the Referendum at least fourteen (14) days prior to when it will be held. The announcement must include the question(s) being considered and the procedure and dates for voting.

   (b) Active Members shall have a period of up to three (3) business days on which to vote on the Referendum question(s) in a secret ballot. Ballots received after this prescribed time shall be invalid.

5. (a) Executive officers (excluding the CRO) shall retain their rights to advocate or endorse any position as individual Active Members. However, no member of the Executive, as an officer, may advocate or endorse any position on a question submitted for Referendum
unless a majority (greater than 50%) of that body is in favour of that position, as indicated by vote.

(b) Any published statements advocating or endorsing a position or positions on a question or questions submitted for Referendum, or any such statement by a member of the Executive in any publication shall (i) clearly state that the statement or statements represent the views of the author or authors only and not the views of the Association or the Executive, and (ii) shall, in the case of Association-sponsored publications, seek and publish representative views in an impartial manner.

(c) Benefits may be offered through the Association to all sides of a Referendum question, including but not limited to equal access to Association facilities, funds, and/or publications; where such benefits are made available, they will be made available in an equal and unbiased distribution.

6. At the end of the voting period, the ballots shall be counted by the CRO. Each side of a question shall be permitted to appoint one scrutineer to witness the counting. The CRO shall make public the results of the Referendum and shall submit written reports at the earliest opportunity, including the number of “Yes” votes, the number of “No” votes, the number of spoiled ballots and any irregularities that may have taken place, to the President and the GC.

7. (a) Referenda shall establish Association policies by majority (greater than 50%) vote, or Constitutional or By-Law amendments by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, subject to the provisions of the By-Laws.

(b) A Referendum may reverse a General Meeting decision only if the percentage of all Active Members who cast a ballot on the relevant Referendum question exceeds the percentage of all Active Members who cast a vote on the relevant General Meeting motion.

8. For the purpose of interpreting this By-Law, the date of the Referendum shall mean the last day on which voting may occur in accordance with Section 4.