



University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association
214 MacKimmie Library Tower
2500 University Drive. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 1N4
Tel (403) 220-5997 Fax (403)282-8992
www.gsa.ucalgary.ca

Policy Title: Code of Conduct

Policy Statement

This document is designed to provide standards for ethical interpersonal conduct to Student Representatives, Volunteers, and Staff Members (collectively referred to as GSA Representatives) while conducting GSA business, and to act as a foundation for effective governance.

Definitions

“Board” means the five elected members who make up the Board of Directors.

“Executive Director” means the senior full-time staff member hired by the Board to lead the operations of the GSA.

“GSA” means The Graduate Students' Association, University of Calgary.

“Membership” means all University students who pay fees to the GSA as identified in the GSA bylaws.

“Volunteer” means all persons employed by the GSA to implement aspects of the Association's programs or services in an unpaid capacity.

“Staff Member” means all persons employed by the GSA in a paid capacity, whether full-time, part-time, term certain, or contract.

“Student Representative” means all persons appointed or elected to the Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team, Committee Chairs, and all other formal Representative appointments for the purposes of conducting GSA affairs.

“University” means The University of Calgary, its Administration, Faculty and Staff.

Applicability

This Code is binding to all GSA Representatives.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate ethical and professional conduct in order to maintain the confidence of the Membership, the University and the public.

Non Compliance

Failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for Staff Members and Volunteers, and impeachment for Student Representatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

The President is responsible to ensure this document is adhered to by Student Representatives and Volunteers. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to ensure Staff Member's comply with this document.

Requirements in Representing the GSA

GSA Representative must recognize that it is their first duty to represent the GSA when employed by or volunteering with the GSA. GSA Representatives must not confuse their own views with those of the GSA, and may only speak on behalf of the GSA with Board approval. It is the responsibility of GSA Representatives to know the GSA by-laws, policies and procedures, and keep up to date with all changes and reforms.

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email
Student Representatives and Volunteers	GSA President	403.220.3501	gsapres@ucalgary.ca
Staff and general interpretation	GSA Executive Director	403.220.7974	danielle.decoste@ucalgary.ca

Procedures

1. Conflict of Interest

1.1 All GSA Representatives have a position of trust with the Membership, the University and the public, and therefore have a number of legal and ethical responsibilities. A 'Conflict of Interest' means a situation where a GSA Representative is involved in multiple interests, one of which could possibly corrupt the motivation of that individual.

GSA Representatives shall not engage in any activity, financial or otherwise, which is incompatible or inconsistent with the ethical discharge of official duties in the execution of the objects of the GSA. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- 1.1.1 All GSA Representatives must ensure that their vocational activities, personal or political allegiances or employment outside the GSA do not affect their ability to meet their assigned responsibilities;
- 1.1.2 GSA Representatives must not misrepresent their position. GSA Representatives may only commit the GSA within their area of authority as defined by the GSA's Personnel Policy;
- 1.1.3 GSA Representatives must not exploit their position for private gain or personal advancement. There must be no self-dealing for personal gain or advantage, or any conduct of private business or personal services between GSA Representatives. Exceptions may occur only when there is openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to information. The Executive Director has the authority to allow exceptions based on transparent business practices. Any decisions made in relation to this clause must be brought to the Board for informational purposes;
- 1.1.4 GSA Representatives may not use GSA resources – including but not limited to contact information of any GSA Representatives or Members – to further their own private gain (such as a private enterprise related to selling merchandise or consulting services or contracts for services);
- 1.1.5 Student Representatives and Volunteers must not use their positions to obtain employment with the GSA for themselves or their family members or friends. If a Student Representative or a Volunteer, or his/her family members or friends, is/are being considered for employment, the Student Representative or Volunteer must temporarily withdraw from deliberation, voting and access to applicable GSA information;
- 1.1.6 Staff Members must not use their positions to obtain employment with the GSA for their family members or friends. If a Staff Member's family member or friend is/are being considered for employment, the Staff Member must temporarily withdraw from deliberation, voting and access to applicable GSA information;
- 1.1.7 Familial or other such intimate relationships amongst GSA Representatives must be disclosed to the Executive Director and the Board. Such relationships must not be allowed to interfere

with the GSA's legitimate lines of communication or governance authority;

- 1.1.8 All GSA Representatives must act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the GSA. All GSA Representatives have an obligation of loyalty and a duty to uphold the integrity of the GSA;
 - 1.1.9 All GSA Representatives have a responsibility to ensure the GSA is properly managed and all assets are properly cared for;
 - 1.1.10 No GSA Representative may allow the personal interests of a third party to conflict with those of the GSA; and
 - 1.1.11 All conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty must be reported to the Executive Director in the case of Staff Members, and to the Board in the case of Student Representatives and Volunteers. If a decision-maker has a conflict of interest regarding a decision to be made, s/he must declare his/her conflict of interest, abstain from voting on the issue and physically absent himself/herself from the conversation.
- 1.2 Following full disclosure of a possible conflict of interest or any condition listed above, the Board (excluding a conflicted Board Member) shall determine whether a conflict of interest exists and, if so the Board shall vote to authorize or reject the transaction or take any other action deemed necessary in their sole discretion to address the conflict and protect the GSA's best interests.
- 1.3 A conflicted Board member, Volunteer, or Staff Member shall not participate in any discussion or debate of the Board, or of any committee or subcommittee thereof in which the subject of discussion is a contract, transaction, or situation in which there may be a perceived or actual conflict of interest. However, they may be present to provide clarifying information in such a discussion or debate unless objected to by any present board or committee member.

2. Core Principles

It is the duty of GSA Representatives to encourage ethical behavior and to facilitate participation of Members in the affairs of the GSA. This includes the following:

2.1 Confidentiality

GSA Representatives will hold in strict confidence all information on matters deemed confidential whether stated or implicit. This includes:

- 2.1.1 Any aspect of *in camera* meetings;

2.1.2 Information identified as confidential within the provision of the *Personal Information and Protection Act (Alberta)*; and

2.1.3 Information subject to solicitor-client privilege.

2.2 Respect for Diverse Opinions

GSA Representatives must encourage constructive criticisms and suggestions for organizational improvements, and discourage destructive criticism of any kind. Pluralism and debate are positive assets to the development of the GSA. GSA Representatives shall ensure their behavior encourages open, honest, and respectful debate, and will be based on the following criteria:

2.2.1 Respecting the rights of others to offer their opinion;

2.2.2 Refraining from participating in malicious behavior, statements or actions that harm the GSA Representatives, Members or integrity of the GSA;

2.2.3 Tolerating viewpoints that may not align with those of others; and

2.2.4 Respecting views and opinions that may be in the minority.

2.3 Respect for the Decision Making Process

All GSA Representatives shall communicate and work towards the organizational directions as set by the Board. Even if decisions are disagreed with, it is the expectation of all GSA Representatives to respect the decisions of the board and work towards end goals as defined by the Board.

Under no circumstances are GSA Representatives to publicly oppose decisions made by the Board. In the case of criticisms or differences of opinion, GSA Representatives should try to resolve conflicts by discussing with the appropriate person. Student Representatives and Volunteers should seek guidance through the President, and Staff should seek guidance through the Executive Director.

3. Separation of Roles of Board and Staff

3.1 Members of the Board shall conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the separation of roles and responsibilities between Board and

Staff. In order to effectively demonstrate respect for the separation of roles, members of the Board shall:

- 3.1.1 Refrain from giving direction to any Staff Member except where that direction is also provided to the Executive Director and represents a position or decision of the Board;
 - 3.1.2 Convey all operational concerns or requests for action from Members directly to the Executive Director without committing the GSA to any specific course of action, expenditure, or use of GSA resources unless approved by the Board;
 - 3.1.3 Not solicit, demand or accept the services of any GSA Representative providing services on a contract for service;
 - 3.1.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director for all operational matters of the GSA;
 - 3.1.5 Not convey to the public criticism or dissatisfaction with any GSA Representative;
 - 3.1.6 Avoid situations in which a friendship, social relationship or social interaction with a Staff Member may be seen to create undue influence, access to information, conflict of interest, or to undermine the authority of the Executive Director;
 - 3.1.7 Not Advocate for the promotion, sanction, or termination of any Staff Member;
 - 3.1.8 Make all requests for information pertaining to Staff Members to the Executive Director; and
 - 3.1.9 Consult with the Executive Director prior to any Staff Member appearing before the Board.
- 3.2 Should Staff Members feel the Executive Director is conducting themselves in contradiction to legislation, GSA bylaws, or GSA policies, and do not feel comfortable discussing it directly with the Executive Director, they reserve the right to inform suspected improprieties to the GSA President.
- 3.2.1 If the GSA President feels the Staff Member has a legitimate complaint, and not of a criminal nature, the GSA President will immediately discuss the accusation(s) with the Executive Director.

3.2.2 If the GSA President feel the Executive Director has violated legislation, the GSA President will use their judgement on how to handle the situation up to and including consulting legal advice.

4. Separation of Roles Between the GSA and the Membership

- 4.1 GSA Representatives shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a manner that reflects clear separation in roles between representing the GSA and representing Membership.
- 4.2 When acting on behalf of the GSA, in both official and unofficial capacities, GSA Representatives shall, at all times, represent the position of the GSA and not that of individual members.
- 4.3 When voting on motions, GSA Representatives will always represent the best interest of the GSA and not that of personal interests.

5. Discrimination

GSA Representatives shall not discriminate against anyone as defined in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. In accordance with the Human Rights Act, GSA Representatives shall not:

- 5.1 Make racial, homophobic, sexist, or ethnic slurs;
- 5.2 Display pornographic, homophobic, sexist, racist, or other offensive or derogatory material;
- 5.3 Make offensive or threatening gestures;
- 5.4 Make written or verbal abuse or threats;
- 5.5 Commit physical or sexual assault;
- 5.6 Make unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunting statements about a person's physical appearance, racial background, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, citizenship, ancestry, creed (religion or belief), sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status, disability (physical or mental), gender expression, or gender identity; and
- 5.7 Make unnecessary or unwanted physical contact.

6. Approval and Interpretation

Any changes to this policy require Board approval. All procedural requirements outlined in this document are interpreted by the Executive Director. Any procedural changes must be approved by the Executive Director.

Forms

[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)

[Personal Information Protection Act](#)

In consideration of my volunteering with the GSA, I agree to the terms of agreement set out above, this ___ day of _____, 202__.

NAME (Printed)

SIGNATURE