

# Ecology Graduate Student Constitution

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Odum School of Ecology  
University of Georgia, Athens GA

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Ecology Graduate Student Constitution  
**Ratified**  
7 May 2014

Respectfully Submitted by  
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**Preamble:**

Being enacted by members of the Ecology Graduate Student Organization (GSO) of the Odum School of Ecology (OSE) at the University of Georgia-Athens, these articles are to:

- 1) Describe the purpose and proceedings of the GSO;
- 2) Serve as guidance and authority for the acts and procedures of both present and future representatives of the GSO;
- 3) Describe the expectations of said representatives by members of the GSO so that all parties may have a clear understanding of those expectations and the authority to enforce representative coherence;

and

- 4) Ultimately, ensure consistent and efficient implementation of elections, appointments, meetings, programs, and other applicable GSO activities.

## **Article I: Name and Purpose**

### Section 1: Name

The association shall be known as the Ecology Graduate Student Organization (GSO) at the University of Georgia- Athens (UGA)

Section 2: Purpose – The purpose of the Ecology Graduate Student Organization is to:

- A. Be an umbrella assistance and advocacy organization, which serves as a representative and decision-making body for the Ecology graduate student community and provides a unified voice to faculty and staff within the department and to the greater campus community;
- B. Foster collegial interactions amongst graduate students in the Ecology department;
- C. Provide a forum for intradepartmental communication between all students, faculty and staff.

## **Article II: Membership**

### Section 1: Full Membership

- A. To be a full member one must be currently enrolled in a graduate degree program offered through the Odum School of Ecology
- B. To be an officer one must have paid the UGA Student Activity Fee

## **Article III: Non-Discrimination**

Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, shall not be denied to any student because of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students as stated in the University of Georgia Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

## **Article IV: Finances**

No dues are required. Money for activities shall come from fundraisers and donations.

## **Article V: Officers**

### **Section 1: Graduate Student Representatives**

All officers must be enrolled in at least \*9\* credit hours at the University of Georgia and should be in good academic standing. The GSO shall have a minimum of two chief officers (hereafter “Graduate Student Representatives”). Graduate Student Representatives shall have a term of one school year, beginning and ending in April of the Spring semester. Duties of the Graduate Student Representatives include, but may not be limited to:

- a) Acting as a liaison for the Ecology graduate students with Ecology faculty and staff, as well as with individuals from other departments at UGA;
- b) Representing current and future Ecology Graduate Students;
- c) Organizing and leading meetings;
- d) Coordinating the activities of all elected and appointed representatives;
- e) Delegating responsibilities to other GSO members;
- f) Disseminating information to the OSE graduate student body;
- g) Being available to new and prospective students for general background information about the Odum School of Ecology graduate program;
- h) Facilitating use of graduate student desk space;
- i) Representing Graduate Students at faculty meetings and report information at graduate student meetings; and
- j) Facilitating participation of the members in departmental activities.

### **Section 2: Other Elected Positions**

The GSO shall elect the following representatives, who are vital to the organization’s operations and are responsible for duties including, but not limited to the following.

#### **A. Treasury and Fundraiser (hereafter “Treasurer”):**

Treasury and Fundraiser (hereafter “Treasurer”): The treasurer must take primary responsibility for managing the graduate student account by receiving and depositing donations as well as disbursing funds as necessary. The treasurer must maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the graduate student account balance, report this balance to members of the GSO at meetings, and implement in any appropriate actions necessary, including fundraising events, to secure adequate funds for GSO operations. The treasurer should, at the discretion of the Graduate Student Representatives, manage the disbursement funds from the graduate student account and may requisition assistance with such actions by other GSO members. The aforementioned responsibilities are those of the treasurer, but shall be shared with the Graduate Student Representatives as necessary. The Treasurer shall have a term of one school year, beginning and ending in April of the Spring semester.

B. Symposium Co-chairpersons (hereafter “Symposium Co-chairs”):

The Symposium Co-chairs shall organize and coordinate all activities and volunteers necessary to facilitate an Annual Ecology Graduate Student Symposium (hereafter “GSS”). The Symposium Chair shall communicate the status of GSS preparatory activities during meetings and must clearly describe the requisite actions of GSO members and volunteers during the GSS. The Symposium Co-chairs shall have a term of one school year, beginning and ending in April of the Spring semester.

Section 3: Election of Representatives

- A. An open election will be held for the positions of Graduate Student Representatives, Treasurer, Symposium Co-chair, and Hire Committee Rep. Nominees for these positions should be persons who are active in GSO events, are frequently on the Athens campus, and are available to commit time to the necessary duties of such positions. Any member of the GSO may nominate other members or personally volunteer for electoral candidacy. Nominations shall take place in a timely manner so that election procedures may fully commence before new representatives assume their duties. Upon formal acceptance of a nomination or after personally volunteering, such persons shall be considered electoral candidates.

Section 4: Election Procedures

- A. Elections shall be held via the Ecology Graduate Student List Serve so that all members may participate and be informed of such proceedings.
- B. Each member shall have one vote which will be tallied by the current Graduate Student Representatives.
- C. A final vote will be held 1 week after the period for nomination solicitation has ended. Before the final vote, candidates must provide a brief background and interest statement, which informs GSO members of a candidate’s qualifications and reasons for wanting the position.
- D. To be elected, a candidate must only receive a greater number of votes than their opponents. In the case of a tie, a successive runoff vote shall be held between the top 2 candidates via procedures outlined in Section 4(sub-§ A-B) of this Article.

Section 5: Removing Officers

In the case of conduct unbecoming of an officer:

- A. A motion may be made to have the officer removed and must pass by a 2/3 majority of the GSO members present at the time of a vote.

#### Section 6: Replacing Officers

In the case of resignation, illness, removal, or other extenuating circumstances, an officer may be replaced by procedures outlined in Section 4 of this Article.

### **Article VI: Meetings**

#### Section 1: Meetings

A. There shall be a minimum of two meetings in each the Fall and Spring semesters and more if important topics for discussion deem a meeting necessary.

B. Quorum: The minimum percentage of members necessary to hold a meeting will be 10 percent. Business requiring votes will be communicated via the Ecograds list serve and an open weeklong voting period through e-mail will be made available for out of town members.

#### Section 2: Notification of Meetings

Members shall be notified of meeting content, time, and location via the Ecology Graduate Student List Serve.

#### Section 3: Minutes

Minutes shall be distributed to the members in a timely manner following all meetings via the Ecology Graduate Student List Serve.

### **Article VII: Volunteer Committee Representatives**

#### Section 1: Committees

Committees shall be formed as necessary for completing goals important to the GSO. One student representative shall be appointed to represent GSO members. The following list of committees may be reduced or expanded as deemed necessary by GSO members.

**New Faculty Hire Committee Representative (hereafter “Hire Committee Rep”):** Hire Committee Reps shall represent GSO member interests on all new faculty hire committees and convey the collective ideas and opinions of GSO members to the other committee members. Hire Committee Reps shall be responsible for attending hire committee meetings, casting allotted graduate student votes, communicating the status and expressed opinions of such committees to GSO members, and organizing events in which GSO members may collectively meet with and discuss new hire candidates. The Hire Committee Rep shall have a term equal to the length of the hiring process, and be elected or appointed as needed with the approval of the Hire Committee Chair.

The following committees shall have a term of one school year, beginning and ending in August of the Fall semester:

- a) **Secretary:** Attend GSO meetings and distributes minutes to the members in a timely manner following all meetings via Ecology Graduate Student List Serve.
- b) **Keystone Staff Spring Fling Chairperson:** Represent GSO members on the Spring Fling Planning Committee. Solicit nominations and conduct elections for the Keystone Staff Award. The Keystone Staff Award is given to a faculty or staff member that the graduate students feel has gone above and beyond their duties for the OSE during the past year.
- c) **Chili cook-off Fart Czar:** The czar will plan and organize the annual Chili cook-off on the first Friday in November. Including but not limited to: Establishing categories and judging criteria, soliciting participants and judges, and acquiring adequate power strips.
- d) **Great Odum Bake Off Chairperson:** The chairperson will plan and organize the Great Odum Bake Off each spring. Including but not limited to: securing a date, establishing categories and judging criteria, soliciting participants and judges, set-up and clean-up.
- e) **Non-Academic Career Panel Organizer:** Organize a non-academic career panel in coordination with the Seminar Committee Chairperson each spring in lieu of an ecology seminar. Including but not limited to: securing a date, soliciting nominations and voting upon panel participants, and securing a moderator for the panel.

The following committees shall have a term of one school year, beginning and ending in April of the Spring semester:

- a) **Ecology Graduate Program Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Graduate Program Committee and report important information at graduate student meetings. Two graduate students should be on this committee with offset terms.
- b) **Undergraduate Program Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Undergraduate Program Committee and report information at graduate student meetings. Help facilitate professional interaction between ecology undergraduates and graduate students. The Undergraduate Program representative should have served as a Teaching Assistant for at least one semester prior to holding this position.
- c) **Seminar Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Seminar Committee. Assist with coordination of invited speaker lunches with graduate students as needed. Facilitate graduate-student organized seminar events including graduate student invited speakers (typically two per year) or panels including nomination process, travel planning, and serve as host for graduate student invited speaker.

- d) **Space and Facilities Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Space and Facilities Committee and keep the GSO apprised of space and research facility availability and concerns.
- e) **Information Technology Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Information Technology Committee and keep the GSO apprised of informational technology needs and opportunities within the OSE community.
- f) **Diversity Committee:** Represent GSO members on the Diversity Committee and report information at graduate student meetings. Help promote and maintain diversity in the Odum School. Two graduate students should be on this committee with offset terms.
- g) **Ecology 8030 Coordinator:** The coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the 1-credit course, ECOL 8030, during the graduate-student led Spring semester. In particular working with the Deans and Graduate Coordinator to advocate for continued student oversight and ensure the continued success of the course. This individual may take on the following responsibilities or recruit an alternative Graduate Student to do so: planning or adapting a suitable syllabus, leading/teaching the course.
- h) **Webmaster:** Maintain the OSE Graduate Student Grant Database, GSO website, and Slack workspace.
- i) **Orientation Co-Chairpersons:** Co-chairs will be members of the GSO who will be in town one week prior to the beginning of the Fall semester and is responsible for organizing and administering the new student orientation once per academic year.
- j) **Graduate Student Association (GSA) Representative:** Attend GSA meetings and keep GSO members informed about relevant issues affecting graduate students by forwarding GSA e-mails and submitting reports at graduate student meetings.
- k) **Student Activity Fund Ad-Hoc Representative:** Represent the graduate student body in the annual Student Activity Fee allocation committee meeting. The student cannot be an officer in GSO (graduate student representative, GSS (co-)chair, secretary, treasurer, webmaster) or Ecoreach.
- l) **Alumni Board Representative:** Represent the graduate student body to the Odum School of Ecology Alumni Board. The representative will facilitate communications and professional interactions between the graduate student body and Ecology alumni.

## Section 2: Committee Representative Appointments

During the election periods stated above, the Graduate Student Representatives will solicit volunteers for the previously listed committees via the Ecology Graduate Student List Serve in

conjunction with nominations for the elected positions. If more than 1 student volunteers for a particular position and only one student is needed, an open election will be held using procedures outlined in Article IV §4.

### **Article VIII: Amendments**

Contents of this constitution and all articles may be modified and new articles may be amended at any time if so moved, appropriately seconded, and approved by a 2/3 majority of the GSO members present at the time of a vote. In the case of a tie, the elected Graduate Student Representatives may confer and cast a unified vote to break the tie.

**Amendment 1** – Procedure for making formal statements on behalf of the graduate student community  
*(Amended 8 March 2019)*

Formal statements on behalf of the graduate student community, (i.e., not communications regarding standard GSO business, such as communications by GSO officers in accordance with responsibilities enumerated in this constitution), will be approved using the following procedure. The statement draft will be created by a GSO committee or GSO representative/member, and sent out via email to all of graduate students for a review and comment period of at least one week. Comments will be incorporated into the statement as deemed appropriate by letter writer(s). The statement will then either be sent out for an additional comment period or sent to all graduate students for an approval vote. The voting period must be at least one week and receive participation of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of listed graduate students. Statements that receive support from  $\frac{2}{3}$  of voters can be sent out on behalf of grad students.