

## **Rights and Responsibilities of GC Department Representatives**

### **1. Becoming a Department Representative of the GC**

Every department belonging to the so-called “Homewood Divisions” (*Constitution of the GRO, Preamble*) that has been recognized by the GRO may send one representative and an alternate (in the rest of the document called rep(s)) per academic year as voting members to meetings of the General Council (GC). Quick note: Every student belonging to KSAS and WSE is automatically a member of the GRO and can attend GC meetings but has no voting rights.

The way GC reps are chosen vary by department. For example, they can be elected, can volunteer, it could be a mandatory obligation for first-year students, or members of departmental student organizations fill the position(s). Whatever solution a department decides, it is important to note that this is a decision of the graduate students themselves and administration or professors are not involved.

A recognized department does not have to send a rep and some departments decide not to do so. In this case, the department misses the discussion of topics that are relevant to all graduate students on campus and decisions on how to take action in order to solve problems (e.g. health care, shuttle service, grievance policy). Also, students from non-attending departments do not have the right to apply for the GRO’s travel grants. In case your department is recognized but currently not attending GC meetings and you do not know how to change this situation, feel free to contact the GRO, in particular the Executive Board (E-Board). The GRO does not interfere in any way with how a rep is chosen but we are always interested in increasing representation, and willing to provide information. At the beginning of each academic year, non-attending departments from the previous years receive an email via their department administrators that they may send one or two reps.

### **2. Being a Department Representative of the GC**

As mentioned above, two reps per department may attend GC meetings and have voting rights. Reps can take turns attending meetings. If no rep is able to attend a meeting, another person cannot fill the position. Due to the rule that every recognized department can only have two reps, no additional person will be added to the mailing list for GC meetings. If both reps attend a meeting, only one of them may cast their vote for the department.

Reps can volunteer to attend GC meetings for several years as long as they are enrolled graduate students. The E-Board recommends that reps volunteer for at least one academic year so that some continuity exists for GC meetings.

### **3. Rights and Responsibilities before/at Meetings**

Every graduate student has the right to add a topic to the agenda of the next GC meeting. In order to distribute the agenda on time, please submit a topic four days before the meeting. If an urgent item comes up, it can be added to the agenda during the meeting (by voting) or discussed at the end of the meeting (last point of the agenda).

Before the meeting, as a GC rep, you should look at the agenda and prepare for the meeting by reading the previous GC minutes as well as additional attachments. It is your responsibility to sign in with the secretary before or at the beginning of a GC meeting. Eye-contact or raising the hand is not enough but it is necessary to go in person to the secretary who takes attendance. It is your responsibility to verify that the department is signed in. The attendance list cannot be edited after the GC meeting.

It is important that you solicit and represent the opinions/questions/problems/views of other graduate students in your department. Please consider this aspect while taking part in discussions and voting at GC meetings.

The GC consists of department reps and E-Board members. It is the goal of the GRO to have engaged discussions at GC meetings so that information is exchanged between specific departments and the E-Board. Only through discussions can we find solutions for problems. The chair and/or co-chair usually moderate(s) the GC meeting but has no right to end a discussion. This can only take place through either unanimous consent or a motion and vote by the GC.

As a GC rep, you can participate in every vote, for example funding requests and E-Board elections. (E-Board members cannot vote at E-Board elections.) GC reps as well as E-Board members (except for the moderating chair(s)) have the right to put forward motions (and second them) when appropriate.

#### **4. Rights and Responsibilities after GC Meetings**

As a rep, you are an important link in the communication between GC, E-Board, and graduate students in your department. Therefore, make sure you

- inform students via email in your department of what happened at GC meetings: What issues were discussed? Were important decisions made?
- ask students in your department what they would like to see the GRO do. For example: What problems can and should the GC discuss? Should policies/activities be modified/put in place?

This might not be possible after every GC meeting but please try to distribute information to graduate students and the GC as often as possible.

#### **5. Terminating your Position at the GRO**

If you stop volunteering for the GRO, the secretary of the GRO should be informed via email. If possible this message includes the name and contact information of the new rep. It is important that you do not forget to inform the graduate students in your department about terminating your involvement with the GC so that they can find a new rep. It would be ideal if you could inform the new rep of the rights and responsibilities mentioned in this document.

Created by Linda Braun (Secretary, 2015-2016)

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