

I-6.00.4 - UMCES Policy on Graduate Student Council

Policy recommended by UMCES Graduate Student Council and by UMCES Administrative Council in May 2023; final approval and effective date October 12, 2023.

1. Purpose of the Graduate Student Council (GSC)

- a. The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) GSC represents all UMCES graduate students, defined as graduate students supervised by UMCES faculty, for the purposes of communication with the Administration, the Faculty, and the Staff in the spirit of shared governance and cooperation. The GSC shall serve both as an advisory body to the President and Administration and as an appropriate forum to support and improve the graduate student experience at UMCES.
- b. The GSC may advise on specific institutional issues, participate in the development of community-building, networking, and educational events organized for the benefit of graduate students, and otherwise act at the request of the President or Administration.
- c. The GSC shall facilitate graduate student access to information regarding resources and services available to graduate students and in turn keep the President and Administration advised of the collective needs and interests of the students

2. Functions

- a. In all matters, the GSC shall be subject to the powers and authorities of the Board of Regents (BOR), the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, and the President of UMCES.
 - i. Actions of the GSC shall not contravene any provision of Maryland Law or any policy of the University System of Maryland (USM).
- b. The general functions of the UMCES GSC shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
 - i. Facilitate discussions of issues, policies, and activities related to UMCES students.
 - ii. Advise the President and Administration and make appropriate recommendations.
 - iii. Promote excellence in education among graduate students.
 - iv. Share responsibility with administration, faculty, and staff for efforts to improve the stature and effectiveness of UMCES and the USM.
 - v. Share responsibility with the administration, faculty, and staff for professional review of laboratory directors and administrators.
- c. In addition to performing such functions, the GSC shall, through recommendations to the President and Administration, consider matters of concern to the students of UMCES, including identification of needs for development of new policies or revision of existing policies.
 - i. The subject of such policies and programs may include, but not be limited to, civil rights, social welfare, and economic well-being of graduate

- students.
- ii. The President (or designee) shall inform the GSC in writing of all new policies and policy revisions officially adopted by UMCES.
 - iii. The GSC may request information from the President on matters within its purview and for distribution to GSC committees, the GSC as a whole, or the student body, as the case may require.
- d. The GSC shall function as the graduate assistant advisory committee to represent the interests of the graduate assistants of UMCES pursuant to USM BOR III – 7.11 VI.C.
 - e. Pursuant to USM BOR III – 7.11 VI.D, the GSC on behalf of UMCES graduate assistants may elect to engage a representative, which may be a labor organization, to assist them in “meet and confer” discussions with the Administration over issues of concern to graduate students, including stipends, benefits and terms of appointment. Such election shall conform to procedures established by the USM.

3. Reporting and Meeting

- a. The Secretary of the UMCES GSC shall provide a brief written report (which can be in the form of meeting minutes) of all GSC actions. These reports shall be maintained in an internally accessible file archive for future reference.
- b. At least one of the Graduate Student Council members from each Laboratory unit shall be invited to participate in regular meetings of that unit’s faculty.
- c. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Graduate Student Council shall be invited to participate in the annual UMCES Faculty Convocation.
- d. The Chair of the GSC (or designee) shall be invited to attend all meetings of the UMCES Administrative Council.
- e. At least once each calendar year, at either a regular or special meeting of the GSC, the UMCES President and/or the Vice President for Education shall be invited to present a report on the state of UMCES and on any matters of concern.
- f. The GSC Chair will provide an annual brief written report of all GSC actions to the President of UMCES.
- g. Pursuant to USM BOR III – 7.11 VI.D, at least once each calendar year representatives of the GSC, including at least the Chair and Vice-Chair, will officially “meet and confer” with representatives of the Administration to include at least the Vice President for Education, the Vice President for Administration and Finance, and the Director of Human Resources. This meeting will offer an opportunity for the students and administration to focus on issues of concern to graduate assistants, including stipends, benefits and terms of appointments as well as student affairs, student support, and student governance, and related issues.

4. Composition and election of the UMCES Graduate Student Council

- a. The GSC shall have two voting members from each of the UMCES laboratory units. Graduate students within each unit shall elect members on an annual basis.
 - i. Any full-time degree-seeking UMCES student may be appointed or elected as a member of the GSC.
 - ii. At least one of the two members from each unit shall be a graduate assistant.
- b. Members of the Graduate Student Council shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among its membership.
 - i. The GSC Chair and/or Co-chair shall serve as a representative on the UMCES Administrative Council, Graduate Faculty Council, Faculty Senate, and USM Student Council.
- c. Membership, election, term limits and description of GSC positions are detailed in the UMCES GSC By-Laws.

5. By-Laws of the GSC

- a. The GSC shall adopt By-Laws necessary for its effective functioning, so long as those By-Laws do not contravene Maryland laws, the powers of the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland, the powers delegated to the Chancellor or the President of UMCES, or policies and procedures of the USM or UMCES.
- b. The GSC shall have such committees, rules, and procedures as may be provided for in its By-Laws, or may establish new rules and resolutions consistent with its By-Laws.
- c. The By-Laws of the GSC may be amended only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the elected members taken at a meeting held at least thirty (30) days after notice of each proposed amendment has been given to each member.