

## **UMCES GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS**

### **I. Introduction**

The student body of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) is integral in achieving UMCES' vision of excellence in its academics, research, and community service by functioning in a support role to its staff and faculty. The President of UMCES and the President's Executive Council have found it appropriate that the UMCES Graduate Student Council (GSC) serve as the liaison between graduate students, individually and collectively, the faculty, the administration, and the alumni of UMCES in areas of policies and procedures that support and improve the quality of the environment for the graduate students at UMCES. The opportunity to be heard on these matters through a recognized Student Council is indicative of UMCES' goal to develop a more responsive environment distinguished by consistently high levels of commitment and productivity from its students.

### **II. Purpose and Functions of the GSC**

1. The Graduate Student Council shall function as the graduate assistant advisory committee to represent the interests of the graduate assistants of UMCES pursuant to University System of Maryland policy III-7.11 VI C
2. The GSC has plenary jurisdiction to investigate, discuss, and make recommendations to the President concerning any matters submitted to it by the President or by any member of the UMCES community.
3. There shall be a GSC representing all degree-seeking students advised by an UMCES faculty member. Non-exempt employees, exempt staff, faculty, and academic administrators are already represented by the collective bargaining unit, staff council, Faculty Senate, and Administrative Council respectively.
4. The functions of the GSC shall include the following:
  - a. To represent the interest and concerns of all graduate students at UMCES in accordance with current regulations;
  - b. To support the administration and academic community with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the graduate students;
  - c. To provide a forum for discussion and recommendations on matters involving students and the welfare of UMCES;
  - d. To participate, in an advisory capacity, in the review and implementation of university policies affecting the students;
  - e. To participate, in the interest of the graduate students, in the recommendation and development of policies, procedures, and/or rules concerning the general operation of UMCES;
  - f. To establish its own committees;
  - g. To serve on the University System of Maryland Student Council (USMSC);
    - i. The Chair and Co-Chair will serve as the two voting/primary members to the USMSC and will serve the duration of their terms on the Executive Council. UMCES gets one vote collectively on the USMSC as a graduate-only institution.
  - h. To serve as a channel of communication between;
    - i. UMCES students and the Administration; and

- ii. UMCES students and the USMSC.
  - i. To coordinate nominations and awarding of the UMCES outstanding faculty mentor award to be given each year at the faculty convocation and UMCES graduation ceremony.
5. Carrying out its purpose and functions, the GSC will observe all established University administrative policies and procedures, including but not limited to USM Board of Regents Policy I.6.00 on shared governance.

### **III. Membership, Term Length, and Appointment/Election**

1. There are eight voting members of the UMCES GSC composed of eligible graduate students. GSC membership consists of two lab representatives, each from Appalachian Lab (AL), Chesapeake Biological Lab (CBL), Horn Point Lab (HPL), and the Institute of Marine Environmental Technology (IMET).
  - a. Lab representatives on the GSC serve a one-year term and can serve a maximum of two years.
  - b. If an eligible student is located at one unit but financially supported by another, the unit that the student represents will be determined on a case by case basis and must have the support of both the director of the person's location as well as the director of the unit that financially supports the student.
  - c. Following temporary vacancies created by personal reasons, the newly-vacated position will be filled with a new member from the same lab who volunteers for the position until the original representative returns.
2. Within this eight member council will be the Executive Council, which includes the Chair, Co-chair, and Secretary.
  - a. The Chair and Co-chair serve one 2-year term. The Secretary serves a 1-year term with the option of serving a maximum of two years. The Chair will serve as past-chair for 6 months following their two year term in order to ease transition during the leadership change and maintain continuity within the shared governance structure.
3. Transitions of GSC representatives and the Executive Council shall be held during the months of May and June for the upcoming year term (July 1 through June 30).
  - a. GSC representatives and Executive Council positions shall be self-nominated or nominated by other eligible student members. If there are two or more students interested in a position, elections will be held, and each student will be given an opportunity to speak on why they are a good candidate for the position to the GSC. The voting members of the GSC will then vote anonymously to elect an officer. The voting procedure will be conducted by the current Chair.
  - b. Each nominee shall confirm that he or she is willing to serve before his or her name is formally submitted as a candidate.
  - c. The results shall be reported to the UMCES President, and Vice President of Education no later than the first week of July of that year.
4. The GSC, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, may remove any of its members.
  - a. A seat vacated by resignation, removal or for any other reason shall be filled by an alternate appointed or elected from the affected unit.

### **IV. Executive Council Positions Descriptions**

1. There shall be three officers of the GSC who will form the Executive Council. The officers shall be the Chair, Co-chair, and Secretary.
  - a. The duties of the officers will be as follows;
    - i. Chair
      1. Preside at all meetings of the GSC,
      2. Finalize the agenda of each GSC meeting,
      3. Serve as chief liaison with the UMCES Administration,
      4. Serve as student representative to UMCES Administrative Council, Faculty Senate and Graduate Faculty Council,
      5. Serve as a primary/voting member to the USMSC and attend all USMSC meetings,
      6. Perform other duties as assigned by the GSC,
      7. Enforce the GSC Bylaws,
      8. Represent the GSC at all official and social occasions or to appoint a representative, as appropriate, and
      9. Conduct training and orientation for the GSC.
      10. Provide an annual brief written report of all GSC actions to the President of UMCES.
    - ii. Co-Chair
      1. Serve in the absence of the Chair,
      2. Serve as GSC parliamentarian,
      3. Serve as a representative on the USMSC and attend all USMSC meetings,
      4. Perform other duties as assigned by the GSC, and
      5. Assist with graduate student orientation programs.
    - iii. Secretary
      1. Record and distribute minutes,
      2. Maintain all records of the GSC and maintain the official roster and take attendance at all meetings GSC,
      3. Perform other duties as assigned by the GSC
2. The GSC shall meet a minimum of three times during each term year.
  - a. The Executive Council shall fulfill the following functions:
    - i. Set the agenda for GSC meetings,
    - ii. Distribute the agenda at least three days prior to each regular meeting to all members of the GSC,
    - iii. Accept proposals for GSC consideration from eligible member(s) of the UMCES community (These proposals are normally submitted through their local representative who must respond in writing to the person submitting, stating he/she has submitted the proposal to the Executive Committee, who will give it full consideration in preparing the agenda), and
    - iv. Refer or automatically postpone non-agenda proposals except in an emergency, as determined by a two thirds vote of the members present, any proposal introduced under new business which does not appear on the agenda shall either be referred to an appropriate committee or automatically postponed until the following meeting.

- b. At the request of any four members of the GSC, the Chair will be required to call a Special Meeting provided all members have been notified at least 24 hours in advance of the date and time of the special meeting.
- c. Prepare and submit reports on the work of the GSC to the UMCES Administration and the UMCES campus community,
- d. Be a point of contact with the UMCES Administration
- e. Recommend to the GSC the establishment, composition and responsibilities of standing and/or special committees, fill irregular vacancies on committees, and recommend participation in joint campus committees; and
- f. Perform such functions as given by the GSC.

## **V. Meetings**

1. The GSC shall meet a minimum of three times during each term year.
  - a. There shall be at least one Open Forum meeting of the GSC each year in which all UMCES students and the UMCES President are able to attend, but there may be more depending on need. An additional open meeting can be held during the all MEES Colloquium run by either the MEES Graduate Student Organization (GSO) or the UMCES GSC leadership.
  - b. Meetings will be held subject to availability and scheduling.
  - c. Working full-Council and/or committee meetings may be held as necessary.
2. If any GSC member is absent from more than 25% of the yearly scheduled working meeting sessions, without prior approval from the Chair, the Executive Council will notify the member in writing of its recommendation for removal from the GSC.
3. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Council, by resolution of the GSC, or by petition signed by at least one-third of the GSC membership.
4. Special meetings may be open with or without voice, or closed to all eligible students at the discretion of the Executive Council.
5. All eligible graduate students may attend Open Forum meetings of the Council, without voice or vote, subject to requirements of space and good order.
6. A quorum shall consist of one more than half of the elected members. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting shall be necessary to adopt any motion or resolution.
7. Meeting notices to members are sent by email.
8. Any three GSC members may require that an item be placed on the agenda of an Open Forum or special meeting.
9. GSC members shall be released from their normal work responsibilities, if necessary, each term year in order to attend the following meetings:
  - a. One Open Forum Council meetings;
  - b. Members may require additional time to fulfill their GSC responsibilities, e.g. attendance at committee or special meetings and other activities.
  - c. Members and their supervisors shall work together in coordinating these activities so as to not interfere with the members normal work responsibilities as students of UMCES.
10. All procedures not otherwise set forth in these Bylaws or by rules adopted by the GSC shall be in accordance with the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

## **VI. Committees**

1. The GSC will establish standing committees, with membership by selections as needed. GSC representatives are encouraged and expected to serve on committees on a volunteer basis.
2. The GSC will also establish committees as assigned by the President of UMCES.
  - a. The GSC will send representation to intra and inter-campus committees and invited faculty committees.
3. The GSC may elect as needed a chair to each committee.
  - a. The GSC may request, within a thirty day time period, any reports it deems necessary from any committee.

## **VII. Administrative Resources.**

1. UMCES resource staff (i.e. Human Resources Management, Information Services, Facilities Management) is available to assist the GSC in its functions.
  - a. Resource staff may be included as non-voting participants in Council, Executive, or committee meetings in order to provide information and other support activities.
  - b. The VPE Office and their designee(s) shall function as the primary resource for the GSC.
  - c. Travel expenses in support of USMSC related meetings shall be funded by Center Administration while travel expenses in support of GSC meetings shall be funded by the laboratories.
  - d. GSC shall review by-laws every two years at a minimum and update as needed.