

BLOUSTEIN GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (BGSA)
STUDENTS CONSTITUTION

Article 1: Name and Purpose.

The Bloustein Graduate Student Association (BGSA) shall be a Graduate Student Organization at Rutgers University and a member organization of the Graduate Student Association. BGSA shall also be a registered Planning Student Organization with the American Planning Association.

The goals of the BGSA shall be to:

- a) Articulate and promote academic and professional interests of its members;
- b) Promote an environment that facilitates communication between its members and the faculty and administration of the departments of the Bloustein School and other members of the university community;
- c) Promote an awareness of the relationship between planning, public policy, public informatics, and Health administration, and the context in which it occurs;
- d) Provide opportunities for social involvement pertaining to social justice in the school and in the New Brunswick community;
- e) To promote awareness and understanding of the valuable contributions that diversity of personalities, perspectives, and identities have made to the fields of urban planning, public policy, public informatics, and health administration;
- f) Allocate Graduate Student Association (GSA) funding to support student activities.

Article 2: Membership.

The following categories of membership will be recognized:

Full membership will be available to any graduate student who is registered for a minimum of one graduate course (or three credits) offered by the Bloustein School or at least one research credit for registered doctoral student at the Bloustein School who has completed their qualifying examinations. Only full members may vote on BGSA affairs.

Article 3: The Executive Committee

The management of the day to day activities of the association shall be entrusted to an executive committee.

Article 3.1 Composition of the Executive Committee

The executive committee, at a minimum, shall consist of the following members, who represent the academic graduate programs at the Bloustein School, elected to terms of no more than two consecutive semesters. An executive term starts on January 1st and ends on December 31st. The Senator shall serve for the duration of the following academic year (i.e. for the academic term starting in August).

All positions are to be elected from those students matriculated in a degree program at the Bloustein School:

- a) Ph.D. (Urban Planning and Public Policy)
- b) M.C.R.P. and M.C.R.S. (Urban Planning)
- c) M.P.P. and M.P.A.P. (Public Policy)
- d) M.H.A and M.H.A.E. (Health Administration)
- e) M.P.I. (Public Informatics)

The student representative to the APA shall also be a member of the American Planning Association and a full-time student.

Article 3.1.1

The executive committee shall consist of the following officers:

- a) President
- b) Vice President of Ph.D. Program
- c) Vice President of Urban Planning Program
- d) Vice President of Public Policy Program
- e) Vice President of Health Administration Program
- f) Vice President of Public Informatics Program
- g) Secretary
- h) Social Chair
- i) Communications Chair
- j) Service Chair
- k) Social Justice Chair
- l) GSA Representative and Treasurer
- m) Student Representative to the American Planning Association
- n) Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy (EJBSPP) Senator

Article 3.2 Responsibilities of the Executive Committee.

The following list of responsibilities of individual members is meant as a general guide to the organization of the executive committee's responsibilities, rather than a complete listing. Responsibilities may be reallocated amongst members of the executive committee or new responsibilities assigned at its discretion.

- a) The President shall serve as the overall chairperson for BGSA by organizing and running meetings. This person should remain relatively neutral in departmental issues, and act to benefit the organization as a whole. In addition, the other members of the executive committee should report their activities to the president prior to each BGSA meeting. Finally, the President should be responsible for presenting the annual report at the Annual General Meeting.
- b) The five Vice Presidents shall each be responsible for attending all Bloustein School steering committee meetings, as well as representing the interests of their respective academic programs at executive committee and BGSA meetings. Vice presidents shall also be responsible for planning and running a listening session for their respective programs during the spring and fall semesters.
- c) The Secretary will be responsible for taking minutes at BGSA meetings and collecting minutes from representatives elected to attend other association meetings. The secretary should prepare these minutes and make them available to all BGSA members before uploading these minutes to a publicly available forum (such as CANVAS). They should also be responsible for keeping track of attendance at meetings, maintaining a record of correspondence and the upkeep of the BGSA bulletin board in the student lounge.
- d) The Social Chair shall be responsible for organizing regular social events for the members of the association and facilitating the participation of association members in Rutgers University intramural leagues. The social chair shall also be the head of the social committee. The social chair shall encourage alumni attendance at all BGSA social events.
- e) The Communications Chair shall be responsible for soliciting and receiving article submissions for the association's member newsletter, as well as editing and publishing the member newsletter. The communications chair shall also be the head of the newsletter committee and they shall be responsible for assisting the Social Chair in the planning, fundraising and execution of Snowball. The communications chair shall assist any other executive committee member with event advertisements (posters, flyers, etc.), social media posts, and other outreach material.
- f) The Service Chair shall be responsible for making service opportunities specifically those related to social justice regularly available to the members of the association. The service chair shall also be the head of the service committee.
- g) The Social Justice Chair shall work to enhance and maintain culturally diverse student enrollment. The social justice chair will provide academic and supplementary support to underrepresented, disadvantaged, and/or disenfranchised populations. The social justice chair will serve as the head of the social justice committee which will serve as an advisory body on matters relating to the concerns of social justice and to act on behalf of underrepresented, disadvantaged and/or disenfranchised students at large through support and dialogue. The social justice chair will create networking and mentoring opportunities

among professionals from diverse backgrounds in the fields of urban planning and public policy, particularly with interest in social justice, and will become a source and forum of information to the Bloustein community concerning social justice issues through engaging students, professionals, and academics to examine nexus between theory and practice and recognizing the effects of social change within communities.

- h) The GSA Representative shall be responsible for maintaining communication between the Rutgers GSA and BGSA. Further, the GSA representative shall be responsible for regularly attending GSA meetings and ensuring the good standing of BGSA as a member organization of the GSA. Moreover, the GSA representative shall also act as the Treasurer and shall be responsible for collecting fees or dues, forming budgets, administering the general financial affairs of the association, and preparing an annual report and balance sheet to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- i) The Student Representative to the American Planning Association shall maintain a dialogue between the American Planning Association (National, State Chapter, and Student Representatives Council) and the students at the Bloustein School. In addition to responsibilities as a member of the BGSA Executive Committee member, the Student Representative shall also adhere their responsibilities as the student representative for a Planning Student Organization for APA, as a member of the Executive Committee of the New Jersey Chapter of the APA, and the student representative council for the New York APA chapter.
- j) The EJBSPP Senator serves as the representative to the Rutgers University Senate. At Senate meetings, the Senator will be asked to consider matters of general University interest, and to make recommendations to the University administration on those matters, and serve on one of the specific Senate Committees. The Senator shall report to the EJBSPP at every scheduled meeting regarding the matters of the Rutgers University Senate.

Article 3.3 Election of the Executive Committee.

Election of the executive committee shall occur in the month of November for the term beginning in January of the following calendar year.

Article 3.3.1 Appointment of an Election Officer.

The election shall be the responsibility of an election officer. This officer shall be appointed by the executive committee and shall not themselves be seeking election. If the president is not seeking re-election, then they may so act if they wish. The election officer shall be responsible for publicizing the nomination period and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

Article 3.3.2 The Nomination Process.

At least one week before the beginning of voting period, the election officer shall announce the start of the nomination period, by notifying the members electronically, through circulars, and/or the posting of the information in a common area and call for nominations, indicating the requirements for a valid nomination, and the date and time by which nominations must be presented to her/him, i.e. the end of the nomination period.

Article 3.3.3 The Election.

- a) As soon as possible after the closing of the nomination period, the election officer shall post a list of those nominated for the executive committee. The notice of nominees shall also contain information on where ballot papers are to be obtained, where the ballot box will be located, and the date and time at which voting will end. The nomination and voting processes may be conducted on-line if a system is available that meets the specifications determined by the Executive Committee.
- b) Ballot papers must then be placed in the ballot box. An electronic ballot box is acceptable.
- c) At the close of the election period, the election officer shall count the votes cast, and post the results as soon as possible.
- d) In the event that not all positions are filled for the executive committee during the election process, the incoming President shall be responsible for soliciting volunteers for any vacancies. The executive committee will then vote to confirm volunteers at the next executive committee meeting. It shall be permissible that current executive committee members hold more than one position, if vacancies after the election exist, related to the position they were elected (i.e. Service Chair can also serve as Social Justice Chair, Secretary can also serve as Communications Chair, etc.).

Article 3.4: Operation of the Executive Committee

In general, it is expected that each member of the executive committee will fulfill their responsibilities in an ongoing and dutiful manner.

- a) To facilitate coordination between members, at least one regular meeting of the executive committee will be held each month during the academic year.
 - i. A quorum of the executive committee shall consist of a simple majority of the executive committee.
 - ii. Executive committee decisions on activities and policy for the association shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting.
 - iii. In the case of serious disagreement between members on any decision, such decision shall be formulated as a resolution, with a proposer and a seconder, and voted upon. A simple majority of the executive members present shall be sufficient to secure its success or failure.
 - iv. The date, time and place of each meeting are to be disseminated electronically to the BGSA members and/or posted in a common area at least one week ahead of the meeting. Such meetings are to be open to all members, although only the executive members can vote on resolutions.

- b) In cases where BGSA is confronted with abnormal circumstances, emergency meetings of the executive committee may be held, without the necessary notice, provided that:
 - i. At least a simple majority of the executive committee is present;
 - ii. Minutes of the meeting are taken; and
 - iii. The minutes of an emergency meeting are adopted at a regular meeting of the executive committee to be called within a week of the emergency meeting.
- c) The executive committee shall establish guidelines for the allocation of GSA funding. The guidelines shall be adopted by a majority vote of the association annually.
- d) In cases where an individual fails to adequately fulfill their executive duties over a period of time, a member of the executive committee shall propose a motion of censure. The motion shall set out the reasons for dissatisfaction and, if seconded, shall be put to the vote. If passed, it shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting. At the next regular meeting of the executive committee, the motion of censure shall be reintroduced as a motion for dismissal. If the performance of the censured member is still not satisfactory, the other members may express their dissatisfaction by voting to request resignation of the offending member. If passed, the offending member shall immediately submit their resignation.
- e) Vacancies that arise on the executive committee due to resignation shall be filled through appointment by the president. An interim election for the vacated post will then be held at the next general meeting of the association. In this case, nominations will be accepted at the meeting, and election will occur through a balloting at the meeting. In cases where an interim election for the vacated post cannot be held in time, a call for nominations may be made electronically and the final candidate may be chosen from the nominations through voting at the Executive Board's next monthly meeting.

Article 3.5: Motion of No-Confidence in the Executive Committee.

The executive committee is at all times accountable to the membership. It may be removed from office through a motion of no-confidence adopted by a simple majority at an association meeting held under the provisions of article 4.

- a) In this case, the mandate of the executive committee will be terminated. It will nevertheless remain responsible for holding new elections within one week of the vote of no-confidence.
- b) It will be designated an "Interim Committee" for this period, responsible for day-to-day administration, but no new initiatives may be undertaken.

Article 4: BGSA Meetings.

The general policy of BGSA will be made through resolutions adopted by a simple majority of voting members present at meetings of BGSA.

- a) General meetings of BGSA shall be held at least once a semester.
 - i. One general meeting will occur within four weeks of the commencement of the Fall semester, and one within four weeks of the commencement of the Spring semester.
 - ii. The date, time and place for such general meetings shall be determined by the chair in consultation with the executive committee
 - iii. The date, time and place for each general meeting shall be conveyed to the members electronically, through circulars, and/or the posting of the information in a common area at least one week in advance of its taking place.
 - iv. General meetings will be open to all members of BGSA, although only full members may propose and vote on resolutions.
 - v. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the executive committee present.
- b) Other general meetings shall be called by the executive committee whenever necessary or upon receipt of a request signed by at least 15 members. They shall be subject to the same requirements set out in (a).
- c) Emergency meetings may be called by the executive committee in times of crisis. In this case, only one hour's notice shall be necessary. All resolutions adopted at such meetings must be confirmed at the next general meeting.
- d) Minimum Board meeting attendance by the Executive Committee: An Executive Board member will only be allowed to miss a maximum of one meeting per semester, unless they inform of an emergency in advance. Regular absences by Board members need to be taken into the notice of the Executive Committee.

Article 5: Special Committees

From time to time it may be felt that there are issues of particular concern to the goals and/or interests of BGSA and its members that require further study. In this case special committees may be appointed either by:

- a) The president in consultation with the executive committee; or
- b) By the president in response to a motion adopted at a BGSA meeting.

The composition, terms of reference and length of appointment of the commission will be the responsibility of the executive committee.

Article 6: Constitutional Amendments.

This constitution is intended for the general guidance of the members and chosen representatives of the Bloustein Graduate Student Association. As such, it should be interpreted as liberally as possible. However, should it become necessary to amend any of its provisions, this shall be possible through the votes of two-thirds of the members present at any general meeting of the association.

Article 6.1: Constitutional Revisions

- Constitution and articles adopted unanimously 2 November 1988.
- Constitution revised 21 April 2006.
- Constitution revised October 2008.
- Constitution revised September 2009. Adopted 9 September 2009.
- Constitution revised 1 November 2017.
- Constitution revised 24 September 2019.
- Constitution revised 24 January 2020. Adopted 20 February 2020.