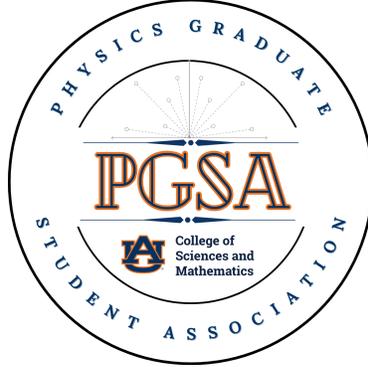


PGSA Constitution

Latest Revision August 2023



ARTICLE I NAME AND PURPOSE

A. NAME

1. The official name for this organization is the Physics Graduate Student Association.
2. This organization will use the name or its acronym, PGSA, in all publicity materials and correspondence.
3. The official name for the governing body of this organization is the Physics Graduate Student Council.
4. The governing body will use the name or its acronym, PGSC, in all publicity materials and correspondence.

B. PURPOSE

1. Our primary objective is to foster an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes academic excellence, professional development, and social engagement within our department. By advocating for the needs and interests of our fellow graduate students, we aim to enhance the overall graduate experience and contribute to the growth and success of the physics department. We strive to promote a sense of community, facilitate communication among graduate students and faculty, and advocate for the needs and concerns of physics graduate students.
 - i. Academic Support and Collaboration
One of the PGSA's core missions is to provide academic support and resources to our fellow graduate students. We aim to facilitate collaborative learning and create opportunities for intellectual exchange among students at various stages of their research.
 - ii. Professional Development
The PGSA's goal is to empower graduate students with the tools and knowledge to excel in their chosen career paths. Recognizing the importance of preparing physics graduate students for successful careers, we are dedicated to offering comprehensive professional development opportunities.

iii. Advocacy

The PGSA serves as a platform for graduate students to voice their concerns, suggestions, and ideas to the department administration. We are committed to advocating for improvements in areas such as overall student well-being by maintaining an open line of communication with faculty and administration. We strive to ensure that the needs and interests of physics graduate students are considered in decision-making processes that affect our academic and research environments.

iv. Community Building and Social Engagement

The PGSA recognizes the importance of fostering a vibrant and inclusive community within the physics department. Through organizing both on and off campus social events, we aim to create opportunities for graduate students to interact, build strong connections, and establish a robust support network.

v. Outreach

The PGSA recognizes the importance of engaging with the broader community and promoting the understanding and appreciation of physics. The outreach activities aim to inspire interest in physics, encourage scientific literacy, and cultivate a positive perception of the field among the general public.

vi. Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The PGSA is committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the physics department. We strive to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of their background or identity, feel valued, respected, and supported. Through initiatives like inclusive policies, adequate representation on the PGSC, and active collaboration with graduate student led group focusing on DEI, we aim to foster a culture that celebrates diversity and empowers all students to reach their full potential.

ARTICLE II PGSA MEMBERSHIP

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. All graduate students enrolled in the physics program at Auburn University shall be considered members of the PGSA.

B. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All members of the PGSA shall have the right to participate in the activities of the organization, attend meetings, voice their opinions, and vote in elections. Members shall also be responsible for upholding the values and objectives of the PGSA and abiding by its constitution.

ARTICLE III PGSC OFFICERS

A. OFFICER TITLES

1. PRESIDENT
2. VICE PRESIDENT
3. SECRETARY/TREASURER
4. GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL (GSC) SENATOR
5. 1st YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE
6. 2nd YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

B. GENERAL DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Respectfully act as a student voice to faculty, staff, and beyond.
2. Work with the rest of the PGSA to address student needs and concerns.
3. Assist in the sustained development of an inclusive environment for the stakeholders in the department.
4. Foster inter-cohort relations and build a cohesive community for the graduate student body.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner when fulfilling official PGSA matters.
6. Facilitate departmental infrastructure to maximize students' academic potential.

C. DUTIES

1. The President shall have the following duties
 - i. Organizes and sets agendas for PGSA meetings.
 - ii. Meets with Graduate Program Officer (GPO) and department chair at least once a semester. (summers optional)
 - iii. Delegates appropriate tasks to other members of council, and ensures tasks are completed in a timely manner.
 - iv. Acts as primary contact between faculty and graduate student body.
 - v. Attends annual physics faculty retreat.
 - vi. Oversees 1st year Physics Graduate Student Mentor Program.
2. The Vice President shall have the following duties
 - i. Plans social events for the PGSA.
 - ii. Acts as a central locust for disseminating information regarding outreach events for the physics department.
 - iii. Coordinates and offers assistance in planning outreach events hosted by stakeholders in the department.
 - iv. Coordinates with the Secretary/Treasurer in the end of year assessment and future goals document.
 - v. Oversees the shadowing process for the incoming council members.
 - vi. Manages PGSA social media accounts as well as the PGSA webpage.
3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall have the following duties
 - i. Keeps PGSA and PGSC meeting minutes then distributes them to the graduate students and the department members in a timely manner and, at the latest, the week prior to the following meeting.
 - ii. Coordinates with the Vice President in the end of year assessment and future goals document.
 - iii. Send out all official non-outreach PGSA communication, via emails.
 - iv. Appropriately maintains PGSA funds.
 - v. Prepares monthly fiscal reports for PGSC meetings. Also prepares an annual budgetary review for the PGSC transition meetings.
 - vi. Coordinates PGSA fundraising opportunities.
4. The GSC Senator(s) shall have the following duties
 - i. Attends monthly graduate student senate meetings. (7PM last Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise specified) If unable to attend, they are responsible for finding a replacement for that month. The order for the replacement must first be a PGSC member, then a PGSA member.

- ii. Disseminates GSC information to all PGSA members through emails and PGSA meetings.
 - iii. Must fulfill all GSC requirements.
5. The 1st Year Representative shall have the following duties
 - i. Provide a means of communication between PGSA and 1st year physics graduate students.
 - ii. Ensure appropriate representation for 1st year physics graduate students is upheld during PGSC and PGSA meetings.
 6. The 2nd Year Representative shall have the following duties
 - i. Provide a means of communication between PGSA and 2nd year physics graduate students.
 - ii. Ensure appropriate representation for 2nd year physics graduate students is upheld during PGSC and PGSA meetings.
 7. All PGSC officers will have voting power on the execution of policies and initiative brought to a vote by the PGSC.

D. ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLDING OFFICE

1. To be eligible for an officer position, a member must be enrolled in the physics graduate program at Auburn University. Each officer must maintain good academic standing throughout their term. The officers must be willing to devote time and effort to fulfill their duties, though not at the expense of their research or academic work.

E. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. Elections for officer positions shall be held annually, starting with nominations on the first Monday of March, for the period of a week's time. Nominations may be submitted by any member of the PGSA, and self-nominations are allowed. Nominations must be submitted in writing to a current PGSC member whereby, a nominee must provide written approval to be considered a candidate. It should also be noted that an individual that provides a self nomination to the PGSC will automatically be considered a candidate. Election polls will open the second Monday of March and will remain open for a period of a week's time. Elections shall be conducted anonymously, and a simple majority, defined as 50% of the total votes plus one, shall be required to win an election. If no majority is achieved, a runoff election will take place between the two top candidates. The runoff election will occur on the following Monday in March after the close of the general election and will remain open for a period of a week's time.
2. There will be a special election to decide the 1st Year Representative. This election will take place the first Monday of December for a period of a week's time. This election will be conducted internally by the 1st year graduate students. A simply majority, defined as 50% of the total votes plus one will be required to win the election. The results of this special election should be provided to a PGSC officer no later than the second Monday in December.
3. The 2nd Year Representative (position) will be voted on during the regular election time as stipulated in Article III Section D subsection 1 with the other officers, but the voting pool will strictly consist of the upcoming 2nd year graduate students.
4. At PGSC's discretion, they may implement election integrity measures if they find it necessary.
5. All officers elect will be required to shadow corresponding outgoing PGSC members following their successful election until the start of their term. They will also be required to attend all future PGSC meetings until the start of their term.

F. TERMS OF OFFICE AND VACANCIES

1. The term of office for all officers shall be one year, starting from the end of the spring semester/beginning of the summer semester and ending at the same time a year later. Officers may serve consecutive terms if re-elected.
2. The 1st Year Representative is an exception. They will serve once elected until the end of the following spring semester/beginning of the summer semester. During the Fall semester for the incoming 1st year graduate students all official representation/communication for their cohort will be officially directed through the 1st Year Graduate Mentor(s), as no 1st Year Graduate Representative will be elected at that time.
3. Vacating Position
 - i. At any point an officer can voluntarily vacate their position.
 - ii. If at any point during an officer's term, they undergo academic probation, then it is the responsibility of the officer to vacate their current position to focus on improving their academic standing.
 - iii. If an officer's conduct is found to be detrimental to the goals, image, or operation of the council and/or department, a termination vote shall be conducted.
 - a. First, the PGSC will hold a special meeting, where all voting members, any relevant individuals, and the party being voted on must attend. These individuals will then discuss the situation. Then a vote will take place amongst the voting council members where the party being voted on must be absent for the vote. For the vote to succeed a super majority must be achieved to remove the officer. A super majority is hereby defined as only one vote not to remove the party being voted upon.
 - b. If the vote passes, the council will then schedule a special PGSA meeting the second Monday after the vote has been held unless prohibited by the current academic calendar, and thereby schedule accordingly. The council, minus the party being voted on, will inform the PGSA members of all necessary information on the situation and then an anonymous vote of the PGSA members, excluding the present voting PGSC members, will take place during that meeting.
 - c. If a simple majority, as previously in Article III, Section E, Subsection 1, votes to remove the individual, their term of office is terminated effective immediately.
 - d. If any of the votes fail to pass, the party being voted upon shall remain in office.
4. If a vacancy occurs in any officer position, a special election shall be held within a month's time to fill the position for the remainder of the term. In the event that the President position becomes vacant, the Vice President shall assume the role of President until the next regular election.

ARTICLE IV OTHER ATTENDING PGSC MEMBERS

A. AMBASSADORSHIP

1. Definition
 - i. An ambassador shall be defined as an individual who is not voted into the PGSC, thereby not having voting privileges on council matters, but rather is selected by their representative organization to provide guidance and perspective not captured by the regular PGSC members.
 - ii. This individual must be a current graduate student in the Auburn University Physics Department.
 - iii. This individual cannot be a current PGSC officer.

- iv. They will be required to attend at least one regular PGSC meeting per semester, but are encouraged to attend any and all meetings.

ARTICLE V OTHER ROLES IN PGSA

A. 1ST YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT MENTOR(S)

1. Definition

- i. A mentor(s) shall be defined as an individual who is selected by the PGSC after volunteering for the position.
- ii. This individual(s) must be a current graduate student in the Auburn University Physics Department, who is at least entering their second year of the program.
- iii. During the Fall semester the mentor(s) will serve as proxy for the 1st Year Graduate Students, thereby having temporary voting privileges on the 1st year's behalf during PGSC meetings. The mentor(s) will collectively have 1 vote on the council, and will all be encouraged to participate in PGSC meetings.

2. Duties

- i. Academic Guidance: Provide academic advice, share study strategies, and assist mentees in selecting courses, research groups/topics, and projects.
- ii. Personal Support: Offer a supportive and understanding environment for mentees to discuss personal challenges, stress management, and work-life balance.
- iii. Networking Opportunities: Facilitate connections with fellow students, faculty, researchers, and professionals to broaden mentees' academic and professional networks.
- iv. Cultural and Diversity Awareness: Foster an inclusive environment by promoting cultural sensitivity and awareness, and celebrating diversity within the PGSA.
- v. Conflict Resolution: Assist in resolving conflicts or issues that may arise within the mentee group, fostering a positive and harmonious atmosphere.
- vi. Feedback and Assessment: Provide constructive feedback to mentees on their progress, offering guidance for improvement in academic, personal, and professional aspects.

3. Expectations

- i. A mentor is expected to act professionally and respectfully in all their interactions with their mentee(s).
- ii. A mentor is expected to meet with their mentee(s) at least 3 times a semester. The mentor is required to inform the president of their scheduled meeting beforehand.
- iii. A mentor is expected to present a write-up of their meeting to the President within a week of having met with their mentee(s).
 - a. A mentor should also encourage a mentee to provide a similar write-up to the President.

4. Selection Process

- i. During the first two weeks of the fall semester the PGSC will put out a request for volunteers to be considered for a 1st Year Graduate Student Mentor. Concurrently the PGSC will send out a survey to the 1st Year Graduate Students to inquire if they wish to have a mentor, and if so, they will be requested to provide a short description of themselves.
- ii. After this time frame the PGSC will assign mentors to the 1st Year Graduate Student as best as they see fit, using the survey results as a guide.

iii. The PGSC will then contact the selected mentors to inform them of their mentee assignment.

5. Review Process

i. At the President's discretion, mentors and mentees will be asked to provide feedback on the mentorship, wholly for evaluation purposes. If the need arises, the President may change assignments.

ARTICLE VI MEETINGS

A. Regular PGSA meetings will be held throughout the school year. The time and location of these meetings shall be determined and announced in advance. All members shall be notified of upcoming meetings.

1. There will be a minimum of three regular PGSA meetings a semester, and one over the summer.

B. Regular PGSC meetings will be held prior to the scheduled PGSA meeting, and whenever else needed throughout the school year. The time and location of these meetings shall be determined and announced in advance. All members shall be notified of upcoming meetings.

1. There will be a minimum of four regular PGSC meetings a semester, and two over the summer.

C. Special meetings may be called by any combination of four PGSC Officers and notice of meeting must be communicated to all members at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

D. For a meeting to be suspended or canceled any combination of four PGSC Officers are required to initiate the motion and a notice of meeting suspension or cancellation must be communicated to all members at least 24 hours prior to the original scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS

A. PROPOSAL AND VOTING

1. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any member of the PGSA. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing, with final intended wording in place, during a regular PGSA meeting at which time they will be discussed.

2. The PGSC will then meet, no later than 3 weeks after the meeting where the amendment was proposed to discuss the proposed amendment. They will not alter the wording of said amendment, and will vote on it.

i. If the majority of the PGSC members vote against the amendment, they must provide reasons why they have done so to the entirety of the PGSA and allow two weeks at most for the original proposer to review and update their proposed amendment, which they will then be able to submit directly to the PGSC from which the process begins anew as if submitted during a regular meeting.

ii. The proposer will be allowed two resubmissions. After the second resubmission, if the amendment is still found to be deficient, then the proposer will not be allowed to submit their proposal directly to the PGSC and must do so during a regular meeting and start the process anew.

iii. If the majority of the PGSC members vote for the amendment, it is then brought to the PGSA to vote on.

3. Once the PGSC has approved the amendment, the PGSA will then be given the opportunity to vote on the amendment, and will be given three options, "yes", "no" and "no, needs modification" and opportunity to justify reasons why.

- i. If 50% of the votes plus one vote “yes”, then the amendment is approved, goes into effect immediately, and is placed into the constitution.
- ii. If 50% of the votes plus one vote either “no”, or “no, needs modification” then proceed as follows
 - a. If a majority of the no votes are “no”, then the amendment fails to pass.
 - b. If a majority of the no votes are “no, needs modification”, then the initial amendment proposer is given the opportunity to revise their amendment, via the feedback provided in the “no, needs modification” and must submit a revised version to the PGSC within two weeks of the voting results being shared.