

# Constitution of the German **Studies** Association (GSA) of McGill University

*(The former version is appended at the bottom, so that you could compare the two. We re-numbered the articles, in a way consistent with other departmental constitutions, because section numbers that are **five digits long** are essentially confusions and miscommunications waiting to happen. The bullet points in italics are explanations of the revisions.)*

## **Title I – The Association**

### Article 1 – Name

1.1 The Association shall be known as the German **Studies** Association, hereafter **referred** to as GSA.

- *We often find ourselves having to explain that, no, we're not a student organization for German people but for German learners and the German departments; at McGill, [nationality] + "students' association" tends to imply cultural group rather than language group. Most student groups resolve this by adding "Studies Students" but we'd prefer maintaining our initialism.*
- *This would of course involve changing our logo, but this is minimal.*

### Article 2 – Aim of the GSA

- 2.1 To represent all students in the department of German Studies at McGill University and to promote their welfare and interests, and
- 2.2 To provide activities and services to enhance the educational, cultural, environmental, and social **experiences** of its members.
- 2.3 The GSA shall be recognized by its members, the Arts Undergraduate Society, the Students' Society of McGill University, the department of German Studies, and the Faculty of Arts as representative of all undergraduate students registered in the department of German Studies **at** McGill University.

### Article 3 – Membership

3.1 The membership of the GSA shall include all undergraduate students currently registered at McGill University in any of the major, double major, honours, joint honours, and minor programs of the department of German Studies, **as well as all members of the Executive Committee.**

3.2 **All members of the GSA, as well as all students currently enrolled in a class in the department of German Studies, shall have the right to attend all activities sponsored by the GSA.**

~~1.3.3 Non-members of the GSA shall be known as Observers:~~

~~1.3.4 Observers may attend an Executive Committee meeting with the assent of one member of the Executive, where they shall have full speaking rights but may under no circumstances exercise a vote:~~

~~1.3.5 Observers may participate in any activity sponsored by the GSA:~~

- *All the points here are covered in other articles - executive committee, voting procedures, etc. - and the definition of a term that is never mentioned again is odd.*

## **Title II – Organization**

### Article 4 – The Executive Committee

4.1 The governing body of the GSA shall be known as the Executive **Committee** (henceforth "Committee") and shall:

4.1.1 Recognize the supremacy of this Constitution and be bound by it.

4.1.2 Be empowered to make all decisions and take action on behalf of the GSA.

~~4.1.3 Establish new Mandates of the Executive Committee:~~

4.2 The **Committee** shall be a non-hierarchical body, with all of its members coequal to each other.

4.3 The **Committee** shall be composed of:

4.3.1 President

4.3.2 Vice President

4.3.3 VP External

4.3.4 VP Events

4.3.5 VP Internal

4.3.6 VP Finance

4.3.7 VP Academic

4.4 The Committee shall arrive at binding decisions through unanimity where possible. Where no such consensus can be found, a majority vote of present Executives shall suffice. Only members of the Committee can cast votes on Committee business.

4.5 All above positions on the Executive must be either filled or in the process of being filled, as per the procedure outlined in Article 12. No student may hold two offices on the Executive simultaneously.

4.6 Other positions may be created at the discretion of the Executive, including but not limited to:

~~2.3.5.1 External Affairs Representative~~

~~2.3.5.2 Academic Affairs Representative~~

4.6.1 The U1 Representative

4.6.2 The U2/U3 Representative

4.6.3 The AUS Representative

~~2.1.4 Beginning with their second (2nd) Council Meeting, officers-elect shall become voting members of the Executive Council.~~

- (4.1) The previous constitution introduced a distinction between the “Council” and an “Executive”, but explained that distinction with a reference to “the Councillors, as defined by Article 2.1.5”. **There was no Article 2.1.5.**
- On a similar note, the terminology throughout the old Constitution was inconsistent between the Committee, Executive, and Council. we’ve standardized it so that it is the “Executive Committee”, shortened to “Committee”. “Executive” is the shorthand for a single member.
- (4.1.5) This Constitution does not define Mandate in any way that might make this clause make sense.
- (4.3) We moved “VP Academic” to a constant position. And why create an “External Affairs” Representative on top of a “VP External”?
- (4.5) From personal experience, a short handed Executive committee can not adequately provide services for the student body. This is why we’re loosening the eligibility criteria + added the “or be in the process of being filled” clause.
- There’s no explanation for only allowing Executives to start voting on their second meeting.

#### Article 5 – Meetings of the Committee

5.1 The Committee shall hold a meeting at least once a month while classes are in session.

5.2 Quorum for a Committee meeting shall be a majority of the members of the Executive Committee (henceforth “Executives”).

5.3 Notice of all meetings shall be given to Executives and the general GSA membership at least three days in advance.

5.4 Information about Committee meetings shall be available to all GSA members who request it. GSA members outside the Committee may attend and speak at Committee meetings, but may not vote.

5.4.1 A member outside the Committee may be barred from attending if there is dissent by a majority of present Executives.

5.5 In urgent and pressing situations, the Committee may decide to hold a meeting as soon as possible.

5.5.1 An Executive may not be removed from office during such an emergency meeting.

~~2.2.5 All meetings of the Committee shall be open to all GSA members.~~

#### Article 6 – General Assemblies

6.1 The Committee shall organize a consultative General Assembly at least once every semester, on a day when classes are in session.

6.2 General Assemblies shall be open to all GSA members, as well as students currently enrolled in a class in the German department.

6.3 Notice of a General Assembly shall be given to members of the Committee and the general GSA membership at least two weeks in advance.

- *The previous version seemed to imply that all executive meetings needed to be open to the public and announced publicly? This is a level of transparency we're never seen any other student organization, even AUS ones, adhere to. But on the other hand, transparency and input are good, of course, so we've created a "General Assembly" where these standards of openness shall be enforced.*

#### Article 7 – Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee

7.1 All members of the Executive Committee shall:

7.1.1 Submit any actions taken or decisions made between meetings of the Committee to be ratified at the following meeting ~~of the Executive~~.

7.1.2 Adhere to the bylaws of the AUS.

~~2.4.1.3 Be members of the GSA in good academic standing.~~

7.1.3 ~~Executives shall~~ Demonstrate keen interest in German language and culture.

7.1.4 Be responsible for the keeping of adequate records of their actions in order to ensure a smooth transition from one year to the next.

7.1.5 Provide a detailed exit report upon completion of their term and have a transition meeting with their successor.

7.1.6 Commit to ensuring an equitable and reasonable distribution of work among Executives.

7.1.7 Miss no more than two meetings of the Committee per semester without excuse.

7.1.8 Should an Executive miss more than two meetings of Committee per semester without excuse, the Committee must take steps to investigate and if necessary remove the Executive, according to the procedure outlined in Article 11.

- *One major change we're making is that all AUS members are eligible for GSA positions (explained later). This is why we added the "as well as members of the Executive" clause earlier, and took away the "be members of the GSA in good standing" clause here.*

#### Article 8 – Duties of the Officers:

8.1 The President shall:

8.1.1 Ensure that the functioning of the GSA and its actions are in accord with the provisions of the GSA and AUS constitutions.

8.1.2 Schedule and chair meetings of the Executive Council.

8.1.3 Oversee and coordinate the work of other members of the Executive Council.

8.1.4 Assist the VP External and VP Events in forming and overseeing subcommittees.

8.1.5 Ensure that GSA documents are properly maintained.

8.2 The Vice-President shall:

8.2.1 Assume the duties of the President during meetings of the Executive in the event of their absence.

8.2.2 In the absence of the VP External, ensure a member of the Executive Committee is in attendance at AUS meetings.

8.3 The VP External shall:

8.3.1 Attend and participate in meetings of the AUS.

8.3.2 Fulfill requirements of AUS Council members, including participation in committee work.

8.3.3 Be familiar with AUS procedures and bylaws, and ensure that actions of the Executive Committee are consistent with them.

8.3.4 Work closely with the VP Finance to apply for, and manage, funding from the AUS.

8.4 The VP Events shall:

8.4.1 Be responsible for the advertisement of GSA sponsored events and fundraisers.

8.4.2 Coordinate the organization of GSA events, which includes but is not limited to: the reservation of event spaces, the procurement of food and drink, and the obtaining of relevant permits with respect to alcohol.

8.4.3 Maintain contact with other language associations at McGill, as well as German groups on other campuses and throughout Montreal, and seek to organize collaborations with them.

8.5 The VP Internal shall:

8.5.1 Record the minutes of proceedings of meetings of the Executive Council.

8.5.2 Coordinate and facilitate communication among members of the GSA for purposes including but not limited to: the announcement of meetings and distribution of minutes.

8.5.3 Act as administrator of social networking platforms for the purposes of disseminating information to students in the German Department.

8.6 The VP Finance shall:

8.6.1 Maintain a balance sheet of GSA revenues and expenditures.

8.6.2 Work closely with the VP Events to balance budgets and manage expenditures.

8.6.3 Submit specifications and permissions for purchases and reimbursements made on behalf of the GSA.

8.6.4 Work closely with the VP External to apply for, and manage, funding from the AUS.

8.6.5 Ensure that spending done on behalf of the GSA is done in a legitimate and responsible manner.

8.7 The VP Academic shall:

8.7.1 Act as a representative of the GSA to the German Department and to AUS.

8.7.2 Act as a liaison between members of the Executive Council and the German Department and AUS in the scheduling of fundraising and other events.

8.7.3 Coordinate and facilitate communication between the Executive Council and students in the German Department.

### Title III – Elections

#### Article 9 – General

9.1 All members of the GSA shall be eligible to vote in GSA elections.

9.2 Elections shall be conducted in accordance to this Constitution and to AUS departmental bylaws.

9.3 Elections are **decided** by a plurality.

9.4 The election process, including campaigning and the voting procedures, will take place from March 1st to **April 15th** of each year.

- *The AUS-determined timeline frequently runs past April 1st, for the reason that elections can only really run after Reading Week and we need an appropriate amount of time.*

#### Article 10 – Eligibility

10.1 Unless otherwise specified by this Constitution, **all undergraduate students at McGill University** shall be eligible to stand for election to positions on the Executive Committee.

10.1.1 All elected individuals must **continue to fulfill this condition** throughout their mandate.

10.1.2 **The newly elected members of the Executive shall come into office on May 1 of the year in which they were elected and leave office on April 30 of the following calendar year.**

10.1.3 **A student with previous experience on the Executive Committee may stand for election even if they plan to graduate or go on exchange after one semester. This candidate must make any such plans known on their election platform.**

10.2 No **student** shall accept nominations for two or more Executive positions in the same year.

- *We have an absolutely tiny student body, and by this association's nature there are students from Germany who are familiar with the language and who care about promoting it, but who are not in the program. There is maybe a concern that only students in the program can really understand the students' needs, and candidates for positions should make it clear in their statements whether they're in the program or not, and if not, how they can make up for this.*
- *(A reasonable response to this is "Elections are never competitive anyway" - but that only further demonstrates the folly of artificially restricting the candidate pool.)*

## Title IV – Removal from Office

### Article 11 – Removal

- 11.1 Any member of the Executive Committee may be dismissed from their functions for impropriety, violation of this Constitution, delinquency of duties, or misappropriation of funds.
- 11.2 A motion to remove an Executive must be presented in writing to the Executive Committee and signed by at least **two Executives**.
- ~~4.1.3 The Executive to be removed is heretofore referred to as ‘the Executive in question.’~~
- 11.3 Quorum to remove an Executive requires **two-thirds** of all Executive Committee members, excluding the Executive **to be removed**.
- 11.3.1 The Executive in question may be removed in absentia, provided they have been notified in **writing at least** one week prior to their dismissal hearing.
- 11.4 Passage of a motion to remove an Executive shall require a two-thirds majority **vote** of present Executive Committee members, excluding the Executive in question.
- 11.5 Should the Executive in question be successfully removed, the Executive Committee proceeds to the rules **for succession and replacement** laid out in Article 12.
- *(11.3) We’ve seen what’s happened to the European Council with regards to Poland and Hungary: if you make it so that you need unanimity to reach quorum, then a single person could prevent the expulsion of an Executive. Two-thirds majority is better.*

### Article 12 – Succession and Replacement

- 12.1 Should the office of President become vacant due to resignation, removal, or incapacitation, **the title of Interim President and the duties of President shall devolve down the Executive list in Section 4.3 to the next Executive. The same procedure is to be followed if the office of Interim President should become vacant.**
- 12.2 Should any other Executive office be left vacant, the **Committee shall undertake, within six weeks, a procedure to fill this position.**
- 12.2.1 **The Committee may decide, by majority vote, to fill the position through interviews or an election of all GSA members.**
- 12.2.2 **Only weeks with classes, as defined in McGill’s official calendar, shall count toward this six-week limit.**
- 12.2.3 **A two-thirds majority of the Committee shall be required to swear in a new Executive.**
- 12.3 **A position vacated after February 1st may be left vacant until the next scheduled elections. During this time, the duties of this position shall be divided among the remaining Executives.**
- 12.4 **Any by-election must be consistent with the timeline stipulated in the AUS Departmental Bylaws.**
- *(12.1) The original clause stated that a two-thirds majority was needed to appoint an Interim President, but it is technically possible that this would not be attained. I instead copied the PSSA’s mechanism.*

## Title V – The Constitution

### Article 13 – Superseding Clause

- 13.1 This Constitution repeals and supersedes all previous constitutions.
- 13.2 This Constitution is subordinate to the Constitution of the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS).

### Article 14 – Amendments

- 14.1 **All members of the Committee must have access to the current version of the Constitution.**
- 14.2 Amendments may be proposed piecemeal by individual members of the **Committee**.
- 14.3 Quorum for an amendment to this Constitution shall be two-thirds of the **Committee**.
- 14.4 This Constitution may only be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of present **Committee** members.

14.5 Any amendments approved by the Executive **Committee** must be submitted to the AUS Council for ratification.

Article 15 – Citation

15.1 The Constitution may be cited as the 'GSA Constitution'.

# Constitution of the German Students' Association (GSA) of McGill University

## **Title I – The Association**

### **Article 1.1 – Name**

1.1.1 The Association shall be known as the German Students' Association, hereafter referred to as GSA.

### **Article 1.2 – Aim**

1.2.1 The aims of the GSA shall be:

1.2.2 To represent all students in the department of German Studies at McGill University and to promote their welfare and interests, and

1.2.3 To provide activities and services to enhance the educational, cultural, environmental, and social aspects of the lives of its members.

1.2.4 The GSA shall be recognized by its members, the Arts Undergraduate Society, the Students' Society of McGill University, the department of German Studies and the Faculty of Arts as representative of all undergraduate students registered in the department of German Studies of McGill University.

### **Article 1.3 – Membership**

1.3.1 The membership of the GSA shall include all undergraduate students currently registered at McGill University in any of the major, double major, honours, joint honours, and minor programs of the department of German Studies.

1.3.2 Membership in the GSA confers the right to participate in all activities organized by the GSA as well as the right to attend Executive Committee meetings.

1.3.3 Non-members of the GSA shall be known as Observers.

1.3.4 Observers may attend an Executive Committee meeting with the assent of one member of the Executive.

1.3.5 Observers shall have full speaking rights at meetings but under no circumstances may exercise a vote.

1.3.6 Observers may participate in any activity sponsored by the GSA

## **Title II – Organization**

### **Article 2.1—The Executive Council**

2.1.1 The governing body of the GSA shall be known as the Council and shall:

2.1.1.1 Recognize the supremacy of this Constitution and be bound by it.

2.1.1.2 Be empowered to make all decisions and take action on behalf of the GSA.

2.1.1.3 Establish new Mandates of the Executive Council

2.1.2 The Council shall consist of:

2.1.2.1 The members of the Executive, as defined by Article 2.3

2.1.2.2 The Councillors, as defined by Article 2.1.5

2.1.3 Each member of Council has full speaking rights and may exercise one vote in decisions of Council.

2.1.4 Beginning with their second (2nd) Council Meeting, officers-elect shall become voting members of the Executive Council.

### **Article 2.2—Meetings of Council**

2.2.1 Quorum for a meeting of council shall be two member of the Executive

2.2.2 The council shall hold meeting at least once a month while classes are in session.

2.2.3 Notice of all meetings shall be given to members of Council and the general GSA membership at least three days in advance.

2.2.3.1 In urgent and pressing situations, the Executive may decide to hold a meeting of Council as soon as possible.

- 2.2.3.2 No removal of an Executive may take place in such an 'emergency session'.
- 2.2.4 All meetings of Council shall be open to all GSA members

#### Article 2.3 – The Executive

- 2.3.1 There shall be a standing committee of Council called the Executive, which shall govern the GSA between meetings of Council in a manner consistent with the policies set out by Council.
- 2.3.2 The Executive shall be a non-hierarchical body, with all members of the Executive coequal to each other.
- 2.3.3 The Executive shall be composed of:
  - 2.3.3.1 President
  - 2.3.3.2 Vice President
  - 2.3.3.3 VP External
  - 2.3.3.4 VP Internal
  - 2.3.3.5 VP Finance
  - 2.3.3.6 VP Events
- 2.3.4 At least four (4) of available positions on the Executive must be occupied. No student may hold two offices on the Executive simultaneously.
- 2.3.5 Other positions may be created at the discretion of the Executive, including but not limited to:
  - 2.3.5.1 External Affairs Executive
  - 2.3.5.2 Academic Affairs Executive
  - 2.3.5.3 The U1 Representative
  - 2.3.5.4 The U2/U3 Representative
  - 2.3.5.5 The AUS Representative

#### Article 2.4 – Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee

- 2.4.1 All members of the Executive shall:
  - 2.4.1.1 Submit any actions taken or decisions made between meetings of the Executive to be ratified at the following meeting of the Executive.
  - 2.4.1.2 Adhere to the bylaws of the AUS
  - 2.4.1.3 Be members of the GSA in good academic standing.
    - 2.4.1.3.1 Members of the Executive shall demonstrate keen interest in German language and culture.
  - 2.4.1.3 Be responsible for the keeping of adequate records of their actions in order to ensure a smooth transition from one year to the next.
  - 2.4.1.4 Commit to ensuring an equitable and reasonable distribution of work among the members of the Executive.
  - 2.4.1.5 Miss no more than two meetings of the Council per semester.
    - 2.4.1.5.1 Should a member of the Executive miss more than two meetings of Council per semester, the Council must take steps to investigate and if necessary replace the Executive member.

#### Article 2.5 – Duties of the Officers:

- 2.5.1 The President shall:
  - 2.5.1.1 Ensure that the functioning of the GSA and its actions are in accord with the provisions of the GSA and AUS constitutions
  - 2.5.1.2 Schedule and chair meeting of the Executive Council
  - (c) Oversee and coordinate the work of other members of the Executive Council
  - (d) Assist VP External and VP Events in forming and overseeing subcommittees
  - (e) Ensure the GSA documents are properly maintained
- 2.5.2 The Vice-President shall:
  - 2.5.2.1 Assume the duties of the President during meetings of the Executive in the event of the absence of the President.
  - 2.5.2.2 In the absence of a VP External, ensure a member of the Executive Council is in attendance at AUS meetings.



- 2.5.3 The VP External shall:
  - 2.5.3.1 Act as a representative of the GSA to the German Department and to AUS.
  - 2.5.3.2 Attend meetings of the AUS.
  - 2.5.3.3 Act as a liaison between members of the Executive Council and the German Department and AUS in the scheduling of fundraising and other events.
  - 2.5.3.4 Coordinate and facilitate communication between the Executive Council and students in the German Department.
  - 2.5.3.5 Act as administrator of social networking platforms for the purposes of disseminating information to students in the German Department.
- 2.5.4 The VP Internal shall:
  - 2.5.4.1 Record the minutes of proceedings of meetings of the Executive Council
  - 2.5.4.2 Coordinate and facilitate communication among members of the GSA for purposes including but not limited to: the announcement of meetings and distribution of minutes
- 2.5.5 The VP Finance shall:
  - 2.5.5.1 Maintain a balance sheet of GSA revenues and expenditures
  - 2.5.5.2 Work closely with the VP Events to balance budgets and manage expenditures
  - 2.5.5.3 Submit specifications and permissions for purchases and reimbursements made on behalf of the GSA.
  - 2.5.5.4 Work closely with the VP External to manage funding allocated by the AUS
  - 2.5.5.5 Ensure that spending done on behalf of the GSA is done in a legitimate and responsible manner.
- 2.5.6 The VP Events shall:
  - 2.5.6.1 Be responsible for the advertisement of GSA sponsored events and fundraisers
  - 2.5.6.2 Coordinate organization of GSA events, which includes but is not limited to: the reservation and purchase of foods and drink, ensure that departmental permissions are in order with respect to alcohol at GSA events.

### **Title III – Elections**

#### **Article 3.1—General**

- 3.1.1 All members of the GSA shall be eligible to vote in GSA elections.
- 3.1.2 Elections shall be conducted in accordance to this constitution and with any applicable GSA by-laws, and the AUS departmental by-laws.
- 3.1.3 Elections are passed by a plurality.
- 3.1.4 The election process, including campaigning and the voting procedures, will take place from March 1st to April 1st of each year.

#### **Article 3.2—Eligibility**

- 3.2.1 Unless otherwise specified by this constitution all member of the GSA shall be eligible to stand for election to the positions for the Executive.
- 3.2.2 All elected individuals must remain member of the GSA throughout their mandate.
  - 3.2.2.1 GSA Executive mandate shall be from 1 May to 30 April
- 3.2.3 No member of the GSA shall accept nominations for two or more Executive positions in the same year.

### **Title IV – Removal from Office**

#### **Article 4.1 – Removal**

- 4.1.1 Any member of the Executive Committee may be dismissed from their functions for impropriety, violation of this Constitution, delinquency of duties, or misappropriation of funds. The preceding list of reasons for dismissal is non-exhaustive.
- 4.1.2 A motion to remove an Executive must be presented in writing to the Executive Committee and signed by at least 2 members of the Executive Committee.
- 4.1.3 The Executive to be removed is heretofore referred to as ‘the Executive in question.’

- 4.1.4 Quorum to remove an Executive requires all Executive Committee members excluding the Executive in question.
- 4.1.4.1 The Executive in question may be removed in absentia, provided they have been notified in the presence of a witness no less than one week prior to their dismissal hearing.
- 4.1.5 Passage of a motion to remove an Executive shall require a two-thirds majority vote of present Executive Committee members, excluding the Executive in question
- 4.1.6 Should the Executive in Question be successfully removed, the Executive Committee proceeds to the rules laid out in Article 4.2 — Succession and Replacement.

#### Article 4.2 – Succession and Replacement

- 4.2.1 Should the office of President become vacant due to resignation, removal or incapacitation, a member will be chosen from among officers of the Executive Council by the Executive Council to act as Interim President until the next scheduled elections.
- 4.2.1.1 A two-thirds majority vote of Council shall be necessary to determine the position of Interim President.
- 4.2.2 Should any other Executive office be left vacant due to resignation, removal, or incapacitation, the President will appoint a member of Council to act as Interim Executive until the next elections.

### **Title V – The Constitution**

#### Article 5.1 – Superseding Clause

- 5.1.1 This Constitution repeals and supersedes all previous constitutions.
- 5.1.2 This Constitution is subordinate to the Constitution of the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS).

#### Article 5.2 – Amendments

- 5.2.1 Amendments may be proposed piecemeal by individual members of Council.
- 5.2.2 Quorum for an amendment to this Constitution shall be two-thirds of Council
- 5.2.3 This Constitution may only be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of present Council members.
- 5.2.4 Any amendments approved by the Executive Council must be submitted to the AUS Council for ratification.

#### Article 5.3 – Citation

- 5.3.1 The Constitution may be cited as the 'GSA Constitution'.