Biomedical Graduate Student Association Constitution

Article I: Name

Section I: Name
The name of this organization shall be the Biomedical Graduate Student Association, hereafter referred to as BGSA.

Article II: Purpose

Section I: Purpose
BGSA shall be the coordinating student body charged with representing all students enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine Biomedical Graduate Studies (BGS) program. The mission of BGSA is to improve the general welfare of BGS students by supporting academic, social and professional development events and advocating on their behalf.

A. BGSA shall represent the concerns of BGS students to BGS administration, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA), the twelve graduate schools (G12), and University of Pennsylvania administration.

B. BGSA shall serve as a liaison amongst the student populations and programs of BGS, which are Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics (BMB), Cell & Molecular Biology (CAMB), Epidemiology & Biostatistics (EPID/BSTA), Genomics & Computational Biology (GCB), Immunology (IGG), Neuroscience (NGG), and Pharmacology (PGG).

C. BGSA shall monitor issues of importance to the BGS community and foster dialogue among its members for the purpose of identifying relevant issues of advocacy. BGSA shall advocate for changes that will enhance the quality of life and the quality of education for BGS students.

D. BGSA shall sponsor academic, cultural, and social events of interest to the BGS community in order to strengthen social and academic bonds between BGS students themselves and between BGS students and faculty. In doing so, BGSA aims to strengthen the tie of BGS students to BGS, the Perelman School of Medicine, and the University of Pennsylvania at large.

E. The primary vehicles for these purposes shall be the Executive Board, the Program Representatives and the General Assembly.

Article III: Affiliation

Section I: Affiliation
This organization is affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine Biomedical Graduate Studies program.
Article IV: Membership

Section I: Restrictions
Membership is restricted to all currently enrolled students of the University of Pennsylvania’s BGS programs.

Section II: Eligibility
Membership in BGSA and the General Assembly is automatically conferred on all currently enrolled BGS students. Application for membership is not required. Membership remains valid while the student is an enrolled BGS student and cannot be revoked for any other reason.

Section III: Rights
Any member of BGSA retains the right to vote or run for office. These rights are restricted to BGSA members. All BGSA members are encouraged to participate in BGSA events and proceedings.

Section IV: Non-discrimination Policy
A. This organization and its members shall not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of race, national origin, color, religion, gender, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, and/or ability status.
B. BGSA reserves the right to withhold funding from groups or individuals that do not adhere to this non-discrimination policy and/or the non-discrimination policies of the University of Pennsylvania.

Article V: Dues

Section I: Dues
BGSA shall not collect dues from its members.

Article VI: Executive Board

Section I: Officer Positions
The officers of BGSA shall consist of
A. Chair
B. Vice Chair
C. Vice Chair for Finance
D. Vice Chair for Operations
E. Vice Chair for Academic Affairs
F. Vice Chair for Social Affairs
G. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) Representatives

Section II: Eligibility
Any member of BGSA may run for any office. No officer may simultaneously hold more than one office in BGSA. Additionally, no officer may simultaneously act as a BGSA Program Representative.
Section III: Term
The term of each office shall be one fiscal year, from July 1st to June 30th. There shall be no term limits.

Section IV: General Elections
General elections for the following term shall take place during the May General Assembly meeting. The General Assembly shall be given at least one week’s notice of general elections.

Section V: Special Election
Should an officer’s position be/become vacant, a special election shall be held at the next BGSA General Assembly meeting, provided there is at least one week until the meeting. If less than a week remains before the next General Assembly meeting, the election shall be held at the first subsequent General Assembly meeting. The General Assembly shall be given at least one week’s notice of special elections.

Section VI: Removal of an officer
A. A member of the Executive Board who is found to be in violation of this Constitution, the BGSA By-Laws, the Rules of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, or University policy may be removed upon a vote of three-fourths of the General Assembly at any General Assembly meeting, provided that the member whose conduct is in question has been given one week’s written notice stating the violation or violations and has been granted an opportunity to be heard in front of the General Assembly.

B. Just cause, i.e., malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance, must be shown in any case involving the removal of a member of the Executive Board.

Article VII: Program Representatives

Section I: Program Representatives
Each program, defined as a PhD graduate group within BGS (see Article II Section B), shall have one representative for every 100 students (1-199 students = 1 Program Representative, 200-299 = 2 Program Representatives, etc). Each program will have a minimum of one representative. The number of Program Representatives shall be revised annually in the fall to reflect current enrollment numbers.

Section II: Eligibility
Any member of BGSA may run to be a Program Representative for the program of which they are a student. No Program Representative may simultaneously hold an Executive Board office in BGSA.

Section III: Term
The Program Representative term shall be from the time of their election to June 30th. There shall be no term limits.
Section IV: Elections
Elections for the current year’s Program Representatives shall take place during the regularly scheduled September General Assembly meeting. The General Assembly shall be given at least one week’s notice of Program Representative elections.

Section V: Special Election
Should a Program Representative’s position be/become vacant, a special election shall be held at the next BGSA General Assembly meeting, provided there is at least one week until the meeting. If less than a week remains before the next General Assembly meeting, the election shall be held at the first subsequent General Assembly meeting. The General Assembly shall be given at least one week’s notice of Program Representative elections.

Section VI: Removal of a Program Representative
A. A Program Representative who is found to be in violation of this Constitution, the BGSA By-Laws, the Rules of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, or University policy may be removed upon a vote of two-thirds of the General Assembly at any General Assembly meeting, provided that the member whose conduct is in question has been given one week’s written notice stating the violation or violations and has been granted an opportunity to be heard in front of the General Assembly.
B. Just cause, i.e., malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance, must be shown in any case involving the removal of a member of the Executive Board.

Article VIII: Amending the Constitution and By-Laws

Section I: Constitutional Amendments
This constitution shall be amended by a vote of three-fourths majority of the General Assembly at any General Assembly meeting. Constitutional amendments approved by the General Assembly must be ratified by a three-fourths majority of the Program Representatives and a three-fourths majority of the Executive Board.

Section II: By-Law Amendments
The BGSA By-Laws shall be amended by a vote of two-thirds majority of the General Assembly at any General Assembly meeting. By-Law amendments approved by the General Assembly must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Program Representatives and a two-thirds majority of the Executive Board.

Section III: Notice of Amendment
The General Assembly and the Executive Board shall be given one week’s notice of amendment, including the text of the proposed amendment, in writing.
Appendix A: Amendments