
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Toronto School of Theology Graduate Students' Association (TGSA)

Ratified: October 1, 2007
Revised: January 11, 2008
Revised: January 30, 2009
Revised: April 3, 2014
Revised: October 6, 2015

A. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Purpose (Constitution Section 2)

A.1 In addition to the goals described in Constitution Section 2, the TGSA seeks to:

- promote scholarly networking among students with similar or cross-disciplinary interests;
- encourage members' participation into the academic world of presenting and publishing;
- emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities, especially related to research and teaching;
- facilitate its members' transition to other graduate schools and the job market; and
- in particular, advocate for greater commitment to and action on the above goals by TST and its members colleges.

A.2 TGSA seeks to fulfil these professional development goals through its activities:

A.2.1 Professional Development Seminars.

Important topics for TGSA members include:

- how to get published;
- professional associations and how to make the most of them;
- CV's and teaching dossiers;
- biblical language software;
- applying for fellowships (OGS / SSHRC);
- general teaching skills;
- course design and syllabi;
- teaching and the use of technology;
- the job interview process;
- dealing with difficult students (including legal issues, harassment, etc.);

- applying for doctoral programs.

A.2.3 Support of TST discipline-specific seminars and conferences, especially if they are student led and encourage the academic participation of TGSA members.

A.2.4 Travel bursaries offered twice a year to deserving TGSA members who will be presenting or responding to papers, or interviewing for jobs outside of Ontario, and who do not have other external funding sources for the conference.

A.2.5 Maintenance of a TGSA website to:

- inform students of TGSA and TST events;
- inform and discuss issues being addressed by the TGSA and/or the TST;
- publish announcements about conferences, events, lectures, etc. at TST colleges and of interest to graduate students; and
- share information on academic resources and professional development.

A.2.6 Annual orientation letter of welcome to introduce new TGSA members to their association and its activities.

A.2.7 TGSA also encourages its members' use of University of Toronto professional resources, including: career guidance, teaching and research skills, English writing skills, programs to introduce new software and technologies.

B. Policies and Procedures for Membership Fees (Constitution Section 3.5)

B.1 The amount of the levy will be variegated between part-time and full-time students.

B.2 The fee will be collected by TST through the University of Toronto.

B.3 The Treasurer is responsible for collecting the monies from TST.

B.4 When necessary, the TGSA Board can move to increase the annual student levy by two-thirds majority vote.

B.5 After TGSA Board approval, any increase to the student levy must be approved by referendum with a two-thirds majority vote of the general TGSA membership.

B.6 The President is responsible for informing the colleges, via the TST Director, of any changes to the membership fees.

C. Policies and Procedures for the TGSA Board (Constitution Section 4)

C.1 The TGSA Executive Committee consists of the President, Treasurer, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Conferences, Vice-President External, Secretary (non-voting), and any other members the Board deems necessary.

C.1.1 The Executive Committee will support the President in fulfilling the essential duties of the Board.

C.1.2 The President will delegate to other Executive Committee members in accordance with their duties.

C.2 The Board will fill vacancies between elections by appointment.

C.2.1 Board members must be nominated to fill Executive vacancies (Constitution Section 4.6). Current Executives may be nominated, but must resign their other position if chosen. If more than one Board member is interested, the Board will choose between them by secret ballot.

C.2.2 Any graduate student (including Board members) from the appropriate college or program may be nominated to fill a non-Executive vacancy (Constitution Section 4.7). If more than one candidate is interested, the Board will choose between them.

C.3 Board members are expected to attend all the meetings required by their role.

C.3.1 When a member knows they will be absent from a TGSA meeting, they shall notify the President or Secretary and email a brief update for the minutes as required.

C.3.2 If the Secretary is absent from a TGSA meeting, an acting Secretary will be appointed.

C.3.3 When a member knows they will be absent from an external committee meeting, they will inform the chair of the committee and the TGSA President, who will find another Board member to attend.

C.3.4 After two consecutive and/or unannounced absences from an external committee meeting, the TGSA President will appoint a new Board member to sit on the committee, and notify its chair and secretary.

C.4 Board members may be removed for excessive absence, even when announced, or other serious failures to fulfill their duties.

C.4.1 Executives have a particular responsibility to keep the confidence of the Board. Any two Board members may move to remove an Executive by secret ballot. An impartial Board member will be chosen to chair the debate and count the ballots, but not vote. If three-fifths of the *sitting* Board members ($\geq 60\%$) vote to remove the named Executive, their position will be declared vacant. The motion to remove and the result of the vote will be recorded in the minutes.

C.4.2 Other Board members may be removed by the same procedure, except that two-thirds of the *sitting* Board members ($\geq 67\%$) must vote for removal.

C.4.3 If the Board is unable to agree on an impartial Board member, they must choose an external TST student or staff member to adjudicate.

D. Duties of TGSA Board Members (Constitution Section 4)

D.1 President

D.1.1 Will chair all TGSA meetings.

D.1.2 Will set the agenda, date, time, and location for meetings in consultation with the Board.

D.1.3 Will appoint appropriate Board members to sit on the Academic Council, Graduate Studies Council, Library Committee, and any other TST committees with student representation.

D.1.4 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the Directors of TST and the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies, communicating regularly to relay student questions and concerns.

D.1.5 Will attend all public meetings of the Board of Trustees (normally 4-5/year), briefing the TGSA Board on issues affecting students, and asking permission to make a presentation to the TST Board.

D.1.6 Will welcome new students and introduce them to the TGSA and its activities at TST's annual orientation.

D.1.7 Will summarize the TGSA's past year of activities at the AGM and prepare a report to be posted online and shared with TST.

D.1.8 Will ensure Board members have appropriate access to the TGSA website and/or social media pages.

D.2 Treasurer

D.2.1 Will be responsible for TGSA bank account(s) and have cheque-signing authority.

D.2.2 Will ensure the annual student levy is collected from member colleges, TST, and affiliated schools as applicable.

D.2.3 Will record all expenditures and income.

D.2.4 Will prepare a brief financial report for every Board meeting (report may be oral).

D.2.5 Will prepare a detailed financial statement for the first meeting of the Board at the beginning of the academic year.

D.2.6 Will present a revised budget for approval by the November Board meeting.

D.2.7 Will prepare an end-of-year financial statement for the AGM in April, reconciling all deposits, receipts, and bank statements for the year just completed.

D.2.8 Will archive all approved budgets and financial statements electronically, online, and in the TGSA filing cabinet, relaying this archive to the next Treasurer and President.

D.2.9 Will announce and accept applications for travel bursaries according to criteria approved by the Board.

D.2.10 Will ensure annually that only the current President, Treasurer, and Vice-President Conferences have signing authority on the bank account, and that two signatures are required for large expenditures if possible.

D.3 Vice-President Academic

D.3.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the TST academic committees.

D.3.2 Will sit on the Academic Council, attending all regular meetings (normally 4-5/year), reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to Academic Council.

D.3.3 Will attend meetings of the Graduate Studies Council and other TST Committees as needed, reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to the Council or Committee.

D.3.4 Will meet with external committee representatives (including if possible outgoing representatives) as needed to ensure continuity and effectiveness in representation.

D.3.5 Will ordinarily chair TGSA meetings in the absence of the President, and will assist in procedural disputes.

D.4 Vice-President Conferences

D.4.1 Will begin and lead planning for a TGSA conference each year, setting and announcing the conference date, call for papers, and submission deadline in consultation with the Board; accepting paper and panel proposals; and preparing them for blind review by a small group of Board members.

D.4.2 Will sit on the Conferences and Lectures Committee, attending all regular meetings (normally 4-5/year), reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to the Committee.

D.4.3 Will work with the Treasurer to apply for conference funding, prepare a budget for the conference, and track conference expenses.

D.4.4 Will share responsibility for other conference tasks with all Board members.

D.5 Vice-President External

D.5.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the University of Toronto student unions, attending the APUS, UTSU, and UTGSU General Meetings each year.

D.5.2 Will invite TST's UTSU representative (if any) to TGSA meetings, meeting with them separately if they are unable to attend.

D.5.3 Will work with other Board members to inform TST students about their representation in university student politics and access to university services.

D.5.4 Will meet with University of Toronto administration and staff as needed to better understand and improve student access to university services.

D.5.5 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and students at affiliated schools, inviting local representatives to attend TGSA meetings and meeting with them separately if they are unable to attend.

D.6 Program Representatives

D.6.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and graduate students in their program.

D.6.2 Will report the issues and concerns of graduate students in their program at TGSA meetings.

D.6.3 Will work with other Board members to better understand the issues faced by students in their program through polls, public meetings, and social media.

D.7 College Representatives

D.7.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and graduate students at their college.

D.7.2 Will report the issues and concerns of graduate students at their college at TGSA meetings.

D.7.3 Will work with the other college representatives to build relationships between graduate students at different colleges.

D.7.4 Will attend their college's (graduate) student orientation and introduce themselves as the TGSA representative.

D.7.5 Will meet the student association, council, and/or leaders at their college at least once a year, reminding them of their representation on TST Councils and Committees and in university student politics.

D.8 External Committee Representatives

D.8.1 If appointed to represent the TGSA on a TST Council or Committee, Board members will attend all regular meetings, report issues discussed at those meetings to the TGSA Board for input, and relay student feedback back to the Council or Committee.

D.8.2 If the student perspective on an issue is contentious or uncertain, external committee representatives will defer to the judgement of the TGSA Board.

D.8.3 External committee representatives will meet with the President and/or Vice-President Academic as needed to ensure continuity and effectiveness in representation.

D.8.4 Representatives will notify the TGSA president and the chair of the committee if they will be absent from an external committee meeting, and resign if they are unable to fulfill their duties.

D.9 Secretary

D.9.1 Will assist the President in scheduling meetings and preparing agendas.

D.9.2 Will confirm the date, time, location, and agenda for all meetings is publicly announced in advance.

D.9.3 Will record the minutes for all TGSA meetings, including attendance at Board meetings

D.9.4 Will distribute the minutes of each meeting before the next TGSA meeting

D.9.5 Will present the minutes of each meeting for approval at the next meeting.

D.9.6 Will archive all approved agendas, minutes, and other Board documents electronically, online, and in the TGSA filing cabinet, and relay this archive to the next Secretary and President.

D.9.7 Will work with the President to ensure the TGSA website is up to date.

D.10 Officers

D.10.1 The Board must appoint a Secretary (D.9) and a Returning Officer (E.1) each year.

D.10.2 The Board may also appoint officers to advertise TGSA events, seminars, and meetings; announce relevant calls for papers, conferences, and job openings; catalogue and post TGSA documents and records; conduct polls or surveys; develop the TGSA website and social media pages; edit a student blog, journal, or newsletter; inform students about TGSA, TST, and university activities and services; prepare brochures, posters, and reports; and/or perform other tasks.

D.10.3 The Board will set the exact duties, compensation, length of service, and title for any officers before asking for nominations. If more than one candidate is interested, the Board will choose between them.

E. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Elections (Constitution Section 3.2)

E.1 Chief Returning Officer

E.1.1 a member of the TGSA Board who is not seeking an elected position is appointed yearly to serve as Chief Returning Officer (hereafter CRO).

E.1.2 The CRO is responsible to administer elections in accordance with the TGSA policies and procedures.

E.2 College elections

E.2.1 College elections will be administered by the CRO, with voting limited to the members of the individual colleges.

E.2.2 The college elections may take place in the fall.

E.3 Program elections

E.3.1 Program elections will be administered by the CRO, with voting limited to the members of the individual programs.

E.3.2 Elections for program representatives may take place in the fall.

E.4 TGSA Elections

E.4.1 Any graduate student interested in running for a position must nominate him/herself for the positions outlined in the constitution, section 4.2.

E.4.2 All nominations must be accompanied by the endorsement of two other graduate students.

E.4.3 Nominations must be submitted to the CRO by the second Friday of March.

E.4.4 Any student nominated as a program representative must be a student in that program.

E.4.5 Any student nominated as college representative must be a student of the respective college.

E.4.6 If there is one nomination in any given position, that person will be acclaimed the winner at the AGM.

E.4.7 In the event that more than one student is nominated for a single position, the following procedure will be adhered to:

E.4.7.1 An election will be conducted before the April AGM with the documented results announced during the AGM.

E.4.7.2 The election campaign will be one week long, where each candidate may:

- post one message to the TST students listserv regarding their candidacy, which will be posted on the TGSA website for one week;
- put a reasonable number of posters up at colleges, through approved channels, and take them down after the election.

E.4.7.3 No campaign literature may be distributed on the election day.

E.4.7.4 The election is usually held electronically through the use of online survey software. Voters will have to declare their status as legitimate TGSA members, that is, current TST graduate students, before they are allowed to vote. The CRO, with the help of an impartial assistant, will verify their status with the TST registrar.

E.4.7.5 Every graduate student is entitled to one vote.

E.4.7.6 In the case of electronic voting, votes will be counted automatically by the online software.

E.4.7.7 The person receiving the most votes will be declared the winner.

E.4.7.8 In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by a coin toss.

F. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Meetings (Constitution Section 4.8)

F.1 TGSA Board Meetings

F.1.1 The TGSA Board will normally meet each month during the school year.

F.1.2 The dates and times of these meetings will be established at the beginning of each term.

F.1.3 Extraordinary meetings may be called by the President if needed on three days' notice.

F.1.5 The President, together with other members of the TGSA Executive, will establish the agenda.

F.1.6 The TGSA Board will meet at least once over the summer.

F.2 TGSA General Meetings

F.2.1 An annual general meeting (hereafter AGM) for all graduate students will be held in April of every year.

F.2.1.1 The Board will determine the location of the meeting at least two months prior to the AGM.

F.2.1.2 The AGM must take place at a member college or in the TST building.

F.2.1.3 The Treasurer will present for information a financial statement for the year just completed and a preliminary projected budget for the following year.

F.2.1.4 The CRO will present the newly elected members of the TGSA Board.

F.2.1.5 Any major policy decisions ratified throughout the year by TGSA will also be presented.

F.2.2 When deemed necessary, other general meetings may be called by the TGSA Executive or the TGSA Board with fourteen days' notice.

F.3 Meeting Attendance

F.3.1 All TGSA members may attend any meeting. Non-members of the Board may address Board meetings if they have requested to be put on the agenda.

F.3.1.1 At the discretion of the TGSA Board, a portion of a Board meeting may be held *in camera*.

F.3.2 To ensure and enhance participation in general meetings, the agenda, material for discussion and voting procedures will be circulated widely prior to the meeting and facilitated through any legitimate means of communication.

F.3.3 Any necessary policy voting procedures will be administered by the Vice-President External.

F.4 Meeting Procedures

F.4.1 The TGSA Board works at achieving consensus in all its Board and General meetings.

F.4.2 If consensus is not achieved, *Roberts' Rules of Order* will be followed.

F.4.3 Each elected Board member carries one vote in the Board meetings.

F.4.4 Each TGSA member carries one vote in the General meetings.

F.4.5 All Board and General meeting minutes will be publicized on the TGSA website.

F.4.6 Electronic media, including the TGSA website, email list and online survey tools will be used to encourage communication with and participation of TGSA members at the General meetings, and to facilitate Board business and communication.

F.4.7 Policy decisions that require a general meeting, such as ratifying constitutional amendments or levy increases, may also be made at the discretion of the Board through electronic means. Any policy voting can be held through online survey software to enhance general membership participation.

F.4.8 The results of any such voting procedures will be publicized through the TGSA website, via email and through any other means deemed necessary by the Board.

F.4.9 Other procedures and practices not in conflict with the constitution and policies and procedures may be established by the TGSA Board.

F.5 Budget Procedures

F.5.1 A proposed budget shall be approved annually by the TGSA Board and publicized on the TGSA website.

F.5.2 Spending decisions which vary significantly from the proposed budget shall be recorded in the Board meeting minutes.

F.6 All TGSA documentation, including meeting minutes, budgets, promotional literature, and others is to be filed in the TGSA filing cabinet at TST.

G. Amendments to Policies and Procedures

G.1 Review of the policies and procedures may take place at the discretion of the TGSA Board.

G.2 All amendments must be ratified by two-thirds majority of the TGSA Board.