

Constitution of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Graduate Women in STEM

Article I: Name of the Organization

The official name of the organization shall be known as the “University of Massachusetts Amherst Graduate Women in STEM” or “UMass GWIS” for short.

Article II: Mission Statement

The UMass Amherst Graduate Women In STEM organization is committed to establishing and maintaining communities which promote the advancement of women pursuing careers in STEM and other disciplines, and which support them through their academic careers and beyond. We embrace a broad membership to increase the participation and representation of women and other marginalized folks in STEM and other disciplines, to address the underrepresentation of marginalized groups in those disciplines, and to catalyze change in the academic and professional climate to inspire future generations of women in STEM and the broader society. We accomplish this mission by engaging with diverse communities, evaluating the best strategies and practices, developing interpersonal skills and seeking out leadership experiences. We seek to empower women to achieve academic, professional and personal excellence and to prepare them to navigate the institutional barriers associated with higher education.

Article III: Purpose

The purpose of UMass GWIS is to broaden the participation and increase the retention of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) fields and other disciplines through committee-led initiatives in outreach, mentoring, professional development, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, networking, and leadership building.

Article IV: Non-discrimination statement

UMass GWIS will not discriminate for any purpose on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, linguistic abilities, religion, sexual identity, political affiliation, disability status, veteran status or marital status.

Article V: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Any enrolled graduate student or post-doctoral fellow committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and other disciplines.

Section 2: Member Identity

A member is defined as anyone who has completed a membership form. Member identity will not be released without permission.

Section 3: General Right of Members

Members can participate in any GWIS programming, including members-only programming. Also, members have the right to volunteer for committees and make programming suggestions during committee meetings. Members may attend executive board meetings, where they are encouraged to observe and comment. Any special issues members would like to raise to the board should be communicated to the executive board via the official UMass GWIS email address in advance of the meeting, at which time the board may allocate meeting time to these issues.

Section 4: Voting Rights

Members can vote on any issue brought to the general body; voting will occur online.

Section 5: Dues

No dues will be required for membership at this time, but this can be changed in the future by a majority ruling in a general body vote.

Section 6: Alumni Status

Upon graduation, members of UMass GWIS may choose to become alumni members submitting an alumni membership form online, and a database will be kept by the mentoring committee. Alumni may be invited back for programming and networking events in the future.

Article VI: General Body Meetings

Section 1: Frequency

General body meetings will occur once in the first four weeks of each semester. Any person (member or otherwise) may attend.

Section 2: Calling General Body Meetings

The call of general body meetings will be on a rotating, subcommittee basis (see Article VIII Section 4). Additional general body meetings can be called by the Executive Board at its discretion.

Article VII: Constitutional Amendments

Section 1: Proposing an Amendment

Any general body member may propose an amendment to the constitution.

Section 2: Voting on an Amendment

Constitutional amendments shall be voted on by the Executive Board with majority deciding the outcome. Any executive board member may demand that the vote be taken anonymously at any time.

Section 3: Overturning an Executive Board Decision

Any general body member may petition any decision or ruling of the Executive Board (pertaining to a constitutional amendment or otherwise) so that the decision is brought to the general body for a vote. A majority vote of participating general body members will overturn the decision.

Section 4: Constitution Review

The Executive Board should review and re-approve this constitution to ensure it reflects current practices and procedures at least once every year at the GWIS post-election retreat.

Article VIII: Leadership

Section 1: Positions of the Executive Board

Executive board members are the chairs of each committee. Committee chair positions may be shared by two people as co-chairs. The term of each chair is from the start of the summer semester until the end of the following spring semester (i.e. one calendar year). No Executive Board member may hold more than one position on the board per term. The title of each executive board member is as follows:

- A. Communications Committee Chair
- B. Finance and Administration Committee Chair
- C. Outreach Committee Chair
- D. Advocacy Committee Chair
- E. Mentoring Committee Chair
- F. Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair

Section 2: Elections of the Executive Board

Only current GWIS members may vote. Voting will take place anonymously online with ranked choice ballots, with the candidate(s) winning by a majority becoming a member of the executive board. In the case of a tie (defined as a difference of one ranked choice point or less), the two highest platforms will participate in a run-off election at the next executive board meeting, after the election subcommittee solicits input from committee members, at which they will have 5 minutes to present their campaigns in person. Run-off candidates may consider serving as co-chairs.

1. Election Timeline

- a. Election announcement and a call for nominations (suggested timeframe: 1st week of February): The election timeline will be announced with a call for nominations via the GWIS mailing list.
- b. Nomination submission period (suggested duration: 2 weeks): Any current member of GWIS may be nominated. Nominations may be made by any member, and members can nominate themselves for committee chair positions. Nominations for a chair position may be for individual candidates or for two candidates running together as co-chairs.
- c. Nomination acceptance and campaigning (suggested duration: 1 week): When accepting a nomination, each candidate must submit a platform which will be

posted to the blog and circulated to all members prior to the voting period. Campaigning may begin when a nomination is accepted and ends when the voting period ends.

- d. Voting period (required duration: 1 week)
- e. Announcement of results (suggested timeframe: within 2 days of voting period closing): election results and any required run-off elections will be announced to the GWIS membership.
- f. Transfer of Power: The newly elected chair(s) will take over the position from the outgoing chair(s) on the date of the executive board retreat or May 15, whichever is earlier.

2. Campaign Guidelines

a. Email

Candidates may campaign using their personal emails. Campaign messages will not be sent over the general body or programming listservs. Current executive board members with access to the listserv are not permitted to access the listserv for campaigning purposes.

b. GWIS Website

The elections planning subcommittee will post candidate platforms on the blog and email the link to members along with the voting link. Platforms are submitted with the nomination acceptance.

c. Flyering

Flyers and signs must be placed on authorized posting places (i.e. student bulletin boards or inside/outside certain buildings). No flyers or signs may be placed on University windows and buildings. Please be reminded that flyers can't be posted anywhere in Campus Center. No writing, painting, or chalking on walls or sidewalks will be permitted. Each candidate is responsible for the removal and disposal of all signs. No campaign materials are to be affixed to bus kiosks, trees, telephone poles, or lamp posts. Candidates may not tamper with or deface the signs of any other candidate. Offenses of this nature are considered serious and may result in disqualification as a candidate in the election.

3. Candidate Code of Conduct

All candidates must abide by the following code of conduct:

- a. No person who is not a candidate, as defined above, shall campaign.
- b. No person(s) shall appropriate funds for the purpose of campaigning. Candidates may not pay anyone to campaign on their behalf and/or vote for them.
- c. No candidate shall wrongfully represent any campaign material as being the material of any other candidate.
- d. No candidate shall violate the University Code of Student Conduct; for more information please see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/

Section 3: Duties of the Executive Board

Executive board members shall serve as the head of their assigned committees, and will be responsible for calling meetings of their committees and any programming run by their committee. The Executive Board will meet as a body at least monthly, with organization of these meetings rotating among the committees. Members are expected to attend all Executive Board meetings; in the case of scheduling conflicts, members are expected to inform the board of their absence and review the meeting minutes. The Executive Board will be responsible for making decisions for the organization by holding voting processes, with the majority winning. Each executive board member, whether a chair or co-chair, will get one vote. In the case of a conflict of interest between committees, the chairs from the committees involved will abstain from voting. Any executive board member may demand that any vote be taken anonymously at any time. Executive Board members are expected to attend UMass GWIS programming such as recruiting and networking events, general body meetings, and their committee's programming, whenever possible.

Section 4: Executive Board Planning Subcommittees

Executive board members will serve on one of the following planning subcommittees, to be assigned at the Executive Board retreat:

- A. Elections and Fall General Body Meeting Planning Subcommittee
 - a. This subcommittee will be responsible for planning elections of new committee chairs, which will take place in the beginning of the spring semester.
 - b. This subcommittee will be responsible for planning the fall general body meeting, which will take place in the first four weeks of the fall semester.
- B. Retreat and Spring General Body Meeting Planning Subcommittee
 - a. This subcommittee will be responsible for planning the Executive Board retreat, which will take place near the end of the spring semester once new executive board members have been elected.
 - b. This subcommittee will be responsible for planning the spring general body meeting, which will take place in the first four weeks of the spring semester.

Section 5: Quorum

The executive board must have at least 50% of members present or represented by proxy to establish quorum in decision making situations. However, in the case of impeachment or amendments to the constitution, all board members (barring any conflict of interest) must vote. Executive board members may submit their vote by proxy. Any executive board member may demand that the vote be taken anonymously at any time.

Section 6: Leave of Absence for Executive Board Members

An executive board member may take a leave of absence during their term. The board member will be responsible for ensuring their duties are carried out in their absence. The other members of the Executive Board may appoint a Deputy Chair to represent their seat on the Board if needed. Any extenuating circumstances will be dealt with at the discretion of the executive board.

Section 7: Impeachment of an Executive Board Member

Impeachment of a board member will require a two thirds majority of executive board member votes. Examples of reasons for impeachment: gross negligence of duties, misuse of GWIS funds. Any executive board member may demand that the vote be taken anonymously at any time.

Section 8: Appointing Replacement Board Members

In the event an executive board position needs to be filled, the executive board will exercise one of the following options at their discretion based on the timing and member interest in the position.

- A. The runner(s)-up from the previous election may be contacted and asked if they are interested in filling the vacant (co-)chair position. If so, the executive board will vote on whether to approve them as the new (co-)chair.
- B. Announce the vacant position to the membership and run a special election for the particular position, following the rules and guidelines for elections detailed in Article VIII Section 2.
- C. Under special circumstances (ex: time sensitivity), any executive board member may appoint a member for the position and the executive board members will vote on whether to approve them as the new (co-)chair.

Article IX: Committees

Section 1: Committee Structure and Responsibilities

Each committee will be comprised of the chair(s) of the committee as well as general committee members. The structure and responsibilities of each committee are summarized below. However, this is not a complete list, and responsibilities may shift or change depending on the needs of the committee at the discretion of the chair (or co-chairs).

1. Communications Committee

- i. Oversee social media content
- ii. Maintain the GWIS website
- iii. Create and publish the GWIS magazine
- iv. Monitor the official GWIS email

2. Finance and Administration Committee

- i. Manage the budget and requests for funding and keep track of fundraising funds and any bank accounts.
- ii. Make recommendations to the Executive Board on matters based on the availability of funds
- iii. Oversee grant applications and fundraising efforts
- iv. Hold a Procard if possible/eligible and handle Purchase Order and speed type requests from other committees
- v. Serve as liaison between funding bodies, the Graduate School, and GWIS

vi. Oversee operations of the organization

3. Outreach Committee

- i. Interface with existing outreach organizations/initiatives for collaborative efforts
- ii. Develop and execute outreach programs for GWIS members to engage with members of the local and surrounding community

4. Advocacy Committee

- i. Interface with university administration to promote changes in policy and culture which address systemic issues affecting our membership
- ii. Plan programming which vocalizes concerns of our membership and drives changes which address these concerns, as well as programming which informs and educates our membership on systemic issues within the graduate school structure

5. Mentoring Committee

- i. Maintain all member and alumni database, including faculty database
- ii. Facilitate faculty and post-doc mentoring opportunities and programming
- iii. Develop programming for undergraduate and graduate student mentoring initiatives

6. Diversity and Inclusion Committee

- i. Ensure that GWIS programming is inclusive of our members with intersectional identities, including but not limited to women of color, international women, LGBTQ+ women, women with disabilities, and parents.
- ii. Plan programming which promotes engagement of a more diverse membership

Section 2: Committee Membership

Any member may join a committee by contacting the Committee Chair(s) and asking to be involved. Membership of committees, except for the chair(s), is on a volunteer basis and all willing participants will be accepted onto committees. Committee members are expected to attend most committee meetings and programming, if able.

Section 3: Committee Meetings

Each committee should aim to meet once a month during the calendar year. Meetings should be scheduled with input from each member, and the time convenient for most members will be chosen. Committee meetings should ideally be announced at least a week in advance with the agenda being posted at that time for comment. Chairs of committees will then report to the Executive Board on the meeting at the next Executive Board Meeting time, if time permits.

Section 4: Inactive Committees

If a committee chair position is not filled after elections, then the Executive Board should pursue the strategies detailed in Article VIII Section 8 to attempt to fill this position. If the position still remains vacant, the committee is considered “inactive.” Chair positions for inactive committees

will still be advertised during elections and references to such committees in the GWIS constitution, website, and other materials will remain. If a committee is inactive for three years, it is considered “under review” and may be removed from the constitution by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Inactive status does not apply to the Finance and Administration committee. If the Finance and Administration committee were to become inactive, the Executive Board will appoint one of its members to serve as committee chair until the position can be filled.

Section 5: Adding new committees

Any member may propose a new committee. New committees will be approved at a meeting of the Executive Board by a majority vote.

Article X: Ratification

This constitution will be ratified by the Executive Board by a majority vote. Any Executive Board member may demand that the vote be taken anonymously at any time. Upon ratification, the constitution will be available to all persons and posted in a location that is easily accessible to all.

Date of Approval: 12/27/2019