



# The GSG Constitution

*(An Emory University Special Interest Organization)*

## Graduate Sustainability Group (GSG)

### Mission Statement

The Graduate Sustainability Group (GSG) is a student-run organization committed to engagement with social and environmental sustainability issues on and off the Emory University campus. It seeks to foster sustainability focused rigorous academic research, creative teaching and scholarship, and initiation of evidence-based solutions by Emory graduate students and staff.

### I. Preamble

We the members of the Graduate Sustainability Group (GSG) subscribe to the regulations and policies of Emory University, the Emory University Student Government Association, and the Graduate Student Government Association, do hereby establish this Constitution to govern the matters within our organization.

The Graduate Sustainability Group (GSG) group is a student-led response to the important social and environmental challenges facing the world as a whole and those specific to our local community, namely that of Emory University and greater Atlanta area. GSG recognizes that engaging graduate students in sustainability on both the academic and practical levels opens up important opportunities for scholarship and for incubating the next generation of leaders in social and environmental sustainability. In an effort to foster engagement with sustainability, with all of its challenges and opportunities in a spirit of commitment, rigor, and community, GSG provides opportunities for Emory University students, faculty, and staff to meet and discuss sustainability issues and topics and their relation to issues of both theory and practice on and off the Emory campus. The organization seeks to create an intellectual and, at times, physical space for support, reflection, critique and practical action with regards to our common social and environmental concerns.

### II. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Sustainability Group (GSG), an Emory University special interest organization.

### III. Purpose

- To connect graduate students and faculty interested in different aspects of social and environmental sustainability and engage in critical debates and academically-rigorous practical initiatives that aim to address sustainability challenges at Emory;
- To collaborate with the GSC in order to ensure that Laney graduate students are aware of sustainability related developments on campus and that their interests are represented in policies, events and initiatives that concern sustainability at Emory;
- To provide an organization which supports graduate students and faculty at Emory University in engaging with issues of sustainability whether that be in and out of the classroom, as students or as teachers, and on and off Emory campus by providing a central point of contact and information on sustainability theory and practice;
- To foster a diversity of voices in the graduate sustainability movement by actively engaging with other graduate groups, associations and clubs that may or may not express interest in social and environmental issues;
- To actively help maintain Emory University's standing as a leader in sustainability in higher education by providing publishing and speaker opportunities for members through their engagement in academic research on sustainability issues facing the University and presenting the results of experimentation with potential solutions at such forums as the publications, conferences and meetings of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE);
- To collaborate with existing sustainability structures at Emory, such as the Office of Sustainable Initiatives (OSI), in order to coordinate student initiatives, facilitate cross-dialogues, and promote relevant initiatives to the graduate student population, such as the OSI Green

Events Certification and the Sustainability Incentives Fund.

- To work closely with the Laney Graduate School (LGS) administration in order to help implement relevant portions of the LGS Climate Action Plan (CAP);
- To act as a venue for the presentation of sustainability scholarship and practice conducted by those affiliated with Emory University and other Atlanta-area universities by hosting speakers, conducting workshops, or organizing conferences.

#### **IV. Membership**

Any graduate student enrolled in the Emory University Laney Graduate School of Arts and Sciences shall be eligible for membership of this organization. Attendance at meetings is not mandatory to maintain membership. All events sponsored by GSG are open to all members of the Emory community.

GSG is dedicated to the Emory University equal opportunity policy, which provides that applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law. (Few exceptions MAY be granted to certain groups (i.e. religious, men/women, etc...) at the discretion of the SGA Attorney General).

#### **V. Executive Board / Officers / Faculty Advisor**

A. The Executive Board for this organization shall at all times consist of at least three members: President, Treasurer and Secretary. Additional members into executive positions may be recruited as the organization evolves. GSG also has a faculty advisor who oversees matters involving the organization and is involved in decision-making. There are no dues required for Executive board members or any other members of this organization.

- At the discretion of the executive board at any election, excepting the Treasurer, any of the officer and chair positions may be jointly held. There may be a maximum of two individuals to hold each position. The executive board must consist of at least three members at all time: President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- If the growth of the organization requires additional responsible officers, GSG will, at the discretion of the Executive Board, expand the leadership team and duly notify the GSC of changes.
- At the end of each academic year, the current executive board members are responsible for training their successors.
- In financial matters, executive board members may be reimbursed for discretionary money spent in relation to the GSG' events and functions.

#### **B. Executive Board Officer Descriptions**

- The President is to oversee the affairs of the organization and serve to represent the group to Emory University. He/she is to preside over all meetings, make room reservations for meetings and events, set goals for the organization each academic year and seek to achieve them.
- The Treasurer will handle all financial matters and transactions of the organization with the approval of the executive board. Per academic year, there will be only one Treasurer who will go through mandatory training prior to the start of that academic year in accordance with GSC policies. The Treasurer will supervise and maintain all financial matters and maintain an accurate spreadsheet of all monetary transactions of GSG. At each executive board planning, the Treasurer will give an up-to-date account of the financial records. Should an executive board member encounter debt as it relates to the organization, the Treasurer is responsible for processing the request of a reimbursement as quickly as possible.
- The Secretary will be responsible for keeping a written record of GSG activities. He/she will assist the President in overseeing all events and meetings, take notes during meetings and circulate meeting minutes and events overviews to GSG members.

C: Faculty Advisor: At the discretion of the Executive Board, and in the interests of promoting cross-disciplinarily, the Faculty Advisor position may be co-held by up to three Emory University faculty members: one from Laney Graduate School and two others from across the University system. GSG reserves the right to make amendments to the appointment of Faculty Advisor(s) and will duly notify the GSC of any changes.

#### **D. Qualifications, Elections and Vacancies**

- All officers must be Emory University students who have been members of the organization for a minimum of one semester.
- All members of the organization are eligible to vote. Voting will take place at a pre-determined GSG meeting. Only votes of present members will be counted unless special arrangements are made by the voter to deliver his or her vote in their absence.

- Candidates for office may be nominated by any member of the organization, including him/herself. Candidates who accept the nomination must submit a written platform statement made public to all voting members.
- Officers are elected by a simple majority. In the case where no candidate receives a majority, run-off elections may be held for those offices.
- Elections are held once per year in May and are administered by the outgoing President.
- Votes are collected by secret ballot.
- New officers assume their positions in June.
- In the event of a sudden Officer departure, members of the group can volunteer to fill the vacant position temporarily until an emergency election can be held.
- The positions of President, Treasurer and Secretary can be held by the same individuals for a maximum of two consecutive years. Once an individual has served for two consecutive years, he or she may be nominated for a re-election after a year away from the post. They may not be elected to another Officer post during their 'gap' year.

#### **VI. Anti-Discrimination Clause**

GSG cannot and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of any individual or group based upon race, sex, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law. GSG welcomes and values all who work on campus, in whatever capacity, and actively promotes an open and genuinely diverse environment.

#### **VII. Grievance Policy**

It is the stated intention of the officers of GSG to foster cooperation and to create a safe environment in which members can express their opinions freely. Should any member(s) of GSG have a grievance, they should first notify and attempt to reach an agreement with the officers. The next step is to notify the general membership and resolve the issue democratically by a majority vote. The faculty advisor must be notified of the proceedings, and he or she has the power to intervene in any step of the process. If a democratic vote of the membership does not resolve the issue, the aggrieved should speak directly to the faculty advisor. Should any of the aforementioned steps fail to bring resolution, the aggrieved may petition the Department Chair and/or the Graduate Student Council.

#### **VIII. Meetings**

- Meetings will be held monthly and arranged by either the secretary or president. Notifications about meetings will be sent through email on through the GSG list serve.
- A quorum shall consist of 75% of all active members. A quorum will only be necessary for financial decisions and elections, all other business may be conducted with any number of members.

#### **IX. Amendments**

- The constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote. All amendments will be presented to GSG members one week prior to voting to ensure all members have time to review the proposed amendments. Amendments must be presented in writing to the group via email or the list serve. Voting will then take place at a meeting and passed amendments will be then be added to the existing constitution and updated with SGA.