

# Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association

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## Constitution of the Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association

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Preamble:

The Constitution of the Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association is intended to encourage a thoughtful, ethical, and environmental approach to the governance of Masters students within the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

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## **Article 1: Name**

1. The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association, hereinafter referred to as "GESSA" or the "Association."

## **Article 2: Object**

1. The objectives of GESSA are to:
  - a) Coordinate activities and events that will enhance the University experience of its members and others in the University.
  - b) Assist and encourage intellectual and professional pursuits by members of the Association.
  - c) Be the primary Graduate Student Association of all registered Masters students in the Faculty of Environmental Studies through which they may collectively enter into association with other formally constituted bodies both inside and outside the University.

## **Article 3: Membership Constituency**

1. There shall be two categories of membership in the Association:
  - a) Regular Members:

All students registered full- or part-time in the Faculty of Environmental Studies who are seeking the degree of Master in Environmental Studies.
  - b) Honorary Members:

Honorary member will include students enrolled in a Doctorate with the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Further, incoming students in the Master in Environmental Studies Program will be treated as Honorary Members until their official registration with the Faculty of Environmental Studies, and should be included in all GESSA communications. Honorary members may not vote for or hold Officer positions for the Association. From time to time the Association may designate persons as Honorary Members.

## **Article 4: Rights of Association Members**

1. Regular members of the Association are entitled to:
  - a) Participate, vote, and place motions on the floor of all General Meetings [GM].
  - b) Propose amendments to the Constitution.
  - c) Nominate candidates for the positions of Association Officers.
  - d) Stand for election or hold office in the Association.
  - e) Participate in any events or activities sponsored by the Association.
  - f) Propose items for the agenda of the GM.
  - g) Equal consideration and access to Association funding programs.
2. Honorary members of the Association are entitled to:

- a) Attend GMs.
- b) Participate in any events or activities sponsored by the Association.

## **Article 5: The General Meeting**

### **1. Guidelines**

- a) The Association shall have General Meetings that encourage participation from all members.
- b) GMs shall be called not less than once per term during the Fall and Winter academic terms and not fewer than 3 GMs shall be held per academic year.
- c) If the Chair is absent, the EC shall elect an Acting Chair for that meeting only.
- d) Quorum at GMs will be 12 members of the Association, excluding executive members.
- e) If quorum is not reached, the Chair shall adjourn the meeting. However, if the officers remaining wish to continue discussions, they may do so informally. Any decisions reached must be ratified at a subsequent meeting.
- f) In the event that quorum is not reached at the subsequent meeting, quorum becomes the membership present.

### **2. Functions and Duties**

- a) To approve an Association annual budget by November 15 for the fiscal year beginning May 1 of that year.
- b) To stand as the final decision-making body on all Association business.
- c) To approve agendas and minutes of GMs.
- d) To approve elected Officers, responsible to the GESSA, on an annual basis through an election process [see Article 9].
- e) To approve elected and terminated members of committees and the Faculty Council within the Faculty of Environmental Studies.
- f) To adopt such rules and regulations to govern the work of the Association's committees.
- g) To approve elected members to represent GESSA on other duly constituted bodies within the University.
- h) To approve a Returning Officer each January to conduct elections for Officers of the Association and, as necessary, referenda.

### **3. Calling a General Meeting**

A GM may be called by:

- a) The Chair;
- b) A majority of the Executive Committee;
- c) or ten members of the Association in good standing.

### **4. Notice of a General Meeting**

When a GM is called, the membership must be duly notified at least one week in advance by posting the call and a proposed agenda on the MES email list or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate, as well as notifying the Chair and EC.

## **Article 6: Executive Meetings**

### **1. Executive Meetings Guidelines**

- a) the EC shall have EC meetings
- b) EC meetings shall be called not less than 3 per term
- c) Quorum for EC meetings shall be at least 2/3rds of the voting officers of the EC, excluding the Chair.
- d) If quorum is not reached, the Chair shall adjourn the meeting. However, if the officers remaining wish to continue discussions, they may do so informally. Any decisions reached must be ratified at a subsequent meeting.
- e) If the Chair is absent, the EC shall, amongst themselves, elect an Acting Chair for that meeting only.
- f) If unable to attend the EC meeting in person, EC members may use telephone or video conferencing to participate.
- g) Any non-executive or non-GESSA members invited to participate and/or observe a GESSA Executive meeting shall be invited prior to the meeting via notification in the Agenda for said meeting. Such invitations will be deemed adopted by the EC when the Agenda is adopted at the commencement of the meeting.
- h) During April and May EC Meetings, the incoming and outgoing EC shall invite their counterparts to their meetings. Decisions at these meetings shall be made only by the current officers.

### **2. Function and Duties of EC Meetings**

The Executive Committee shall:

- a) Administer financial policies as established at the GM.
- b) Promote the interests of GESSA to external bodies.
- c) Propose policies, programs and projects to further the Objectives of the Association.
- d) Carry out other duties as determined at the GM.

## **Article 7: Executive Committee**

1. The EC of the Association shall be composed of the following officers: Chair, Internal Officer, VP/Finance Officer, Social Officer, External Officer, Advocacy Officer, Research and Travel Fund (RTF) Officer, First-year Representative, and Chief Returning Officer.

- a) These Officers must be Regular Members of the Association.
- b) These Officers shall be elected by the membership of the Association as in Article 9.
- c) The term of each Officer shall extend from May 1 until April 30 with exceptions of:
  - i) a First-year Representative, term serving from September 31 until August 31
  - ii) a Chief Returning Officer, term serving from February 1 until May 31
- d) These Officers shall perform the responsibilities as outlined in Article 7.3 and 7.4.
- e) These Officers may be impeached as outlined in Article 7.5.
- f) If necessary, more than one person may occupy the same position.

- g) In order for GESSA to operate, the following positions must be filled: Chair, VP/Finance Officer, Research and Travel Fund Officer, and Internal or External Officer
- h) All Officers will coordinate with York University's Graduate Student Association (YUGSA) to ensure both parties are represented fairly and equally.

## 2. Oath for GESSA Executive Committee Officers:

All ECOs, upon assuming office are considered to have taken the following oath by placing and undersigning their signature on the following:

“ I, \_\_\_\_\_, solemnly swear that I will carry out my duties to the best of my abilities as an Executive Officer of GESSA. I will represent the Masters students of the Faculty of Environmental Studies and their interests by upholding the constitution and all charges issued by the Executive Committee of GESSA and the GM. Furthermore, I will abide by all rules and regulations as set out by GESSA and the York University Senate. I further attest that I understand and have read all articles of the Constitution and all the regulations, rules, codes of conduct that are relevant to GESSA and my position as an officer and stand to defend, uphold, and implement them.”

A written version of this oath shall be signed and dated by the officer elect and witnessed by two EC officers already in office and placed in the GESSA office. This written oath will be kept on file for 3 years after the term of the officer has been carried out.

## 3. Responsibilities of Officers:

All Officers of the Association will hold regular and publicized office hours for the duration of their terms. In addition, the Officers shall fulfil the following responsibilities:

### 3.1) Chair

The Chair shall:

- a) Uphold the Constitution and be required, within reason, to facilitate all Association General Meetings and Executive Meetings. The Chair will ensure that they are conducted in an orderly, impartial fashion and will clarify the Rules of Order.
- b) Vote only in the event of a tie.
- c) Serve as the Masters representative, on Faculty Executive, the Student Representative Roundtable, and Faculty Council.
- d) Notify the SCLD (Student Community Leadership Development) Elections Review Officer of the name and contact information for GESSA's Chief Returning Officer.
- e) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- f) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Chair of the Association.

### 3.2) Internal Communications Officer

The Internal Communications Officer shall:

- a) Be the custodian of the records of the Association, and its committees.
- b) Work with the Chair to coordinate all meetings of the Executive and the Association.

In coordinating all meetings, the officer shall:

- i) organize meeting dates
- ii) book a room for all meetings
- iii) send out an agenda call at least one week prior to each meeting

- iv) record minutes of General and Executive Meetings and keep a legible and permanent record of those meetings (both an electronic copy on the GESSA laptop and a paper copy in the “Agenda and Minutes” binder which is to be kept in the GESSA office at all times). Meeting minutes will be kept for at least 7 years.
  - v) bring an attendance sheet to every GM
  - vi) send out GM minutes no later than one week after the GM to the MES email list or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate.
  - vii) provide access to these records when requested by any Regular Member of GESSA
- c) Follow all communication policies as established at the GM and pursuant of Article 20: Agenda, Minutes, Motions, and Amendments.
  - d) Be responsible for administrative tasks and duties for the Association, including maintaining communication with the EC and ensuring tasks are completed as outlined in meeting minutes.
  - e) Be the source of contact for GESSA’s Graduate Assistant (GA) and manage their workload. All requests from EC Officers for the GA will be initially made to the Internal Communications Officer.
  - f) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
  - g) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Internal Communications Officer of the Association.

### 3.3) VP/Finance Officer

The VP/Finance Officer shall:

- a) Prepare a preliminary annual budget for the fiscal year beginning May 1.
- b) Prepare a final budget no later than October 31, or after student levy discussions are finalized, for the Association’s consideration and approval no later than November 15 of that year.
- c) Establish a central service available to all committees of the Association in writing cheques, preparing statements, and controlling expenditures, and will maintain the Association’s books and accounts (both an electronic copy on the GESSA laptop and a paper copy to be filed in the GESSA office).
- d) Accept cheques and be one of the two required signatories of said bank account.
- e) Arrange for custody and disbursement of the funds pursuant to appropriate direction from the Association.
- f) Facilitate two audits of the Association that will be conducted by an accountant [see Article 8].
- g) Place all audited statements in the Dean’s office and in the office of the Vice-President of the University, Student Affairs.
- h) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- i) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming VP/Finance Officer of the Association and transfer all financial information by May 1.

### 3.4) Social Officer

The Social Officer shall:

- a) Fulfil those duties determined by the EC.

- b) Plan, arrange and advertise social events and community-building activities for the participation of all GESSA members.
- c) Build and maintain relationships between GESSA, faculty members, staff, and the greater student body.
- d) Recruit and coordinate required subcommittees for planning large social events. In creating event subcommittees, the Social Officer should coordinate with PlanIt in order to include and represent the entire MES student body.
- e) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- f) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Social Officer of the Association.

### 3.5) External Communications Officer

The External Communications Officer shall:

- a) Conduct all recruitment and elections for Masters representatives on FES committees by November 1, and address any concerns they have as representatives as well as coordinate their reports at GMs.
- b) Abide by and uphold all terms set out in Articles 11, 12 and 13 of the GESSA Constitution.
- b) Assist other University bodies requiring graduate student representatives from the Faculty of Environmental Studies to elect such representatives.
- c) Publish all public materials—including RTF and ECF (External Community Fund) forms, events, and GM Meeting Minutes—on the GESSA website.
  - i) ensure that all materials published on the GESSA Website and social media accounts comply with federal regulations on privacy and copyright
  - ii) ensure that documents published on the GESSA Website are up-to-date and contain accurate information
  - iii) coordinate with the VP/Finance Officer to fiscally maintain the GESSA website
- d) Coordinate the incoming and outgoing Executive transfer of email accounts.
- e) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- f) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming External Communications Officer of the Association.

### 3.6) Advocacy Officer

The Advocacy Officer shall:

- a) Coordinate with the First-year Representative to introduce him or herself in ENVS 5100.
- b) Meet regularly with the Dean's Representative to Students to foster a safe, inclusive atmosphere for students.
- c) Coordinate with the External Communications Officer on ensuring safe, fair representation for Masters students by maintaining regular communication with Student Representatives on Faculty committees and addressing any issues that might arise in conjunction with the Dean's Representative to Students.
- d) Serve as the representative on the Faculty Equity Committee.
- e) Be a representative on other FES student groups as seen necessary.
- f) Provide resources for students to other campus and mediation bodies and equity services.



- g) Foster a safe environment for students to address their concerns equitably and without discrimination.
- h) Fulfil those duties determined by the EC.
- i) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- j) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Advocacy Officer of the Association.

### 3.7) Research and Travel Fund Officer

The Research and Travel Fund Officer shall:

- a) Call for research and travel fund applications during the first month of each term via the MES email list, posters, the GESSA website and Facebook, or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate.
- b) Provide advice and information for students regarding the RTF.
- c) Process Research and Travel Fund applications in a timely fashion.
- d) Arrange payment for RTF awards and administer these awards to students.
- e) Maintain records of all applications and payments made.
- f) Be the second signatory of cheques and financial transactions.
- g) Provide resources to students regarding other University funding opportunities.
- h) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- i) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Research and Travel Fund Officer of the Association.

### 3.8) First-year Officer

The First-year Officer shall:

- a) Coordinate with other members of the GESSA Executive to serve the needs of First-year MES students.
- b) Be permitted to run for election in March, and if elected, serve in both capacities until the election of a replacement First-year Officer.
- c) Be permitted to serve as Chief Returning Officer.
- d) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- e) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming First-year Officer of the Association.

### 3.9) Chief Returning Officer

The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) shall:

- a) Conduct all elections for Officers of the Association, as described in Article 9 of the GESSA Constitution.
- b) Monitor their executive email and respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- c) Write a final report for the purpose of assisting the incoming Chief Returning Officer of the Association.

## 4. Responsibilities of Honorary Officers:

Honorary officers are representatives from Doctorate and Bachelor Environmental Studies Student Associations. Although these positions do not have voting rights, their purpose is to promote a unified student presence within the Faculty.

#### 4.1) PhESSA Representative

The PhESSA Representative shall:

- a) Attend GESSA EC and GM meetings.
- b) Be an active member of GESSA EC and work with the Association in unifying the student body within the Faculty.

#### 4.2) BESSA Representative

The BESSA Representative shall:

- a) Attend GESSA EC and GM meetings.
- b) Be an active member of GESSA EC and work with the Association in unifying the student body within the Faculty.

### 5. Impeachment of Officers

- a) An Officer of the Association may be removed from office by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the GM.
- b) A notice of impeachment must be announced at the GM prior to the meeting at which it will actually be moved.

## **Article 8: Finances**

1. Any money obtained by GESSA shall be used only for the Association.
  - a) Any bank accounts opened for GESSA shall be in the name of the Association and kept in any Canadian chartered bank.
  - b) Any cheque issued shall be signed by two executive members: one being the VP/Finance Officer and the second as the RTF Officer.
  - c) The VP/Finance Officer will ensure that the group stays within the budget.
  - d) The VP/Finance Officer will also allocate a contingency fund for the incoming EC. Sufficient allocation will be determined by the VP/Finance Officer and approved by the EC.
  - e) A year-end audit must be commenced prior to the Fall Semester. An interim audit must occur prior to February 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Article 9: Elections**

1. The elections shall be administered according to the following regulations:
  - a) An election to determine the Officers for GESSA shall be held during the month of March each year.
  - b) The election will be conducted by a Chief Returning Officer [CRO], who is elected by the GM or the EC by January 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - c) The CRO and all potential candidates must be a member of GESSA. Potential candidates must be registered as a full-time student for their term in office.
  - d) The CRO shall solicit nominations for the Officers of GESSA.
  - e) The CRO shall call for nominations at least 2 weeks prior to the first day of the election.

- f) Nominations shall close a week prior to the first day of the election.
- g) No candidate may accept nomination for more than one executive position in any one election.
- h) If only one person is nominated for a particular executive position, that person shall be elected by acclamation.
- i) If more than one person is nominated for a particular executive position, the CRO shall contact nominees and clearly explain the election process, then forward the required information to SCLD to produce e-vote setup.
- j) Any other necessary regulations and the polling procedure shall be determined by the GM.
- k) By-elections for vacant positions will be held at the discretion of the GM.
- l) Any concerns should be addressed to the CRO.
- m) Violation of these rules and those following could result in the candidate being disqualified from the election.

2. Campaigns shall be administered according to the following regulations:

- a) Nominees will campaign only during the prescribed period. Any campaigning before or after the official dates may result in disqualification.
- b) Nominees are encouraged to send at least one e-mail introducing themselves and their platforms to the CRO, who will then email the MES email list or communicate through any mode the current EC deems appropriate. Excessive e-mailing through the MES email list for the purpose of campaigning is not allowed. All campaign literature must be respectful and purposeful attacks on character are not permitted.
- c) Nominees can set up posters in the FES building only, since voting is only open to MES students, and are permitted to campaign through their own websites and networks.

3. Voting shall be administered according to the following regulations:

- a) There will be a 5-day online voting period administered by SCLD.
- b) The CRO will send e-mails on the MES email list or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate, opening and closing the voting period.
- c) Only currently registered MES students are eligible to vote.
- d) Results will be tabulated by SCLD and sent to the CRO and the current Chair.
- e) CRO will contact the GESSA executive and candidates and inform them of the results.
- f) If there are no concerns, the CRO will announce the results to the student body.

4. If a candidate is elected and subsequently discovers that they will no longer be a member of GESSA, it is their responsibility to find a suitable replacement. The candidate must be approved by the EC.

## **Article 10: Amendments to the Constitution and Referenda**

1. The Chair of the Association shall give members of the Association ten days notice of a proposed amendment to the Constitution.

2. Referenda shall be administered according to the following regulations:

- a) The printed text of the referendum question and all background materials shall be distributed to each graduate mailbox. Furthermore information will be advertised through the MES email list or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate at least ten days prior to the first day of the referendum.
- b) Referendums may be administered at GMs or any method deemed appropriate by the EC.
- c) The referendum shall be declared approved if it receives fifty percent plus one vote of the votes cast.

## **Article 11: MES and GESSA Committee Representation**

1. The Chair of the Association or the External Communications Officer will serve as GESSA representatives, but this practice can be altered at the discretion of the GESSA EC. Committee and subcommittees representation should be approved at a GM. The following rules and procedures shall be adhered to when filling MES committee/subcommittee and GESSA external positions for York University bodies with student representatives:

- a) A call for nomination will be announced to the student body for all vacant positions via any communicative means (deemed suitable by the EC) such as email lists, posters, emails, class announcements, bulletin boards, and personal communication.
- b) The call for nomination shall be at the minimum 7 days prior to a GM. It is recommended, however, that this call for nomination be issued 21 days in advance.
- c) A full written description of the committee's function, structure, and purpose shall be presented to the student body for said vacancy. The meeting times and schedule of the committee/subcommittee shall also be made available to the student body if available.
- d) The call for nomination(s) shall only expire at the time of election(s), confirmation(s), or nomination(s) when the Chair of GESSA tables and moves the motion for such an election(s), confirmation(s), or nomination(s) at the GM.

2. If the committee(s) in question is scheduled to meet before a GM is called, where such a vacancy can be filled, any officer of GESSA's EC may represent MES at this committee or subcommittee or external York University body. The EC officer may only represent MES until the next GM, where an attempt will be made to fill the vacancy.

3. If an officer of the EC is unable to fill the vacancy, or if there is sufficient time before the next assembly of the committee/subcommittee in question, any student interested in representing MES may temporarily fill the position in response to a short "request for representation" from the External Communications Officer on the MES email list. The External Communications Officer will send out a notice via MES email list or any mode of communication the current EC deems appropriate, that this student will temporarily represent MES until the next GM. The notice shall encourage the student body to respond if they have any objections to said student's representation. If any objections are raised, then the committee/subcommittee in question shall go unrepresented by MES until the next GM. If there are no objections, the interested student may represent MES temporarily until confirmed at the next GM. If there is more than one reply to such a "request for representation," the committee/subcommittee shall go unrepresented by MES until the next GM at which time a further attempt will be made to fill the vacancy.

4. Students wishing to run for MES committee/subcommittee or GESSA external York University body representation, who are unable to attend a GESSA GM for elections, must contact the External Communications Officer, to declare their intentions for said position. The students shall state their credentials and experiences that qualify them for the position. It is incumbent on the External Communications Officer of GESSA to read out such declarations and carry out elections as if the student was present at the GM.

5. If an elected or confirmed student representative cannot continue to represent MES, he/she shall inform the External Communications Officer in writing as soon as possible. The position shall immediately be deemed vacant upon such notification. The EC may then attempt to fill this position. A failure to notify GESSA in writing and an unexplained absence of the representative for 2 consecutive meetings will result in the said position to be deemed vacant.

6. All MES committee/subcommittee and GESSA external body representatives shall provide an update to the GM in person or in writing of the respective committee(s), insofar as confidentiality allows. This update should be at least once a term. If the committee in question has not met all term, then it shall be communicated to the GM. If an update is not received once a term, the External Communications Officer shall send a warning to the student representative to update the GM. If the warning is still not heeded, then the position shall be deemed vacant.

7. Any student may table a motion in a GESSA GM challenging the continued representation of a student on a committee/subcommittee/external York University committee for incompetence and/or failure to abide by the direction and order of the GESSA GM. Such a motion, if carried by the GM, shall denote an immediate vacancy in the said position.

8. The EC (in between GMs) has the authority to direct, instruct, and charge any individual MES representatives on any committees.

9. All MES and GESSA representatives shall abide by regulations, rules, codes of conduct, instructions, and codes governing matters that require confidentiality, on the respective external assemblies and committees.

a) All student representatives, once elected, are considered to have taken the following oath:

“I, \_\_\_\_\_ solemnly swear that I will carry out my duties as a representative of [MES or GESSA] to the best of my abilities in representing the Masters students at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, as directed, instructed, and charged by the GM and as set out in this regulation and the constitution of GESSA.”

b) In addition, a written version of this oath shall be signed and dated by the student representative and witnessed by an EC officer.

## **Article 12: GESSA Subcommittees**

All subcommittees created by the EC must be endorsed by the GM and all members of said subcommittee must be presented to the GM and the EC. The subcommittee must report to one

officer on the EC for the purposes of smooth governance so that all subcommittee business is transparent, and must uphold the terms of the GESSA Constitution. The EC shall report to the GM the business undertaken by the subcommittees.

### **Article 13: External Communications**

All written communication to GESSA's Constituents, the Faculty, The Office of the Dean, or any other external body on issues resulting from a decision ratified by an EC meeting or the student body in a GM must be made available to all officers of the EC for scrutiny 48 hours prior to its submission to the intended recipients of such communication.

### **Article 14: Expenses Incurred by GESSA Executive Officers**

1. All expenses, except for RTF payments, courtesy account payments, and payments that appear as fixed payments on the GESSA Capital/ Programs budget (already approved by the GM), must be approved by a majority vote in the EC before the VP/Finance Officer or any other signing officer can release funds for such payment. The amounts, dates, estimates/invoices, and corresponding motions and votes shall be reflected in the minutes of a meeting prior to when said expenses are incurred.

2. The officer applying for the expense(s) shall submit a completed Internal Claims form with all required attachments and signatures.

### **Article 15: Conflict of Interest**

When deliberating about funding, endorsement, policy direction, or financial matters, there may be "Conflict of Interest." This is defined as one or more officers being involved in the operation of or having a relationship (financial or otherwise) with an external person or body beyond his/her duties as an officer of GESSA. It is incumbent on such officers of GESSA to bring forth all relevant details of such a "Conflict of Interest" before the EC.

Once aware of a possible "Conflict of Interest," the EC shall immediately follow and table the following procedures and motions in the presence of the officers that are allegedly in a "Conflict of Interest."

1. The officer in "Conflict of Interest" will identify their conflict to EC and should excuse themselves from any matters pertaining to said conflict.

2. In the event that a potential "Conflict of Interest" is identified that involves an EC officer, the EC will vote on the following motion:

"Given all the facts, can the committee establish with reasonable justification that there exists a 'conflict of interest' such that it can potentially put the reputation of GESSA in disrepute and hinder the committee in pursuing the short and long term interests of its

constituents? Is the ‘conflict of interest’ grave enough to hinder the decision-making process of the EC?”

This motion is to be voted upon by the executives that are not allegedly themselves in a “conflict of interest.”

If the committee denies the above motion, the meeting shall precede as normal with the due participation of the Executive Officers that were allegedly under a “conflict of interest.” If, however, the motion is upheld, then the EC shall order the said Officers “out of quorum” (out of the meeting or the right to participate) and deliberate the subsequent motion:

2. Having established “conflict of interest,” the EC in a separate and new motion will determine the continued quorum and conditions of participation of the Officers in question on issues that have been established as being in “conflict.”

### **Article 16: Resignation of Officers**

In the event that an officer of the Association decides to relinquish his/her responsibilities and duties as an officer of GESSA, the resigning officer must present the EC a statement to that effect, either as an addendum or notice on the agenda. In addition, the resigning officer must produce a written and signed communication available to the Internal Communications Officer or Chair for safekeeping.

After delivery of such notice, the remaining EC shall evaluate whether a replacement is necessary and consider whether to hold a by-election. In the event that the EC does not reach a unanimous decision, a by-election will be held.

The resigning officer shall immediately transfer and make all information, documents, emails, receipts, correspondences, keys, and proposals available to the Internal Communications and VP/Finance Officers. Furthermore, the resigning Officer may not run for the same position within the same election cycle (by-election).

### **Article 17: Proxy Voting**

As outlined in Article 6: Executive Meetings, proxy voting and discussion are permissible in EC meetings only. No form of proxy voting shall be practiced at GMs. Quorum must be reached for either meeting to vote, deliberate, amend, and move motions.

### **Article 18: Extended Absence of Officers**

If an Officer on the EC cannot be “in quorum” for an extended period of time (two months or more), he or she shall inform the EC at least 14 days prior to his or her departure and notify the EC with the dates and length of the absence. Upon such notice, the Officer shall be deemed suspended for the purposes of a headcount for quorum at EC meetings, such that his or her

presence or absence would not count toward fulfilling quorum. The EC will then elect an Officer amongst themselves to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the absent officer until his or her official return.

If any Officer is of the opinion that the absence is unacceptable, they may table and move a motion upon notice of the extended absence from the Officer in question and before his or her leave of absence that such a leave is unacceptable to GESSA's operation. This motion will then demand a resignation from the Officer in question. Such a motion shall not be tabled or moved if the absence is less than three months or in the summer term. Officers who miss too many EC or GM meetings, as determined by their fellow officers on the EC, may also be required to resign.

If the motion demanding the resignation carries, the EC will follow the regulations set out in Article 16: Resignation of Officers.

If an Officer refuses to tender a resignation letter to the EC, impeachment proceedings will be followed at the next GM.

## **Article 19: Meeting Rules of Order**

Rules of order are procedures by which meetings can be conducted in an orderly fashion, issues debated and motions passed according to the majority, but with due regard to the rights of the minority. Rules of Order are based upon common sense and the need to move through an Agenda expeditiously. The Chair conducts meetings impartially, preserves order and decorum, and clarifies the Rules of Order.

## **Article 20: Agenda, Minutes, Motions, and Amendments**

### **1. Agenda and Minutes:**

The Agenda is the order of business for the meeting. The Agenda describes the items for consideration and gives the order in which they will be addressed. They must be adopted before the meeting can commence. The adoption of the minutes of the last meeting ratifies any decisions taken at that time. Any changes in the Agenda or minutes must be proposed and considered before the Agenda and minutes are adopted. An item on the Agenda may be taken out of sequence and disposed of only by majority consent.

Agenda items for GESSA Executive Committee (EC) meetings shall be submitted to the Internal Communications Officer by email or in writing approximately 3 days prior to the meeting. The submission of a motion should include "The question before the committee" and whether the mover of the motion wishes it to be discussed without resolution or whether he or she would like the question to be deliberated and voted or resolved before the EC. The Internal Communications Officer shall present the Agenda to all officers of the EC 48 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting (preferably via email.)



If motions or agenda items are forwarded to the Chair less than 48 hours prior to the meeting, he or she may defer them for a later meeting or may include them in the section “Other Business.” Motions and items (if not dealt with) should then be tabled on a subsequent meeting.

## 2. Motions:

A motion is a proposal made pursuant to an item of the Agenda that certain actions be taken, certain views become policy, etc. which is then debated, potentially amended, and voted upon.

There are also motions that propose procedures for considering other motions, e.g. Motions to Table, to Divide the Question, to Put the Question, to Adjourn, to Amend.

Any officer may move a substantive or procedural motion as long as it is in order. A substantive motion or one containing multiple considerations shall be prepared in writing and given to the Chair in advance of the meeting.

The “mover” of a motion is allowed to speak first on said motion, followed by the “seconder.” Then opponents and proponents alternate in the subsequent debate. Questions about the motions are directed to the Chair, thence to the mover or person to whom they are addressed. Since procedural motions are in order when considering a substantive motion and take precedence over it, it is not always possible that the mover may speak last on the motion. The mover may withdraw her or his motion with majority consent.

## 3. Amendments:

An amendment to a motion must be relevant to said motion and properly moved and seconded. An amendment may propose to amend the language by deleting or inserting particular words. When an “in order” amendment takes precedence over the main motion and becomes the subject of debate, it must be accepted or rejected before debate reverts to the motion. If accepted, the motion as amended is debated. If it fails, the main motion is unchanged.

A sub-amendment may be proposed to an amendment under the same conditions as an amendment is moved to a motion.

At no time may there be more than one main motion, one amendment, and one sub-amendment on the floor. When all three exist, the Chair submits them in the reverse order to which they were moved.

A motion once defeated cannot be reintroduced as an amendment to another motion. The “mover,” with the consent of his/her “seconder,” may incorporate a “friendly” amendment into the main motion if the “mover” and “seconder” of the amendment are in agreement.

## **Article 21: Associate Membership Agreement between the Graduate Environmental Studies Students’ Association and the York University Graduate Students’ Association**

*Note: This agreement was signed July 18, 2013 and revised December 5, 2013. The agreement will be in effect until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.*

Preamble:

Based on the historical agreements which define the relationship between YUGSA and its associate members, we believe that the appropriate means of responding to the University's imposition under the Presidential White paper of 1987 is through an Associate Membership agreement.

The YUGSA will continue to provide services for their associate members, and these will be provided on a contract basis, as set out in new associate status agreement.

Whereas the purpose of this *Associate Membership Agreement* between the Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association (hereafter referred to as GESSA) of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES), and the York University Graduate Students' Association (hereafter referred to as the YUGSA, or "the Association") of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) is to create and affirm a mutually beneficial relationship for appropriate and effective student representation and government at York University; it is hereby agreed.

Jurisdiction:

1. GESSA recognizes that the YUGSA, as constituted in its charter documents, acts as the principal student government on issues pertaining specifically to students enrolled directly in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, or who are otherwise full members of the YUGSA
2. The YUGSA recognizes that GESSA, as constituted in its charter documents, acts as the principal student government on issues pertaining to Masters (MES) students in the Faculty of Environmental Studies.
3. The YUGSA further recognizes that PhD students in Environmental Studies represented by PhD Environmental Studies Students' Association (hereafter referred to as PhESSA) are full members of YUGSA, and have no organize relationship with the GESSA.
4. The GESSA and the YUGSA:
  - i. each retain complete autonomy over internal matters; and
  - ii. each retain the right to establish and maintain external relationships independent of each other.
5. The GESSA, by virtue of its members having participated in the referendum held in November and December of 1994, is a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Its members are therefore entitled to all the privileges of such membership, and are subject to dues collection on behalf of the CFS. Services of CFS membership include the ISIC card and Bulk Purchasing, or are otherwise listed as services provided to the GESSA by the YUGSA. The CFS dues and services shall be administered through the YUGSA.

6. In the event of a dispute arising between the parties as to jurisdiction over a specific matter, the same shall be resolved by the President of the YUGSA and the President of GESSA after consultation with their respective councils with the understanding that:

- a) each party retains its residual powers; and
- b) if the dispute cannot be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties, an appeal will lie with the Office of Student Community and Leadership Development (SCLD).

#### Representation:

The GESSA have two (2) representatives to the YUGSA Council:

1. The YUGSA will allocate two (2) seats on the YUGSA Council with full voting privileges to representatives of GESSA. One of the representatives shall be the President of GESSA, or a designated representative thereof, *ex-officio*. Said persons will be elected or appointed by GESSA and will be fully accountable to GESSA.
2. GESSA is responsible for setting the amount of, and granting payment of any honoraria to be awarded its representatives to the YUGSA Council.
3. In addition, GESSA members may hold up to two (2) of the twelve (12) seats on the YUGSA Council which are designated for underrepresented constituency groups. These representatives shall enjoy full voting privileges.
4. As associate members, GESSA members are not eligible for election to the YUGSA Executive Committee, but are eligible to vote in elections, interim elections or by elections for executive members.

#### Senate:

Full members of the YUGSA may occupy seats on the York Senate allocated to students directly enrolled in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and only full members may vote for these positions in open elections. MES students in Environmental Studies may occupy Senate seats allocated to Masters students in Environmental Studies, and only GESSA members may vote for these positions in open elections.

#### Board of Governors:

The GESSA and the YUGSA shall work in common to seek graduate student representation on the York University Board of Governors. All members of the YUGSA and GESSA, being graduate students, shall be eligible to become nominees for and to vote for any designated graduate student seat on the Board of Governors.

#### Financial:

1. Half of the YUGSA membership levy per Full Time Equivalent Student (FTEs), (half being equivalent to \$59.25 as of July, 2013), shall be deducted from the annual levy of the GESSA and forwarded to the YUGSA by the Office of Student Community and Leadership Development (SCLD), in recognition of services performed by the YUGSA for the Masters students in

Environmental Studies. This levy shall increase yearly in proportion to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

2. The amounts shall be forwarded according to the following formula: sixty percent (60%) in the Fall term, twenty-five percent (25%) in the Winter term, and fifteen percent (15%) at the end of the fiscal year.

3. Any increase in full membership levies shall not affect the GESSA levies until April 30, 2017, at which point this agreement is subject to renegotiation.

#### YUGSA Services:

1. The YUGSA provides advocacy services for members of GESSA, as detailed in the YUGSA Constitution.

2. All GESSA members shall be eligible to apply to the YUGSA Academic Funds (Conference Support Fund, Thesis Support Fund and Skills Support Fund), the Publication Support Fund, the Community Outreach Support Fund, the Dependent Bursary, the Donation Request Fund, and the International Student Bursary. The following funds will be capped at 50% of each individual GESSA student application: Academic Fund (Conference Support Fund, Thesis Support Fund and Skills Support Fund), Dependent Bursary, International Student Bursary, Donations Request and the Publication Support Fund.

GESSA students have full access (100%) to the following funds: the Emergency Loan Fund (ELF) and the Community Outreach Support Fund of the YUGSA. The GESSA will assist the YUGSA in collecting on outstanding loans receivable by the ELF on behalf of GESSA members which are outstanding for a duration of greater than twelve months.

3. Members of the GESSA will be eligible to apply for the Emergency Loan Fund (ELF) of the YUGSA. The GESSA will assist the YUGSA in collecting on outstanding loans receivable by the ELF on behalf of GESSA members which are outstanding for a duration of greater than twelve months.

4. The YUGSA will provide one copy for each GESSA member (approximately two hundred and fifty (250) copies) of the *YUGSA Handbook and Day Planner* to the GESSA each year of the contract, upon publication, at the GESSA Fall Orientation at no cost to the GESSA.

5. Members of GESSA have voted to participate in a mandatory health plan offered by the YUGSA. The YUGSA shall make every effort to ensure that GESSA participants receive fair and equitable service according to the terms of the plan, and to ensure that the GESSA member participants are supplied with all relevant information and necessary materials.

#### Duration:

1. This agreement renders null and void the previous agreement between GESSA and the YUGSA of December 4, 1997, and will continue in force until April 30, 2017, at which time said agreement is subject to review by both parties.

2. If either party wishes to change the terms of this agreement in any way, before April 30, 2017, the said party must provide written notice of such at least 30 days in advance.

3. Where there is mutual consent, this agreement may be amended before April 30, 2017. Mutual consent in this context requires a majority vote in favour of the proposed changes by both respective Councils.

4. Where either Council votes in favour of, and provides written notice of the suspension of this agreement, this document becomes null and void thirty days from the date of submission of written notice to the other party.

Signed:

Yasar Bukan  
President, YUGSA

Jennisha Wilson  
President, GESSA

Kimalee Phillip  
Witness, YUGSA

Brenna Thompson  
Witness, GESA