



GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING STUDENTS' SOCIETY
CONSTITUTION

Table of Contents

1. Definitions
2. Mandate
3. Membership
4. Executive Committee
5. Committees
6. Meetings
7. Elections
8. Constitution Amendments
9. Finances
10. Dissolution

1. Definitions

- 1.1. “GAPSS” indicates the Geography and Planning Students’ Society.
- 1.2. “Constitution” indicates the constitution of GAPSS.
- 1.3. “HGEO” indicates the Human Geography Undergraduate and Graduate Program.
- 1.4. “PLAN” indicates the Urban and Regional Planning Undergraduate and Graduate Programs.
- 1.5. “Executive” indicates a member of the GAPSS Executive Committee.
- 1.6. “VP” indicates a Vice President.
- 1.7. “CRO” indicates the Chief Returning Officer.
- 1.8. “DRO” indicates the Deputy Returning Officer.

2. Mandate

- 2.1. The Geography and Planning Students’ Society (GAPSS) exists to provide services to students in the Human Geography program and Planning program at the University of Alberta and those who are interested in Human Geography and Planning.
- 2.2. GAPSS aims to strengthen the HGEO and PLAN programs at the University of Alberta.
- 2.3. GAPSS operates at the University of Alberta and is subject to the University of Alberta and the University of Alberta Students’ Union policies and procedures.
- 2.4. GAPSS shall comply with all provincial and federal laws, and all municipal Bylaws.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Membership is open to all current undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at the University of Alberta, subject to membership requirements outlined in the University of Alberta Students’ Union student group policies.
- 3.2. Students shall be eligible to become a member by subscribing to the GAPSS newsletter.
- 3.3. There shall be one (1) class of membership in the Society, active membership.
- 3.4. A student who meets Section 3.2 shall be considered an active member.
- 3.5. There shall be no membership dues.
- 3.6. Members shall withdraw their membership by submitting a notice to the Vice President (Internal).
- 3.7. A member may be expelled from the Society on the ground of charges levied against the member for violation of the University of Alberta Code of Student Behaviour, provincial law, or federal law, by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee.

4. Executive Committee

- 4.1. There shall be eight (8) members of the Executive Committee, consisting of the
 - 4.1.1. President;
 - 4.1.2. Vice President (Finance);
 - 4.1.3. Vice President (Internal);
 - 4.1.4. Vice President (External);
 - 4.1.5. Vice President (Marketing);
 - 4.1.6. Vice President (Human Geography);
 - 4.1.7. Vice President (Planning); and
 - 4.1.8. Vice President (Events).

Requirements

- 4.2. A member can only hold one (1) Executive position.
- 4.3. The President and the Vice Presidents must be active members of GAPSS.
- 4.4. The President and the Vice Presidents shall be elected on a one (1) year term from May 1 to April 30 of the following year.
- 4.5. The President and the Vice Presidents shall maintain “full-time student” status, as per the definition of the University of Alberta in both the fall and winter terms of the academic year.
- 4.6. No person can serve as President for more than one (1) term of office.
- 4.7. No Vice President shall serve in the same position for more than two (2) terms of office.
- 4.8. The President and Vice Presidents, other than Vice President (Planning) and Vice President (Human Geography), shall be a student who is enrolled in the BSc Specialization in Planning, BA Major in Planning, or BA Major in Human Geography program.
- 4.9. Vice President (Planning) shall be a student who is enrolled in the BSc Specialization in Planning, BA Major in Planning, MSc in Planning, or Ph.D. in Planning program.
- 4.10. Vice President (Human Geography) shall be a student who is enrolled in BA Major in Human Geography, MA in Human Geography, or Ph.D. in Human Geography program.

Resignation

- 4.11. The President may resign by submitting a written notice of their resignation to the Vice President (Finance), and such resignation shall be effective no later than two (2) weeks from the date of the receipt of such notice.

- 4.12. Vice Presidents may resign by submitting a written notice of their resignation to the President, and such resignation shall be effective no later than two (2) weeks from the date of the receipt of such notice.

Impeachment

- 4.13. The Executive Committee has the authority to remove the President, or a Vice President, through a motion to impeach.
- 4.14. A motion to impeach the President or a Vice President must be made in good faith and only for one (1) or more of the following reasons:
 - 4.14.1. a significant breach or multiple breaches of GAPSS' Constitution and/or Bylaws;
 - 4.14.2. charges levied against the respondent for violation of the University of Alberta Code of Student Behaviour, provincial law, or federal law; or
 - 4.14.3. performing without the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.
- 4.15. A motion to impeach must be submitted to the President through a petition submitted by the appellant. The motion shall require the signatures of at least 2/3 of the Executive Committee members.
- 4.16. If the President was subject to impeachment, the Vice President (Finance) shall carry the duties of the President.
- 4.17. The respondent shall be informed of the allegations being levied against them, in writing by the President, at least seven (7) days before a motion to impeach can appear in an Executive Committee meeting.
- 4.18. The meeting will include a presentation where the respondents shall be given the opportunity to defend themselves, and the appellant shall be given the opportunity to present their case for impeachment.
- 4.19. In the event that the President or a Vice President:
 - 4.19.1. resigns their office;
 - 4.19.2. no longer able to perform the duties of their office;
 - 4.19.3. be impeached;
 - 4.19.4. no longer meets the requirements of their position in accordance with Sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, or 4.11 in the academic year in which they hold office; or
 - 4.19.5. has three (3) absences from executive meetings without a reasonable excuse, the remaining members of the Executive Committee shall declare their position vacated and may hold a by-election to elect a successor who shall take office immediately and remain in office until the end of the executive term.

Duties

- 4.20. The President:
 - 4.20.1. shall be the primary spokesperson for the Society;
 - 4.20.2. shall supervise the affairs of GAPSS;
 - 4.20.3. shall develop and maintain awareness of significant issues that impact GAPSS members; and
 - 4.20.4. shall develop and maintain work plans detailing goals and objectives for the term in office with each Vice President.

- 4.21. Vice President (Finance):
 - 4.21.1. shall oversee GAPSS operational budget and all financial transactions;
 - 4.21.2. shall apply for funding as appropriate and explore sponsorship opportunities;
 - 4.21.3. shall organize and plan GAPSS' efforts on fundraising; and
 - 4.21.4. shall provide financial advice to the Executive Committee.

- 4.22. Vice President (Internal):
 - 4.22.1. shall act as the clerk of the Executive Committee;
 - 4.22.1.1. record meeting minutes;
 - 4.22.1.2. maintain GAPSS' records; and
 - 4.22.1.3. organize and maintain the GAPSS office and digital workplace.
 - 4.22.2. shall lead and develop committee members' recruitment plan and provide support to other Vice Presidents on committee members-related matters;
 - 4.22.3. shall coordinate and plan internal events and activities; and,
 - 4.22.4. shall act as the liaison between the executive committee and members.

- 4.23. Vice President (External):
 - 4.23.1. shall act as the primary point of contact between the Society and external organizations;
 - 4.23.2. shall build and maintain communication and relationships with other student groups, external organizations, and the Human Geography and Planning industry;
 - 4.23.3. shall collaborate with Vice President (Marketing) to promote GAPSS; and,
 - 4.23.4. shall act as the editor-in-chief for the Society's newsletters.

- 4.24. Vice President (Marketing):
 - 4.24.1. shall develop and maintain a marketing strategic plan;
 - 4.24.2. shall oversee and lead GAPSS marketing effort;
 - 4.24.3. shall ensure GAPSS maintains a constant presence on social media; and,

- 4.24.4. shall coordinate and plan clubs fair and other promotional opportunities on- and off-campus.
- 4.25. Vice President (Human Geography):
 - 4.25.1. shall maintain regular communication with Human Geography department representatives;
 - 4.25.2. shall develop and maintain awareness of Human Geography-related academic issues that impact GAPSS' members;
 - 4.25.3. shall lead and coordinate GAPSS' efforts on academic advocacy related to Human Geography; and,
 - 4.25.4. shall act as the co-editor-in-chief of the Society's annual student journal with the Vice President (Planning).
- 4.26. Vice President (Planning):
 - 4.26.1. shall maintain regular communication with Planning department representatives;
 - 4.26.2. shall develop and maintain awareness of Planning-related academic issues that impact GAPSS' members;
 - 4.26.3. shall lead and coordinate GAPSS' efforts on academic advocacy related to Planning; and,
 - 4.26.4. shall act as the co-editor-in-chief of the Society's annual student journal with the Vice President (Human Geography).
- 4.27. Vice President (Events):
 - 4.27.1. shall develop an events plan for the academic year;
 - 4.27.2. shall oversee the planning and organizing of academic and non-academic events;
 - 4.27.3. shall organize and promote through an event management and ticketing system; and,
 - 4.27.4. shall submit and seek event approval from the University of Alberta and other organizations as needed.
- 4.28. If the President cannot carry out their duties or the position is vacant, the Vice President (Finance) shall assume the office of the President on a temporary basis until the President can resume their duties or the position is filled.
- 4.29. All members of the Executive Committee shall develop and maintain a transition manual to ensure the continuity of the Society.

5. Committees

- 5.1. The Executive Committee shall be free to establish standing committees or ad hoc committees as it sees fit.
- 5.2. The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint and remove members to and from committees by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee.
- 5.3. Appointed members shall have the right to refuse such appointments without penalty.
- 5.4. GAPSS shall have three (3) Standing Committees, and their structure and mandates are listed under Sections 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8.

Standing Committees

- 5.5. Standing Committees shall:
 - 5.5.1. be committees that provide recommendations on internal and external GAPSS policies and provide guidance, advice or other information to the organization on a general topic;
 - 5.5.2. be recurring; and,
 - 5.5.3. be created, approved, formalized, eliminated or renewed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee.
- 5.6. Academic Committee
 - 5.6.1. The Academic Committee shall be co-chaired by the Vice President (Planning) and the Vice President (Human Geography).
 - 5.6.2. The committee shall:
 - 5.6.2.1. develop and maintain awareness of academic issues that impact GAPSS' members;
 - 5.6.2.2. lead and coordinate GAPSS' efforts on academic advocacy; and
 - 5.6.2.3. edit and publish GAPSS' annual student journal.
- 5.7. Events Committee
 - 5.7.1. The Events Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President (Events).
 - 5.7.2. The committee shall:
 - 5.7.2.1. organize academic and non-academic events;
 - 5.7.2.2. coordinate and plan events with other student groups and external organizations; and,
 - 5.7.2.3. ensure compliance with the University of Alberta and the University of Alberta Students' Union's regulations.
- 5.8. Outreach Committee

- 5.8.1. The Outreach Committee shall be co-chaired by the Vice President (External) and the Vice President (Marketing).
- 5.8.2. The committee shall:
 - 5.8.2.1. develop and maintain awareness of GAPSS;
 - 5.8.2.2. build and maintain relationships with external groups; and,
 - 5.8.2.3. lead and coordinate all communication with external parties.

Ad Hoc Committees

- 5.9. Ad Hoc committees shall:
 - 5.9.1. be committees whose mandate is narrow surrounding a particular topic, initiative, or project;
 - 5.9.2. be expected to be short term;
 - 5.9.3. may be referred to as “task forces” or “working groups”;
 - 5.9.4. expire at a designated time not to exceed one year; and
 - 5.9.5. be created, approved, formalized, eliminated or renewed by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.

6. Meetings

- 6.1. No meeting shall occur unless the quorum is met.

Executive Committee Meetings

- 6.2. The President is the chair of the Executive Committee.
- 6.3. In the absence of the President, the Vice President (Finance) shall chair the Executive Committee.
- 6.4. Quorum of the Executive Committee is five (5).
 - 6.4.1. Should one or more Executive positions be vacant at the time of a meeting, there must be at least half plus one (1) member of the Executive Committee present.
- 6.5. Executive meetings shall be held twice (2) a month or at the discretion of the chair of the Executive Committee.
- 6.6. An executive meeting can be convened by any member of the Executive Committee at any time with three (3) days' notice.

General Meetings

- 6.7. The Executive Committee shall call a general meeting twice annually, once in the fall semester and once in the winter semester.
- 6.8. A general meeting can be called by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee at any given time of the year.

- 6.9. Members shall be given at least seven (7) days' notice of a general meeting.
- 6.10. Quorum of a general meeting is twenty (20).
 - 6.10.1. If the quorum is not met after fifteen (15) minutes from the time appointed for a general meeting, members of the Executive Committee may vote to lower the quorum to fourteen (14).

7. Elections

Elections Committee

- 7.1. Annually, an Elections Committee shall be formed in January and dissolved in April.
- 7.2. The Elections Committee shall consist of two (2) or three (3) members of the Executive Committee who will not be candidates in that election.
- 7.3. The President is the chair of the Elections Committee, acting as the Chief Returning Officer (CRO).
- 7.4. The Vice President(s) chosen by the CRO shall act as the Deputy Returning Officer(s) (DRO(s)).
- 7.5. The Elections Committee shall:
 - 7.5.1. oversee the implementation of the Elections Regulations of this Constitution;
 - 7.5.2. conduct the election;
 - 7.5.3. advertise the election; and
 - 7.5.4. determine the dates for all nomination deadlines, election cycles, and voting days.
- 7.6. The CRO shall be the highest responsible member of the Elections Committee.

Nominations

- 7.7. The Elections Committee shall make the nomination package available to every member not fewer than twenty-one (21) days before the nomination deadline as set by the Elections Committee.
- 7.8. Members shall declare their candidacy through the submission of their nomination package to the Elections Committee prior to the deadline.
- 7.9. No member shall be nominated for more than one (1) of the position contested in each election.
- 7.10. No nomination shall be accepted if it contravenes Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, or 4.10.

Campaigning

- 7.11. No volunteer or candidate shall engage in campaign activities between the nomination deadline and the commencement of the campaign.
- 7.12. No expenses will be reimbursed to any candidate.
- 7.13. Forums may be organized at the CRO's discretion.

Voting

- 7.14. The election shall be held annually in April.
- 7.15. The Elections Committee shall conduct voting by any secure electronic means that provides precise and accurate results.
- 7.16. Members shall use their official University of Alberta email account when voting.
- 7.17. Each member shall be entitled to cast one (1) ballot, including members of the Elections Committee.
- 7.18. All votes cast shall be by secret ballot.
- 7.19. Balloting shall be conducted by simple majority balloting, in which voters shall choose one (1) choice for each position.
- 7.20. For each position, ballots shall list all candidates, followed by "None of the Above."
 - 7.20.1. Where "None of the Above" is declared victorious, no further candidates shall be declared victorious.

Result

- 7.21. The Elections Committee shall post final results no later than two (2) days after voting has concluded.
- 7.22. Request for a recount shall be submitted to the Election Committee in writing no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the result has been announced.
- 7.23. The recount process shall be supervised by the CRO and at least one (1) DRO.
- 7.24. No appeal shall be accepted to the recount result.

By-election

- 7.25. The President shall assume the duties of the CRO, and the Vice President (Internal) shall assume duties as the DRO.
- 7.26. The CRO shall carry out the duties listed in Sections 7.5 and 7.6.
- 7.27. In the event that the position of President is vacant, the Vice President (Internal) shall act as the CRO and carry out such duties outlined in Section 7.25.
- 7.28. In the event that the Vice President (Internal) assumes duties as the CRO in pursuance of Section 7.27, the CRO shall appoint a Vice President to assume duties as the DRO.

8. Constitution Amendments

- 8.1. Constitution amendments shall first be passed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee before presenting at a general meeting.
- 8.2. Constitution amendments shall be passed by a simple majority vote of the general membership at a general meeting.
- 8.3. Each member shall be entitled to cast one (1) secret ballot.

9. Finances

- 9.1. The fiscal year runs from May 1 until April 30 of the following year.
- 9.2. The President and Vice President (Finance) shall be the primary signing authorities.
- 9.3. In the event that either the President or Vice President (Finance) roles is vacant, the Vice President (Internal) shall be the second signing authority.
- 9.4. In the event that the President or Vice President (Finance) requires reimbursement, the Vice President (Internal) shall be delegated signing authority.
- 9.5. All GAPSS expenses shall be approved prior to any transaction by the President and Vice President (Finance).
- 9.6. The Vice President (Finance) shall:
 - 9.6.1. keep and maintain all financial documents for the year during their term;
 - 9.6.2. present a budget at the fall general meeting, subject to the approval by a simple majority vote of the general memberships; and
 - 9.6.3. provide a year-end financial report at the winter general meeting.
- 9.7. All financial documents are to be kept for six (6) years.
- 9.8. The outgoing Vice President (Finance) shall transfer all finance-related documents to the incoming Vice President (Finance) for the following academic year no later than twenty-one (21) days after the election result has been announced.
- 9.9. Members shall forward all valid receipts for approved expenses to the Vice President (Finance) within seven (7) days of the transaction.
- 9.10. Members shall be reimbursed for approved expenses with valid receipts no later than fourteen (14) days after the transaction.
- 9.11. No reimbursements shall be approved after the fiscal year has concluded.

10. Dissolution

- 10.1. The dissolution motion shall first be passed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee before presenting at a general meeting.

- 10.2. The dissolution motion shall be passed by a 2/3 majority vote of the general membership at a special general meeting with thirty (30) days' notice given to all members.
- 10.3. Upon dissolution of the Society, any assets remaining after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall be transferred to charity(ies) on campus, and GAPSS' bank account shall be cancelled.

Appendix 1- Amendments Log

- September 2015* Added Secretary position and 12: Initiatives.
- March 3, 2016* Added VP Internal and VP External positions, changed all Executive positions other than President to Vice Presidents.
- September 22, 2016* Editorial changes throughout, changed 3.1: membership eligibility, added 6: Committees, 8: Elections Procedures, 7.5.1: quorum.
- September 21, 2017* Edited VP Internal, VP External and VP Finance positions, changed 3.1: membership eligibility, PLAN course code added as automatic membership, added Journal committee under Committees
- April 6, 2018* Addition of President of Graduate Studies, changes to the VP Graduate and VP External roles, updated requirements for executive positions, addition of the online voting system and video campaign speeches if members cannot attend the AGM, addition of transition document.
- April 3, 2019* General Clerical Amendments addressing grammar and clarity; restructuring of committees and executive roles; dissolving of the Journal Committee to be replaced with the Media & Communications Committee; merging of the Events Committee and Fundraising Committee to develop the Events & Fundraising Committee.
- March 12, 2020* General clerical amendments addressing grammar and clarity; addition of program requirements for VP Graduate Studies; Added clarity to membership requirements requiring students who have not taken a HGP/Planning course to sign up for the newsletter/ mailing list; added the requirement for the majority of the executive board to be undergraduate students, as per SU requirements.
- September 21, 2021* Addition of a VP Journal and Journal Committee; Changes to by-election procedures; general and clerical amendments for inclusivity, membership classifications and general clarity, as per SU suggestions
- September 25, 2022* General clerical amendments addressing grammar and clarity; Replaced “HGP” with “HGEO” and “PLAN”; Changed membership requirements to allow all students enrolled at the University of Alberta to become a

general member of GAPSS; Adjusted the roles and responsibilities of Executives to create more balance between positions; Updated the ability of the Board to remove an Executive Member not fulfilling their contract; and Adjusted Executive Board meeting intervals from tri-weekly to Bi-weekly.

March 15, 2023

To amend the Geography and Planning Students' Society Constitution by amending the GAPSS' mandates; the composition of the Executive Committee; the duties of the President and Vice Presidents; the requirements for members to become a member of the Executive Committee; the structure and name of standing committees; the general and by-elections procedures; the number of signing authorities; constitutional amendments requirements; and the procedure of dissolution, adding the procedure of resignation and impeachment of members of the Executive Committee; the allowance of ad hoc committees and their governing procedures; and the establishment of an election committee to conduct and oversee general and by-elections, combining Section 4 and 5, and removing Section 11 and 12.