Philosophy and Religion Graduate Student Association Constitution

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be named the Philosophy and Religion Graduate Student Association. The organization is a student organization at the University of North Texas.

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the organization shall be:
a. To provide fellowship among graduate students in the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies.
b. To discuss and organize the mutual interests and concerns of the graduate students in the department and ensure that all voices are heard in a reflective and discursive process.
c. To maintain open dialogue with the faculty of the department, and represent the collective needs and interests of the graduate students to the faculty, as well as to provide a means for faculty concerns to reach students and ensure an ongoing discussion within the department.
d. To aid in funding and collaborative opportunities for student professional development.
e. To assist communication between our department and other departments within the UNT community and the Environmental Education, Science and Technology building, as our home, especially.
f. To facilitate the organization of events in accordance with the above objectives.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Membership for this organization is open to students who are attending the University of North Texas and are either (a) officially enrolled in the Philosophy Master of Arts or the Philosophy PhD. Program, or are (b) enrolled in graduate level Philosophy courses (5000 or higher) on a semi-regular basis (including graduate students in other department and non-degree seeking students, but excluding undergraduate students who attend graduate courses while enrolled in undergraduate level Special Problems).

Meetings will be open to anyone who would like to attend, however, portions of meetings may be subject to private, members-only discussion for sensitive subject matter as this is an organization intended to create a safe forum for graduate students to voice concerns.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Terms: All positions serve for one academic year, beginning the start of the Spring Semester and ending with the end of the Fall Semester of the following academic year. Officers will coordinate on passing on duties to new officers in January. This time includes the summer break.

If the officers at any time do not think they can fulfill their position, a re-election will be called, ideally with a 4 week notice. If this is temporary (four weeks or less), a substitute can be chosen by the student representative.

1. Student Representative / Attends faculty meetings
2. Student Co-Representative / Secretarial and Treasurer duties
3. Community Coordinator / Welcoming Students, Information Dispersal
ARTICLE V – VOTING

Elections will take place with nominations during the second to last meeting of the Fall semester. The voting coordinator (an individual not running in the election who volunteers) will then collect a short 200 word advertisement from each nominee to send out by email to the entire student body (to account for long-distance students). Voting will take place via email with votes being counted by the voting coordinator and then corroborated by the current Administrative Assistant for the department. All ballots will be deleted by the voting coordinator after corroboration to ensure confidentiality of student opinion.

Changes to the association constitution can be officially proposed with the requirements of a supporting motion by another student, at which point a special meeting will be called to discuss the matter and a vote by email will take place.

ARTICLE VI – NOT-FOR-PROFIT STATEMENT

This is a not-for-profit organization.

ARTICLE VII – STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of age, color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, disability or handicap, race, religion, sexual orientation, Vietnam Era veteran status. This policy will include, but is not limited to, recruiting, membership, organization activities or opportunities to hold office.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

All expenditures must be accounted for and documented by the Student Co-Representative. Funds will be raised on an as-needed basis through a general fund-raising collection from the student body. There will be no fees or dues for membership or participation unless decided upon by the group.

ARTICLE IX – STATEMENT OF NON-HAZING

This organization will not engage in hazing, participate in hazing, or commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical harm or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the institution.

ARTICLE X – STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH CAMPUS REGULATIONS

This organization shall comply with all University and campus policies and regulations and local, state, and federal laws.
ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

I. Cabinet

a. Student Representative (Elected)
   i. Official representative of the organization. Proactive participant in community, supporting graduate student cooperation within the department and with other students.
   ii. Presides and mediates meetings. Prepares agenda for individual meetings and ensures that association has forward momentum during semester. Ensures that student association meets agreed upon goals for each semester.
   iii. Attends faculty meetings of the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies.
   iv. Presents shared views of association at faculty meetings.
   v. Calls regular and special meetings.
   vi. Informs association of events and conversations from faculty meetings (unless specifically asked not to by faculty).
   vii. Aids in dispersion of relevant information (changes in policy, timelines, any information deemed important by chair or administrative assistant)
   viii. Encourages creative dialogue within student body and is attentive and proactive regarding potential concerns, problems or opportunities for students.

b. Student Co-Representative (Elected)
   i. Temporarily assumes duties of Representative, when necessary.
   ii. Assists Representative in coordination activities and maintaining enthusiasm and self-direction of association.
   iii. Keeps accurate notes of meetings, presents summary notes to Representative and generally assists in secretarial duties.
   iv. Will serve as a substitute for student representative during faculty meetings if representative is unable to attend. In such cases, will inform student body and representative of events as described above.
   v. Collects and records fees or donations collected by the association for purposes deemed acceptable by the association.
   vi. Keeps accurate records of the collection and expenditure of money by the association.

c. Community Coordinator (Elected)
   i. Welcomes new students, coordinates events for community interaction
ii. Coordinates student group activities community events (luncheons, seminars, reading groups, peer-reviews)

iii. Creates and/or updates packet of informational materials for incoming MA and PhD students in the department.

iv. Manages association-created resources for incoming MA and PhD students.

v. Organizes events for meeting and discussion between new MA/PhD students and current MA/PhD students.

d. Voting Coordinator (Voluntary and Temporary)

i. When an election is held, a member of the student body who is not running for an office will volunteer for this position

ii. Counts votes according to voting procedures specified above.

II. Meetings

a. Meetings will be open to all active members of the organization and to the organization’s faculty supervisor. Advance notice will be given prior to meetings, however a certain length of notice cannot be guaranteed for special meetings. The meetings are to be organized and controlled by officers and active members.

III. Temporary Committees

a. On an as-needed basis, the association shall form temporary committees for specific tasks deemed necessary by the association.

b. These committees will be comprised of volunteers. The temporary leader of any such committee will be chosen by volunteers; in the case of more than one person wishing to head the committee, the leader will be chosen by an in-meeting, anonymous vote.

c. Any such committees, as well as any duties placed upon the committee members and leader, will end upon the satisfactory completion of that committee’s task, as decided by the student representative and student co-representative.