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## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### Toronto School of Theology Graduate Students' Association (TGSA)

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Ratified: October 1, 2007  
Revised: January 11, 2008  
Revised: January 30, 2009  
Revised: April 3, 2014  
Revised: October 6, 2015  
Revised: February 4, 2016  
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#### **A. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Purpose (Constitution Section 2)**

A.1 In addition to the goals described in Constitution Section 2, the TGSA seeks to:

- promote scholarly networking among students with similar or cross-disciplinary interests;
- encourage members' participation into the academic world of presenting and publishing;
- emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities, especially related to research and teaching;
- facilitate its members' transition to other graduate schools and the job market; and
- in particular, advocate for greater commitment to and action on the above goals by TST and its members colleges.

A.2 TGSA seeks to fulfil these professional development goals through its activities:

##### *A.2.1 Professional Development Seminars.*

Important topics for TGSA members include:

- how to get published;
- professional associations and how to make the most of them;
- CV's and teaching dossiers;
- biblical language software;
- applying for fellowships (OGS / SSHRC);
- general teaching skills;
- course design and syllabi;
- teaching and the use of technology;

- the job interview process;
- dealing with difficult students (including legal issues, harassment, etc.);
- applying for doctoral programs.

A.2.3 Support of TST discipline-specific seminars and conferences, especially if they are student led and encourage the academic participation of TGSA members.

A.2.4 Travel bursaries offered twice a year to deserving TGSA members who will be presenting or responding to papers, or interviewing for jobs outside of Ontario, and who do not have other external funding sources for the conference.

A.2.5 Maintenance of a TGSA website to:

- inform students of TGSA and TST events;
- inform and discuss issues being addressed by the TGSA and/or the TST;
- publish announcements about conferences, events, lectures, etc. at TST colleges and of interest to graduate students; and
- share information on academic resources and professional development.

A.2.6 Annual orientation letter of welcome to introduce new TGSA members to their association and its activities.

A.2.7 TGSA also encourages its members' use of University of Toronto professional resources, including: career guidance, teaching and research skills, English writing skills, programs to introduce new software and technologies.

## **B. Policies and Procedures for Membership Fees (Constitution Section 3.5)**

B.1 The amount of the levy will be variegated between part-time and full-time students.

B.2 The fee will be collected by TST through the University of Toronto.

B.3 The Treasurer is responsible for collecting the monies from TST.

B.4 When necessary, the TGSA Board can move to increase the annual student levy by two-thirds majority vote.

B.5 After TGSA Board approval, any increase to the student levy must be approved by referendum with a two-thirds majority vote of the general TGSA membership.

B.6 The President is responsible for informing the colleges, via the TST Director, of any changes to the membership fees.

## **C. Policies and Procedures for the TGSA Board (Constitution Section 4)**

C.1 The TGSA Executive Committee consists of the President, Treasurer, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Conferences, Vice-President External, Secretary (non-voting), and any other members the Board deems necessary.

C.1.1 The Executive Committee will support the President in fulfilling the essential duties of the Board.

C.1.2 The President will delegate to other Executive Committee members in accordance with their duties.

C.2 The Board will fill vacancies between elections by appointment.

C.2.1 Board members must be nominated to fill Executive vacancies (Constitution Section 4.6). Current Executives may be nominated, but must resign their other position if chosen. If more than one Board member is interested, the Board will choose between them by secret ballot.

C.2.2 Any graduate student (including Board members) from the appropriate college or program may be nominated to fill a non-Executive vacancy (Constitution Section 4.7). If more than one candidate is interested, the Board will choose between them.

C.3 Board members are expected to attend all the meetings required by their role.

C.3.1 When a member knows they will be absent from a TGSA meeting, they shall notify the President or Secretary and email a brief update for the minutes as required.

C.3.2 If the Secretary is absent from a TGSA meeting, an acting Secretary will be appointed.

C.3.3 When a member knows they will be absent from an external committee meeting, they will inform the chair of the committee and the TGSA President, who will find another Board member to attend.

C.3.4 After two consecutive and/or unannounced absences from an external committee meeting, the TGSA President will appoint a new Board member to sit on the committee, and notify its chair and secretary.

C.4 Board members may be removed for excessive absence, even when announced, or other serious failures to fulfill their duties.

C.4.1 Executives have a particular responsibility to keep the confidence of the Board. Any two Board members may move to remove an Executive by secret ballot. An impartial Board member will be chosen to chair the debate and count the ballots, but not vote. If three-fifths of the *sitting* Board members ( $\geq 60\%$ ) vote to remove the named Executive, their position will be declared vacant. The motion to remove and the result of the vote will be recorded in the minutes.

C.4.2 Other Board members may be removed by the same procedure, except that two-thirds of the *sitting* Board members ( $\geq 67\%$ ) must vote for removal.

C.4.3 If the Board is unable to agree on an impartial Board member, they must choose an external TST student or staff member to adjudicate.

## **D. Duties of TGSA Board Members (Constitution Section 4)**

### **D.1 President**

D.1.1 Will chair all TGSA meetings.

D.1.2 Will set the agenda, date, time, and location for meetings in consultation with the Board.

D.1.3 Will appoint appropriate Board members to sit on the Academic Council, Graduate Studies Council, Library Committee, and any other TST committees with student representation.

D.1.4 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the Directors of TST and the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies, communicating regularly to relay student questions and concerns.

D.1.5 Will attend all public meetings of the Board of Trustees (normally 4-5/year), briefing the TGSA Board on issues affecting students, and asking permission to make a presentation to the TST Board.

D.1.6 Will welcome new students and introduce them to the TGSA and its activities at TST's annual orientation.

D.1.7 Will summarize the TGSA's past year of activities at the AGM and prepare a report to be posted online and shared with TST.

D.1.8 Will ensure Board members have appropriate access to the TGSA website and/or social media pages.

### **D.2 Treasurer**

D.2.1 Will be responsible for TGSA bank account(s) and have cheque-signing authority.

D.2.2 Will ensure the annual student levy is collected from member colleges, TST, and affiliated schools as applicable.

D.2.3 Will record all expenditures and income.

D.2.4 Will prepare a brief financial report for every Board meeting (report may be oral).

D.2.5 Will prepare a detailed financial statement for the first meeting of the Board at the beginning of the academic year.

D.2.6 Will present a revised budget for approval by the November Board meeting.

D.2.7 Will prepare an end-of-year financial statement for the AGM in April, reconciling all deposits, receipts, and bank statements for the year just completed.

D.2.8 Will archive all approved budgets and financial statements electronically, online, and in the TGSA filing cabinet, relaying this archive to the next Treasurer and President.

D.2.9 Will announce and accept applications for travel bursaries according to criteria approved by the Board.

D.2.10 Will ensure annually that only the current President, Treasurer, and Vice-President Conferences have signing authority on the bank account, and that two signatures are required for large expenditures if possible.

### D.3 Vice-President Academic

D.3.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the TST academic committees.

D.3.2 Will sit on the Academic Council, attending all regular meetings (normally 4-5/year), reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to Academic Council.

D.3.3 Will attend meetings of the Graduate Studies Council and other TST Committees as needed, reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to the Council or Committee.

D.3.4 Will meet with external committee representatives (including if possible outgoing representatives) as needed to ensure continuity and effectiveness in representation.

D.3.5 Will ordinarily chair TGSA meetings in the absence of the President, and will assist in procedural disputes.

### D.4 Vice-President Conferences

D.4.1 Will begin and lead planning for a TGSA conference each year, setting and announcing the conference date, call for papers, and submission deadline in consultation with the Board; accepting paper and panel proposals; and preparing them for blind review by a small group of Board members.

D.4.2 Will sit on the Conferences and Lectures Committee, attending all regular meetings (normally 4-5/year), reporting matters discussed to the TGSA for input and relaying student feedback back to the Committee.

D.4.3 Will work with the Treasurer to apply for conference funding, prepare a budget for the conference, and track conference expenses.

D.4.4 Will share responsibility for other conference tasks with all Board members.

### D.5 Vice-President External

D.5.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and the University of Toronto student unions, attending the APUS, UTSU, and UTGSU General Meetings each year.

D.5.2 Will invite TST's UTSU representative (if any) to TGSA meetings, meeting with them separately if they are unable to attend.

D.5.3 Will work with other Board members to inform TST students about their representation in university student politics and access to university services.

D.5.4 Will meet with University of Toronto administration and staff as needed to better understand and improve student access to university services.

D.5.5 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and students at affiliated schools, inviting local representatives to attend TGSA meetings and meeting with them separately if they are unable to attend.

#### D.6 Program Representatives

D.6.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and graduate students in their program.

D.6.2 Will report the issues and concerns of graduate students in their program at TGSA meetings.

D.6.3 Will work with other Board members to better understand the issues faced by students in their program through polls, public meetings, and social media.

#### D.7 College Representatives

D.7.1 Will be the principal liaison between the TGSA and graduate students at their college.

D.7.2 Will report the issues and concerns of graduate students at their college at TGSA meetings.

D.7.3 Will work with the other college representatives to build relationships between graduate students at different colleges.

D.7.4 Will attend their college's (graduate) student orientation and introduce themselves as the TGSA representative.

D.7.5 Will meet the student association, council, and/or leaders at their college at least once a year, reminding them of their representation on TST Councils and Committees and in university student politics.

#### D.8 External Committee Representatives

D.8.1 If appointed to represent the TGSA on a TST Council or Committee, Board members will attend all regular meetings, report issues discussed at those meetings to the TGSA Board for input, and relay student feedback back to the Council or Committee.

D.8.2 If the student perspective on an issue is contentious or uncertain, external committee representatives will defer to the judgement of the TGSA Board.

D.8.3 External committee representatives will meet with the President and/or Vice-President Academic as needed to ensure continuity and effectiveness in representation.

D.8.4 Representatives will notify the TGSA president and the chair of the committee if they will be absent from an external committee meeting, and resign if they are unable to fulfill their duties.

#### D.9 Secretary

D.9.1 Will assist the President in scheduling meetings and preparing agendas.

D.9.2 Will confirm the date, time, location, and agenda for all meetings is publicly announced in advance.

D.9.3 Will record the minutes for all TGSA meetings, including attendance at Board meetings

D.9.4 Will distribute the minutes of each meeting before the next TGSA meeting

D.9.5 Will present the minutes of each meeting for approval at the next meeting.

D.9.6 Will archive all approved agendas, minutes, and other Board documents electronically, online, and in the TGSA filing cabinet, and relay this archive to the next Secretary and President.

D.9.7 Will work with the President to ensure the TGSA website is up to date.

#### D.10 Officers

D.10.1 The Board must appoint a Secretary (D.9) and a Returning Officer (E.1) each year.

D.10.2 The Board may also appoint officers to advertise TGSA events, seminars, and meetings; announce relevant calls for papers, conferences, and job openings; catalogue and post TGSA documents and records; conduct polls or surveys; develop the TGSA website and social media pages; edit a student blog, journal, or newsletter; inform students about TGSA, TST, and university activities and services; prepare brochures, posters, and reports; and/or perform other tasks.

D.10.3 The Board will set the exact duties, compensation, length of service, and title for any officers before asking for nominations. If more than one candidate is interested, the Board will choose between them.

### **E. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Elections and Referenda**

#### E.1 Returning Officer

E.1.1 Will be appointed by the TGSA Board at least six weeks before the election, with the motion recorded in the minutes to help gain access to voting.utoronto.ca (see <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/cld/voting-system-agreement> for more details.)

E.1.2 Will agree to be impartial and not seek an elected position or nominate anyone.

E.1.3 Will compile a list of positions coming open due to term limits and ask Board members for advance notice if they are resigning and/or seeking another position.

E.1.4 Will administer the nominations and elections according to the Policies and Procedures described below.

E.1.5 Will invite winning candidates to the next Board or General meeting after the election and present the results for ratification there.

E.1.6 Will announce the ratified results through the mailing list and update the list of Board members and their terms on the TGSA & TST websites.

## E.2 Nominations

E.2.1 The nomination period should last at least 18 days and close at least two weeks before the meeting where the results will be ratified, subject to Board approval.

E.2.2 The Returning Officer will announce the open positions and nomination process on the mailing list three times, once before the nomination period and twice during it. They may also call for nominations through college bulletin boards, the TGSA website and social media pages, and in cohort classes, college meetings, or other public forums.

E.2.3 Candidates must be nominated by two of their peers, be willing to serve, and in the college, program, or concentration to be represented (if applicable). If it is unclear, the Returning Officer will ask potential candidates to declare their willingness to serve as well as their college, program, and concentration(s).

E.2.4 Once the nomination period ends, the Returning Officer will inform all the candidates of who is running and which positions are still vacant, giving multiply eligible candidates a brief opportunity to change the position they are seeking before the election without requiring additional nominations.

## E.3 Executive Elections (Constitution Section 4.2.1)

E.3.1 If only one candidate is nominated for an Executive position, they will be acclaimed at the ratification meeting.

E.3.2 If more than one candidate seeks an Executive position, the vote for that position will be part of a general election.

E.3.2.1 The Returning Officer will set a schedule for the general election so there are at least three weekdays for campaigning and three weekdays for voting, excluding school and religious holidays. They will first inform the candidates of the schedule and any rules for the election campaign, asking each for a statement of less than 1000 letters, including spaces. The Returning Officer will then announce the election, candidates, candidate statements, voting method and dates through the mailing list, TGSA website, and social media pages.



E.3.2.2 If one candidate asks, and a majority of the others agree, the Returning Officer will organize, announce, and moderate an Executive candidates' forum.

E.3.2.3 The Returning Officer will work with voting.utoronto.ca and the TST registrar to ensure a fair and secure online vote for every registered graduate student (Constitution Section 3.2). If a TGSA member is unable to vote, they can be emailed a ballot to print, complete, and seal in an envelope, to be counted once their eligibility and inability to vote is verified.

E.3.2.4 On the ballots, the positions should be in the same order as in the Constitution, and the option to randomize candidates should be checked.

E.3.2.5 Any ties will be resolved by a coin toss at the ratification meeting.

#### E.4 Program Elections (Constitution Section 4.2.2)

E.4.1 If only one candidate is nominated to represent a program or program concentration, they will be acclaimed at the ratification meeting.

E.4.2 If more than one candidate seeks to represent a program or program concentration, the vote for that position will be part of the general election, as described above, except that position will also have a 'I'm not in this program/concentration' choice on the ballot.

#### E.5 College Elections (Constitution Section 4.2.3)

E.5.1 If only one candidate is nominated to represent a college, they will be acclaimed at the ratification meeting.

E.5.2 If more than one candidate seeks to represent a college, the Returning Officer will oversee an vote limited to the graduate students in that college.

E.5.3 If possible, the vote may be through voting.utoronto.ca. Otherwise, the Returning Officer will work with the candidates and the college to convene a meeting of graduate students in the college to elect their representative.

E.5.4 The Returning Officer will announce the election, candidates, candidate statements, voting method and dates through the college mailing list.

#### E.6 Referenda

E.6.1 A referendum is required to: admit affiliate students as members of TGSA (Constitution Section 3.4.2); amend the constitution (Constitution Section 5.1); alter the TGSA fee, once or on a recurring basis (Policy and Procedures Section B.5); join or leave a student union (per student union bylaws); or, opt students in to, or out of, some non-academic fees (if applicable; see the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities *Tuition and Ancillary Fees Reporting Operating Procedure*.<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/documents/TuitionandAncillaryFees.pdf>.

E.6.2 The Board must set the issue(s) to be considered in a referendum no later than their December meeting. Board members will then be asked to represent the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ sides of each issue with an impartial Board member appointed as the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer, with the Yes and No representatives, will constitute the Referendum Committee.

E.6.2.1 If amending the Constitution is in view, the Board will appoint representatives from the Constitution subcommittee (Constitution Section 5.1.2).

E.6.2.2 The Returning Officer will chair the Referendum Committee and have the power to appoint up to two additional representatives per issue, as long as the ratio of Yes and No representatives is brought closer to an even balance, or else kept the same.

E.6.2.3 Once the meeting minutes are approved, the Returning Officer will secure access to an online voting system (e.g. [voting.utoronto.ca](http://voting.utoronto.ca); see E.1.1).

E.6.3 The Referendum Committee will draft a Notice of Referendum with a short description of the referendum issue(s) and process; a list of the Committee members; and, an open call for comments, questions, and additional Yes or No representatives. The Notice will be distributed through the TGSA website and the email list.

E.6.4 The Committee will consult with external bodies, as needed. For example, if the referendum involves non-academic fees, TST should be consulted; if it concerns membership in a student union, the respective union should be consulted; and if it relates to a fee covered by the University of Toronto Ancillary Fee Protocol, the Council on Student Services should be consulted.

E.6.5 Mindful of feedback received, the Referendum Committee will organize a town hall that includes short presentations from interested parties with relevant information and a diversity of perspectives. The town hall date and location will be announced through the TGSA website and social media pages and the email list. The Returning Officer will moderate the town hall to ensure equal time for presentations and for questions, and if possible, presentation documents and an audio or video recording should be made available online for students who cannot attend.

E.6.6 Any interested parties who publically campaign on an issue must do so fairly. The Referendum Committee will write rules for campaigning in advance, clarifying as needed, and if rules are violated the Returning Officer may issue cautions; ask the Board to add, remove, or replace Yes or No representatives; or even halt the referendum, dissolving the Committee, and asking the Board to restart the process.

E.6.7 After the town hall, the Referendum Committee will prepare the ballot for the referendum, endeavouring to write clear, neutral, and short questions with only two

possible outcomes (a yes or a no). The final wording of the ballot must be approved by a majority of the Board as well as a two-thirds majority of the Referendum Committee.

E.6.8 Once the ballot is approved, the Referendum Committee will set a voting period of at least 14 days, beginning no earlier than the FINCA date in the fall term and ending no later than the last day of class in the winter term or the TGSA AGM, whichever is first. They will then draft a second Notice of Referendum that includes the voting method, dates, question(s), and brief statements from the Yes and No representatives on each issue. This Notice will be distributed through the email list twice, once before the voting period and once during it, as well as on the TGSA website and social media pages, college bulletin boards, and in other public forums.

E.6.9 The Returning Officer will work with an online voting system and the TST Registrar to ensure a fair and secure vote for every registered graduate student. If a TGSA member is clearly unable to vote online, they will be emailed a ballot to print, complete, and seal in an envelope for delivery to the Returning Officer before the end of voting, to be counted once their eligibility is verified.

E.6.10 For a question proposing a net increase in non-academic fees of more than \$25/year, quorum requires 50 students or 20% of those eligible to vote, whichever is less. Quorum for any other question requires 25 students or 10% of those eligible to vote, whichever is greater.

E.6.11 To pass any referendum question requires both quorum and the support of a two-thirds majority of those voting. (For constitutional amendments, this defines the meaning of 'ratify' in Constitution Section 5.1.6.)

E.6.12 Referenda outcomes are binding on the TGSA Board and Executive unless overturned by another referendum. Any question that may overturn the outcome of a past referendum cannot be voted on until the following academic year.

## **F. Policies and Procedures for TGSA Meetings (Constitution Section 4.8)**

### **F.1 TGSA Board Meetings**

F.1.1 The TGSA Board will normally meet each month during the school year.

F.1.2 The dates and times of these meetings will be established at the beginning of each term.

F.1.3 Extraordinary meetings may be called by the President if needed on three days' notice.

F.1.5 The President, together with other members of the TGSA Executive, will establish the agenda.

F.1.6 The TGSA Board will meet at least once over the summer.

### **F.2 TGSA General Meetings**

F.2.1 An annual general meeting (hereafter AGM) for all graduate students will be held in April of every year.

F.2.1.1 The Board will determine the location of the meeting at least two months prior to the AGM.

F.2.1.2 The AGM must take place at a member college or in the TST building.

F.2.1.3 The Treasurer will present for information a financial statement for the year just completed and a preliminary projected budget for the following year.

F.2.1.4 The CRO will present the newly elected members of the TGSA Board.

F.2.1.5 Any major policy decisions ratified throughout the year by TGSA will also be presented.

F.2.2 When deemed necessary, other general meetings may be called by the TGSA Executive or the TGSA Board with fourteen days' notice.

### F.3 Meeting Attendance

F.3.1 All TGSA members may attend any meeting. Non-members of the Board may address Board meetings if they have requested to be put on the agenda.

F.3.1.1 At the discretion of the TGSA Board, a portion of a Board meeting may be held *in camera*.

F.3.2 To ensure and enhance participation in general meetings, the agenda, material for discussion and voting procedures will be circulated widely prior to the meeting and facilitated through any legitimate means of communication.

F.3.3 Any necessary policy voting procedures will be administered by the Vice-President External.

### F.4 Meeting Procedures

F.4.1 The TGSA Board works at achieving consensus in all its Board and General meetings.

F.4.2 If consensus is not achieved, *Roberts' Rules of Order* will be followed.

F.4.3 Each elected Board member carries one vote in the Board meetings.

F.4.4 Each TGSA member carries one vote in the General meetings.

F.4.5 All Board and General meeting minutes will be publicized on the TGSA website.

F.4.6 Electronic media, including the TGSA website, email list and online survey tools will be used to encourage communication with and participation of TGSA members at the General meetings, and to facilitate Board business and communication.

F.4.7 Policy decisions that require a general meeting, such as ratifying constitutional amendments or levy increases, may also be made at the discretion of the Board through electronic means. Any policy voting can be held through online survey software to enhance general membership participation.

F.4.8 The results of any such voting procedures will be publicized through the TGSA website, via email and through any other means deemed necessary by the Board.

F.4.9 Other procedures and practices not in conflict with the constitution and policies and procedures may be established by the TGSA Board.

#### F.5 Budget Procedures

F.5.1 A proposed budget shall be approved annually by the TGSA Board and publicized on the TGSA website.

F.5.2 Spending decisions which vary significantly from the proposed budget shall be recorded in the Board meeting minutes.

F.6 All TGSA documentation, including meeting minutes, budgets, promotional literature, and others is to be filed in the TGSA filing cabinet at TST.

#### **G. Amendments to Policies and Procedures**

G.1 Review of the policies and procedures may take place at the discretion of the TGSA Board.

G.2 All amendments must be ratified by two-thirds majority of the TGSA Board.