

**Official Charter**  
**of the**  
**German and Dutch**  
**Graduate Student Association**

**A Registered Student Organization  
at the University of Wisconsin-Madison**

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Revised by members of the GDGSA in the academic year 2010-2011

## **Preamble**

*The German and Dutch Graduate Student Association (GDGSA) is a student association for graduate students of German and Dutch at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The goals of the GDGSA are: (1) to serve as a communicative link between graduate students and faculty of the Department of German, (2) to provide graduate students with opportunities for professional development and service opportunities, (3) to foster a productive and professional working environment through open discussions at monthly meetings, (4) to organize social events to encourage a friendly and supportive atmosphere among its members, and (5) to serve as an outreach organization for German and Dutch language and culture.*

## **Article I: Procedures**

### **Section 1: Membership**

- (1) All graduate students enrolled in the Department of German at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are members of the GDGSA.

### **Section 2: Meetings**

- (1) Monthly meetings shall be scheduled in advance by the GDGSA presidency.
- (2) At least one member of each committee must be present at every meeting. In the event that none can attend, the committee is required to submit a report in advance of the meeting, even in cases where there is nothing to report.
- (3) Any member of the GDGSA may submit new discussion topics. Any member may also anonymously submit a discussion topic via the Discussion Box. Issues raised will be placed on the agenda under “New Business”.
- (4) Additional meetings may be called by the presidency as needed. They must be announced at least 24 hours in advance.

### **Section 3: Elections**

*The GDGSA recognizes the importance of service in the academic community. It aims to provide all GDGSA members with the opportunity to develop service skills by serving on its committees.*

#### **§ 1: Voting Eligibility**

All GDGSA members are eligible to vote in elections.

#### **§ 2: Nominations**

- (1) GDGSA members who wish to run for office must nominate themselves for the applicable committees during the spring semester.
- (2) The presidency shall post sign-up sheets in the Schlauch where members can self-

- nominate. The period for submitting nominations shall be no less than one week.
- (3) The presidency shall make an effort to include and accommodate those members not currently in Madison who wish to self-nominate for a committee representative position.

### **§ 3: Ballots**

- (1) The presidency shall distribute ballots (either in paper or electronic form) to all members after the nomination period has ended.
- (2) All ballots must be returned to the presidency within 48 hours of their distribution in order to be considered valid.
- (3) The presidency shall count all ballots in the presence of the secretary.
- (4) The counting procedure and final results are open to all GDGSA members.
- (5) The candidates receiving the most votes shall be elected unless they decline service, in which case the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes shall be elected. This process shall continue until a candidate accepts the position. If no candidate is available, the presidency reserves the right to appoint committee representatives, at the appointee's consent.
- (6) In the event of a tie, the presidency shall notify the relevant members and the members will then have the opportunity to decide the results based on their preferences. Should neither nominee voluntarily decline the position, a run-off election shall be held immediately to determine the result. The presidency shall follow standard ballot procedure in this matter, allowing 48 hours for the new ballots to be returned to be considered valid.
- (7) The presidency shall disclose election results via email by the end of the spring semester, barring complications in the process. If complications should arise, the results should be disclosed as soon as possible.

### **Section 4: Amendments**

*The GDGSA is not a static organization, nor is this charter a static document. Accordingly, the GDGSA charter may be amended to better serve the needs of the membership.*

- (1) Any member of the GDGSA may propose changes to the charter. All proposed changes must be presented to the entire GDGSA for discussion and approval of the wording at a GDGSA meeting.
- (2) The presidency shall distribute ballots that state the proposal as it would appear in the charter and call for a 'yes' or 'no' vote. Ballots must be returned to the presidency within 48 hours of their distribution to be considered valid.
- (3) The amendment shall pass if it receives a two-thirds (2/3) majority from those members who return the ballot to the presidency within the required time period.
- (4) Once passed, the amendment shall go into effect immediately (unless otherwise noted) and added to the GDGSA charter under the appropriate section.

## **Article II: Association Structure**

*A separate Association Structure document shall be maintained. Amendments to this document may be presented as a motion at a GDGSA meeting and shall be adopted by majority vote of those present at that meeting. Names and descriptions included in the charter must be amended following the usual procedure for amending the charter.*

### **Section 1: Presidency**

*The GDGSA shall have a presidency comprised of two co-presidents. It is the responsibility of the presidency to keep the GDGSA activities on track. The presidency supervises all other offices and committees while remaining accessible and approachable to all graduate students. The presidency works closely with the chair of the Department of German, represents the GDGSA at departmental meetings, and organizes meetings and events. A list of their responsibilities shall be maintained in the Association Structure Document.*

### **Section 2: Secretary**

*The GDGSA shall have a secretary, who will serve as a recording secretary and treasurer. A list of his/her responsibilities shall be maintained in the Association Structure Document.*

### **Section 3: Committees**

*The GDGSA is comprised of nine (9) set committees. Unless stated otherwise, each committee may consist of up to two elected representatives. Each committee may also have additional members; these additional members need not be elected by the general membership, but they require the consent of the elected representatives in order to join that committee. Committee representatives should contact the faculty representation on their respective committees as soon as possible to introduce themselves.*

*A list of committee responsibilities shall be maintained in the Association Structure document.*

#### **1: German Culture**

*This committee promotes German-speaking culture by organizing an array of cultural events throughout the academic year. This committee may have up to three elected representatives.*

#### **2: Undergraduate Committee**

*This committee works closely with faculty at developing and maintaining the undergraduate program / curriculum.*

### **3: Dutch Committee**

*This committee assists in making decisions related to the Dutch program.*

### **4: Graduate Program Committee**

*This committee works closely with faculty to develop and sustain a diverse graduate program and curriculum as expressed by the needs and desires of students in accordance with faculty interests. This committee is also involved in course-scheduling decisions for graduate students.*

### **5: Events Committee**

*This committee organizes and invites colleagues or faculty to give talks about issues affecting graduate students, works with faculty to invite speakers to campus, and also organizes presentations of original research by graduate students.*

### **6: Recruitment and Orientation Committee**

*This committee works with faculty to recruit and welcome new graduate students. The primary goals are to inform current graduates of prospective students, to help organize prospective student visits, to welcome new graduate students to the department, and to act as a contact for both prospective and new graduate students.*

### **7: Media & Technology Committee**

*This committee encompasses all aspects of media and technology within the GDGSA. It works with other committees when they require technical help.*

### **8: Teaching Assistants Association (TAA)**

*This committee serves as an informational link between graduate students and the union.*

### **9: Conference Committee**

*This committee organizes the GDGSA conference.*

### **10: Ad-hoc Committees**

*The GDGSA may form committees on an ad-hoc basis and elect a chairperson by majority vote at a GDGSA meeting. The committee shall be formed for special projects and initiatives that fall outside the normal range of activities of the set committees.*