

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Graduate Student Advisory Committee Bylaws

Ratified: 4/23/2020

Modified: 11/29/2022

I. Statement of Purpose

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC) shall act in an advisory capacity to the Vice President of Agricultural Administration and Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (hereafter, Dean). The primary goals of the committee include representing the interests of graduate students in CFAES as well as fostering an environment of collaboration and collegiality amongst students of the various departments in the college.

The purpose of the committee is to:

- Provide a formal vehicle for graduate student participation in the betterment of the College by shaping an environment that promotes mutual respect, builds teams, and creates a compelling place to work and learn;
- Increase the efficiency and scope of communication within the College and University by:
 - Serving as the graduate student voice/liaison to the Dean;
 - Relaying communication from the Dean to graduate students;
 - Facilitating cross-departmental and cross-campus graduate student communication and collaboration through relationships with departmental graduate student groups;
 - Broadening university-wide communication through its relationship with the Council of Graduate Students; and
 - To develop professional development opportunities and social events, as well as encourage camaraderie between the various campuses, departments, and research groups in the college.

II. Membership

The goal of the committee is to enable students to bring their talents to GSAC and serve at their full leisure, while also giving everyone (who would like) a chance to serve. Each CFAES graduate program will be permitted one representative per campus where the program has student representation. Terms for members of the committee will be 1 year for Master's students and 2 years for PhD students. Terms will follow the academic year, beginning in autumn. Members are permitted to serve up to 2 consecutive terms on the committee, but are still required to go through the standard election process.

In an effort to increase the number of students who can engage with the GSAC, subcommittees will have open membership so graduate students from each program may serve without being a standing member of the representative council.

This will include CFAES-affiliated interdisciplinary programs of Translational Plant Sciences and the Environmental Science Graduate Program. Due to close alignment of students and research areas, the OSU Nutrition Interdisciplinary program will be included with the Animal Science graduate representatives. Members may be either MS or PhD students. There should also be at least one representative from each of the CFAES professional programs. The CFAES Graduate Education Coordinator (or other advisor as assigned by the Dean or appropriate designee) will serve as the permanent advisor, and an ex-officio (non-voting) member until said advisor resigns due to any reasons, personal or professional.

Call for membership

Each academic year (in the fall) there will be an open call to CFAES graduate students to fill any vacant positions on the committee. The vice Chairs will be responsible for overseeing the process on their respective campus. Graduate program coordinators for each department are asked to assist the committee with recruitment of new members. Interested applicants can contact their graduate program coordinator (GPC), corresponding Wooster campus personnel, or the GSAC permanent advisor for information on how to apply.

All interested students will need to submit a completed GSAC application to their specific program coordinator or the GSAC permanent advisor. GPCs are asked to submit electronic copies of applications, along with optional recommendations, to the GSAC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will review all applications and ultimately decide who will join the committee.

Graduate Program Representation

The GSAC permanent advisor will assist in reviewing active programs to determine whether positions need to be adjusted based on campus representation. Regular membership reviews by the CFAES Graduate Education Coordinator and the Executive Committee are required to occur every 3 years to ensure accurate representation of every CFAES graduate student.

Based on the review in 2020, representation to the committee will be delineated as follows:

- Programs in Wooster and Columbus, receiving one representative for each campus (MS or PhD students)
 - Animal Sciences (combined with OSU Nutrition Program)
 - Entomology
 - Food, Agricultural, and Biological Engineering
 - Food Science and Technology
 - Horticulture and Crop Sciences
 - Plant Pathology
 - School of Environment and Natural Resources
- Programs in one location, receiving one representative (MS or PhD students)
 - Agricultural Communications, Education, and Leadership
 - Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics
 - Environmental Science Graduate Program
 - Translational Plant Sciences
- Professional Programs, receiving one representative
 - School of Environment and Natural Resources MENR
 - Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics MAE
 - Entomology/ Plant Pathology MPHMM
- CFAES Graduate Education Coordinator (non-voting)

Process for Removal

Any member who misses **three meetings** will be removed from the committee. In order to represent their constituents and accomplish the stated mission of the committee, members must be in

attendance. These meetings include general GSAC meetings, external committee and GSAC subcommittee.

If any member cannot make a meeting, they can choose to send an alternate from the same program and the absence will not count against them as their constituents are being represented in accordance with the GSAC mission. These alternates will have full voting rights for that meeting of attendance. Members will need to notify the VP before the meeting and include the alternate that they wish to send to ensure they can be added to any mailing lists of meeting materials and voting process. Priority is for members to attend via Zoom, however we would prefer to have departments represented with an alternate over a complete absence. Members can send up to 2 alternates per yearly term.

If a member accrues 2 absences, then a letter of notice will be issued from the GSAC Chair addressed to the student and their advisor, carbon copying (cc) the GSAC permanent advisor, and the respective graduate program coordinator and vice Chair for the appropriate campus. After issuance of the notice letter, membership discussion meeting with the VP, GSAC permanent advisor, and the student will occur to discuss absences and alternatives is encouraged before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Filling vacancies

In the case that an existing GSAC member must voluntarily vacate their position, the outgoing member must notify the Chair who is responsible for assisting in filling the position. If the committee member is removed from the committee involuntarily, the position remains unfilled for the remainder of that academic year.

When an officer voluntarily vacates their position, they must notify the Chair as soon as possible. Nominations for those who would like to fill the vacated position will be collected via email prior to the next scheduled meeting. A special election will be held at the next regularly scheduled committee meeting to vote upon the new officer.

III. Offices

Officers will be formally elected to the committee in April, with the newly elected officers beginning their term in the fall of each academic year. Any member of the committee who has served at least one full semester (autumn or spring) is eligible to run for an officer position. Officer terms will be for one year. Officers may reapply to serve in an officer position, but this will follow the standard voting procedure. However, officers cannot serve more than 2 consecutive terms within the same position.

Officer nominations will be collected in March. Those interested in an officer position can either self-nominate or be nominated by their peers. Members are permitted to run for multiple officer positions, if desired. All members running for office are required to submit a resumes or CV (up to 1-pg front and back) and a cover letter (300-word max) explaining their interest in the position one week prior to the meeting where voting will take place. These documents will be uploaded to Box by the Records Administrator at least one week prior to the meeting at which voting will take place.

At least the first 15 minutes of the meeting at which voting will take place will be set aside for questions to those being nominated. Ideally, those who are running for an officer position must be present at the voting meeting in person, but may attend via Zoom at the discretion of the Chair. The group will first

vote on all positions with multiple members running, then move on vote for any unopposed positions. A member will be granted the officer position they are elected to first, following this standard voting order – first the Chair position, followed by the two Vice Chairs, Records Administrator, Treasurer, and Social Chair. If there is an officer position with no members running, a member who was running for another position (but has lost) is permitted to run for the open position at the same meeting at which voting takes place.

Officer elections will be conducted electronically by a secret ballot vote with the permanent advisor assisting in counting the votes along with the outgoing Chair as needed. All voting members of the committee will receive one vote for each officer position. A quorum of 80% of members must be present in order to vote. Officers will be voted in with a simple (51%) majority.

Summer semester will serve as a training period for newly elected officers. The Chair must be able to serve a full term and attend training sessions over the summer (consideration for those who may be graduating). In the case that an officer is graduating, the elected officer will take on the officer role as soon as the previous officer has left. The Chair will be responsible for assisting with training of new officers. Finally, although newly elected officers are expected to attend, they do not gain officer voting rights outside existing membership rights until the fall and the start of their official terms.

Officer duties are outlined as follows:

Chair

- Preparing agendas for meetings and leading meetings
- Tie-breaker vote if needed
- Oversee committees to ensure regular progress
- Meet regularly with permanent GSAC advisor
- Approving and bringing in guests as relevant
- Managing permissions to the Buckeye Box for group
- Appointing members to external committees in accordance with discussed procedures (refer to committee sections)

Wooster and Columbus Vice Chairs (2 members, one for each location)

- Responsible for membership on their respective campus. In the case that a VP position is vacant, the existing VP will be responsible for both campus membership.
- Vice Chair also ensures that members are meeting committee service requirements
- Finding meeting rooms
- Meet once per month with group advisor

Records Administrator

- Document archiving: ensuring a record of the committee history and issues.
- Recording meeting minutes

- Post meeting minutes on the website for public viewing. Will maintain Executive Committee minutes in private Box folder after meetings depending on the topic. These topics will be at the discretion of the GSAC Chair.
- Sending emails out about meetings and locations, also posting materials to Box

Treasurer

- Building budget and tracking expenses
- Responsible for annual expense audit (to be determined at a future date)
- Collecting any expenses throughout the month

Social Chair

- Oversees social media and events subcommittees
- Responsible for managing annual audits of social media accounts
- Submits social media posting plan once per semester

IV. Committees

Every GSAC member is required to serve on a committee. Potential committees of service include the Executive Committee, subcommittee, or external committee such as a CFAES search committee. Committee service will generally be one year, with the possibility to extend in some cases. Each member will have some choice in the committee or subcommittee that they are assigned to, but final assignments are at the discretion of the Chair. Members are expected to participate in group activities to the best of their abilities.

Three standing committees will be formed as follows:

- Executive Committee** – The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, Records Administrator, Treasurer, and Social Chair. They will attend College Leadership meetings and be responsible for running GSAC in accordance with the stated mission.
- Social Media Subcommittee** – The Social Media Subcommittee will be responsible for creating content for social media pages and developing a social media plan of action each semester. This committee is overseen by the Social Chair. Note, only the advisor or appropriate designee and the social media Chair will post to social media pages.
- Events Subcommittee** – The Events Subcommittee will be responsible for creating and putting on events for graduate student audiences. These should include both informal (social events) and formal (professional development). At least one professional development event and one social event should be hosted per semester. Care should be taken to ensure that there is representation from both campuses on the events committees, to aid in advertising and hosting events on both campuses. This committee is overseen by the Social Chair.

Additional task forces may be created at the discretion of the Chair to deal with specific needs. However, new standing committees must be created by amending the Bylaws.

Appointment to External committees

The Chair will be responsible to appoint members to any external committees as needed. Generally,

members will have department/ location preference (for example, if it is an ACEL Chair search, the ACEL rep would have first priority on committee service). Further, those who have not served on external committees or those graduating soon will be prioritized for committee service. Final selection is at the discretion of the Chair to choose who they feel will best fulfill the GSAC mission.

V. Meetings

The group will generally follow business meeting procedures, however for instances where more formality is required, or instances of great division Robert's Rules of Order will be followed. In the case where Robert's Rules of Order are to be followed, it is up to the Chair and Vice-Chairs to disseminate appropriate information on Robert's Rules to ensure all GSAC members can participate. This information can include basic operating procedures and common rules that members may need. The Chair must disseminate a meeting agenda at least 24 hours before the stated meeting time.

Full committee meetings will take place once per month during the academic year. The Executive Committee is expected to meet once per month outside of the full committee meeting, ideally taking place prior to College Leadership meetings. Additional meetings may be called as needed by the Dean and/or advisor.

GSAC will meet at least one time during the summer term, before classes resume in the fall semester. The GSAC Chair will determine the number of meetings and dates with the aid of the rest of the Executive Committee. GSAC subcommittees are also asked to meet at least once during the summer to work on social media content at the discretion of the Social Chair.

New member orientation meeting

Newly elected GSAC members will meet with the Executive Committee before their first GSAC meeting for an orientation meeting where service expectations will be discussed as well as assignment to subcommittees. These new members will be strongly encouraged to read past GSAC minutes to ensure familiarity with the issues being discussed so they can better represent their constituency.

Subcommittees are encouraged to similarly orient their new members as needed.

VI. Voting

Various committee activities such as resolutions, proposals, officer elections, etc. will require the committee to vote to show approval by GSAC members. Committee members should work with the Records Administrator to ensure all members have access to any voting options employed in meetings. This voting can take two forms, generally determined by the purpose of the vote:

- *General voting* - General voting can take place either by an electronic voting process, paper ballot, or via an informal vote (i.e. by the raising of hands), to be decided at the discretion of the Chair. This type of voting is anticipated to resolve questions more quickly, and in cases that do not require formal tracking. Examples include whether to proceed in planning an event or whether to change the date of a meeting.
- *Formal voting* - Formal voting must be completed electronically to ensure the integrity of the vote. In a formal vote, the GSAC Chair generally does not receive a vote unless needed as a tie-breaker, but is responsible for collecting and counting the votes. Officer elections, changes to the Bylaws, proposals or resolutions going forward to the Dean, official GSAC opinions on issues, and issues of great division must be done through a formal vote. Other votes may be done

formally at the discretion of the Chair. A quorum of 80% of GSAC members need to be present for any formal vote and a 2/3 majority vote is required to pass any proposed change.

GSAC subcommittees can submit ideas (proposals, resolutions, etc.) to the executive committee to move forward. The Chair will decide whether the idea needs to go before the full GSAC for voting, or if it can move forward without a vote. The Treasurer will be responsible to submit the annual budget to the executive committee for voting and then passed along to Dean. Any subcommittee voting is to be conducted at the preference of that subcommittee Chair.

Amendments to the Bylaws

A formal motion to edit the Bylaws can be submitted to the Executive Committee by any standing committee or member in good standing. The proposed motion will be added to the meeting agenda for the next GSAC full meeting for review and a formal vote by all members. A quorum of 80% of GSAC members need to be present and a 2/3 majority vote is required to pass any proposed change to the Bylaws.