

Constitution of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Graduate Women in STEM

Article I: Name of the Organization

The official name of the organization shall be known as the “University of Massachusetts Amherst Graduate Women in STEM” or “UMass GWIS” for short.

Article II: Mission Statement

The UMass Amherst Graduate Women In STEM organization is committed to the professional and personal advancement of women pursuing careers in STEM and related fields. By encouraging successful scientific research strategies and practices, developing professional networking skills and supporting the integration of career with personal goals, we seek to empower women to achieve academic and professional excellence. We embrace an inclusive and diverse membership in order to enhance the participation and recognition of women in STEM, catalyze change in the professional climate, and inspire the success of future generations of STEM professionals. All are welcome.

The UMass GWIS organization will fulfill this mission by sponsoring 1) professional development events, 2) networking workshops, 3) seminars, and by 4) engaging the community in science, and 5) acting as mentors to current and future scientists and engineers.

Article III: Purpose

The purpose of UMass GWIS is to advance the standing of women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields through outreach, mentoring, professional development, and leadership initiatives.

Article IV: Non-discrimination statement

UMass GWIS will not discriminate for any purpose on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, linguistic abilities, religion, sexual identity, political affiliation, disability status, or marital status.

Article V: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Any enrolled graduate student or post-doctoral fellow in or related to a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field.

Section 2: Member Identity

A member is defined as anyone who has completed a membership form. Members of the Peer Mentoring Groups encompassed by UMass GWIS are also members. A database of member information will be kept by UMass GWIS and updated as needed. Member identity will not be released without permission.

Section 3: General Right of Members

Members can participate in any GWIS programming, including members-only programming. Also, members have the right to volunteer for committees and make programming suggestions during committee meetings.

Section 4: Voting Rights

Members can vote on any issue brought to the general body; voting will occur online.

Section 5: Dues

No dues will be required for membership at this time, but this can be changed in the future by a majority ruling in a general body vote.

Section 6: Alumni Status

Upon graduation, members of UMass GWIS may choose to become alumni members submitting an alumni membership form online, and a database will be kept by the communications committee. Alumni may be invited back for programming and networking events in the future.

Article VI: General Body Meetings

Section 1: Frequency

General Body Meetings will occur once each semester. Any person (member or otherwise) may attend.

Section 2: Calling General Body Meetings

Additional General Body Meetings can be called by the Executive Board at their discretion.

Article VII: Constitutional Amendments

Section 1: Proposing an Amendment

Any member may propose an amendment to the constitution.

Section 2: Voting on an Amendment

Constitutional amendments shall be voted on by the Executive Board with majority deciding the outcome.

Section 3: Overturning an Executive Board Decision

Any member may petition any decision or ruling of the Executive Board (pertaining to a constitutional amendment or otherwise) so that the decision is brought to the general body meeting for a vote. A majority vote of participating members present at the meeting will overturn the decision. Proxy voting should be made available to members who cannot attend.

Section 4: Constitution Review

The executive board should review and re-approve this constitution to ensure it reflects current practices and procedures at least once every two years.

Article VIII: Leadership

Section 1: Positions of the Executive Board

Executive board members are the two co-chairs of the organization and the chairs of each committee. The term of each chair is from the start of the summer semester until the end of the following spring semester (i.e. one calendar year). No Executive Board member may hold more than one position on the board per term. The title of each executive board member is as follows:

- A. Executive Co-Chair: Liaison
- B. Executive Co-Chair: Administrator
- C. Communication Committee Chair
- D. Financial Committee Chair
- E. Outreach Committee Chair
- F. Professional Development Committee Chair
- G. Mentoring Committee Chair
- H. Networking Committee Chair

Section 2: Elections of the Executive Board

Only current GWIS members may vote. Voting will take place online, with the candidate winning majority becoming a member of the executive board. In the case of a tie (defined as a difference in the top two candidates of less than or equal to three votes), the two highest candidates will participate in a run-off election at the next executive board meeting at which they will have 5 minutes to present their campaigns in person. . Candidates may consider serving as co-chairs.

1. Election Timeline

- a. Elections Announcement (suggested: 1st week of November)
- b. Nominations and campaigning (suggested: 2nd - last week of November)
Any current member of GWIS may be nominated. Nominations may be made by any member, and members can self-nominate for executive board positions. When nominations are accepted, each candidate will have the opportunity to submit a platform which will be posted to the blog and circulated to all members prior to voting. Campaigning may begin when a nomination is accepted and ends when the voting period begins.
- c. Voting Period (suggested: 1st week of December)
- d. Shadow Period (spring semester)
Newly elected executive board members will shadow current members of the board throughout the spring semester, and will assume their new positions on May 1st.

2. Campaign Guidelines

- a. Email

Candidates may campaign using their personal emails. Campaign messages will not be sent over the general body or programming listserves. Current executive board members with access to the listserv are not permitted to access the listserv for campaign purposes.

b. GWIS Website

The executive co-chairs will post candidate platforms on the blog and email the link to members with the voting link. Platforms are submitted with the nomination acceptance

c. Flyering

All flyers and signs should be submitted via email to the executive co-chairs for approval (see Candidate Code of Conduct below). The co-chairs will respond to the candidate regarding submitted materials within 48 hours. Flyers and signs must be placed on authorized posting places (i.e. student bulletin boards or inside/outside certain buildings). No flyers or signs may be placed on University windows and buildings. Please be reminded that flyers can't be posted anywhere in Campus Center. No writing, painting, or chalking on walls or sidewalks will be permitted. Each candidate is responsible for the removal and disposal of all signs. No campaign materials are to be affixed to bus kiosks, trees, telephone poles, or lamp posts. Candidates may not tamper with or deface the signs of any other candidate. Offenses of this nature are considered serious and may result in disqualification as a candidate in the election.

3. Candidate Code of Conduct

All candidates must abide by the following code of conduct:

- a. No person who is not a candidate, as defined above, shall campaign.
- b. No person(s) shall appropriate funds for the purpose of campaigning. Candidates may not pay anyone to campaign on their behalf and/or vote for them.
- c. No candidate shall wrongfully represent any campaign material as being the material of any other candidate.
- d. No candidate shall violate the University Code of Student Conduct; for more information please see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/

Section 3: Duties of the Executive Board

Executive board members shall serve as the head of their assigned committees, and will be responsible for calling meetings of their committees and any programming run by their committee. The Executive Board will meet as a body at least monthly. The Executive Board will be responsible making decisions for the organization by holding a vote, with the majority winning (except for impeachment votes) with a tie being decided jointly by both executive co-chairs. Committee co-chairs will share their vote. Executive Board members are expected to attend UMass GWIS programming such as recruiting and networking events, general body meetings, and their committee's programming, whenever possible.

Section 4: Quorum

The executive board must have at least 50% of members present or represented by proxy to establish quorum in decision making situations. However, in the case of impeachment or amendments to the constitution, all members (barring any conflict of interest) must vote. Executive board members may submit their vote by proxy.

Section 5: Leave of Absence for Executive Board Members

An executive board member may take a leave of absence during her or his term. The board member will be responsible for ensuring their duties are carried out in their absence. The other members of the Executive Board may appoint a Deputy Chair to represent their seat on the Board if needed. Any extenuating circumstances will be dealt with at the discretion of the executive board.

Section 6: Impeachment of an Executive Board Member

Impeachment of a board member will require a 2/3 majority of executive board member votes. Examples of reasons for impeachment: gross negligence of duties, misuse of GWIS funds.

Section 7: Appointing Replacement Board Members

In the event an executive board position needs to be filled, the executive board will appoint a replacement until the next election.

Article IX: Committees

Section 1: Committee Structure and Responsibilities

Each committee will be comprised of a chair of the committee, voted on by the General Body, as well as general committee members. The structure and responsibilities of each committee are summarized below. However, this is not a complete list, and responsibilities may shift or change depending on the needs of the committee at discretion of the chair (or co-chairs).

1. Executive Committee Chairs

a. Liaison

- i. Serve as the public face of the organization
- ii. Interface with sponsor and collaborator institutions
- iii. Oversee operations of the organization
- iv. Responsible for use of the official GWIS email

b. Administrator

- i. Serve as the public face of the organization
- ii. Run and organize General Body and Executive Board meetings
- iii. Develop General Body Meeting and Executive Board meeting agendas
- iv. Oversee operations of the organization
- v. Responsible for use of the official GWIS email

2. Communications Committee

a. Communications Committee Chair

- i. Develop and distribute advertising materials for open meetings

- and advise and aid committees on advertising for events
- ii. Oversee advertising and social media content
- iii. Maintain all member and alumni databases

3. Finance Committee

a. Finance Committee Chair

- i. Manage the budget and requests for funding and keep track of fundraising funds and any bank accounts.
- ii. Make recommendations to the Executive Board on matters based on the availability of funds
- iii. Oversee grant applications and fundraising efforts
- iv. Hold a Procard if possible/eligible and handle Purchase Order and speed type requests from other committees

4. Outreach Committee

a. Outreach Committee Chair

- i. Interface with existing outreach organizations/initiatives for collaborative efforts
- ii. Develop and execute outreach programs for GWIS members to engage with members of the local and surrounding community

5. Professional Development Committee

a. Professional Development Committee Chair

- i. Conceptualize, develop and execute events for networking events and professional development workshops
- ii. Form networking alliances with other groups on campus to promote collaborative efforts for events

6. Mentoring Committee

a. Mentoring Committee Chair

- i. Manage database of members interested in peer-mentoring groups and facilitate development of new groups and rearrangements of existing groups when needed
- ii. Facilitate faculty mentoring opportunities and programming
- iii. Develop programming for undergraduate and graduate student mentoring initiatives

7. Networking Committee

a. Networking Committee Chair

- i. Plan and execute at least one large scale networking event per year
- ii. Facilitate multiple graduate student networking opportunities (for example, planning graduate student appreciation coffee hours) per semester

Section 2: Committee Membership

Any member may join a committee by contacting the Committee Chair(s) and asking to be involved. Membership of committees, except for the chair(s), is on a volunteer basis and all willing participants will be accepted onto committees. Committee members are expected to attend most committee meetings and programming, if able.

Section 3: Committee Meetings

Each committee should aim to meet once a month during the calendar year. Meetings should be scheduled with input from each member, and the time convenient for most members will be chosen. Committee Meetings will be announced at least a week in advance with the agenda being posted at that time for comment. Chairs of committees will then report to the Executive Board on the meeting at the next Executive Board Meeting time, if time permits.

Article X: Ratification

This constitution will be ratified at a meeting of the executive board by a majority vote. Upon ratification, the constitution will be available to all persons and posted in a location that is easily accessible to all.

Date of Approval: October 27, 2015