Graduate Computer Science Society Constitution and By-laws

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Definitions

The following acronyms and terms shall apply throughout this document.

UMGPS
University of Manitoba Graduate & Postdoctoral Society

GCSS
Graduate Computer Science Society

Executive
This is a label for individuals who take up positions at the top of the GCSS management hierarchy. These individuals are the final decision-makers for the GCSS's business, such as Operations, Finance, Events, and Marketing. Regardless of their label internally or externally, if the position is labelled as an executive to UMGPS, we will view the individual as an integral position to the GCSS who holds responsibility and oversight.

Signing Authority
This is a label for specific individuals who have authorisation to sign cheques, contracts, or anything legally binding in relation to the GCSS. Usually, this is in reference to individuals who have authority to manage and access bank accounts, but it can also be used in UMGPS for individuals who can make contracts with UMGPS.

Conflict of Interest
This conflict happens when an entity or individual becomes unreliable because of a clash between personal interests and professional duties or responsibilities. Such a conflict occurs when an organisation or person has a specific interest in the outcome and serves to gain from it, such as money, status, knowledge, relationships, or reputation, which puts into question whether their actions, judgement, and/or decision-making can be neutral.

Council
Any person in power who has any duties or responsibilities to the GCSS, such as executives, Council members, volunteers, etc. Proxy members of Council must be Computer Science graduate students.

Section 1: GCSS Identity

Article 1a: Name

The name of the student association shall be Graduate Computer Science Society, also known as the GCSS.

Article 1b: Purpose

GCSS is a student-governed association representing the graduate students in the Department of Computer Science. The mission of GCSS is to:

- provide graduate student representation at the department level and at the UofM Graduate & Postdoctoral Society (UMGPS) Council.
- support the academic and professional growth of graduate students.
- promote graduate student advocacy and make proper use of departmental and external resources to benefit graduate students.
- offer social support to graduate students.
- provide a supportive environment for all CS graduate students and promote research collaboration between students.
- provide financial and bureaucratic support to any graduate student who is willing to put in the work to organise an event for GCSS.

Article 1c: Membership

All graduate students are considered to be members of GCSS, unless they manually cancel their membership. Membership is free and lasts as long as the student is registered in the Department of Computer Science in a graduate-level program. Sign-up is not required to participate in the GCSS or its events unless required by the organiser.

GCSS will consist of the following executive members, who shall be voting members of the group as part of the Council:

- President
- Senior Vice President (SVP)
- Vice President Media
- Vice President Social
- Vice President Advocacy

Section 2: GCSS Executives

Article 2a: Terms of Office

The Terms of Office for all Executive Positions at GCSS will last for at most one year from the first day they were officially appointed. Individuals in executive roles will be dismissed from their term in office after one year, unless they have been fairly reappointed to office again.

Article 2b: Executive Officers and Duties

- President
  - Act as a signing authority for GCSS.
  - Be the contact person for UMGPS and act as the primary contact person for external communications with GCSS.
  - Maintain frequent and punctual communication with the Faculty of Science, Department of Computer Science, UMGPS, Members of Council, Members of the Association, and all other relevant parties.
  - Be responsible for the overall operations of the group.
  - Deal with issues concerning the GCSS and its individual Members.
  - Coordinate team-building events for Council.
  - Serve as signing authority on any group accounts.
  - Be a voting member of GCSS for management decisions.
  - Call special meetings.
  - Attend all meetings.
  - Carry out provisions of the constitution.
  - Ensure the group funds remain within budget with local and external sponsors.
  - Be responsible for and track all funds generated by Council events.
  - Oversee and track all of Council's expenditures.
  - Approve or deny potential Council expenditures with discretion and with the best interests of the members of the GCSS in mind.
  - Make available any audits of GCSS to any Student members upon request with more than two weeks' notice.
  - Perform a year-end audit at the end of the GCSS Fiscal Year.
  - Prepare and present the budgets for group activities.
  - Contact UMGPS, the Science Students' Association, and external sponsors for funding when appropriate.
  - Oversee that any treasury training as required by UMGPS happens for all signing authorities and is recorded with UMGPS.
  - Perform other duties incidental to this office within reasonable discretion as directed by the Council.
  - Assign tasks and initiatives to Council, and set deadlines when applicable.

- ➢ See that tasks and initiatives undertaken by Council are completed by their deadlines.
- ➢ Perform any other duties incidental to the office of the President or directed by Council.

❖ Senior Vice President

- ➢ Ensure that all GCSS Executives have completed any training as required by UMGPS and that it is recorded by UMGPS.
- ➢ Ensure Executive Officers have adequate support and resources to perform their duties.
- ➢ See that tasks and initiatives undertaken by Council are completed by their deadlines, when applicable.
- ➢ Assist the President with any of their duties as outlined above, as necessary or directed.
- ➢ Assume the role, duties, and ongoing tasks of the President in their absence.
- ➢ Serve at the UMGPS Council to represent the Department of Computer Science. The Senior Vice President may also ask the Vice President Advocacy to inherit this duty.
- ➢ Perform other duties incidental to this office within reasonable discretion as directed by the President and/or Council.

❖ Vice President Social

- ➢ Oversee the planning of events for computer science students.
- ➢ Coordinate a minimum of one event or academic initiative in each term, at the discretion of the Council.
- ➢ Ensure there are an adequate number of social and academic events.
- ➢ Work in collaboration with other groups to promote and assist with collaborative events and initiatives.
- ➢ Work with the President to contact UMGPS, the Science Students' Association, and external sponsors for event funding.
- ➢ Work with the Vice President Media to manage the social media accounts of GCSS.
- ➢ Perform other duties incidental to this office within reasonable discretion as directed by the President and/or Council.

❖ Vice President Advocacy

- ➢ Guide the Council on advocacy for underrepresented communities.
- ➢ Work with the Vice President Social and Vice President Media to ensure that the GCSS's promotional and digital presence is accessible.

- ➢ Conduct regular surveys for CS graduate students and identify any issues/requests the CS department and/or GCSS executives should be aware of.
- ➢ Work with the Senior Vice President to bring CS graduate students' concerns/requests to the UMGPS council or the University of Manitoba management.
- ➢ Perform other duties incidental to this office within reasonable discretion as directed by the President and/or Council.

❖ Vice President Media

- ➢ Manage the GCSS website and ensure all information is clear and up-to-date.
- ➢ Coordinate with university IST and related relevant parties to administer the GCSS's server.
- ➢ Manage any technological systems needed for use during GCSS's events.
- ➢ Serve as a liaison between Council and external technology service providers.
- ➢ Consult with the Vice President Advocacy about the accessibility of the GCSS website.
- ➢ Consult with the Vice President Social to ensure all events are documented on the GCSS website.
- ➢ Perform other duties incidental to this office within reasonable discretion as directed by the President and/or Council.

❖ All Executives

- ➢ Report to Council regarding their activities.
- ➢ Participate in voting on GCSS related activities.
- ➢ Participate and assist with Group activities.
- ➢ Be responsible for any specific tasks delegated to them by general resolution of Council.
- ➢ Declare any conflicts of interest.
- ➢ Declare any personal or financial interest in any expenditure of the group funds.
- ➢ Comply with all regulations set out by the Campus Police of the Dean's Office, specifically those concerning smoking and drinking on campus.
- ➢ Promote Council cohesion and a respectful atmosphere abiding by the University of Manitoba Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Policy.
- ➢ Refrain from drug/alcohol use or sexual activity at any GCSS event. Alcohol consumption is only permitted if the venue of the event distributes alcohol.
- ➢ Prepare, in cooperation with other executives of the same position when applicable, an orientation package for the subsequent person to fill each position.
- ➢ Attend all regular meetings.
- ➢ Put fair effort into acquiring a proxy, in the event a voting member is unable to attend a Council meeting.

Article 2c: Executive Officer Dismissal Protocol

Executive Officer(s) who fail to uphold their basic duties outlined in Article 2b and/or violate any Governance articles in Section 4: GCSS Governance are subject to temporary probation for a performance review. This performance review must be started and conducted by the President and requires a clear written assessment of the officer's performance versus the minimum threshold of the duties that the officer must do as outlined in Article 2b and/or Section 4: GCSS Governance. The written assessment must be documented, dated, and stored in case the GCSS is under investigation.

Criteria and reasoning for dismissal must not be discriminatory by nature and cannot be influenced by a person's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability. Exceptions can only apply if they are legitimate factors that negatively affect performance. In that case, written minutes with a cover letter explanation must be documented when applying this exception. There must always be a clear record and reason for a dismissal.

If there are no written minutes, written notice, and/or the information presented in the documents is inaccurate before the dismissal, this is considered an unfair dismissal. A GCSS Executive who is under investigation and found to have committed an unfair dismissal will be subjected to the disciplinary items in Article 4d: Violations of the Constitution.

If an executive officer is dismissed, the GCSS must follow Section 3: GCSS Changeover in order to follow the proper procedure(s) outlined to fill the vacant position(s).

Section 3: GCSS Changeover

Article 3a: Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest is defined as when an entity or individual becomes unreliable because of a clash between personal interests and professional duties or responsibilities. Such a conflict occurs when an organisation or person has a specific interest in the outcome and serves to gain from it —such as money, status, knowledge, relationships, or reputation—which puts into question whether their actions, judgement, and/or decision-making can be neutral.

During an election process, conflicts of interest may arise. When they do, the individual who has professional duties or responsibilities related to organising the democratic election procedure must identify their conflict of interest and withdraw from the role for that particular election. This is to guarantee a fair democratic process. Failure to identify the conflict of interest and/or withdraw from the role will be considered a violation of the GCSS's constitution, and the GCSS will be subject to the disciplinary items outlined in Article 4d: Violations to Constitution.

Results from a Democratic Election that had a conflict of interest may be subject to being voided. A rerun of the democratic election without any conflicts of interest may begin again for the open executive position(s).

Article 3b: Chief Returning Officer Appointment

Prior to the election, the Executives agree to appoint a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) to oversee the election. This CRO ensures the election is run competently, fairly, and transparently to its members and UMGPS.

To ensure the election is run fairly and transparently, the CRO must:

- Not be a person who is running in the election.
- Not have any conflicts of interest with the GCSS's management or electoral candidates. This conflict of interest is outlined in Article 3a: Conflict of Interest.
- Be neutral and unbiased about the GCSS and their electoral candidates in their election through their professional duties.

If a member or members of the executive team appoint CROs with a conflict of interest and continue to run elections with that conflict of interest, this is considered a violation of the constitution.

Article 3c: Chief Returning Officer Duties

The duties of the CRO are to:

- Oversee and administer the elections for GCSS.

- Publicise the elections to the membership of GCSS.
- Hear and decide on any appeals or complaints related to the elections.
- Oversee and administer the electronic system's results for votes in the election.
- Announce the results of the elections and inform UMGPS of who next year's Executive will be.

Article 3d: President Appointment Procedure
All GCSS Presidential elections for the upcoming year will occur no later than October 31st on an annual basis.

Prior to the election, the Executives shall appoint a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) to oversee the elections via the procedure outlined in Article 3b: Chief Returning Officer Appointment.

Voting for the upcoming year's President will be conducted as follows:

- The electoral President position must be posted and competently advertised to the GCSS's membership at least 1 week in advance. This post must be shown through at least the GCSS's membership email list and social media.
- Candidates who wish to be nominated should inform the CRO during that period and must be a member in good standing of GCSS at the time of their nomination.
- Each nominated candidate is allowed to campaign on behalf of themselves and any slate (or team) they are a part of during the campaigning period.
- Voting can be online or in person. It has to be accessible to all members of the GCSS.
- The results from the voting will be collected by the CRO. These results will be sent to candidates and GCSS members.

Any tampering with the democratic voting process outlined here will constitute a violation of the constitution, and the GCSS is subject to Article 4d: Violations of the Constitution.

In the case of needing to replace the President, it must trigger an election for the position, with the Senior Vice President assuming the interim position of President until a new President is elected.

Article 3e: Democratic Election Procedure
All GCSS Council elections for the upcoming year will occur no later than October 31st on an annual basis. Exceptions can only be made on a case-by-case basis, such as an executive being dismissed.

Prior to the election, the President shall appoint a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) to oversee the elections via the procedure outlined in Article 3b: Chief Returning Officer Appointment.

Voting for the upcoming year's Council will be conducted as follows:

- The vacant Council position(s) must be posted and competently advertised to the GCSS's membership at least 1 week in advance. This post must be shown through at least the GCSS's membership email list and social media.
- Candidates who wish to be nominated should inform the CRO during that period and must be a member in good standing of GCSS at the time of their nomination.
- Each nominated candidate is allowed to campaign on behalf of themselves and any slate (or team) they are a part of during the campaigning period.
- Voting can be online or in person. It has to be accessible to all members of the GCSS.
- The results from the voting will be collected by the CRO. These results will be sent to candidates and GCSS members.

For nominations:

- Nominees must have a full understanding of the constitution.
- Nominees must have a full understanding of any outstanding projects.
- Nominees may be given an interview to check their knowledge of both points 1 and 2 prior to their entry into the position.

Any tampering of the democratic voting process outlined here will constitute a violation of the constitution.

Section 4: GCSS Governance

Article 4a: Compliance with University of Manitoba Graduate and Postdoctoral Society's (UMGPS) Policies

GCSS will comply with the University of Manitoba Graduate and Postdoctoral Society (UMGPS) and follow all of its bylaws, policies, procedures, and any mandatory training workshops required.

These bylaws, policies, procedures, and workshops are designed to foster a healthy, safe environment in the GCSSs and protect students. When an Executive does not follow the bylaws, policies, procedures, or workshops, then they may be investigated. When being investigated, GCSS will comply by providing the necessary documents as well as information. Any Executive who acts unfaithfully in the investigation process will be subjected to Article 4d: Violations of the Constitution.

If any article in the GCSS's constitution is in direct conflict with Article 4a: Compliance with UMGPS Policies, then Article 4a will take first priority and override the effect of the other conflicting article. This is to ensure that GCSSs are compliant with UMGPS policies, which are designed to protect students.

Article 4b: Compliance with University of Manitoba's Community Code of Conduct

To foster an inclusive and welcoming community, GCSS will follow the code of conduct and behaviours expected of the University of Manitoba community outlined by the University of Manitoba Administration.

Also, GCSS agrees to foster an environment that does not encourage STUDENT NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND CONCERNING BEHAVIOUR outlined by the University of Manitoba.

Article 4c: Amendments to Constitution

Any changes (amendments) to this constitution must first be presented and reviewed by the entire GCSS Council at a publicised meeting. This meeting can be hosted in-person or virtually.

The student GCSS membership list is generally held by the executive Council, and the Council is responsible for communicating these constitution changes to the members. Failure to communicate these changes and failure to host a publicised meeting qualify as a violation of the constitution.

The proposed changes must be made available to all members of the GCSS at least two weeks before the meeting. To vote in favour of the amendment, this vote requires the support of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at the meeting.

After the members of the GCSS approve the constitution, a copy of the amended constitution must be submitted to UMGPS to be considered officially updated.

To prevent corruption, Section 4: GCSS Governance and its associated articles cannot be changed (amended). These articles can only be changed if the change is mandated by UMGPS explicitly in writing, or the change was first proposed to UMGPS by the GCSS's Council and the GCSS has received explicit approval of the change by UMGPS.

Article 4d: Violations of the Constitution
When an executive or multiple executives violate the article(s) in this constitution, the following disciplinary actions will come into effect:

1. To avoid any conflict of interest, UMGPS oversees any violations of the Constitution. Every situation will be different, and thus, UMGPS will always have full oversight and discretion regarding what the verdict is, when the verdict takes place, and whether disciplinary action is necessary. This is to guarantee a fair process and the well-being of students, the GCSS, the overall campus community, and relevant stakeholders. UMGPS will be responsible for explaining the violation and the possible repercussions. UMGPS will also provide recommendations for how the GCSS can move forward after the violation and consequences are settled.

2. To maintain equity, the severity of repercussions will depend on the weight of the constitution violation and the specifics of the situation. UMGPS will act as a neutral third party in assessing the infringement and will pass down an appropriate conclusion on the matter. This will be based on precedent and UMGPS bylaw parameters.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of disciplinary punishments, as UMGPS will have full discretion regarding the matter.