

Geological Sciences Graduate Association (GSGA)

Bylaws Document

Mission Statement

The Geological Sciences Graduate Association (GSGA) is the organization that represents the graduate students of the Geological Sciences Department (GEOL, “the Department”) at CU Boulder, and it is a registered student organization (RSO) of the Center for Student Involvement (CSI). GSGA’s mission is to advance the interests and improve the experience of GEOL graduate students. Graduate students are one part of the departmental community, and in the interest of the community GSGA’s mission includes the betterment of the Department and University as entities. GSGA divides its mission into three areas:

Advocacy

GSGA works primarily on behalf of GEOL graduate students. It is the primary representative of graduate students within GEOL and advocates for improvements to GEOL policy, academics, and culture to support GEOL graduate students. GSGA works with the Administration to make reasonable reforms to the extent they are feasible and to sustain positive changes.

Community

GSGA organizes activities to enrich the graduate student community, including organizing grad social events, assisting with departmental community events, assisting with GEOL grad recruitment efforts and onboarding, organizing an annual grad student retreat, and disseminating important and relevant information. These events are welcome to all CU students and are organized to foster a vibrant, connected graduate community in GEOL. GSGA is committed to advancing DEI efforts.

Resources

GSGA provides material support for graduate students by requesting funding from student government, GEOL, the Graduate School and sources external to CU for student conference travel, social activities, academic enrichment, professional development, and GSGA operations. GSGA also maintains informational resources like applications, guides, papers, texts, theses, standards, scientific or professional procedures, GEOL 1030 and other course materials, etc. to aid students as they navigate their graduate studies.

Primacy

When these Bylaws conflict with the established rules of the Department, the Graduate School, or the University, those of the Department, Graduate School, and University have precedence.

Affiliation with the Center for Student Involvement

GSGA is a Registered Student Organization (RSO) of the Center for Student Involvement. GSGA adheres to all CSI policies and maintains communication with our CSI liaison. GSGA leadership annually registers the organization with CSI and sends at least two executive officers to CSI's annual leadership training.

Programs

Social Events Program

GSGA produces social events that help bring the grad students together in community. Social events improve the experience of grad school and help students know their peers. The aim of the social program is to provide a variety of activities and events that cater to all members of the grad student body. Social events should also aim to include other parts of the department when appropriate, to better integrate grad students with other members of GOEL. Examples of social events include board game nights, trivia bowls, holiday-themed celebrations, ice skating at the Rec Center, and various social mixers. GSGA seeks funding for expenses related to these events to cover food, decorations, booking fees, or materials.

Communications & Resources

To enable transparent communication with the GEOL grad community and to provide important resources, GSGA manages 3 platforms: a GSGA website hosted on Colorado.edu, a cloud-based shareable drive folder (GSGA Community) with meeting minutes and other resources beneficial to grad students, and a regularly published GSGA Newsletter to disseminate news and announcements.

Grad Talk

Grad Talk is a weekly grad student meeting with a presentation by a speaker. A catered lunch is provided. In scheduling speakers, preference is given in this order: Grad student practice talks, GEOL faculty or staff presentations, CU resource informational sessions, and external academic or professional speakers.

Grad Retreat

Grad retreat is a weekend trip to an off-campus location in Colorado that is designed to foster community among the grad students. It is an important bonding opportunity especially for more junior grad students as it helps them integrate into the department. Grad Retreat has traditionally included one professional development and one academic enrichment activity; These activities increase the likelihood that student government will fund the Grad Retreat.

First Year Program

The first-year program is a set of activities and efforts to (1) facilitate student recruitment and matriculation and (2) support first-year students and their specific needs. GSGA assists the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA) with Welcome Week in August and recruitment activities in the spring semester by helping to plan activities and coordinating volunteers. GSGA provides informational presentations, organizes social activities targeted toward first years, and helps the first-year cohort elect a first-year representative who represents the interests of the first-year cohort and facilitates communication between the first year cohort, GSGA and the rest of the department.

Snack Cabinet

Grad students are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. GSGA funds and maintains a stock of nutritious and culturally appropriate snacks and drinks for grad student consumption at no charge. The Snack Cabinet is located in the Benson Earth Sciences Building in an area not accessible by the general public but that is accessible by GEOL grad students, staff, and faculty. The Food Coordinator is responsible for choosing food items, arranging the purchase of food stocks, picking up food for and stocking the Snack Cabinet, and ensuring the Snack Cabinet is kept clean and in no way disruptive to GEOL activities. The Snack Cabinet is funded by GEOL food funding; The total amount of annual funding set aside for Snack Cabinet is decided by the Treasurer and President and included as a line item in the annual budget.

Positions

GSGA has four kinds of service positions which are filled either through direct election by GSGA membership or appointment by an elected member from a list of volunteers. These are: Executive Officers, Student Representatives, Other Elected Positions, and Volunteer Positions. Duties associated with these roles include over-all GSGA management, advocacy on behalf of the GEOL grad community, and execution of GSGA programs. Roles and responsibilities for each role are detailed in this section.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is charged with overseeing the management of the GSGA organization and execution of its Mission and Programs. The five positions that comprise the Executive Board are elected by GSGA members.

President

The President is chiefly responsible for executing GSGA's mission. The President guides GSGA's vision, represents the GEOL graduate students to the GEOL Administration, other CU entities, and the broader community, and chairs the GSGA Executive Board. Chairing the Executive Board includes directing and supporting the executive officers in their work, leading Board meetings, and defining meeting agendas. The President works with the Treasurer to develop an annual budget plan. The President pursues high-level initiatives, for example:

improving GSGA function and ensuring the success of its programs, developing large or complex budgets with the Treasurer and CSI Liaison, and working department-level student representatives and the Department Administration towards policy changes for the betterment of the graduate student experience. The President is responsible for organizing GSGA elections. The President is responsible for adhering to CSI RSO rules, like having regular CSI liaison meetings and completing the annual registration and leadership training. The President may also step in for other Executive Board positions or to help with any other duties if necessary.

Secretary

The Secretary is the chief executive of communications. The Secretary is primarily responsible for maintaining communication between the Executive Board and the grad students, facilitating the use of communication pathways for student benefit, documenting GSGA business, promulgating relevant and important information to the grad students, monitoring the GSGA email, and managing GSGA informational resources in a Community Resource Drive that is accessible by all grads. The secretary appoints a GSGA Newsletter Editor and a GSGA Webmaster and helps them with their publications.

Treasurer

The Treasurer manages GSGA's finances. They develop and present an annual budget, including a request for funding from GEOL, to the Executive Board. The purpose of the annual budget is to create an allocation plan that uses funding resources as efficiently as possible to fulfill GSGA's mission. The Treasurer works closely with CSI to ensure GSGA's compliance with all funding stipulations and protocols. They work closely with other Board members to secure funding for activities aligning with the GSGA mission. This includes developing, submitting, presenting and defending budget requests for student government or other funding sources, helping relevant parties plan for spending in compliance with funding stipulations, managing and/or facilitating reimbursements, and submitting post-spending reports. The Treasurer tracks the amount of remaining funding resources and advises the Executive Board on funding availability when changes to the annual budget are considered. The Treasurer provides spending reports as requested by the President. The Treasurer submits a summary end-of-year spending report.

Events Coordinator

The Events Coordinator manages GSGA's social program. They plan a slate of events for the year meant to foster community for and between all grad students. These social events can include small monthly social events and larger special events. The Events Coordinator develops budget requests for events requiring funding and passes the requests to the Treasurer. The Events Coordinator is responsible for the logistics and execution of GSGA social events. The Events Coordinator is an *ex officio* member of the GEOL Events Coordination Committee.

Program Manager

The Program Manager is responsible for planning the high-level logistics of Grad Retreat, Grad Talk and the First Year Program, and ensures the success of those programs by coordinating volunteers responsible for the execution of day-to-day tasks. The Program Manager works with

the Grad Retreat Organizer to plan the retreat, including developing a budget request and advising on the location and itinerary. For Grad Talk, the Program Manager arranges the speaker schedule and a slate of rotating caterers for the year, and provides any assistance to the Grad Talk Host that is necessary for Grad Talk to run smoothly. The Program Manager coordinates with the Food Coordinator for food pick ups. The Program Manager is also in charge of the First Year Program, intended to help first years succeed and get integrated into the department. The Program Manager assists the GPA with planning and coordinating volunteers for Recruitment Day and Welcome Week. The Program Manager helps first year students elect a First Year Representative. The Program Manager works with the First Year Representative on matters relating to first year grad students.

Student Representatives

GSGA membership elects representatives to advocate on behalf of the GEOL graduate community in department-level committees, at faculty meetings, and in other university organizations. The representatives advocate for the improvement of the graduate program, including curriculum, policy, culture, DEI efforts, and first-year experience. They also disseminate relevant information from discussions and initiatives of their respective committees/organizations to the GEOL grad community.

Graduate Curriculum Committee Representatives (2: one MS student, one PhD student)

The Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) is a faculty committee that is responsible for improving the graduate curriculum, including taking on major initiatives on the grad student experience. GSGA sends two delegates (1 MS student, 1 PhD student) to GCC meetings in order to advocate for graduate student interest. The student delegates represent the graduate student body on decisions and action items within the GCC. They solicit feedback from graduate students and communicate that feedback to the GCC during their meetings. Sometimes GCC student representatives are asked to present grad student perspectives in Faculty Meeting. The representatives are to work constructively with the GCC Committee members to draft documents and forms of various topics relating to the graduate student curriculum (exam and committee guidelines, advising agreements, coursework requirements, graduate student funding information, etc.).

Faculty Meeting Representatives (2)

The Faculty Meeting is an all-faculty meeting that occurs every two weeks. Discussions at Faculty Meeting focus on a wide range of topics related to the GEOL department, including graduate student experience. GSGA sends two delegates to Faculty Meeting. The student representatives take notes to share with graduate students and communicate graduate student feedback and proposed actions to faculty during meetings, sometimes as presentations.

BAJEDI Committee Representatives (2)

The GEOL Belonging, Acceptance, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (BAJEDI) Committee is tasked with advancing justice and DEI efforts in GEOL. GSGA sends two delegates to represent the graduate students on the BAJEDI committee. The student BAJEDI committee members collaborate with other BAJEDI committee members to push departmental DEI

initiatives (e.g., programs or events, curriculum-related changes, field equipment grants, micro-credentials, etc.), provide the Committee with graduate student-specific feedback where applicable, and run the First Year Mentoring program (as well helping with the Mentoring Presentation at Welcome Week).

GPSG Representative

The CU Boulder Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) is a student government body representing a coalition of CU students of advanced degrees. GSGA elects a graduate student delegate to represent the GEOL department as a GPSG department representative. The GEOL department representative is responsible for attending GPSG meetings, advocating for GEOL grad students and relaying their feedback to GPSG when necessary, and sending out a weekly recap email containing notes, documentation, announcements or outcomes of GPSG meetings.

First Year Representative

The First Year Representative is elected by the first year cohort early on in the fall semester. The Program Manager is responsible for facilitating this election. The First Year Representative is responsible for promulgating GSGA news to the first years and collecting feedback from the first years to pass along to the Executive Board. The First Year Representative should try to connect the first years with the rest of the department, and to encourage first years to engage with department activities.

Other Elected Positions

Two additional elected positions are tasked with carrying out key GSGA charges. Although these roles do not specifically advocate on behalf of the grad community like Elected Representatives, they can have a large influence on student experience and require a significant time commitment so they are elected rather than appointed.

Colloquium Committee (2)

The Colloquium Committee is a faculty-led committee that organizes the GEOL colloquium program, including inviting and scheduling speakers and managing their campus logistics, and providing a post-colloquium social hour. GSGA sends two student delegates to represent the graduate students on the Colloquium Committee. The student representatives solicit feedback from the graduate students on topics and speakers to invite for the weekly Colloquium talk, attend Colloquium Committee meetings, help send out relevant weekly information about Colloquiums, and work with volunteers to set up the snacks for the social hour following the Colloquium talk.

Desk Assignment (2)

The representatives are responsible for polling graduate students on desk and space needs and changes to desk occupancy. The representatives keep the graduate seating map up-to-date and ensure the cleanliness of recently vacated desks. Finally and assigning desks to current and

incoming students based on, for example, use needs, seniority, area of research, and other department politics in coordination with the Graduate Program Administrator.

Volunteer Positions

Several GSGA Programs are carried about by a set of appointed positions which are filled by Executive Board members from a list of volunteers compiled during annual elections. These positions generally have shorter time commitments than elected roles. Unlike elected positions, volunteer positions are not required to be filled and can be added or removed during the academic year as necessary.

Grad Talk Host (appointed by Program Manager)

The Grad Talk Host is responsible for the execution of Grad Talk logistics, but not the planning – the Program Manager is responsible for planning speakers and catering for Grad Talk. The Grad Talk Host should be present at all Grad Talks to set out the catering, welcome and orient the speakers (especially if they are external to GEOL), and make sure attendees sign in on the attendance sheet. If the Host cannot be present at a Grad Talk they are responsible for finding a delegate to take their place. The Host is also responsible for transferring copies of the catering receipts and attendance sheet to the GPA and Treasurer.

Grad Retreat Organizer (appointed by Program Manager)

The Grad Retreat Organizer is responsible for planning the specific logistics of Grad Retreat and for managing their execution. They work with the program manager to select a destination and date for the retreat, estimate the costs, and submit a budget request to student government. The Grad Retreat Organizer plans the activities of the itinerary, ensuring that community bonding, professional development and academic enrichment activities are included. They are also responsible for executing the plan during the retreat — coordinating drivers and meals, helping students settle in to the accommodations, leading or coordinating activities.

Food Coordinator (appointed by Program Manager)

The Food Coordinator is responsible for picking up and managing GSGA food stocks. This mainly includes purchasing food for the GSGA Snack Cabinet and sometimes picking up catering orders for Grad Talk.

Newsletter Editor (appointed by Secretary)

The Newsletter Editor is in charge of the GSGA newsletter. They are responsible for using an existing GSGA Newsletter template to create a unique newsletter issue on a regular basis. They organize volunteers to solicit announcements and content to include from graduate students and others in the department and organize and format that information into a digestible newsletter.

Webmaster (appointed by Secretary)

The webmaster is responsible for managing the GSGA website. They work with the GSGA Executive Board (mainly the Secretary), OIT and the campus web express team to maintain and

build the GSGA website with announcements and information timely and relevant to grad students. The Webmaster also manages the GSGA Community drive to ensure that community resources, archives of meeting minutes, and other materials are up-to-date and well organized.

Meetings

Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board meets at least once a month to discuss high-level business and plan GSGA programs and activities. The agenda of each meeting is finalized by the President and published at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Agendas include: (1) Updates from each executive officer, (2) Open business items if any, (3) Open discussion. Meeting minutes are recorded by the Secretary and published in the Community Resource Drive no more than 24 hours after the meeting adjourns. Executive Board meetings are open to all GSGA members. All meeting attendees must adhere to GSGA parliamentary procedures. Violators may be removed by a majority vote of the Executive Board. [Robert's Rules of Order](#) are used to govern parliamentary procedure at GSGA Executive Board meetings.

General Meetings

GSGA general meetings occur monthly. These meetings have traditionally been held in the place of every fourth grad talk. The purpose of GSGA general meetings is to share important GSGA information, plan upcoming programs or events, discuss GSGA business items, and provide a forum for open discussion of grad topics. The location and time of GSGA general meetings are to be announced at least one week in advance. The agenda of each meeting is finalized by the President and published at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Agendas include: (1) Updates from each executive officer if any, (2) Required updates from the Faculty Meeting Representatives, Graduate Curriculum Committee Representatives, BAJEDI Committee Representatives, and the First Year Representative, (3) Open business items if any, and (4) Open discussion. Meeting minutes are recorded by the Secretary and published no more than 24 hours after the meeting adjourns. [Robert's Rules of Order](#) are used to govern parliamentary procedure at GSGA general meetings.

Finances

Funding Sources

GSGA's main funding sources are: the Arts and Sciences Student Government, Student Organization Allocation Committee, Graduate and Professional Student Government, The Department of Geological Sciences, The Graduate School

Stipulations

Allowable Expenses

GSGA funds may only be used for their intended purpose. Expenses are allowable only if they align with GSGA's mission. Materials purchased with funding from a CU Boulder source may not be resold or gifted to any individual. Alcohol is not an allowable expense.

Social Event Requirements

All GSGA Socials must be held on campus. Social events must be publicized well in advance and welcome all CU Boulder students. Attendees may bring non-students as guests, but guests must adhere to GSGA and CU Boulder policies. Individuals not associated with CU Boulder are not allowed to attend GSGA socials without a CU boulder student or permission from GSGA. Attendees who violate CU Boulder or GSGA policies may be removed from the event. Alcohol is not permitted at social events.

Purchasing

GSGA members should avoid making GSGA purchases using their own money when possible. This avoids the burden of putting personal funds forward for use and seeking reimbursement. Instead, the CSI finance office staff is primarily responsible for making purchases on behalf of the organization. GEOL discretionary funds can be transferred to CSI if necessary, but the GEOL office staff or the Chair or another GSGA designee may also make purchases using GEOL funding.

Required Reporting

ASSG and SOAC require some form of post-event or post-spending report. These are filled out and submitted by the treasurer.

Required Expenditures

Operational Food

GSGA requests the maximum amount of operational food funding from SOAC to support GSGA meetings and other operational food needs.

Departmental Funding

GSGA requests funding from GEOL to support catering for grad talk

Grad Retreat

GSGA requests travel funding from the student government to support an annual grad student retreat. Travel funding is used for lodging and gas, but not food or activities.

Social Program

GSGA requests and sets aside sufficient funding to support the Social Program.

Conference Travel Fund

GSGA requests and uses any available travel funding left after budgeting for Grad Retreat to support GEOL grad student travel to scientific conferences at which they are presenting original research. This has traditionally supported students presenting at AGU since it is the most popular scientific conference for geology grad students, and student government funding sources often only support funding for a single conference.

Annual Budgets

The President and Treasurer develop an expected annual budget consisting of funding requests planned for the year. This is to ensure that funding is used deliberately and efficiently to fulfill the GSGA mission. The annual budget includes a specific request for funding from GEOL, laying out exactly what, how, and why purchases are expected to be made. The GEOL funding is intended to be used mainly for Grad Talk and discretionary funding. The annual budget is proposed and voted upon by the executive board during the summer, before the fall semester begins. The annual budget is sent to the Chair and Business Administrator for approval.

Discretionary Funding

Discretionary Funding is funding from GEOL that is set aside for use in unusual circumstances wherein other forms of funding are not available, for example if there is a significant time constraint or if student government funding sources cannot be used to support the intended expense. The President may decide to use Discretionary Funding for unanticipated purchases that are critically necessary to support the GSGA mission and that will occur within 48 hours. The Executive Board may by majority vote allocate Discretionary Funding for purchases that will occur more than 48 hours from the vote if the purchase is critically necessary to support the GSGA mission and cannot be supported by other funding sources.

Elections, Volunteer Positions and Amendments

Nominations

Nominations for elected positions must be submitted to the GSGA secretary to be included on election ballots. Candidates may nominate themselves. Candidates may include a statement of purpose with their nomination. Nominations will open at least 6 weeks in advance of elections. Nominations will close and nominees will be notified at least 24 hours before elections. Nomination forms also include an option to indicate willingness to volunteer for ancillary positions like grad retreat organizer, snack cabinet manager, first year program volunteer(s), webmaster, or newsletter editor.

Elections

Election details, along with a list of candidates and their statements if any, are publicized at least 24 hours in advance. Catering is often arranged. Remote voting is allowed. The single transfer vote counting method is used to determine the winner.

Terms

Terms are for one year, beginning July 1st of the election year. Note that Desk Assignment Committee student representatives will likely begin working with the GPA prior to July 1st.

Amendments

Motions to amend these bylaws may be submitted by any GSGA member. Amendment motions require a second. Amendments are voted upon at the annual elections.