

Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student Association

Faculty of Medicine
University of Ottawa

CONSTITUTION

Article I Name

The name of this organization shall be: the biochemistry, microbiology and immunology graduate students association of the University of Ottawa (BMIGSA), hereinafter referred to as “the Association” or “the BMIGSA”.

Article II Objects

- 2.1 To promote and defend the rights, welfare, and interests of members of the Association.
- 2.2 To enhance the educational, cultural, environmental, and social conditions of its members.
- 2.3 To represent its members as required.
- 2.4 To engage in other such activities and undertakings as may seem appropriate to the Association.

Article III Definitions

Whenever used here and hereinafter, the following acronyms shall apply:

- i. U of O shall mean the University of Ottawa;
- ii. Members shall mean active members of the BMIGSA unless stated otherwise;
- iii. Council shall mean the General Council of the BMIGSA, which includes both executives and members-at-large;
- iv. Executive shall mean the Executive of the BMIGSA;
- v. BMI shall mean the department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Ottawa;
- vi. OHRI shall mean the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute;
- vii. UOHI shall mean the University of Ottawa Heart Institute;
- viii. GSAED shall mean the Graduate Students Association of the University of Ottawa;
- ix. GSAED Council shall mean the Executive council of the GSAED;
- x. BOD shall refer to the Board of Directors of the University of Ottawa;
- xi. Senate shall refer to the Senate of the University of Ottawa.

Article IV **Membership**

- 4.1 All graduate students (including Qualifying Year, M.Sc., Ph.D., full time, part-time, and additional session students) registered in the Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology department at the University of Ottawa shall automatically be entitled to full membership in the BMIGSA.

Article V **Officers**

- 5.1 There shall be officers of the Association as follows:
- i. President (or Co-Presidents)
 - ii. Vice-President, Academic
 - iii. Vice-President, Archives
 - iv. Vice-President, Communications (formerly Vice-President Webmaster)
 - v. GSAED Representative for the BMIGSA (formerly Vice-President, External)
 - vi. Vice-President, Finance
 - vii. Vice-President, Internal
 - viii. Vice-President, Social (or Co-Social)
 - ix. Vice-President, Wellness
 - x. Vice-President, Social Media
 - xi. Vice-President, Professional Development
 - xii. Representative, International Students
 - xiii. Representative, UOHI
 - xiv. Representative, OHRI
- 5.2 Should the officer positions outlined in 5.1 be filled, interested BMI students shall be allowed to join the BMIGSA as members-at-large.
- 5.3 The powers and responsibilities of the General Council and the Executive shall be as defined in the By-Laws of the BMIGSA.

Article VI **Finance**

- 6.1 Assets of the BMIGSA are comprised of account balances, purchases made under the BMIGSA name, and donations given to the BMIGSA.
- 6.2 The total annual BMIGSA budget, and all proposed amendments to such, shall be approved by a simple majority vote at a Council meeting. The budget, and proposed amendment(s) to such, are to be distributed to Council at least one week prior to the Council meeting at which the budget or proposed amendment(s) is (are) to be voted on. Should there be no quorum at the Council meeting, the President may reschedule the Council meeting as appropriate.

- 6.3 The total annual budget of the BMIGSA shall be composed of the annual fees collected from the membership, and distributed to the BMIGSA by the GSAED during that year, the remaining account balance of the previous fiscal year after any funds designated for trust funds have been placed in such funds as appropriate, and any donations made during that year over which the BMIGSA has complete control.
- 6.4 All monies of the BMIGSA shall be deposited in the bank accounts and trust funds of the BMIGSA except for a small amount which may be kept for petty cash.
- 6.5 The Vice-President, Finance, and the President (or one Co-President) shall be the signing officers of the BMIGSA. The signature of the Vice-President, Finance is necessary for the issuance of all cheques by the BMIGSA. Each cheque issued must bear the signature of one signing officer.
- 6.6 The financial year shall begin on May 1 and shall end on April 30 of the following year, to correspond with the annual council turnover.
- 6.7 Upon the Council's proposal, the Vice-President, Finance shall be responsible for the approval of all expenditures.

Article VII Meetings

- 7.1 The Council shall meet at least once, but preferably twice, per month during the fall and winter terms, and at least once per month during the summer term. Council meetings shall be open to all active members or members-at-large and shall occur in-person. For those members not located near RGN, teleconferencing accommodations for meetings shall be made. Participation by non-council members is limited to formal presentations and motions on the table, at the discretion of the Chair. Formal presentations must be submitted to the President at least three days in advance.
- 7.2 The Executive shall meet as necessary between Council meetings to conduct the affairs of the BMIGSA. Executive meetings are open to all Council members. The participation of council and non-council members is at the discretion of the Chair. Executive meetings will be called by the President or either of the presiding Co-Presidents.
- 7.3 Council may call general meetings of the BMIGSA active membership by means of a motion passed by a simple majority vote.
- 7.4 A) Special Council meetings of the BMIGSA may be called by the Executive with a simple majority vote in an Executive meeting or by

Council with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote during a council meeting.

B) Special Council meetings may be called by a petition of half (1/2) the executive members or two-thirds (2/3) of council members.

C) General meetings of the BMIGSA may be called by a petition of 10% of the active membership. The Council will be bound by motions passed in a general meeting.

7.5 A) There shall be at least seven (7) days notice for any Council meeting.

B) There shall be at least three (3) days notice for any Executive meeting.

C) There shall be at least fourteen (14) days notice for any general meeting of the GSA.

D) There shall be at least twenty-one (21) days notice for a referendum of the GSA.

7.6 "Robert's Rules of Order" shall apply at all meetings of the GSA.

7.7 A) The quorum for Council meetings shall be two-thirds (2/3) of filled council seats.

B) The quorum of executive meetings shall be two-thirds (2/3) of filled Executive seats.

C) The quorum of general meetings shall be 5% of the BMIGSA active membership.

D) Unless stated otherwise, there is no quorum for a referendum.

Article VIII **Vacancy and Tenure of Position**

8.1 A) If at any time the office of the President should become vacant, the Vice-President, Communications shall become Acting President and the Executive shall attempt to fill the position at the next council meeting.

B) If at any time the office of the Vice-President, Communications should become vacant, the Vice-President, Internal shall become the acting Vice-President Communication and the Executive shall attempt to fill the position at the next council meeting.

C) Should any Executive position become vacant, the Executive shall attempt to fill the position at the next Council meeting. Should the position remain unfilled after the Council meeting, the Executive may

appoint an active member to the position until such a time as it can be filled by Council.

D) Should any general member wish to fill a vacant position, current Executive members shall vote on the matter. The position will be considered no longer vacant if the Executive vote is two-thirds (2/3) of the currently filled Executive seats.

8.2 A) The President shall have the power to recommend the termination of the term of any Council member on constitutional grounds. Termination of a member's term in office must be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Council. Once the President has recommended the termination of the term of a council member, that council member shall be barred from fulfilling the duties of his or her position until a vote has been taken by Council. The council member shall have no vote in this matter but will have the right to defend himself or herself to Council before a vote is taken.

B) The President shall have the power to recommend the termination of the term of any Executive member on constitutional grounds. Termination of an executive member's term in office must be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Council. Once the President has recommended the termination of the term of an executive member, that executive member shall be barred from the Executive and from fulfilling the duties of his or her position until a vote has been taken by Council. The executive member shall have no vote in this matter but will have the right to defend himself or herself to Council before a vote is taken.

C) The President shall have the power to recommend dissolution of the BMIGSA. Dissolution of the BMIGSA must be ratified by a simple majority vote in a referendum in which there is a 50% + 1 turnout of active members.

8.3 A) The Council shall have the power to remove the President from office on constitutional grounds by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a council meeting. The President shall have no vote in this matter. The President will have the right to defend himself or herself before Council before a vote is taken.

B) If two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive sign a petition which recommends the removal of the President on constitutional grounds or two-thirds (2/3) of Council signs such a petition, then the President is barred from office until such time that a vote is taken by Council in the next scheduled council meeting. The Vice-President, Communications will assume the duties and responsibilities of the President until the vote has

taken place. The President shall have no vote in this matter but will have the right to defend himself or herself to Council before a vote is taken.

C) The Council shall have the power to recommend dissolution of the BMIGSA with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in a Council meeting provided that the motion to dissolve Council was made in a Council meeting at least two weeks previous to the council meeting in which the vote is being taken. Dissolution of the BMIGSA must be ratified by a simple majority vote in a referendum in which there is a 50% + 1 turnout of the active membership.

- 8.4 A) Impeachment of any or all members of Council and/or the Executive may be made with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a general meeting where a quorum is present.
- i. if a member of Council is impeached at this meeting, he or she will be replaced at the next Council meeting.
 - ii. if a member of the Executive is impeached at this meeting, the position shall be filled at the next Council meeting.
- 8.5 The standard term of office for a Council or Executive member shall be one year in conjunction with the fiscal year.
- 8.6 The term of office for any Council or Executive member ends with the fiscal year and the Council or Executive member must be re-elected (or re-appointed) to retain his or her position.

Article IX **Referendums**

- 9.1 A) Referendums may be called at the discretion of the Council, or by the President subject to Article VIII, Section 2, Part C and Article XIII, Section 2, Part D.
- B) A referendum may be initiated by a motion of Council which is passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, or by a petition to the President signed by 10% of the active members of the BMIGSA.
- 9.2 The minimum notice that must be given for a referendum is outlined in Article VII, Section V, Part D. The active membership must be made aware of the question when they are informed of the referendum.
- 9.3 Referendums shall be conducted by the Vice-President, Archives and one Past Executive Officer. Petitioners may appoint two (2) scrutineers. All information relevant to the issue must be distributed to the membership at least seven (7) days prior to commencement of voting. Ballots shall be returned to persons designated by Council and counted by the Vice-President Administration and his/her deputies, or by duly appointed alternates, in the presence of any appointed scrutineers.

- 9.4 Any decision by referendum shall be binding on Council. Should the President bring into effect Article XIII, Section 4 Part D, then the decision shall not take effect until after the referendum on GSA dissolution, assuming a negative vote. The result of a referendum on dissolution is final.

Article X **Voting**

- 10.1 A) Only Council members may vote at Council meetings. The Executive are considered to be council members at meetings of Council and may vote.
- B) Only executive members may vote at Executive meetings.
- C) All active members may vote in general meetings.
- D) All active members may vote in referendums.
- E) The Chair may not vote except in the event of a tie vote.
- 10.2 The results of referendums are final.
- 10.3 A) Any Council member may call for the vetoing of a Council decision on constitutional grounds providing that this active member can make a valid case to at least one Executive Member and obtain the support of two other Council members. The veto must be ratified by a simple majority vote at a General meeting for it to become effective.
- B) Any decision which is vetoed by a Council member with appropriate support, as defined in part A, is not brought into effect until after the ratification vote, assuming that the ratification vote is negative. If the ratification vote is positive, then the decision that was vetoed does not take effect.

Article XI **Amendments**

- 11.1 The Constitution may be amended by a simple majority vote of the active membership in a General meeting or Special council meeting.
- 11.2 Proposed amendments must be delivered to the Vice President, Archives at least three weeks prior to voting.
- 11.3 All amendments must be publicized at least two weeks prior to voting.

Article XII **Dissolution**

- 12.1 Upon dissolution of the BMIGSA, all assets shall be converted into a monetary form and placed in a trust fund for BMI graduate student funding which will be transferred to the School of Graduate Studies.
- 12.2 Dissolution can occur only after a referendum on the issue has been voted on and passed. Such a referendum is subject to Article IX. Once a referendum to dissolve has been passed, the Council is disbanded and the executive has six (6) months to complete dissolution from the date of the referendum.
- 12.3 The Executive members in office at the time of dissolution shall be empowered to evaluate all matters affecting the BMIGSA with respect to dissolution until such a time when dissolution is complete.

Article XIII **Elections**

- 13.1 Elections will be held either in-person or virtually and supervised by the outgoing Vice-President, Archives.
- 13.2 Should two individuals run as co-running mates, let the ballot reflect this. For positions that can be run with co-members such as Vice President, Social, the general assembly will be asked to select their top two candidates. The two candidates with the most votes will be awarded the position, although this does not necessarily mean that it will be the two individuals that ran as co-running mates.
- 13.3 Election ballots shall include a 200-word description of the candidate and their qualifications for the desired position. Virtual ballots will not include images of the candidates.
- 13.4 GSA positions will be decided by a simple majority vote from the general BMI student body. Candidates are allowed to vote on any position, including the position they are running for.

Constitution of the Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student Association of the University of Ottawa.

Ratification: 10/8/2004

Amended: 10/04/2023