

Preamble

We, the members of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA), are dedicated to the enhancement of the graduate experience for African-American students and students of African descent at The University of Mississippi. BGPSA promotes and fosters an academic, professional, social and cultural environment for Black students and serves as an aid in advocating the needs and concerns of Black students at the University.

Mission Statement

The University of Mississippi's Black Graduate and Professional Student Association strives to advance the academic growth, professional development, and social and cultural support of Black graduate students.

Article I: Name and Purpose

The name of this organization shall be known as the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association. The purpose of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA) is to form a student-led organization dedicated to ensuring that the academic, professional, social, and cultural environment at The University of Mississippi, offers a more conducive atmosphere for the cultivation and development of Black Graduate students. As we seek to become scholars, practitioners, and leaders within our various communities, we envision a BGPSA whose organizational capacity is vibrant enough to promote a university-wide setting conducive to supporting these ends. Furthermore, we strive to develop and articulate a new strategic vision to advance the interests of Black Graduate students throughout the entire University of Mississippi system.

Section 1:

This organization seeks to offer a more conducive atmosphere for academic growth through:

1. Promoting academic achievement through scholarly enriching activities.
2. Making recommendations to pertinent university administration, faculty, and staff on pertinent matters of interest to current campus concerns.
3. Supporting the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented graduate and professional students

Section 2:

This organization seeks to offer a more conducive atmosphere for professional growth through:

1. Offering enrichment activities such as, but not limited to, research forums, workshops, and professional development events.
2. Encouraging active membership in professional organizations.
3. Promoting civic engagement.
4. Provide potential networking opportunities to allow members to obtain information regarding job placement, funding opportunities, graduate study programs, and other educational and professional opportunities.

Section 3:

This organization seeks to offer a more conducive atmosphere for social and cultural growth through:

1. Improving communication between Black graduate students, academic departments, and the University by publicizing BGPSSA-sponsored projects, offering a supportive presence at University sanctioned activities and events, and maintaining an up-to-date web presence.
2. Articulating and addressing the academic, financial, political, social and professional needs of members.
3. Mentoring undergraduate students of color.
4. Participating in service-learning.
5. Fostering mutual and lasting relationships among BGPSSA members, alumni, faculty, and other graduate students.
6. Providing an effective voice and advocacy for historically underrepresented graduate and professional students at the University of Mississippi by actively participating and contributing to the Graduate Student Council.

Article II: Executive Positions and Duties

Section 1.

Elected Positions

Elected positions shall include BGPSSA President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations and Marketing Chair, Social Chair, and Community Service Chair which will constitute the Executive Board, the governing body of BGPSSA.

1. The President shall be responsible for the external affairs of the organization. This individual shall serve as the official spokesperson for BGPSA and serve as liaison to the University administration. This individual shall also preside over the meetings. The President shall also vote in a manner deemed to serve the best interests of BGPSA when attending a University committee.

2. The Vice-President shall work closely with the internal activities of BGPSA. This includes receiving progress reports from each committee. The Vice-President shall assume the duties of Acting President of BGPSA in the event that the President is unable to fulfill the obligations of the office for any reason. If required by either absence or failure to perform duties, the Vice-President shall occupy the position of Acting President for a period not to exceed eight weeks, during which time current members shall conduct an election to fill the office of President. The Vice President will also chair the Professional Development Committee.

3. The Secretary shall be the primary agent of correspondence and serve as the Parliamentarian for BGPSA. This person shall record all proceedings during meetings and maintain all records and papers of the organization. The secretary shall also prepare and forward the application for annual official University recognition to the office of Student Organization Services, and work with the Treasurer in the preparation of documents to accompany BGPSA's request for funding from the University's Graduate Student Council or Associated Student Body. The Secretary shall work with the President (either in person or digitally) to prepare the agenda for all Executive and/or General Body Meetings. The completion and dissemination of agendas are to be determined by the sitting Executive Board.

4. The Treasurer shall receive all monies of the organization and promptly deposit it in BGPSA's student banking office account. In addition, the Treasurer will make authorized disbursements on requisitions signed by the Treasurer and co-signed by the President. Each year, the incoming Treasurer shall submit a proposed budget to the Executive Board for ratification. Ratification of the budget shall require a two-thirds majority of members present at the meeting. Any subsequent modifications to the budget are subject to the advice and consent of the members. The Treasurer shall ensure that BGPSA funds are only used in accordance with the budget. The Treasurer will also chair the Fundraising Committee.

5. The Public Relations and Marketing Chair shall be responsible for researching and compiling the organization's history. This individual shall record and document, in written and visual form, the events and activities of the organization outside of meetings. The Public Relations and Marketing Chair will also update the MSync account of upcoming event notices and previous event photos. The Public Relations and Marketing Chair will also keep up with social media accounts to make the public aware of the on-goings of BGPSA. The Public Relations and Marketing Chair shall work with the Communications Committee to make sure that information is regularly updated. The Public Relations and Marketing Chair will also chair the Communications Committee.

6. The Social Chair shall coordinate and supervise social functions of BGPSSA. The Social Chair shall work to foster a welcoming and communal environment within the organization.

7. The Community Service Chair shall be responsible for organizing activities designed to stimulate awareness in the university community as well as the Lafayette/Oxford, MS community. The Community Service Chair shall plan and organize outreach activities to the undergraduate students at the university and members of the community. Moreover, this chair shall also be responsible for bringing relevant events and affairs of the University and Lafayette/Oxford, MS communities to the attention of BGPSSA and providing suggestions on how the organization can become involved.

Section 2. Committees

1. The Social Committee shall assist with social functions of BGPSSA. This committee shall work to foster a welcoming and communal environment within the organization.

2. The Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for organizing events that will serve to raise monies for the organization's general budget. It shall also be responsible for working with the president to solicit funds from departments and offices within the university.

3. Professional Development Committee shall be responsible for developing and organizing opportunities for the scholarly and professional advancement of BGPSSA members.

4. The Community Service Committee shall assist with organizing activities designed to stimulate awareness in the university community as well as the Lafayette/Oxford, MS community. This committee shall plan and organize outreach activities to the undergraduate students at the university and members of the community. Moreover, this committee shall also be responsible for bringing relevant events and affairs of the University and Lafayette/Oxford, MS communities to the attention of BGPSSA and providing suggestions on how the organization can become involved.

5. Communications Committee accurately maintains all BGPSSA websites and shall work closely with the Historian/Archivist and Secretary.

Section 3. Executive Vacancy/Tenure

1. In the event that a member of the Executive Board is unable to fulfill his or her duties, they will be asked to step down. In order for a member to be asked to step-down, the remaining members of the Executive Board must have documentation showing that said member is not fulfilling their duties. The officer in question will be notified in writing of the possible termination or removal at least 72 hours prior to the vote and will be allowed to

address the Executive Board in a private meeting with the advisor(s) present. The Executive Board present at the private meeting will then vote on whether or not the member in question should be asked to step-down. In the event that there is a split vote, the advisor will make a decision in the best interest of the organization.

2. Officers no longer wishing to serve on the board must submit their written resignation to the President at least two (2) weeks in advance. In the event that the President wishes to resign, they must submit a written resignation to the Vice President and advisor(s). Prior to the officers final day he/she shall provide all documents relating to the organization and brief his/her replacement of current projects in his/her care.

3. In the event an officer is removed or resigns, the nomination process will take place at the next scheduled meeting. The election process will take place at the next scheduled meeting following nomination. The newly elected officers' term shall end at the annual election scheduled at the end of Spring semester.

Article III: Membership

Section 1. Membership Classification

Membership status in BGPISA will render the determinative factor for voting rights within the organization. Membership classification and responsibilities include:

1. Active membership status shall be granted to those registered graduate and professional students who request BGPISA membership for the academic year.
2. Inactive membership status shall be granted to all university students who do not meet all requirements in Section 3.1, but who wish to be a part of the goals and purpose of BGPISA as outlined in Article II.
3. Associate membership shall be faculty and staff who are interested and committed to the goals and purpose of BGPISA.

Section 2.

Recruitment shall take place throughout the year and membership is open at all times.

Section 3.

Membership may be revoked without mutual agreement for non-participation, misconduct, or violations of any provisions of the Constitution. The member will be notified

in writing of the possible revocation at least 72 hours prior to the vote and will be allowed to address the organization in order to relate to members any relevant defense prior to the voting for removal. Membership can only be revoked upon a 2/3 majority vote of eligible members. Revocation of membership will be valid for one (1) semester.

**Article
IV:
Meeting Conduct and
Voting**

Section

1.

Executive Committee and General Body
Meetings

1. Regular meetings of BGPSA shall be held monthly during the Fall and Spring semesters, with a minimum of three regular meetings scheduled for each semester. The schedule of meetings shall be determined by a majority vote of the Executive Board members at the beginning of each academic semester. Moreover, special meetings can be called at the request of the Executive Board.

Section

2.

Voting Practices and Rights of
Members

1. The general body will vote to elect the executive board members during the end of November or beginning of February each year. Newly elected officials will assume tenure at the close of the May meeting to foster a mentoring relationship with the former officers and facilitate a smooth transition into the upcoming academic year. Voting is restricted to active members in good standing.

2. Voting for projects, engagements, and activities will take place during executive board meetings. A formal plan of events for the year will be provided to general body members at general body meetings. Any changes to the proposed plan of events will be announced at general body meetings. This will allow the executive board members to take into account events suggested by general members throughout the year.

Article V: Advisor(s)

Section

1.

The Advisor(s) for BGPSA must be a currently employed full-time member(s) of the University's faculty, staff, and/or administrator with a Doctorate and/or Masters.

Section

2.

Selection of a BGPSA Advisor will be chosen at the discretion of the BGPSA Executive Board Office.

Section

3.

The role of the advisor(s) is the following:

- Be informed about the organization and what the organization will require;
- Provide advice when called upon or when the situation warrants;
- Ensure that the organization registers each year with the Graduate School;
- Regularly attend general and executive board meetings; if you can only attend one, we recommend attending executive meetings;
- Serve as a resource for planning and organizing as well as provide knowledge of the campus and community
- Become familiar with the purpose and structure of the organization by reviewing the constitution and bylaws.
- Familiarize yourself with the group's financial structure, from where the treasury is derived (dues, fundraising), for what the money is used, how money is allocated, and how the money is budgeted, assist in budget development and execution;
- Familiarize yourself with Student Government guidelines;
- Explain and enforce University policies when necessary, including policies on hazing and alcohol;
- Inform the group of infractions of their bylaws, codes, and standing rules;
- Act as a resource on parliamentary procedure;
- Attend group activities and functions and assist when necessary;
- Be familiar with University facilities, services, resources, and procedures which might affect or be of benefit to the organization;
- Function as a liaison between the organization and the campus administration and assist the group in developing an ongoing, beneficial relationship with the University;

- Supervise the transition of officers and assist in new officer training and leadership development
- Assist officers in general operations when necessary;
- Ensure that officers know and understand the obligations of their position and that they are working to fulfill these obligations;
- Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise, when necessary;
- Monitor the group's activities and correspondence to ensure that it is appropriate and in keeping with accepted standards
- Maintain a close relationship with the Executive Board and attempt to meet as many members as possible.

Article VI: Amendments

Section 1

Any member(s) of BGPSSA may propose amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws.

Section 2

All proposed amendments shall be presented to the BGPSSA Secretary in writing at least one week in advance of the next scheduled meeting of BGPSSA Executive Board.

Section 3

All proposed amendments shall be approved or declined by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

Article VII: Ratification and Enactment

This Constitution shall be ratified by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the General Body meeting, and it shall be enacted immediately.

The present constitution shall be the binding force and effective as of August 1, 2020. Any constitution in effect prior to this date is rendered null and void.

This Constitution is subject to amendment based upon extenuating circumstances outside of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association Executive Board's realm of control.

