

# Mathematics Graduate Student Council

## *By-Laws*

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Participation in student organizations is an integral component of students' academic education and professional development. In addition, organizations can also play a crucial role in facilitating the democratic governance of a department. As such, the Mathematics Graduate Student Council (MGSC) serves as an enhancement of both graduate students' experiences as well as the Department of Mathematics as a whole. In recognition of the importance of both a holistic educational experience and democratic governance, we hereby establish these by-laws of the MGSC.

### **I. Organization**

- A. The name of this organization shall be the Mathematics Graduate Student Council (MGSC).
- B. The MGSC is affiliated with the Department of Mathematics of the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK).

### **II. Purpose**

- A. To promote cohesion and cooperation among Mathematics graduate students;
- B. To foster interactions between the faculty and the graduate student body of the Mathematics Department;
- C. To lobby for and/or support the interests of Mathematics graduate students, thus giving a collective voice to the graduate student body of the Mathematics Department;
- D. To disseminate information to the graduate students regarding the Mathematics Department, the Graduate School, and/or UTK procedures, requirements, and/or other pertinent administrative policies and functions; and
- E. To provide liaisons between the Mathematics Department students/faculty, CAS, and other UTK organizations.

### **III. Member Elections and Terms of Service**

- A. There should be three voting members on the MGSC at any given time. Terms of service for MGSC voting members are one year (that is, Summer term through Spring semester of the following academic year).

- B. All MGSC members should be graduate students in the Mathematics Department, carrying a minimum of three credit hours. In addition, all voting members should realistically believe they will be able to carry out their full elected terms (for example, a voting member should not be planning on graduating in December during their term).
- C. The MGSC will call for nominations (including self-nominations), of graduate students to serve as voting members on the MGSC in the following year, no later than four weeks before the end of Spring semester classes. Elections will then be held no later than two weeks before the end of Spring semester classes, with the winners of these elections (i.e. the three individuals receiving the most votes) announced within three days of the elections. The last MGSC meeting of that Spring semester should include both the old and new MGSC members, and serve as a transitioning meeting.
- D. In the event of a tie for the third-most votes in the elections, all tied individuals shall serve as MGSC voting members for the following term. (Note it is acceptable in this case for there to be more than three MGSC voting members at one time.)
- E. All events in (C.) will be scheduled and coordinated by the current MGSC. Elections each year shall occur via online ballot. ALL graduate students in the Mathematics Department are invited and encouraged to participate (i.e. run AND vote) in these elections.
- F. Any voting member of the MGSC who is remaining a graduate student in the Mathematics Department for the following year is eligible for re-election (although must run and win the election again).
- G. At least one voting member from the previous MGSC must also be on the following year's MGSC. In the event that no voting members are elected in this capacity, one current member of the MGSC shall be included in the following year's MGSC as a non-voting member.
- H. In the event that all MGSC voting members intend to leave the university at the conclusion of their Spring semester term, the call for nominations and elections outlined in (C.) shall be moved earlier. In particular, nominations of voting members must be held no later than two weeks into the beginning of Spring semester and elections held two weeks following these nominations. The remainder of that Spring semester will then serve as a transitional period with ALL voting members (i.e. both old and new) functioning as full voting members.
- I. If a MGSC voting member cannot continue his or her duties and steps down, a replacement voting member shall be selected by the remaining MGSC voting members. If the voting member who stepped down was also the President or Secretary, the MGSC is then responsible for selecting a MGSC voting member to fulfill that role as well.

- J. A MGSC voting member may be removed from office for failure to fulfill the duties for which he or she was elected. To remove a MGSC voting member, a motion to solicit a vote of no confidence must be made and approved by ALL of the other MGSC voting members. This motion is then put to vote by the graduate students of the Mathematics Department. A two-thirds majority of the participating vote is required to pass this motion.

#### **IV. Meetings**

- A. Meetings will be held as necessary (as determined by the MGSC), but are to be held a minimum of once per month during both the Fall and Spring semesters.
- B. A majority of MGSC voting members must be present in order for a vote to occur.
- C. Meetings will typically be open only to current MGSC members, but the MGSC may also invite to any meeting any guests they choose (Director of Graduate Studies of the Mathematics Department, Head of the Mathematics Department, Mathematics Department Administration/Assistants, other graduate students, etc.).
- D. In particular, the Mathematics Department Representative to the Graduate Student Senate (if not also a MGSC voting member) should be encouraged to contact the MGSC and attend MGSC meetings as a non-voting member, especially if at that time there is pertinent information on the UTK/Graduate School-level to be discussed with the MGSC.

#### **V. Faculty Advisor and Executive Officers**

- A. The Faculty Advisor of the MGSC shall be the Director of Graduate Studies of the Mathematics Department or another Mathematics faculty member, as appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies of the Mathematics Department.
- B. The President of the MGSC should be selected by and from the voting members of the MGSC during the first meeting of any new MGSC. The President's duties shall be as follows: provide policy leadership; call, set agenda for, and run MGSC meetings; oversee/delegate responsibilities involving the elections for the following year and any activities occurring during the year; attend faculty meetings and report details to the membership (or ensure that at least one MGSC member is present at such meetings); have name included on bank signature card; and maintain group cohesion.
- C. The Secretary of the MGSC should also be selected by and from the voting members of the MGSC during the first meeting of any new MGSC. Alternatively, the MGSC can also decide to rotate this position among its voting members throughout a term in whatever way it chooses. The MGSC as a whole simply must make sure that the following Secretary duties are adequately performed:

take minutes at MGSC meetings; transcribe minutes into electronic format and post on the MGSC website; update the MGSC website; moderate elections and record votes for MGSC members for the following MGSC term; and record any official votes on resolutions.

- D. The Treasurer of the MGSC should be selected by and from the voting members of the MGSC during the first meeting of any new MGSC. The Treasurer's duties shall be as follows: Oversee and present budgets and financial statements to the MGSC and the graduate student community when necessary; ensure proper use of funds; keep an accurate record of all money received and disbursed; manage bank account; have the bank signature card include the President's name; prepare future budgets; and prepare the newly elected treasurer to fill this role.

## **VI. Duties of the MGSC**

### **A. *Be a Voice for the Mathematics Department Graduate Student Body***

Whenever issues arise (either from within the MGSC or brought to the MGSC's attention by the GSS, faculty, other graduate students, etc.), the MGSC should do its best to address such issues. When necessary, the MGSC should draft resolutions to address these issues. Such a resolution must first be presented to all graduate students with ample time provided to solicit feedback. To pass, a resolution must then be approved by a majority of the MGSC voting members. It will then be presented by one or more MGSC members to a faculty/committee meeting, as invited. The MGSC's Faculty Advisor will serve as a facilitator/liaison in this regard.

### **B. *Attendance at Select Faculty/Committee Meetings***

When requested/approved by the MGSC Faculty Advisor, the MGSC should send at least one member to attend that faculty/committee meeting requested/approved. This member(s) will then report back to the MGSC on what was discussed at that meeting and what, if any, follow-up is necessary.

### **C. *Mathematics Department Town Hall Meetings***

In addition to the MGSC's usual meetings, the MGSC is also responsible for organizing, advertising, running, and taking notes during "Town Hall" meetings. These should occur at least once each Fall and Spring semester. This event should first be advertised two weeks in advance and announced in the weekly seminar list. All graduate students in the Mathematics Department are highly encouraged to attend. In addition, faculty and/or department administration may be invited at the discretion of the MGSC. The purpose of these Town Hall meetings is to give Mathematics graduate students a venue for voicing/discussing concerns, suggestions, problems/possible solutions, etc. in

regards to their department. The MGSC should do its best to follow up on any issues raised in these meetings.

*D. Help Organize Other Activities for the Mathematics Department*

The MGSC can assist the Mathematics Department with activities already occurring (for instance, helping organize the department's Tea Time, Professor of the Year Award, new graduate student orientation, etc.). In addition, the MGSC can organize and facilitate new events within the Mathematics Department. Such events include, but are not limited to, fundraisers, social events, and community service activities. For any of these above activities, the MGSC can take the lead on organizing/running that event, or delegate those responsibilities accordingly to a willing graduate student volunteer. This volunteer would then be invited to relevant meetings of the MGSC as a non-voting member.

**VII. Amendment Procedure for these By-Laws**

- A. Amendment(s) shall be drafted by the MGSC and first approved by ALL current MGSC voting members.
- B. Draft amendments shall be presented to the Mathematics Department graduate student body for review prior to calling a vote. Discussion of any such amendment(s) should be facilitated as necessary.
- C. Proposed changes shall be submitted for a vote by all graduate students in the Mathematics Department. A two-thirds majority of the participating vote will be required to pass any amendment.