

Bylaws

Council Purpose

[This is where we talk about what the roles of the council entail, it's mission statement, etc.]

Article I. Roles of the Council Members

I.A. Four Equal Council Members

I.A.I. The four members of the council will maintain equal representation of the Biochemistry student body as a member of the Biochemistry Graduate Student Council (BGSC).

I.A.II. The roles defined in Article I.C. will be rotated through each member throughout their one-year term. (See Term Limits; Article II.B.)

I.A.III. Members of the council, in any capacity, must be graduate students of the Biochemistry department.

I.B. Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) Representative

I.B.I. The GPSC Representative will make up the fifth member of the BGSC, but will not partake in the roles as defined in Article I.C.

I.B.II. The GPSC representative will act as liaison between the Council/student body and GPSC.

I.B.III. The Biochemistry study body via majority vote election, if applicable, will vote upon any roles of the GPSC representative within GPSC.

I.C. Rotating Roles of Council Members

I.C.I. To maintain a degree of equality among the council members, the following roles will be rotated among the four members (excluding the GPSC representative) throughout their one-year term.

I.C.II. The roles of the council members will rotate before each open forum council meeting (Article XXX).

I.C.III. Roles of Council Members:

I.C.III.i. Chair: The acting Chair will call and preside at meetings among the council members/GPSC representative. The acting Chair will oversee and hold accountable all operations and activities of the council and any Committees the council forms.

I.C.III.ii. Secretary: The acting Secretary will be responsible for recording, posting, and filing of minutes of all open forum Council meetings to the BGSC website.

I.C.III.iii. Communicator: The acting Communicator shall intercept all emails (See Emails; Article IV.B.) sent to the BGSC account and prepare a scheduled agenda for the acting Chair to lead at the

following open forum council meeting (See Meeting Agenda; Article III.A.). The Communicator will draft all polls sent out to the Biochemistry Student body.

I.C.III.iv. Treasurer: The acting Treasurer shall receive, disburse, and account for all funds of the Council. The acting Treasurer will provide a written account of the finances freely available on the BGSC website for all Biochemistry students to see. (See Website; Article IV.A.)

Article II. Election of Council Members

II.A. Voting

II.A.I. All votes shall be by majority, unless otherwise specified.

II.A.II. All votes will be blind using electronic polls.

II.A.III. All members of the student body count as one vote, regardless of role.

II.A.IV. Quorum shall be defined as twenty-five percent of the Biochemistry student body. If quorum cannot be convened, the present members will vote on any such actions taking place. These actions can later be canceled if quorum is met and majority vote rules so.

II.A.V. All votes on matters not pertaining to election of the four council members or GPSC representative will occur at the open forum council meetings.

II.A.VI. All votes on matters pertaining to election of the four council members or GPSC representatives will be sent out via email to the entire student body.

II.A.VII. Council member and GPSC representative elections will take place before July 1st of the upcoming school year every year. Each election indicates the end of a term.

II.A.VIII. First year students – those beginning their first year in the Fall semester of the upcoming academic year – may not be elected as members of BGSC for their first academic year. First year students may take part in elections throughout the academic year. First year students may be elected to BGSC as rising second year students.

II.B. Term Limits

II.B.I An individual elected to the BGSC may serve no more than two terms as either a council member or GPSC representative. However, an individual may serve a total of three terms if they choose to change their role; for instance, an individual may serve two terms as a council member and one term as the GPSC representative, or vice-versa.

II.C. Removal of Elected Council Member

II.C.I. Impeachment Process

II.C.I.i. A petition signed by quorum of the student body requesting the impeachment of an elected officer may be presented at any forum council meeting.

II.C.I.ii. The council members and GPSC representative will hear the petition

II.C.I.iii. The relevant council member will be allowed to address the entire student body at the **following** forum council meeting.

II.C.I.iv. A two-thirds majority vote of present members is needed to remove the officer from the council. If successful, the member will be removed immediately.

II.C.I.v. If the council member is removed, their seat will not be replaced until the normally scheduled election at the end of term.

II.C.II. Appeal Process

II.C.II.i. If a council member feels they were unjustly removed from the council, they may be allowed to hold a vote for re-election.

II.C.II.ii. Two-thirds majority vote will be needed to override the previous removal.

II.C.II.iii. The appeal process may only be completed once per term per council member.

Article III. Meetings

III.A. Meeting Agenda

III.A.I. Majority council members (3/5) must be present at all open forum council meetings.

III.A.II. In the event that majority of council members will not be met for the monthly meeting, a meeting will be rescheduled for the same month. The student body will be notified via email to participate in a vote for the re-scheduled meeting.

III.A.III. A council member is allowed two absences from council meetings per term, i.e. 2 per year. Absences beyond 2 will result in impeachment without petition (See Impeachment Process; Article II.C.I.).

III.A.III.i. During impeachment for >2 absences, a council member may present their reasons for absence. Acceptable reasons, for example, may include extended illness, maternity/paternity leave, or scientific pursuit that requires travel (e.g. conferences, internships, collaborations). Unacceptable reasons are anything related to typical work as a graduate student, including but not limited to: exams (preliminary or otherwise), classwork, defense preparation, paper writing, TAing.

III.A.III.ii. Only a quorum vote (not two-thirds) is needed to remove the council member in this instance.

III.A.IV. All student body members are given the chance to submit agenda topics prior to open forum council meetings via email.

III.A.IV.i. If a council member feels it should be addressed prior to the next meeting, they will follow up with the individual to prepare a statement. The identity of this individual will be kept private among the council members unless the individual explicitly states otherwise.

III.A.IV.ii. If no council members feels the need to address the topic at the next meeting, they will address this to the individual, who will be given the chance to state their case during Open Forum Discussions (Article III.B.).

III.A.V.iii. After the presentation of each agenda topic, the council will invite members of the student body to provide comments or suggestions. Each individual will have no more than 5 minutes to speak at a given time. If they require more time to speak, the council will majority vote to give the individual 5 minutes more. A majority vote will take place every 5 minutes to extend the individual's speech.

III.A.V.iv. After covering the planned agenda, the council will open the floor to the student body for comments. Each individual will get 5 minutes to discuss a topic of their choosing relevant to the Biochemistry student body. If they require more time to speak, the council will majority vote to give the individual 5 minutes more. A majority vote among the council members will take place every 5 minutes to extend the individual's speech.

III.C. Times

III.C.I. Open forum council meetings will last no longer than 2 hours unless voted upon.

III.C.I.i. If the 2 hour mark is reached and the agenda has not been completely covered, a majority vote among the Council members will take place to extend the meeting by 20 minutes. A majority vote will take place every 20 minutes to extend the meeting an additional 20 minutes.

III.C.I.ii. If the 2 hour mark is reached and the agenda has not been completely covered, and the majority vote disfavors a time extension, any topic uncovered will be included in the agenda at the next meeting.

III.D. Additional Meetings

III.D.I. A petition signed by quorum of the student body requesting an additional meeting off-schedule from the monthly open forum discussions may be presented via email or to a member of the council at any point.

III.D.I.i. The council members will send an email to the entire student requesting participation in a vote to decide upon an additional meeting time.

III.D.I.ii. Quorum must be reached for the additional meeting time.

Article IV. Transparency with the Student Body

IV.A. Website

IV.A.I. The Council members will maintain website detailing the current council members, meeting minutes, events calendar, contact information, and finances.

IV.A.I.i This website will be update *minimally* on a monthly basis.

IV.B. Email

IV.B.I. The council can be reached by email at the following address: dukebiochemgsc@gmail.com

IV.B.II. A monthly reminder will go out one week before each meeting. [link here]

IV.B.II.i. This email will contain: the date/time/location of the meeting; an agenda for the meeting.

Article V. Anti-Discrimination Policy

V.I As written in the GPSC Council Bylaws, Article XVII: Council Anti-Discrimination Policy (as of 08/2016), the BGSC will seek to “represent and advocate the concerns of graduate and professional students at Duke University. The Council advocates on behalf of students who are citizens of many countries, of diverse ethnic backgrounds, cultural affiliations, creeds, genders, sexual orientations and political beliefs. [The BGSC] will not implement any policies that discriminate against or prevent the free rights of any student. [The BGSC] encourages all interested parties to... discuss sensitive topics in a constructive and academic manner.”

V.II. If the Council deems that a discussion is found discriminatory against any of the parties above and it is not being held in a professional manner, the individual(s) will be asked to remove themselves from the meeting.

V.III. If the individual(s) is/are found to repeat this discriminatory offense at a second meeting, they will be prohibited from attending open forum council meetings for the remainder of the academic year.

V.III.i. If the discriminating individual is a member of the council, they will be removed from office without process and prohibited from appealing.

Article VI. Amendments to Bylaws

VI.A. Amendment Process

VI.A.I. The amendment proposal will be presented to the council meeting prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

VI.A.II. The proposal will be distributed to the entire student body via email prior to discussion at the next open forum council discussion.

VI.A.III. The proposal must be discussed at the next regularly scheduled open forum council discussion.

VI.A.IV. The proposal will **not** be voted upon until the following regularly scheduled open forum council discussion.

VI.A.V. The proposal cannot be either discussed or voted upon at a non-regularly scheduled open forum council discussion.

VI.A.V.i. The proposal cannot be either discussed or voted upon at a make-up meeting for a regularly scheduled open forum council discussion.

VI.A.VI. Two-thirds vote is needed to ratify the amendment.

VI.A.VII. If the amendment is approved, it will take effect immediately.