Kent State University

Black Graduate Student Association
Constitution

Updated 05.15.18

Preamble

Recognizing that Black Students are underrepresented at all levels in higher education and are faced with challenges that are unique to students of color, the Black Graduate Students of Kent State University do hereby organize the Black Graduate Student Association to provide academic and social mediums of support.

Article I- Name and Type of Organization

The organization shall be referred to as the Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA), a non-profit student-led organization.

Article II- Purpose

The purpose of the BGSA is to meet the academic, professional, and social needs of Black graduate students. Our organization recognizes that graduating with a master’s degree or Ph.D. is a top priority. Subsequently, this organization is dedicated to the promotion of academic excellence, mentoring, professional guidance, and social support that will enhance the scholarship of Black graduate students at Kent State University. Most importantly, we plan to use these tools to empower our community and assist with opening the doors to higher education to more individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. We wish to provide a place of refuge where Black students are encouraged to share ideas, concepts, and frustrations. Finally, we aim to provide social opportunities for members to relax and network.

Article III- Membership

Section 1

1. Membership will be divided into two categories:
   a. Active (voting) membership will be extended to all graduate and professional students that have paid their dues for the current academic year.
   b. Associate (non-voting) membership will be open to all graduate and professional students attending Kent State University along with its’ faculty and staff.
2. Each active member of the BGSA is entitled to one vote.
3. General body meetings shall be held at least once a month.
4. Dues can be paid in the form of cash or check at General Body meetings.
Section 2

The BGSA recognizes the importance of diversity in academia and subsequently shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, ability, veteran status, sexuality, religious affiliation, nationality or ethnic origin.

Section 3

All members are expected to abide by the Constitution and any stipulations outlined by Kent State University.

Article IV- Administration

Section 1

The Executive Committee of the BGSA shall consist of one or two persons in the follow chairs

1. Executive Chair
2. Finance Chair
3. Communications Chair
4. Advocacy Chair

Section 2

The Executive Committee shall

1. Be held accountable to the General Body and none of its acts shall conflict with the goals and objectives of the organization or the decisions that have been voted on by active members
2. Define the objectives and goals of the organization for each year
3. Determine policy and administer the BGSA affairs.

Section 3

The Executive Committee shall abide by the administrative financial responsibilities detailed below.

1. The Executive chair(s) and Financial chair(s) are the only persons with the authority to make transactions on the BGSA accounts.
2. Under no circumstances shall the Executive Committee spend more than a specified amount of the BGSA funds between General Body meetings without permission and approval from the General Body.
3. The specified amount of annual dues for the next academic year will be determined by the incoming Executive Committee before the end of the fiscal year.
Section 4

The BGSA agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the Center for Student Involvement (CSI), its executive committee and the finance board. The constitution, amendments to it and the by-laws of the organization shall be subject to the review by the CSI Executive committee to ensure that they are in accordance to the aforementioned rules and regulations.

Article V- Executive Committee Chairpersons

Section 1

All members of the Executive committee must be an active member of the BGSA and are entitled to one vote.

Section 2

In general, all decisions shall be made by the majority vote of those active members present.

Section 3

In any instance of an emergency (decided by Executive chair(s)), a decision shall be made by a majority vote of the entire Executive Committee. In the rare event that this happens, the decision must be reported in writing before the next meeting or at the next General Body meeting.

Section 4

Voting by proxy is only allowed during elections.

Section 5

Elections:

1. Nomination and election of officers shall take place prior to the last general meeting of Spring Semester.
2. The executive meetings shall appoint a parliamentarian prior to the second-to-last meeting of the Spring Semester, who shall supervise elections, count ballots, and announce election results by the last general meeting of Spring Semester.
3. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.
4. In the event that there is a tie, there will be a revote for the two top candidates.

Section 6

Active members of the BGSA reserve the right to impeach any committee chair by a two- thirds majority vote of the active full membership.
Article VI- Roles of Executive Committee Chairpersons

The duties of the elected officers are:

1. Executive Chair
   - Are responsible for the day to day functioning of the organization.
   - Shall call and chair Executive Committee and General Body meetings.
   - Shall ensure and facilitate effective communication between the committees and General Body meetings.
   - Shall be the primary representative(s) of the BGSA in all campus and professional relations.
   - Appoints committee chair(s) as needed

2. Finance Chair
   - Shall maintain and update the BGSA’s financial records and accounts.
   - Shall be responsible for recording the organizations financial transactions and for reporting a monthly statement and a yearly report for its account.
   - Shall be responsible for communication with the Graduate Student Senate and Finance Board.

3. Communications Chair
   - Shall facilitate ordinary business of the organization.
   - Shall maintain and update the organization’s listserv.
   - Shall record and report minutes at all meetings.
   - Shall be responsible for any and all correspondence with the General Body.
   - Shall maintain the BGSA media presence.

4. Advocacy Chair
   - Shall increase the level of service to and interaction between local colleges, Kent, Portage County, international Black community and the BGSA members.
   - Shall enhance awareness of events and happenings of the BGSA to members of the KSU, Kent, and Portage County Communities.
   - Shall oversee committee chairs appointed by Executive Chair.

Section 1

Meetings

Executive committee shall call

1. At least one General body meetings per month.
2. At least two Executive board meetings per month.
Article VII- Amendments

Section 1

Amendments to this constitution may be made by:

1. Proposal (at least verbally) during the course of General Body meetings
2. Active members only

Section 2

A written draft of the specified amendment must be made available to the General Body at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which it will be voted on.

Section 3

A two-thirds majority vote of the active membership present at the General Body meeting is necessary for any amendments to be made to this document. Accepted amendments will take effect the following fiscal year.