**Lakehead Environmental and Life Sciences Graduate Association Constitution 2021-22 Table of Contents**

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**Section 1- Name of the Association**

*The name of the Association is the Lakehead Environmental and Life Sciences Graduate Association, “LELSGSA” herein referred to as “the Association”.*

**Section 2- Purpose of the Association**

*The Association aims to represent the interests and needs of natural sciences graduate students and to keep them informed about university and departmental issues. The Association provides a forum for all natural and life sciences graduate students to voice their opinions on matters important to them through monthly meetings; consensus-based decisions are then carried forward by Association-elected and appointed representatives to the relevant university bodies. The Association also seeks to foster interactions, promote and support professional development, and to encourage communication and organization between graduate students on both social and academic levels.*

*LELS GSA is working towards greater equity, diversity and inclusion. LELS GSA represents all graduate students within all science and interdisciplinary departments and it is imperative that all of our constituents have equal support, access to development opportunities, and have equal participation abilities. We encourage all students to nominate themselves for the available positions. LELS GSA will strive to ensure every student feels as if they are equally represented and have an equal voice.*

**Section 3- Membership**

*Membership in the Association will be limited to Lakehead University graduate students who study the natural and life sciences. Specifically, membership is open to students belonging to the departments of Biology, Natural Resources Management, Geology, Biotechnology, Archaeology, and Environmental Studies. All graduate students currently registered (full and part-time) in these departments are automatically considered members of the Association*.

**Section 4- Members of the Executive Committee**

*The Executive Committee will consist of three administrative positions, five Departmental representatives, two standing committee roles, and any appointed coordinators of* Ad hoc *Committees.*

Elected positions consist of the following:

*Administrative Positions*

1) Council Chair

2) Council Co-Chair

3) Treasurer

4) Secretary

*Departmental Representatives*

1) Biology representative – natural sciences

2) Biology representative – life sciences

3) Biotechnology representative

4) Environmental Studies representative - Geography

5) Archaeology/Anthropology representative

6) Natural Resources Management representative

7) Geology representative

*Standing Committee Coordinators*

1) Event Coordinator

2) Media Coordinator and Webmaster

**Section 5- Duties of the Executive**

*Members of the Executive fulfill specific needs within the Association. These members are expected to attend regular Association meetings and always have the interests of the entire Association at heart. If the Association feels a member of the Executive is not fulfilling his/her/their obligations, they/he/she may be removed by the Association by a motion as outlined in Section 7. Executive members are required to complete a year-end report/Meeting by March 31 of each year to be passed along to executive-elect members.*

*Duties of unfilled positions will be delegated to existing members of the standing committee.*

**Administrative Positions**

*Administrative members ensure the smooth running of Association operations as well as schedule, organize, and mediate monthly meetings. Their duties are:*

1) Association Chair

* Attends and moderates the Association monthly meetings, and calls special meetings as requested by members.
* Collects correspondence and delivers opinions/statements from absentee members at Association meetings.
* Ensures that consensus-based decisions reached at Association meetings are carried out by the relevant representatives/committees.
* Is the primary contact for university administration

2) Association Co-Chair

* Replaces the Chair at meetings where he/she/they is unavailable.
* Announces upcoming meetings and circulates agenda.

3) Treasurer

* Performs monetary transactions as directed by the Association.
* Keeps accurate records of receipts and expenditures.
* Prepares and presents the Annual Report of the Association’s finances, including a budget for the following year.

4) Secretary

* Compiles meeting minutes and posts these on the Association website.

**Departmental Representatives**

*Department representatives will be the voice of the graduate students in their respective department and will sit on the LELS GSA board as an executive member. Representatives will participate in monthly meetings, will be involved in all decision-making processes, and be the conduit for information, ideas, and concerns between each department and the graduate association. When occasionally required, department representatives will attend bi-weekly meetings or meetings on an as needed basis.*

Department Representative roles include:

* Being prepared to attend Association meetings with ideas and intent to contribute to improving the lives of your fellow graduate students.
* Be open to communicating with your representative department/students to hear their concerns and requests to bring to a Association meeting
* Help to organize, run, and attend Association events
* Have an open mind to other ideas and working as a team member
* Promote outreach by speaking to your peers about events/opportunities
* Attend departmental meetings and communicate back to the Association decisions and information that pertains to Association graduate students
* When required, represent the Association on matters pertaining to hiring, renewal, tenure, and promotion of faculty members

**Standing Committees**

*The primary function of the standing committees is to improve communication and collaboration between Association members, at both the academic and social levels. These committees should seek to foster cohesiveness within the department, while serving the diversity of interests present.*

**Media Coordinator and Webmaster**

The media coordinator and webmaster will be responsible for maintaining the Association website and for running all social media accounts. Knowledge of developing infographics, websites, posting on social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram, and some knowledge of photography are assets. The Media Coordinator and Webmaster will attend monthly meetings.

* Roles include:
  + Maintaining social media platforms with up to date news and events
  + Create a website that is easily accessible and is updated regularly with resources for students and detailed information on upcoming events
  + Monitor the inboxes of all social media platforms and the website for students reaching out.
  + Bring suggestions to the group for better media outreach and student engagement
  + Creation of posters for display on campus and in emails to announce upcoming events

**Event and Social Coordinator**

The event coordinator will help to coordinate all events the Association conducts. They will work with other GSA members and coordinate members to ensure events are run effectively.

* Roles include:

o This includes organizing meetings for and managing sub-event committees. Typical events within a year include a graduate-student mini-conference, coffee hours, beginning of school year meet-and-greet

o Reserving food and event spaces

o Ensuring all public health and safety protocols are followed

o Should be familiar with Queen’s Events Services regulations pertaining to the consumption of food and alcohol on University premises

o Working with the treasurer to maintain the budget and complete reimbursements

o The event coordinator will attend monthly board meetings and any meetings on a as needed basis.

***Ad hoc* Committees**

*Ad hoc Committees may be struck by the Association on areas of special interest to members that are not covered by the Standing Committees, or in which the Association feels a dedicated committee would be more effective. As these committees are primarily interest driven, its directors are appointed by the Association at general meetings on a case-by-case basis. Areas of special interest could include: community outreach, sustainability-related issues, and hobby-related groups. As with elected positions, ad hoc committees are expected to represent the interests of the Association and committee directors will be considered members of the Executive.*

**Section 6 – Electoral Process**

1) By March 1st of each year, the Secretary will provide notice of elected positions available for the following year. All positions are for one-year terms.

2) Annual elections shall be held during the 3rd calendar week in March

3) To be considered for a position, candidates will submit a written notification and statement of interest of their candidacy along with a minimum of five signatures (e-signature is fine) from Association members supporting their nomination no later than 10 working days from the time that the election notice is served. Candidates cannot be nominated for more than one position simultaneously. Written statements will be posted on the Association website prior to annual elections.

4) At the Nomination meeting, the Association will appoint an Elections Officer, who will not be on the slate of nominees.

5) Elections shall be held by secret ballot, conducted through Google Form using an official Lakehead University email address. Ballots will be rank-preference and will be scored using the standard Borda count method. The website URL for the ballot form will be open for 24 hours.

6) Votes will be tallied by the sitting Association Chair

7) Election results will be announced to the Association by the Secretary the day following the election.

8) Elected executive members will begin their term on May 1st. During the month of April, they will be considered the executive-elect and will meet with the current

executive members to discuss the requirements of their positions and receive a year-end report.

**Section 7 – Association Meetings**

*Association meetings serve as the primary forum for establishment of Association policies, positions and discussions and are crucial for its continued wellbeing. It is during these meetings that members of the Executive report on their activities, new concerns are brought forward, and future directions are discussed.*

1) Association meetings are held monthly. Meeting location, times, and agendas are advertised to the Association by the Co-Chair or Chair, and are open to all members.

2) Decisions made by the Association are primarily consensus-based. In the event that

substantial consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a vote at the next meeting. Motions will be considered accepted if passed by a 2/3 majority. Each Association member will receive one vote. Proxy votes may be cast with written permission from the absentee members in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting.

3) A quorum shall consist of 2/4 of the elected members of the Executive in addition to 2 departmental representatives.

**Section 8 – Amendments to the Constitution**

*Amendments to the Constitution can represent fundamental shifts in the operation of the Association. As such, every step should be taken to ensure that the entire Association membership is aware of proposed changes and has a voice in deciding their fate.*

1) Proposed amendments to the Constitution must be brought to the Chair at least 7 working days before an Association Meeting, and be signed by the Chair and/or Co-Chair with a majority of Executive members.

2) No later than 5 working days prior to the Association Meeting, the Co-Chair will circulate a notice of the proposed amendment.

3) During the Meeting, time will be allotted to discuss the proposed amendment and a vote will be held according to the guidelines in Section 7.

**Section 9 – Adoption of This Constitution**

This Constitution will come into effect as of December 1, 2022, contingent on acceptance by a 2/3 majority of Association members. The Constitutional referendum will be held according to the same procedure as outlined in Section 6, with the exception that the ballot will be a Yes/No question and no nominations will be held.

**Section 10 – Dissolution of the Association**

The Association can be dissolved by a 2/3 majority of Association members, following the guidelines of Section 9.