

## **Introduction**

As early as 2004, it was acknowledged that the By-Laws of the HGC were inadequate. Some aspects of HGC operations, like attendance, were outlined in overly-bureaucratic detail while other issues, notably the budgeting process, were scarcely discussed. Indeed, items as important as the mission of the organization were omitted completely. The By-Laws of the HGC needed more than revision, they needed a complete reconstruction.

A period of reconstruction affords many new opportunities, and in seeking to better codify our governance, the HGC looked to the various Harvard graduate school student governments as well as student governments from across the Ivy League. Our new governance documents have many improvements yet still retain the most important pieces of the previous By-Laws. In addition to creating a new set of By-Laws, we continued the work began in 2004-2005 toward the creation of a HGC Constitution.

## **Major changes in the 2006 governance documents**

### *Constitution introduced*

A Constitution was introduced into the HGC, distinct from the By-Laws, to provide a place for the fundamental vision of the organization to be defined apart from the technical details of operations that the By-Laws codify. Use of this dichotomy is almost universal across surveyed student governments.

### *By-Laws rewritten*

Neither the existing structure nor overall language of the previous By-Laws was used to form the basis for the new By-Laws. Where appropriate, sections and phrases were transferred.

### *Executive Board restructured*

The previous model had an Executive Board with eight positions. This was useful in theory, but in practice led to a top-heavy organizational model, under-utilizing talented people by putting them in overly-specific Executive roles. Offices were consolidated and duties changed accordingly.

<b>Current Executive Board</b>	<b>Proposed Executive Board</b>
President	President
Vice-President Academic Affairs	Vice-President Student Advocacy
Vice-President Student Affairs	
Vice-President Internal Affairs	Vice-President Internal Operations
Vice-President Finance	
Vice-President Communications	Vice-President External Relations
Vice-President Relations	
Vice-President Events	Vice-President Events

### *Codify mission*

The mission of the organization is now codified in the governance documents (Constitution). No mention of mission was made in previous the By-Laws.

### *Meeting definition*

The distinction between an open meeting and a closed meeting caused an unending amount of bureaucratic complexity. Further, by only allowing the full student constituency of the HGC to attend one meeting per month, the democratic nature of the organization was somewhat diminished. Therefore, the two large-scale meetings per month are now designated as General Assembly meetings and remain open to all members of the HGC.

### *Member definition*

As a way of more clearly defining who the constituency of the HGC is, a member is now defined as “all students matriculated at the eleven graduate and professional schools of Harvard University.” The term “matriculated” is newly implemented here.

### *Representative definition and number*

The definition of a member is now clearly defined and the number of representatives from each school is set (previously, the number was variable between two and five). Now, “each graduate and professional school shall formally designate four matriculated students to be its Representatives to the HGC.”

### *Attendance policy removed*

Tracking and punitive measures for non-attendance were removed because they were overly bureaucratic and juvenile.

### *Codify the set of standing committees*

The set of standing committees is now codified. The previous By-Laws did not discuss standing committees.

### *Financial operations*

A framework for budgeting, disbursal, and oversight of financial operations is now in place. Only three brief sentences about budgeting existed in the previous By-Laws. There was previously no infrastructure to guide disbursal or prevent fraud through oversight.

### *Compensation prohibited*

It is now stated that “no officeholder of the Harvard Graduate Council shall solicit or accept personal compensation in any form for duties performed in the name of the Harvard Graduate Council.” This language is completely new to the HGC, though the practice has long been such.

### *Removal from office*

A new framework for removing elected persons is now in place. It now allows anyone accused of wrongdoing to defend themselves before the General Assembly.

*Grouping by category*

Certain pieces of infrastructure, such as a set of principles for defining suffrage, are now in one place (grouped by category) instead of scattered about throughout the document on a per-issue basis. The definition of suffrage is the best example of this.

*President Emeritus*

The President Emeritus will now hold that position for one year after their term as President has expired only if he or she is still a matriculated student of Harvard University. The provision for being a matriculated student is new.

*Presidential suffrage*

In anticipation of possible events, the President is now allowed to vote only in the case of a tie.

Respectfully submitted,



John Kalis  
2005-2006 HGC President

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