



Constitution of the Viterbi Graduate Student Association (VGSA)

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Viterbi Graduate Student Association Constitution

University of Southern California

Article I. NAME AND PURPOSE

Part A. Name

- Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Viterbi Graduate Student Association, formerly Engineering Graduate Student Association of the University of Southern California, hereafter referred to as "VGSA".
- Section 2. Neither name nor the logo of VGSA shall be used for any purpose whatsoever without the consent of the VGSA Executive Board.
- Section 3. This organization will use the name or its acronym, VGSA, in all publicity materials and correspondence.

Part B. Purpose

- Section 1. The purpose of VGSA is to address and represent the needs and concerns of the graduate students of the Viterbi School of Engineering in collaboration with the Office of Graduate and Professional Programs (GAPP) and Office of Student Affairs when necessary or appropriate. This will be done by providing an inclusive and accessible environment for the Viterbi graduate students at all VGSA events and sponsored events.

Article II. MEMBERSHIP

Part A. Requirements

- a) All full-time and part-time graduate students currently enrolled in the Viterbi School of Engineering at the University of Southern California are eligible to be voting members
- b) Membership to VGSA is given at the time of enrollment into a Viterbi graduate program and will be terminated upon the member's completion or exiting of the program.
- c) Membership decisions will not be discriminated on the basis of age, race, religion or creed, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation
- d) All members should review and agree to adhere to the purposes of VGSA as described above

Article III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Part A. Voting Parties "the Council"

Section 1. Executive Board

- a) The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Communication, Vice President of Finance, and Vice President of Programs
- b) The Executive board shall focus on the overall direction of VGSA and make decisions based on the improvement and best interest of the entire organization

Section 2. Senators

- a) The "Senators" shall consist of students elected by the graduate students of that department to represent their respective departments.
- b) Elected Senators will report directly to the Executive Vice President and will have the option to serve in various chair positions under a Vice President
- c) Senators shall be from the following departments:
 - i. Aerospace & Mechanical Engineering
 - ii. Astronautics & Space Technology Division
 - iii. Biomedical Engineering
 - iv. Computer Science
 - v. Daniel J. Epstein Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering
 - vi. Distance Education Network (DEN)
 - vii. Green Technologies
 - viii. Department of Informatics
 - ix. Mork Family Department of Chemical Engineering & Materials Science
 - x. Ming Hsieh Department of Electrical Engineering
 - xi. Sonny Astani Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering
- d) The number of representatives from each department is based on current enrollment figures:

Department Enrollment	Number of Senator(s)
001-300	1
301-600	2
601-900	3
901-1200	4 etc

Part B. Non-Voting Party (Ex-Officio)

Section 1. Advisor

a) Requirements

- i. As a recognized student organization at the University of Southern California, VGSA is required to have an official advisor from the USC faculty and/or staff.
- ii. Other persons may serve as special advisors as needed.

b) Duties

- i. The advisor must sign the recognition application each year, or whenever officer information changes or amendments are made to the constitution.
- ii. Advisers should meet with council members as needed

Section 2. Viterbi Graduate Student Liason

- a) Listen to your concerns, answer your questions, help in any way that I can and maintain confidentiality
- b) Represent the Viterbi graduate student body and act as the channel between students and administrators
- c) Collaborate with student organizations like VGSA and GSG to help enrich your graduate student life experience
- d) Coordinate the Viterbi Graduate Mentors (VgradM) program in order to help new students make a smooth transition into the Viterbi community
- e) Participate as a GSG senator
- f) Select additional GSG senators as designated by GSG
- g) Communicate outcomes of GSG meeting to the Executive board of VGSA

Section 3. VGSA Ambassadors

- a) Volunteer Viterbi Graduate students
- b) No voting power within VGSA
- c) Requested to assist with certain task and events as deemed appropriate and needed by any member of the VGSA Executive Board

Article IV. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Part A. All Executive Board members are expected to:

Section 1. Vote on funding requests

Section 2. Attend VGSA Executive Board and Council meetings

Part B. President

- a) Be the Official Spokesperson of VGSA and the Chief Liaison with all other offices, organizations and student groups both inside and outside USC
- b) Chair all meetings of VGSA and will call special meetings as needed
- c) Oversee VGSA activities
- d) Organize and conduct the Executive Board meetings and the Council meetings
- e) Meet with the VGSA Advisor regularly to address concerns of the organization and its members
- f) Coordinate with persons and student organizations associated with events for VGSA members
- g) Execute his/her discretionary powers in times of constitutional emergency
- h) Approve/discard any proposal if there is a tie in the poll over a given proposed constitutional amendment or any other affair

Part C. Executive Vice President

- a) Attend VGSA Executive Board and Council meetings
- b) Maintain VGSA property and supplies
- c) Conduct VGSA Council and Board meetings in the absence of the President
- d) Directly oversee all Senators to ensure they are meeting their position requirements

Part D. Vice President of Communications

- a) Maintain and regularly update the VGSA website at viterbistudents.usc.edu/vgsa
- b) Transcribe minutes for all VGSA meetings and post them on VGSA Website within 48 hours of each meeting
- c) Handle mail and e-mail correspondence of VGSA via vgsa@usc.edu
- d) Generate and e-mail announcements of VGSA events to Senators and/or GAPP adviser
- e) Produce flyers for VGSA events and distribute them to Senators for posting
- f) Be the point-of-contact for initial communication with VGSA for any official matters

- g) Work closely with GAPP and assist them in their communication initiatives

Part E. Vice President of Finance

- a) Manage the budget and finances of VGSA
- b) Attend all GSG funding workshops
- c) Be responsible for purchasing and budget requests for VGSA
- d) Keep track of receipts and close out budget grants
- e) Maintain a record of all budget requests and expenditures
- f) Track and be responsible for funding requests submitted to VGSA from other organizations
- g) Ensure that approved funding requests meet all after approval requirements

Part F. Vice President of Programs

- a) Organize events for all VGSA members
- b) Reserve all venues for VGSA events and meetings
- c) Work with the Vice President of Finance to attain funding for VGSA events
- d) Work with the Vice President of Communications to ensure that all event information is properly and effectively circulated to the VGSA members

Article V. DUTIES OF SENATORS

- a) Uphold responsibilities as listed in the bylaws of this constitution
- b) Be the Single Point-of-Contact for students of the respective department for non-academic affairs. Any issue with an academic intent or background should be first discussed with the department's Graduate Student Advisor(s)
- c) Attend weekly council meetings, unless other arrangements are made with Executive Vice President
- d) Assist with the VGSA activities and post VGSA flyers in the department they specifically represent
- e) Forward all official VGSA e-mails to department advisors so they can forward it to all students in their graduate program
- f) Keep in contact with Department specific organizations
- g) Keep in constant contact with department advisers
- h) Participate in a VGSA committee or chair position
- i) Be available to students to address concerns

Article VI. CHAIRMANSHIPS & COMMITTEES

Part A. Standing Chairmanships

Section 1. Chairmanships reporting to the Vice President of Communication

- a) The Newsletter Chair shall oversee the VGSA newsletter and ensure that it is accurate and disseminated in a timely manner.
- b) The Website Chair shall maintain and update the VGSA website.

Section 2. Chairmanships reporting to the Vice President of Finance

- a) The Major Department Finance Chair shall assist in collecting funding requests and organizing reimbursements for the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science departments.
- b) The Minor Department shall assist the VP Finance in collecting funding requests and organizing reimbursements for all departments other than Electrical Engineering or Computer Science.

Part B. Event Chairmanships

- a) A chairman shall be selected for each major VGSA-wide event and shall report to the Vice President of Programs

Part C. Other Chairmanships/Committees

- a) Other chairmanships may be appointed by a majority vote of the members at a regular council meeting of VGSA.
- b) It is at the discretion of all vice presidents to appoint a Senator to serve as a chair
- c) The duties and duration of that chair must be clearly defined and approved by the President
- d) The approved description and duration shall be given to the Ex-Officio party as a record

Article VII. NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, & TERMS

Part A. Requirements for Running for and Holding Office

Section 1. All officers and candidates for office must be currently enrolled Graduate Students in the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

Section 2. All officers must be in good standing at USC and may not be on academic probation.

Part B. Executive Board

Section 1. Nomination

- a) Executive Board elections will take place annually at the second to last council meeting of the spring semester or at the end of the Fall semester if a position becomes open.
- b) Candidates must submit their intent to run 1 week prior to elections. Executive Board members, Senators and VGSA Members are all eligible to run for Executive Board positions.

Section 2. Elections

- a) VGSA must promote elections at least 2 weeks prior to the election.
- b) All candidates will have 1 minute to give a speech. Candidates for President will have 2 minutes to give a speech. If a candidate is not able to be at the meeting, he/she may submit a speech to be read by the highest ranking outgoing board member.
- c) Deliberation will be moderated by a member of the Ex-Officio group. Suggested method of discussion is 1-pro, 1-con, 1-pro.
- d) Voting shall be by secret ballot and counted by moderator.
- e) To vote, all council members must be present for all speeches for a position. If a council member misses one of the speeches, he/she may stay for the other speeches for that office but may not vote.
- f) Candidates may not be present for speeches by other candidates for the position for which they wish to run.
- g) If a candidate is not elected, he/she may run for other positions on the board.
- h) Positions shall be elected in the order listed in the VGSA Constitution.
- i) A simple majority vote of the quorum present at that meeting will be sufficient to elect an officer. If there are more than two candidates and no candidate receives a majority, there will be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients in the general meeting.

Section 3. Removal from Office

- a) Officers may be removed from office for failure to perform duties or for violation of membership clause.
- b) Officers to be voted upon in this regard will be notified of the intention to do so in writing at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken.
- c) A two-thirds majority of quorum present at a regularly scheduled meeting shall be sufficient for removal from office.

Section 4. Terms of Office and Vacancies

- a) The term for all Executive Board members shall be from the last meeting of each spring semester until the end of the second-to-last meeting of the subsequent spring semester.

- b) Should a vacancy in office occur, there will be another applicant procedure and election for the vacant office.
- c) In the meantime, the Executive VP will assume the duties of the President, the VP Finance will assume the duties of the Executive VP, and the VP Communication will assume the duties of the VP Finance should those offices be vacant.

Part C. Senators

Section 1. Nomination

- a) To express an intent to run for a senator position a student must submit an application as promoted by VGSA
- b) Nominations will be confirmed by the E-Board after a basic application review for clarity, completeness, and appropriateness

Section 2. Election

- a) Senator elections will take place at the beginning of each semester
- b) VGSA must promote elections with sufficient time for students to apply and vote
- c) Election will be conducted in a transparent, inclusive, and honest manner

Section 3. Removal from Office

- a) Senators may be removed from office for failure to perform duties as described in the constitution and bylaws
- b) Senators may be removed from office for violation of membership clause

Section 4. Terms of Office and Vacancies

- a) The term for all Senators begins at the start of the semester and ends on the last day of finals for the semester.
- b) Should a vacancy in office occur, there will be another applicant procedure and election for the vacant office.

Article VIII. MEETINGS

Section 1. Council meetings will be held each week.

Section 2. To conduct business at any meeting, one half of the entire voting membership must be present to form quorum.

Section 3. Executive board meetings will be held weekly.

Section 4. Special meetings

- a) May be called by any combination of three of the officers. Notice of special meetings must be communicated to all members at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

Article IX. FUNDING REQUESTS

Part A. Application Guidelines

Section 1. These guidelines are only for events which are not considered as joint events with VGSA

- a) Applications must be submitted 4 weeks prior to your event date
- b) All applications must comply with the GSG Finance Laws and Funding Policy in addition to the VGSA specific guidelines below
- c) The applying Student Organizations must be directly related to Viterbi School of Engineering OR indicate that the proposed event will have an attendance breakdown of at least 50% Viterbi students
- d) The event MUST be open and free to attend for all Viterbi Students
- e) Students organizing the event are NOT allowed to charge the participants in any way
- f) The decision of the VGSA Board will be final and non-negotiable
- g) The VGSA Committee reviews funding requests once a week and will get back to you with the verdict at the end of the weekly cycle
- h) T-shirts and hard durables (i.e. grill, electronics, clothing, etc.) cannot be funded

Part B. Application Procedure

- a) Funding applications will be reviewed at weekly E-Board meetings
- b) Notification of request will be sent no more than 12 hours after an E-Board meeting
- c) If at any time the approved funding request does not meet Article IX standards VGSA reserves the right to with-hold funding

Part C. Post Approval

Section 1. Prior to event occurrence

- a) Appropriately affix the official VGSA logo to all promotional materials for the event as specified by the VGSA E-Board
- b) Promotional material must be visible within all Viterbi department (i.e. email, flyers, Facebook, etc.)

Section 2. Post event occurrence

- a) Submit all required documentation to Vice President of Finance

Article X. AFFILIATIONS

Part A. USC

- Section 1. This organization is a recognized student organization at the University Of Southern California Viterbi School Of Engineering, but is not part of the University itself.
- Section 2. In all correspondence and business transactions, it may refer to itself as an organization at the Viterbi School and/or USC, but not as part of the Viterbi School and/or USC itself.
- Section 3. VGSA accepts full financial and production responsibility for all activities it sponsors.
- Section 4. VGSA agrees to abide by all pertinent Viterbi School and USC policies and regulations. Where the Viterbi School and/or USC policies and regulations and those of VGSA differ, the policies and regulations of the Viterbi School and/or USC will take precedence.
- Section 5. This organization recognizes and understands that the University and the Viterbi School assume no legal liability for the actions of the organization, and that the University and the Viterbi School are not providing blanket indemnification insurance coverage for any activities of the organization, unless those activities expressly benefit and further the goals of the University, and have received prior review, approval, and consent of Campus Activities, Risk Management, and/or General Counsel.

Article XI. AMENDMENTS & BY-LAWS

Part A. Amendments

- Section 1. This constitution can be amended by a two-thirds vote of the entire Council at a regular meeting of VGSA.
- Section 2. Notification of such a motion must be made to the Council at least one meeting in advance of the one in which the actual vote is taken.

Part B. By-Laws

- Section 1. By-laws can be added to this constitution by a simple majority vote of the entire Council at a regular meeting of VGSA.
- Section 2. This constitution takes precedence over any and all by-laws.

Article XII. BY-LAWS

Part A. Expectations of Senators

- a) Hold at least 1 event every semester
- b) Attend at least 1 GSG meeting per semester
- c) Attend at least 50% of all VGSA events per semester