

ECSE Graduate Council Bylaws

Version 1.0

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the **ECSE Graduate Council** (hereafter, the **ECSE GC**).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The ECSE GC exists to improve the graduate student experience within the Department of Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering (ECSE) by (i) building community among graduate, (ii) advocating for graduate student needs to departmental and Institute leadership, (iii) organizing social, professional, and wellness programming, and (iv) supporting initiatives that enhance learning, research, and everyday life for ECSE graduate students.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Equal Opportunity and Hazing

- a) It is the policy of the ECSE GC to provide, to the maximum extent feasible, equal opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability for all aspects of the ECSE GC's activities.
- b) The ECSE GC shall make reasonable efforts to ensure Masters', Co-term and PhD students of the department are adequately represented.
- c) Hazing, reckless or intentional endangerment to health, or forced consumption of alcohol or other drugs for the purpose of initiation into or continuing membership of the ECSE GC is strictly prohibited.

Section 2. Definition of Membership

- a) **Regular Members** are registered Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) students who are enrolled in graduate programs offered by the ECSE Department subject to a maximum of eight (8).
- b) **Associate Members** (non-voting) may include but not limited to ECSE faculty/staff, ECSE alumni, and non-ECSE RPI students interested in supporting ECSE GC activities.

Section 3. Obtaining Membership

- a) To obtain Regular Membership, an eligible person must be nominated by any active graduate student in the ECSE department and must be voted in during regular annual elections.
- b) Associate Membership may be granted through approval by the ECSE GC upon receipt of written request indicating such intent.

Section 4. Continued Membership

Every regular member of ECSE GC voted in during regular annual elections shall continue to hold office for 1 year or until the next elections, as the case may be.

Section 5. Voting Rights

- a) Only Regular Members in good standing shall have voting rights; each such member has one vote.
- b) A member loses voting rights upon loss of Regular Member status or for cause as determined through the disciplinary process in Section 7.

Section 6. Membership Information

- a) The ECSE GC shall collect, record and maintain an updated roster of: (i) preferred name, (ii) RIN (if applicable), (iii) RCS ID (if applicable), (iv) email address of all regularly registered grad students in the ECSE department.
- b) All information other than names and membership level is confidential and released only to the department staff upon specific request received in writing to ECSE GC.

Section 7. Removal of Membership

- a) A member may be removed for failure to comply with these bylaws or department policy, violation of the Student Code of Conduct, or violation of RPI Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities.
- b) **Process:** (i) A written complaint is submitted to the ECSE GC voting membership; (ii) removal requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the ECSE GC voting membership; (iv) notice of decision and appeal options is provided in writing within five (5) business days.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers and Duties

1. The ECSE GC shall include at minimum a **President**, a **Secretary** and two **Officers**.
2. **President:** It shall be the President's duty to lead the ECSE GC, set agendas, represent graduate students to ECSE leadership and Institute bodies, and ensure alignment with the ECSE GC purpose. The ECSE GC President also represents the department at the RPI Graduate Council as a non-voting member. The ECSE GC President may also appoint the following roles to reflect ECSE GC activities and needs
 - **Vice President:** Supports the President; oversees committees; manages internal operations and succession planning.
 - **Events Coordinator(s):** Plans social/professional events that build cross-group interactions (e.g., mixers, seminars); coordinates logistics and evaluations.
 - **Publicity & Communications Coordinator (s):** Manages outreach (email, flyers, social); maintains web presence.

Section 2. Eligibility for Office

- a) Candidates must be Regular Members.

- b) If an officer cannot complete the term, they shall inform the ECSE GC before being eligible to hold office in the future.
- c) No person may hold more than one elected office concurrently.

Section 3. Elections

- a) Elections shall be held at least once per academic year, typically in early November for terms beginning in the subsequent week of elections.
- b) **Process:** (i) Graduate Program Assistant announces the election timeline at least two (2) weeks in advance; (ii) nominations open for one (1) week and may be self-nominations; (iii) candidates submit a short statement; (iv) voting occurs at a General Meeting or via secured online ballot open for 48 hours; (v) simple majority elects; (vi) ties are resolved by a runoff between tied candidates.
- c) Any member who suspects unfair conduct shall notify the Graduate Program Assistant for further scrutiny.

Section 4. Removal from Office

- a) An officer may be removed for failure to perform duties, failure to comply with these bylaws or ECSE GC policy, violation of the Student Code of Conduct, or violation of ECSE Department policies.
- b) **Process:** (i) Written petition by at least five (5) Regular Members or a majority of the ECSE GC; (ii) discussion at a special meeting with at least five (5) days' notice; (iii) removal requires two-thirds (2/3) vote of Regular Members present and voting, provided quorum is met.

Section 5. Succession

- a) Vacancies shall be filled as soon as reasonably achievable.
- b) **Process:** The Vice President serves as Acting President if the Presidency is vacant; other vacancies are filled by special election using Article IV, Section 3 procedures within three (3) weeks.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1. General Meetings

- a) The ECSE GC shall hold a minimum of two (2) General Meetings each Fall and Spring semester.
- b) **Procedure & Quorum:** Meetings follow an agenda set by the President and distributed at least 24 hours in advance. Quorum for business is fifty percent (50%) of Regular Members or three (3) Regular Members, whichever is fewer. Proxy or electronic participation may count toward quorum if allowed by the President. Actions pass by simple majority unless otherwise specified.

ARTICLE VI. POLICIES, STANDING RULES, AND BY-LAWS

Section 1. Availability

- a) All policies, standing rules, and bylaws shall be available to any student of the department or interested member upon request and shall be published wherever these bylaws are published. These bylaws must be published on the ECSE GC website, and on file with the ECSE department administration.

ARTICLE VII. RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS**Section 1. Supremacy Clause**

If any part of these bylaws violates or contradicts the policies of Rensselaer, the Rensselaer Union, or applicable laws, the contradictory parts are invalid.

Section 2. Ratification

- a) These bylaws shall be effective immediately upon ratification by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members with voting rights and subsequent approval of the ECSE department administration.
- b) Amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members with voting rights present at the amendment meeting and subsequent approval by the ECSE department administration.

Section 3. Abrogation

Upon adoption, these bylaws abrogates previous governing documents relating to the ECSE GC without disrupting officers currently serving terms validly elected under a prior set of bylaws.

Notes to personalize before submission: (1) Add dues amount or “set annually by vote,” (2) adjust election dates if needed, (3) tune quorum thresholds to expected size, (4) merge or split officer roles to fit the team.