

The Constitution of GAPTS

Graduate Association of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Students
Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, McGill University

April 23, 2021

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Preamble

We, the members of Graduate Association of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Students at McGill University, do hereby establish this Constitution on April 15, 2021, in order that our purpose to exist and be realized to its fullest extent.

Co-presidents: Anne-Sophie Pépin, Jennifer Chen

Recording Secretary: Anne-Sophie Pépin

Quorum: 8

Members in attendance: 35

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Article I: Name

1. The name of the organization shall be “The Graduate Association of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Students at McGill” hereinafter referred to as [“GAPTS”].
2. For the purpose of this document, internally, the organization shall be inter-changeably referred to as [“the Association”].
3. For the purpose of external qualification and recognition, the name of the organization shall be spelled out in full, in each document where it first appears, at least once, and thereafter it may be abbreviated as [“GAPTS”].
4. For the purpose of this document, [“the University”] refers to the McGill University, [“the Faculty”] refers to the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, and [“the Department”] refers to the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at McGill University.

Article II: Purpose

1. The purpose of the Association shall include:
 - 1.1. Representing and promoting the views of its Membership to various bodies, including but not limited to the Department, the Faculty and the University;
 - 1.2. Facilitate the membership’s connection with resources pertaining but not limited to academic formation and social matters;
 - 1.3. To promote a sense of belonging among its members by arranging a set of activities of interest to its members so that the participants may purposefully benefit from the recreational and/or academic nature of an organized event.

Article III: Membership

1. Regular membership of the Association shall be composed of those who have paid PGSS dues and are:
 - 1.1. Enrolled at the Master’s level, leading to a M.Sc. (Master of Science) degree from the Department;
 - 1.2. Enrolled at the Doctorate level, leading to a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) degree from the Department;
 - 1.3. Enrolled in the joint program such as MD/Ph.D. from the Department;
 - 1.4. Post-doctoral fellows working within the Department.
2. Associate membership to the Association may be granted to:
 - 2.1. Individuals who have demonstrated keen interest in officially joining the Association by:
 - 2.1.1. The act of joining shall be done through a written submission expressing and justifying such a desire.
 - 2.1.2. The request to join as an associate member will be determined by the GAPTS executive council that shall vote on said membership and may be denied by a majority vote.
 - 2.1.3. Membership fees will be levied at the same rate and schedule as graduate students in accordance to PGSS calculations as determined yearly by the VP Finance. Failure of payment of dues leads to revocation of membership
3. Aside from the stipulation above (Article III, Part 1), the Association shall not discriminate against any individual, in any way that is deemed either unlawful, or inappropriate by:
 - 3.1. The PGSS Constitution;
 - 3.2. The McGill University ethics guidelines;

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3.3. The municipal, provincial, or federal law.

Article IV: Executive Officers and Commissioner

1. There shall be eight executive officers of the Association:
 - 1.1. Co-Presidents (two)
 - 1.2. Vice President, Finance
 - 1.3. Vice President, Social
 - 1.4. Vice President, Academic
 - 1.5. Vice President, Communications
 - 1.6. Vice President, Health and Wellness
 - 1.7. Graduate Student Representative
2. There shall be one commissioner of the Association:
 - 2.1. Election Commissioner
3. The executive officers shall be jointly charged with the responsibility of:
 - 3.1. Serving the purpose of the Association as stated in Article II;
 - 3.2. Adhering to the constitution of the Association;
 - 3.3. Ensuring that the vision of the Association is in line with the current interests of the Membership by proposing amendments to the constitution as necessary;
 - 3.4. Being official representatives of the Association and its interests;
 - 3.5. Ensuring prudent fiscal management of the Association's funds;
 - 3.6. Ensuring that GAPTS' activities have a minimal ecological footprint to the best of their abilities.
4. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Co-Presidents shall:
 - 4.1. Be charged with the general management and supervision of the affairs of the Association;
 - 4.2. Act as official contact/spokespersons on behalf of all executive officers on all occasions except on the Graduate Training Committee (e.g. faculty meetings);
 - 4.3. Be the contact person for Departmental student sub-committees that fall under the Association;
 - 4.4. Be responsible for calling and presiding over executive council meetings;
 - 4.5. Be sole signing officers on behalf of the Association on all official documentation except those involving financial matter, refer to Article IV Section 4.6;
 - 4.6. Ensure the duties of vacant executive council positions are covered (refer to Article IX: Elections);
 - 4.7. Review and announce the elections results of the Election Commissioner position.
5. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Vice President, Finance shall:
 - 5.1. Be responsible for generating and adhering to an annual budget;
 - 5.2. Reconcile bank statements with internal records, ensuring transparent book-keeping practices;
 - 5.3. Refund executive council members for association activity-related expenses which were previously approved by VP Finance and at least one other signing officer;
 - 5.4. Handle all financial transactions (i.e. banking, preparing cheques, issuing payments and responsible as the sole holder of the bank card);
 - 5.5. Prepare financial statements quarterly, annually and as requested for the executive council and PGSS;

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- 5.6. Be a signing officer for the association on all financial matters along with at least one Co-President.
6. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Vice President, Social shall:
 - 6.1. Organize recreational events for the Membership: defined as any event outside of academics (e.g. socializing or athletic events);
 - 6.2. Organize fundraising initiatives to support planned recreational events when necessary.
7. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Vice President, Academic shall:
 - 7.1. Organize Academic events for the Membership (e.g. PHAR&Wide, Methods Seminar);
 - 7.2. Organize fundraising initiatives to support planned academic events when necessary.
8. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Vice President, Communications shall:
 - 8.1. Disseminate information relevant to the Membership such as for upcoming events and/or resources available through mediums including but not limited to social media, promotional materials, newsletters;
 - 8.2. Be responsible for all matters concerning PGSS including:
 - 8.2.1. Attending PGSS meetings and reporting on minute meetings to the executive council;
 - 8.2.2. Serving as a resource for Members interested in PGSS-related issues and activities.
9. Further to the joint responsibilities, the VP Health and Wellness shall:
 - 9.1. Be a departmental support contact person for graduate students;
 - 9.2. To act as a liaison for graduate students by providing appropriate resources related to physical and mental health and wellness;
 - 9.3. Be responsible for organizing and facilitating events to promote physical and mental health and wellness.
10. Further to the joint responsibilities, the Graduate Student Representative (GSR) shall:
 - 10.1. Review applicant files, conduct applicant interviews, and provide a final assessment of applicants applying to the graduate programs in the Department;
 - 10.2. Attend and actively participate in graduate training committee meetings;
 - 10.2.1. In the event a candidate misses more than one meeting over the academic year, the council reserves the right to remove the GSR from his/her position;
 - 10.2.2. Substitutions or proxies may not fill in for the Graduate Student Representative in the case of absence due to confidentiality reasons.
 - 10.3. Voice requests and concerns of graduate students to the executive council and the Department for all matters concerning the graduate programs in the Department;
 - 10.4. Attend meetings involving student evaluations (i.e. following student presentations and seminars);
 - 10.5. Serve as a contact person for academic and secretarial staff, together with the copresidents on matter related to graduate student affairs.
11. The Election Commissioner shall:
 - 11.1. Oversee the organization of the election with the current executive council;
 - 11.2. Contact Post Graduate Students' Society of McGill University to set up the voting system;
 - 11.3. Serve as third party to review and announce the elections and by-elections results for Executive officer positions;
 - 11.4. Maintain any information related to the elections and elections results confidential, excluding the names of the elected executives;
 - 11.5. Not be a member of the executive council.

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Article V: Executive

1. The Executive shall be the officers of the Association, and shall be elected annually as per the election guidelines set out elsewhere in this constitution (Article IX).
2. The Executive shall hold office each year from September 1st to August 31st the following year (inclusive).
3. A transition period from June to August 31st will take place where members of the previous and upcoming executive council will attend executive council meetings, but the upcoming council will not have voting rights until the beginning of their term.

Article VI: Council

1. The GAPTS Council shall be the working body of the Association between General Meetings.
2. The Council shall be comprised of:
 - 2.1. the Executive members
3. The Co-Presidents shall call meetings of Council when required:
 - 3.1. Quorum for such a meeting shall be two-thirds (66%) of the total Council membership.
 - 3.2. Council meetings are open to all members of the Association.
 - 3.3. One member of the executive committee will be selected to take minutes during the meeting.

Article VII: Finances

1. The Association shall conduct fund raising for such programs or activities as it sees fit.
2. The Association may seek funding from the PGSS in accordance with the PGSS funding program guidelines.
3. The fiscal term for the Association shall begin on September 1st of the year, and end on August 31st of the following year.
4. Members of council are expected to maintain a reserve of uncommitted funds of \$300 for the following year for unexpected costs and yearly start-up. These funds can only be used upon unanimous decision of all members of the executive council.
5. The VP Finance and the Co-Presidents are expected to be fiscally responsible and maintain positive cash flows.
6. The society may not have a negative balance sheet.
7. Expenses under \$50 may be reimbursed by petty cash. Amounts larger than this require a traceable method of payment (i.e. cheque, electronic fund transfer)

Article VIII: General Meetings

1. There shall be at least one General Meeting per academic year held to discuss the overall state of the Association.
2. Notice of a General Meeting shall be given by announcements by e-mail at least one (1) week before the meeting.
3. Quorum for the General Meeting shall be ten percent (10%) of the regular membership of the Association.
4. All motions shall be passed upon either a simple majority vote or two-thirds majority vote of members present at each General Meeting, depending on the nature of the motion, consistent with the most recent version of the Robert's Rules of Order.

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Article IX: Elections

1. Elections for Executive officer positions shall be held once per year in May, preceding the start of the financial year.
2. Elections for the Election Commissioner position shall be held once per year at least one (1) month before announcing the elections for Executive positions.
3. Any regular member of Association may seek election for an open position provided they fulfill certain criteria.
 - 3.1. Due to the academic nature of the position of Graduate Student Representative, candidates will require approval from the Council to apply for this position. Applicants must be in good academic standing with a CGPA of 3.5 or higher. Priority will be given to senior PhD students (PhD 3-5). Under no circumstances will the position be held by a student in their first year of studies in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics.
 - 3.1.1. To be eligible, candidates must guarantee no foreseen conflicts with the GTC meetings scheduled for the academic year
 - 3.2. Due to the nature of the position of Election commissioner, candidates shall not enter the election for Executive officer positions that they will exert their responsibilities.
 - 3.3. Candidates being nominated for an executive position should be in their second year or higher of their graduate studies (MSc or PhD) or post-doctoral studies during their duration in office.
 - 3.3.1. Shall positions remain open after a call for nomination, Article IX: Section 3.3. clause will be negated and all students in their MSc or PhD or post-doctoral position are able to be nominated.
 - 3.3.2. In the event that there is no Election Commissioner nominated, Co-Presidents shall serve as the acting Election Commissioner.
4. Each candidate must plan to serve a full term of office and if graduation is expected before the end of term, then the candidate must disclose such information.
5. Elections will take place using the online voting system provided by PGSS.
6. Elections results for GAPTS Executive officer positions shall be reviewed and announced by the Election Commissioner.
7. Elections results for the Election Commissioner shall be reviewed and announced by the Co-Presidents.
8. Vacancies during the course of the year shall be filled through by-elections, to take place either at a special General Meeting, or by an Online Voting System (e.g. the PGSS OVS). Co-Presidents are responsible for actively recruiting for the vacant positions, and in the meantime ensuring important duties to the position are covered by him/her or otherwise.

Article X: Affiliation

1. The Association shall be affiliated with the Post Graduate Students' Society of McGill University (PGSS) as outlined in the PGSS Constitution.
2. The Association may choose to be affiliated with other bodies as its membership sees fit.

Article XI: Constitutional Adoption and Amendments

1. Constitutional changes must be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a General Meeting of the Association that has reached quorum.
2. Notice of proposed amendments shall be posted at least one (1) week before the General Meeting.

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3. Amendments will be voted on by open ballot and shall pass by a two-thirds (2/3) majority at a General Meeting of the Association that has reached quorum.
4. Any changes of the organization's Constitution and Bylaws shall be forwarded to the PGSS within one (1) month of their implementation.

Article XII: Conflict Resolution

1. Should there be a dispute between a decision rendered by the executive council and its members, the Council will call an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis at hand to determine a course of action that is in favour of the Association as a whole.
 - 1.1. Such an emergency meeting will serve as a means to determine whether the conflict in hand can be mediated internally or whether external assistance from PGSS is required;
 - 1.1.1. With regard to any conflict, the first course of action of the Council shall be to manage any dispute internally within the confines of the Association;
 - 1.1.1.1. In the situation where internal conflict resolution can be afforded, the council and plaintiff must agree on a non-partisan arbiter who will mediate the dispute upon understanding both sides of the conflict at hand.
 - 1.1.1.2. In the situation where external assistance is required, it is the responsibility of the Presidents of the Association to contact the PGSS Student Life Coordinator to seek assistance, whom shall serve as an arbiter to mediate any conflict(s) at hand
 - 1.2. Throughout the aforementioned outlined process, the Council of the Association will be expected to strictly follow Conflict Resolution Guidelines as determined in the Constitution of PGSS.
 2. In the event that adherence to the PGSS Constitution's Conflict Resolution Guidelines and the aforementioned process fails to resolve any dispute, the plaintiff may be invited to submit a written complaint to the Student Life Coordinator at PGSS.
 - 2.1. Decisions made by the PGSS Student Life Coordinator after this step will be deemed final and irrevocable.

Article XIII: Student Engagement Awards

1. The GAPTS Student Engagement Awards shall recognize students who have demonstrated leadership in student involvement and community engagement initiatives over the last 12 months.
2. Any graduate student enrolled in the Pharmacology and Therapeutics M.Sc or Ph.D. program (including B.Sc – M.Sc and Rotation programs) is eligible to apply, with the exception of the current GAPTS executives.
3. The Association must present two awards; one award for the junior category (less than 24 months of study), and one award for the senior category (more than 24 months of study).
4. The value of the awards must be at least \$100 but can change yearly depending on the available funds and fundraising efforts of the Association.
5. Members of council are expected to sustain the GAPTS Student Engagement Awards with funds of at least \$200 accounted for in each yearly budget.
6. The nomination period will run from May 15th to May 30th of each academic year.
7. The application review committee will consist of the members of council, the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

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8. The specifications of the application and evaluation criteria are subject to change but must be decided and agreed upon by the entire application review committee prior to the review of applications.