



**GraduateStudent**  
**SOCIETY**

*Together we achieve more*

**Graduate Student Society Constitution**

**Ontario Tech University**

**School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies**

**Last Update: September 29, 2023**



## A Summary of Plans for the Graduate Student Society 2023-2024 Period

### Objectives & Goals:

- Connect graduate and post-graduate students to each other, clubs, societies, and members of the Ontario Tech University (OTU) faculty. Our main associative faculties would be, but are not exclusive to, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU).
- Raise awareness of important issues affecting graduate students, both on campus and in society.
- Advocate for the interests, concerns, and needs of graduate students within the university administration and decision-making processes.
- Maintain effective communication channels to keep graduate students informed about important university updates, events, and opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and university administration to address graduate student concerns and improve the overall graduate student experience.
- Seek funding opportunities and financial assistance for graduate students.
- Provide information on scholarships, grants, and financial aid.
- Advocate for fair academic policies and practices.
- Provide resources, workshops, and peer support for academic success, including research skills, writing, and time management.

### Future Event Plans

1. Graduate Holiday Party (Last week of exams, December 2023): An end of the semester celebration for graduate and postdoctoral students hosted in a school event space.
2. Social Gatherings: Plan social events like game nights, movie nights, or themed parties to help students relax and connect.
3. Cultural and Diversity Celebrations: Host events that celebrate the diversity of our graduate student body, such as cultural festivals, food tastings, or international film screenings.
4. Wellness and Stress-Relief Workshops: Promote mental health and well-being by offering workshops on stress management, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques.
5. Guest Speaker Series: Invite notable speakers, alumni, or experts in various fields to give talks and engage in discussions with graduate students.
6. Book Clubs and Discussion Groups: Start book clubs or discussion groups focused on literature, current events, or academic topics.
7. TEDx-style Talks: Host TEDx-style talks featuring graduate students or faculty members sharing their research and ideas.



8. Graduate Student Awards Ceremony: Recognize outstanding achievements and contributions of graduate students within the university community.
9. Field Trips: Plan educational field trips to museums, research facilities, or industry partners related to students' fields of study.
10. Thesis/Dissertation Writing Retreats: Offer writing retreats or workshops where students can focus on their research and writing in a distraction-free environment.
11. On-boarding workshops: Events which give new graduate students key information to aid in their success, meet other students, and gain insight from upper-year graduate students.

## **Funding & Collaborations**

1. Initial funding opportunities will be provided by the OTSU through registration as a club. The GSS will seek this out through relevant OTSU Societies.
2. Other clubs and councils within OTU will be providing initial events for the GSS. These include the Ontario Tech-Trent Women in Chemistry Club (OTT-WIC) and the Criminology Graduate Student Society (CGSS), which will work in conjunction with the GSS. As well, SGPS Outreach will offer aid in initial event planning.
3. Initial funding will also be provided by the PSAC, in support of the work the GSS is doing for Teaching Assistants and Invigilators.
4. Further funding opportunities will be determined as the GSS is fully formed with collaboration with OTU administration. This funding will seek to create an ongoing yearly budget which will be managed by the GSS.

## **Section 1.**

### **1.1 Name of Organization**

- 1.1.1 The official name of the society will be the Graduate Students' Society at Ontario Tech University .
- 1.1.2 The Graduate Students' Society of Ontario Tech University may be referred to, primarily on our logos and banners, by the Ontario Tech Graduate Students' Society or with the acronym, GSS.

## **Section 2.**

### **2.1 Vision**

- 2.1.1 To be an uplifting society of the faculty of School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), our priority must be for graduate student involvement across all faculties at Ontario Tech University. This



coincides with recruiting student members to join the GSS and to maintain an active community.

- 2.1.2 As the lead committee of the GSS, our goal is to be graduate student representatives of a growing organization of student members. We want to create currently enrolled in graduate programs

## **2.2 Purpose**

- 2.2.1 The main role of the GSS will be to connect all the graduate students at the Ontario Tech University together in one student organization. Since graduate students at our university come from a variety of departments, disciplines, cultures and religions, our role is to celebrate those differences and build on our common interests. We will be highly active throughout the calendar year, holding academic and social events, and working to ensure that all the needs of the graduate and post-doctoral students are heard.
- 2.1.2 The GSS will serve as a non-profit organization and will prioritize promoting students and their respective clubs and societies registered at Ontario Tech University .

## **Section 3.**

### **3.1 Membership**

- 3.1.1 Membership in Graduate Students' Society is automatically granted to all graduate students whose home departments are based in OTU and those who sign an affiliation form indicating they are affiliated with the OTU. The term of membership for the Graduate Students' Society will be from September 1 – August 31 each year.
- 3.1.2 Each member shall be afforded the following rights through membership in Graduate Students' Society:
  - I. The right to participate and vote in group elections and meetings;
  - II. The right to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas;
  - III. The right to organize/engage in activities/events that are reasonable and lawful;

- IV. The right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or sexual orientation;
  - V. The right to be free from censorship, control, or interference by the University on the basis of the organization's philosophy, beliefs, interests or opinions unless and until these lead to activities which are illegal or which infringe on the rights and freedoms already mentioned above;
  - VI. The right to distribute on campus, in a responsible way, published material provided that it is not unlawful;
- 3.1.3 Each member shall possess the following responsibilities relative to participation in Graduate Students' Society:
- I. Support the purpose of the organization;
  - II. Uphold the values of the organization;
  - III. Contribute constructively to the programs and activities offered by the organization;
  - IV. Attend general meetings;
  - V. Abide by the constitution and subsequent official organizational documents;
  - VI. Respect the rights of peers and fellow members;
  - VII. Abide by Ontario Tech University policies, procedures, and guidelines;
  - VIII. Abide by the Laws of the Land, including but not limited to the Criminal Code of Canada.
  - IX. The Graduate Students' Society values and respects the personal information of its members. The Graduate Students' Society secures its member's information at all times and will not supply names or other confidential information to third-parties.
  - X. The Graduate Students' Society will protect the privacy of member information and must use it only for the delivery of service and not for commercial gain.

### 3.2 Executive

3.2.1 The GSS Executive is founded by four graduate students who fill one or more of the executive positions. Therefore, until we expand, the responsibilities are shared amongst all Executive members and decisions are made by democratic vote. The broad roles and positions are as follows:

- I. *President*: Oversees GSS and the Executive throughout the year. This includes organizing and running events, chairing Executive meetings, meeting with other groups, coordinating with faculty, administrators, etc. Generally being the main contact person(s) for GSS and coordinating/delegating as necessary to keep everything running efficiently.
- II. *Vice-President(s)*: VPs are the right-hand people for the President(s) and help with running of events, meetings with other groups, faculty etc. Generally the VPs take on the main coordination of the GSS events, with help from the rest of the Executive.
- III. *Treasurer*: The financial guru of GSS. This role entails being responsible for our yearly budget, keeping detailed records of funds and expenses, and issuing cheques for reimbursements.
- IV. *Secretary*: This person is responsible for keeping a record of our meetings and proceedings throughout the year. To keep Executive members informed, minutes of each meeting should be circulated and all decisions recorded.
- V. *Student Communications*: This person will monitor all GSS social media accounts. They will also help to prepare content for social media, email, and other communications.
- VI. *Graduate Student Seminar Series Coordinator(s)*: This person (or persons) will be responsible for putting together a set of seminars targeted at all OTU graduate



students. We would ideally like to have 3-4 seminars during each calendar year.

- 3.2.3 Only student members of the organization may hold executive positions.
- 3.2.4 The executive positions collectively will form a committee that acts as the primary steward of the organization.
- 3.2.5 This committee is collectively responsible for the day-to-day decision making of the organization including but not limited to monitoring finances, event planning and execution, member services, and advocating on behalf of members to Administration and student government.
- 3.3.6 This committee cannot make amendments to the constitution without the approval of the general membership at a valid general meeting.
- 3.3.7 The term of each executive will last from July 1 following the executive election to June 30 of the following year.
- 3.3.8 Any executive of the organization may resign, provided that such resignation is made in writing and delivered to the President. Unless any such resignation is, by its terms, effective on a later date, it shall be effective on delivery to the President, and no ratification by the organization shall be required to make the resignation official.
- 3.3.9 Any vacancy of executives shall be filled by the President or designate of the organization until such a time where a by-election is held, a permanent appointment occurs, or a hiring process is conducted.
- 3.3.10 If the President resigns, notice of such resignation must be submitted in writing and delivered to the executive committee at a valid executive meeting. Unless any such resignation is, by its terms, effective on a later date, it shall be effective on delivery to the executive committee, and no ratification by the organization shall be required to make the resignation official.



3.3.11 Any vacancy of the President shall be filled by another executive committee member appointed by a simple and clear majority of the executive committee until such a time where a by-election is held, a permanent appointment occurs, or a hiring process is conducted.