

# Association for English Graduate Students Constitution

## **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE**

### Section 1.

The name of this organization shall be Association for English Graduate Students (AEGS).

### Section 2.

AEGS seeks to assist and advocate for graduate students in the Department of English by representing students on committees across the university, providing opportunities for professional development, promoting a collegial and professional atmosphere among students and faculty, and supporting graduate students at every stage of their studies.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

### Section 1.

Any MSU student may be a member of AEGS. All graduate students in the Department of English at MSU are members of AEGS by default. AEGS will not discriminate on the basis of age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight.

### Section 2.

Any MSU student who is not a graduate student in English may become a member of AEGS by contacting the President of AEGS and indicating their desire for membership. A member remains in good standing as long as they are registered as a student at MSU and as long as they do not violate the rules of AEGS as set forth in this constitution and its amendments. All members are expected to subscribe to the AEGS listserv.

### Section 3.

AEGS is dues-free for graduate students in the Department of English. Dues may not be collected from English graduate students unless approved by a binding vote amongst the membership at a General Membership Meeting (hereafter referred to as GMM). If dues are approved by the general membership, they cannot be used as criteria for membership or voting privileges, but can be used as criteria for AEGS funded events and programs, such as travel funding. Dues can be collected as criteria for membership for students who are not graduate students in the Department of English without a vote by the general membership.

## **ARTICLE III: OFFICERS**

### Section 1.

AEGS officers shall be elected for terms of one year, from the beginning of summer semester to the end of the following spring semester.

Officers to be elected include:

- President
- Vice President
- Graduate Committee Representative
- Undergraduate Committee Representative
- Policy Committee Representative
- Speaker Series Committee Representative
- Council of Graduate Students (COGS) Representative
- Event Coordinator
- Information and Media Coordinator

The English GEU Steward Committee can appoint a representative to AEGS Executive Committee meetings, and that representative has one vote on Executive Committee decisions. The GEU Steward Committee can appoint other stewards to accompany the representative, but only the appointed representative can vote.

## Section 2.

**A. General Elections-** Only English department graduate students may be elected officers of AEGS and only English department graduate students may be voting members. Voting members must be members in good standing (See II.2). The Executive Committee shall set a date for nominations and a date for the election of AEGS officers to occur no later than the week before finals during spring semester. The Executive Committee shall announce the dates and format of the election (electronic or paper ballot) at least one week before the election takes place.

**B. Nominations-** Any voting member of AEGS may nominate a voting member (including themselves) for an officer position by submitting their name to the Executive Committee either via a posting to the AEGS listserv or by submitting a written (electronic or paper) nomination to the designated member of the Executive Committee. Nominated candidates shall be informed of their nomination and given an opportunity to accept or decline the nomination, as well as provide an optional position statement. Once nominations are accepted, elections shall take place by electronic or paper secret ballot, as announced by the Executive Committee. Votes may be submitted until the deadline established by the Executive Committee and voting shall be open for at least five days.

**C. Ballot Counting-** Results of the election shall be collected, counted, and reported by the Information and Media Coordinator, and independently verified by the Vice President. Results shall be reported to the AEGS listserv and announced by at least the final GMM of the year. Ballots cast must be retained for one year after an election and should be made available for inspection by voting members on demand.

**D. Appeals-** Appeals of election results must be submitted to the Executive Committee, which must then call a General Membership Meeting to decide the appeal. Only the general membership may call for another election.

**E. Special Elections-** Special elections may be called as needed by the Executive Committee to fill vacant positions on Department Committees that arise periodically (such as Hiring Committees), or for other unusual circumstances. Special elections shall occur at the next regularly scheduled General Membership Meeting, at an emergency General Membership Meeting if necessary, or via secure electronic means. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Special Elections shall be announced and results shall be tallied and reported following the same guidelines as regular elections. An expedited special election is only permissible via an emergency General Membership Meeting. A quorum of members (see IV.I) must have voted for special election results to be binding.

Section 3.

The duties of each elected AEGS officer include collaboration in department events, assistance in the general duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee, and the maintenance of all AEGS property and spaces. Officer duties are allocated at the discretion of the Executive Committee in addition to the following:

**A. President**—The President shall preside over and schedule Executive Committee and General Membership Meetings. The President shall be the main liaison with the English Department administration. The President shall be responsible for the student professional development and support activities of AEGS. The President shall conduct AEGS program review by the end of each academic year to collect membership viewpoints on AEGS events and programs, and shall give that data and recommendations to the incoming President and Executive Committee. The President shall also designate someone responsible for the keeping and posting of AEGS agenda/minutes, sending them to the Information and Media Coordinator if necessary.

**B. Vice President**—The VP shall be responsible for the organization’s finances, including the coordination of fundraising and accounting for all income and expenditures. The VP shall take the lead role in organizing AEGS fundraising events. The VP will keep a record of all financial transactions, maintain an up-to-date register of all members, and keep in organized fashion all other records and documents pertaining to the organization’s operations. The VP shall also preside over all AEGS meetings that the President is unable to attend. The VP will also verify ballot counts collected by the Media and Information Coordinator.

**C. Graduate Committee Representative (GCR)**—The GCR shall serve on the Department of English Graduate Committee and represent the interests of the graduate students to this committee. The GCR shall keep the Executive Committee and the General Membership informed of the items under consideration by the Graduate Committee.

**D. Undergraduate Committee Representative (UGCR)**—The UGCR shall serve on the Department of English Undergraduate Committee and represent the interests of the graduate students to this committee. The UGCR shall keep the Executive Committee and General Membership informed of the items under consideration by the Undergraduate Committee.

**E. Policy Committee Representative (PCR)**—The PCR shall serve on the Department of English Policy Committee and represent the interests of the graduate students to this committee. The PCR shall keep the Executive Committee and the General Membership informed of the items under consideration by the Policy Committee.

**F. Speaker Series Committee Representative (SSCR)**—The SSCR shall serve on the Department of English Speaker Series Committee and represent the interests of the graduate students to this committee. The SSCR shall keep the Executive Committee and the General Membership informed of the items under consideration by the SSC.

**G. Council of Graduate Students Representative**—The COGS Representative shall serve on the Council of Graduate Students and represent the interests of the Department of English graduate students to this body. The COGS Representative shall keep the Executive Committee and the General Membership informed of the items under consideration by COGS. The COGS Representative shall also inform the AEGS membership about University Committees with open graduate representative positions filled through COGS, and will help facilitate AEGS members' applications for those positions.

**H. Event Coordinator (EC)**—The Event Coordinator shall take the lead role in organizing AEGS social events. This may include (but is not limited to) parties, events related to professionalization like the faculty profile series, and smaller meetings like AEGS coffee hours. The EC will delegate tasks and work in concert with the entire executive board and general membership to ensure the successful planning, organizing, and completion of tasks related to these events.

**I. Information and Media Coordinator (IMC)**—The Information and Media Coordinator is responsible for design and maintenance of AEGS digital media and outreach to the general membership. They are responsible for the design and updating of the AEGS website or database, AEGS social media, the AEGS listserv, and other appropriate forms of outreach as deemed appropriate. The IMC shall also create and organize elections in consultation with the President or other Executive Committee members, and shall be responsible for collecting, counting, and reporting results of the elections to the Executive Committee and general membership.

#### Section 4.

**English Graduate Employees Union (GEU) Steward Committee**— The GEU stewards who represent the English department graduate students to the GEU constitute a standing committee that is independent of AEGS. GEU stewards are not elected, and stewardship is open to all. The English GEU Steward Committee has freedom to handle all employment and grievance issues independent of the AEGS Executive Committee and AEGS voting procedures. The English GEU Steward Committee can appoint one representative to AEGS Executive Committee meetings with one vote on Executive Committee decisions.

The English GEU Steward Committee has freedom to determine its own procedures, but the general expectations of English GEU stewardship (established by the GEU) include:

- Maintaining an active role in the GEU
- Representing the interests of the English Department graduate students to the GEU
- Attending GEU Steward's Council
- Informing English department graduate students of important union information and any items under consideration by GEU

#### Section 5.

An officer who ceases to be a member in good standing (see II.2) shall automatically be removed. Otherwise, an officer may be removed via a special election at a General Membership Meeting. Special elections for the removal of AEGS officers may only be called with the agreement of five of the nine Executive Committee members and must follow the same guidelines as other special elections (see III.2.E).

Section 6.

Any officer may resign at any point during their tenure. Resignations should be submitted in writing to the President and Vice President. After both the President and the Vice President have accepted the resignation the Executive Committee will convene to determine a special election. The announcement of the special election must take place within one week of the acceptance of the resignation, and thereafter follow the rules of special elections (see III.2.E).

Section 7.

Outgoing members of the Executive Committee shall meet with the incoming Executive Committee for a brief discussion and prepare the new executive board for the upcoming year. This meeting should be held in a timely manner, preferably at the end of the Spring semester after the final GMM of the Spring semester. The outgoing President should share the results of program review with the incoming President.

#### **ARTICLE IV: OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Section 1.

General Membership Meetings shall occur on a regularly scheduled basis, to be determined by the President. At least two General Membership Meetings must be held during both Fall and Spring semesters. General Membership Meetings shall be held in the English Department conference room unless otherwise determined. At least ten voting members must be present (including at least four Executive Committee members) in order to establish quorum. Quorum is necessary for any resolution that requires a binding vote (such as amendments to the Constitution, special elections, or financial matters). General Membership Meetings should be advertised to the membership via the listserv, and may include other advertising as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee, at least seven days prior to the General Membership Meeting date.

Section 2.

The President, or another member of the Executive Committee appointed in the President's absence, shall preside over General Membership Meetings. Rules of order shall be determined by the presiding officer.

Section 3.

Standing committees of AEGS include:

**A. Executive Committee**—The Executive Committee shall consist of all AEGS elected officers, as well as one representative from the English GEU Steward Committee. The Executive Committee shall monitor the organization's finances, conduct both general elections and special elections, schedule and conduct activities with the assistance of other members (such as new student orientation, social events, professional development events, etc.), and plan and conduct General Membership Meetings.

**B. Office Assignments Committee**—Each summer the President will coordinate with the Director of Graduate Studies to form a committee to establish office assignments for the coming year.

- i. The committee shall consist of at least three members of the Executive Committee or general membership.
- ii. The committee shall obtain a list of teaching Graduate Assistants, teaching assignments, and available spaces from the department secretary. The committee shall collect office preferences from these Graduate Assistants, and use them to create recommended office assignments. Priority shall be given to Graduate Assistants who wish to keep their current assignments.
- iii. The committee shall deliver their recommended office assignments to the department chair no later than August 15.
- iv. The committee shall make any alterations to the office assignments as required by the department chair. Once the assignments are finalized, they shall announce the office assignments to the Graduate Assistants with office spaces.
- v. The recommended office assignments are not AEGS resolutions, and do not require approval by the general membership or Executive Committee.

**C. Travel Funding Committee**—If the Executive Committee votes to approve Travel Funding for a given semester (Fall or Spring), then they shall appoint a Travel Funding Committee at the first General Membership Meeting of the semester. The Travel Funding Committee shall consist of two Executive Committee members and two elected general members (see 4.B.iv-v). The Travel Funding Committee shall determine the manner of collecting applications, application deadlines, and delivery and announcement of travel grants. The Travel Funding Committee must conclude the selection process in time to distribute funds by the end of the semester (Fall or Spring).

**D. Other**—Other committees may be established by the Executive Committee or the General Membership. Any resolutions proposed by these committees must be approved by the general membership at either a General Membership Meeting or a special election.

#### Section 4. Finances

**A. Use of AEGS Funds**—Any and all use of AEGS funds will be voted on by the Executive Committee and must gain the approval of five of the nine members. The Vice President and the Fundraising and Event Coordinator will set a budget for all AEGS events. Proposed budgets must be approved by the Executive Committee, and may be brought before the General Membership as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee reserves the right to amend budgets as necessary. At each General Membership Meeting the Vice President will present a financial report to the general membership. All AEGS expenditures are subject to review by the general membership. Any expenditure that exceeds \$400 must be brought before the general membership for a vote.

#### **B. AEGS Travel Funding**

- i. This funding is intended to encourage and mitigate the costs of professional travel.
- ii. The Executive Committee will vote to provide funding for each academic semester (Fall and Spring) based on current finances and member interest.

1. Funds allocated for travel grants cannot exceed 33% of AEGS savings at the time.
2. Funds for travel grants must be distributed in the semester for which they are allocated (Fall or Spring).
- iii. Application deadlines, travel funding budget, and selection process shall be announced at the first general membership meeting of each semester and through an email to the AEGS listserv.
  1. Conferences must take place during the semester for which funding is awarded, or in the break period before the subsequent semester begins.
- iv. Applicants must submit the following materials in order to be considered for travel funding. The materials required may be modified by the selection committee.
  1. Acceptance/Confirmation letter or e-mail
  2. Brief statement of conference significance to ongoing studies
  3. Brief budget detailing cost of travel
- v. Recipients and size of the travel grants will be selected by a committee of comprised of two Executive Committee members and two general members.
  1. The General Membership shall elect the two general members to the selection committee at the first General Membership Meeting of a given semester (Spring or Fall) after the announcement of travel funding for that semester.
  2. Recipients shall be selected based on merit of proposal, location of conference, and budget requirements.
  3. Number and size of the grants shall be determined by the committee according to the number of applicants, the budget for travel grants, and the criteria above.
  4. All submissions shall be welcome, but priority shall be given to those who have not received an AEGS travel grant prior in their graduate career.
  5. Any individual applying for an AEGS travel grant in a given semester shall be ineligible to serve on the selection committee for that semester.
- vi. The selection committee shall announce awards by the final General Membership Meeting of the semester (Fall or Spring), and must distribute funds by check before the final day of the semester.

Section 5.

The Constitution shall be available for review by all members on demand, and a digital version available at all times via the AEGS website or database.

**ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS**

Section 1.

Amendments may be proposed by any AEGS member in good standing.

Section 2.

Proposed amendments should be submitted in writing (paper or e-mail) to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will bring the proposed amendment and/or any suggested revisions to the next General Membership Meeting or convene an emergency Membership Meeting as necessary. With the announcement of general and/or emergency

meetings any proposed amendments will be included on the proposed agenda and distributed to the membership for review prior to voting.

Section 3.

Amendments must be approved at a General Membership Meeting by a simple majority of voting members present. A quorum must be established for such a vote to be binding.