**English Student Association Constitution**

We the students of the CUNY Graduate Center English Program, in order to further the interests of the English Program students, improve the living and working conditions of the English program students, and to secure the representation of English Program students in English Program governance, do establish this Constitution for the English Student Association, hereinafter referred to as the ESA.

**Article I: HISTORY**

The ESA was founded in the late 1980s in response to student demands for curriculum and exam reform. The ESA successfully advocated for the elimination of the “four Norton” reading anthology written exam as well as the creation of the option to choose three custom fields on the Oral Examination. It created the ESA Student Handbook and instituted student course evaluations each semester.

**Article II: MISSION**

The ESA is a student-run organization that seeks to improve the living and working conditions of students in the English Program by representing the interests of the students in the CUNY Graduate Center English Program. Representation shall include expressing concerns of the students to faculty and administration, relaying information back to the students. The primary tasks of the ESA are to provide a forum for students concerns, organize on behalf of those concerns, sponsor a network of student support and mentors, elect student representatives to English Program committees, facilitate co-curricular activities including reading groups and examination preparation groups, develop alumni relationships, oversee course evaluations, run the annual ESA conference open to all ESA members and participants from other institutions, and undertake any initiatives to improve the English Program for the benefit of its students.

**Article III: MEMBERSHIP**

The ESA shall be composed of all students currently matriculated in the English Program at The CUNY Graduate Center. Each member of the ESA shall be entitled to freely and openly propose new business and agenda items for ESA meetings; participate in ESA meetings and the ESA list-serv; motion for a vote at ESA meetings; vote either in person or by proxy on issues put to a vote at ESA meetings; propose a topic for the ESA conference and serve as a conference chair or co-chair; nominate fellow students for positions on program, ESA and GC committees; vote in all ESA elections; and propose an amendment to the Constitution or By-laws of the of the ESA.

**Article IV: OFFICERS AND GOVERNANCE**

The sole officers of the ESA are the two ESA Co-chairs, charged with the responsibilities of facilitating discussion among members, acting as liaisons between the English Program student body and the English Program Executive Officer, organizing ESA meetings, and managing the ESA finances. Co-chairs will be nominated and elected annually according to the election process.

The ESA governance will follow the ESA By-laws and rules established by ESA resolutions at all times.

**Article V: RATIFICATION**

This charter was distributed to all ESA students via the ESA list-serv and the English Program list-serv for review and comment. Proposed amendments to the Constitution were submitted in writing to the co-chairs and distributed for review and comment on the ESA list-serv. These were also discussed at December 2014 ESA meeting where the charter was ratified unanimously by a vote following the voting procedure in the ESA by-laws.

**Article VI: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be altered, amended, repealed, or a new Constitution adopted by the following procedure: A proposal must be made in writing and presented at an ESA meeting, either in person or through a proxy. The proposal must then be seconded by someone in attendance at the meeting, in order for it to be considered. After a period of discussion at the meeting, a vote will be held on the proposal at the following meeting in accordance with the procedure for taking action at a meeting described in the ESA By-laws. Once a proposal has been seconded and passed by a valid majority vote in an ESA meeting, the proposal shall then be added to the elections ballot as a proposed amendment or alteration of the ESA Constitution. In order to be adopted, the proposal must gain a simple majority of the votes on the election ballot to pass. Once the amendment is passed, it is the responsibility of the Co-chairs to alter the Constitution accordingly.

**Draft of By-Laws of the English Student Association (ESA)**

Approved: 5/8/2015

**Article I: Meetings of Members**

*Section 1.1 Place of Meetings*

All ESA meetings shall be held at the Graduate Center.

*Section 1.2 Frequency of Meetings*

Meetings should be held at least four (4) times per semester, approximately once every month.

*Section 1.3 Day and Time of Meetings*

Meetings should be scheduled at a time that is convenient for as many students as possible and every possible effort should be made to avoid scheduling meetings that conflict with other English Program student-run events.

*Section 1.4 Notice of Meetings*

Members shall be given notice of meetings at least one (1) week prior to the day of the meeting. ESA Co-chairs shall announce ESA meetings on the ESA list-serv; on the English Program list-serv; and by posting an announcement on the ESA website.

*Section 1.5 Quorum*

A quorum at meetings is defined as those present at the meeting.

*Section 1.6 Order of Business*

The order of business at all meetings shall be determined by the ESA Co-chairs, but the order of business to be followed at any meeting may be changed by any member in attendance at the meeting. An agenda outlining the order of business must be publicized along with the notice of the meeting (see section 1.4).

*Section 1.7 Action at Meetings*

All action that does not involve amending, altering, or otherwise changing the by-laws will be made at ESA meetings, according to the following procedure. In order for an issue to be voted on in an ESA meeting, it must appear on the publicized agenda for that meeting, in accordance with section 1.4. Consequently, no issue may be raised and then voted on in the course of a single meeting.

Assuming the issue has been properly announced, the vote will take place during the ESA meeting. Before the vote takes place, there will be a period of discussion. All members present at the meeting will have one vote, excluding the Co-chairs, who only vote in the case of a tie. In the case of a tie, the Co-chairs shall vote based on their judgment of what the majority of students in the English program think, or, lacking a clear sense of a majority opinion, what will best serve the students in the program. Students who are not able to attend the meeting can make an attending student or one of the Co-chairs their proxy (see section 1.8, below).

In order for action to be taken, the total votes for the action must equal at least 51% of the total votes.

*Section 1.8 Proxies*

Each member may authorize another person to act for them by proxy. There is no limit on members for which a single member may proxy. The proxy should submit evidence of the member's vote in written or electronic form to the Co-chairs at the time of the vote. A member may ask the co-chairs to act as their proxy.

*Section 1.9 Minutes*

The keeping of minutes of all ESA meetings shall be the responsibility of the Co-chairs. Co-chairs shall publish the minutes of all meetings on the ESA list-serv and on the ESA website within the one (1) week following the meeting.

**Article II: ESA Co-chairs**

*Section 2.1 Powers and Voting*

The primary tasks of the co-chairs include facilitating discussion among members, acting as a liaison between the student body and the Executive Officer, and organizing ESA meetings.

*Section 2.1 Number of Co-chairs*

The total number of Co-chairs will be two (2).

*Section 2.2 Nomination, Election and Term of Co-chairs*

Co-chairs will be nominated and elected according to the elections process. Co-chairs are nominated on the nominations form sent out by the elections committee, and are elected by a simple majority (51% of the total votes). Co-chairs serve for one year, but can be nominated and reelected in subsequent years.

*Section 2.3 Co-chair Duties*

In addition to duties listed elsewhere in this document, the co-chairs are expected to perform the following tasks:

* Serve on the ESA and English Program Executive Committees *ex officio;*
* Serve as representatives of student concerns to the English Program Executive Officer;
* Publicize the ESA to current English Program students by sending emails to the English Program and ESA list-servs outlining the nature and purpose of the ESA, how to register for the ESA list-serv and other ESA message boards (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.);
* Announce meetings in accordance with the section 1.4;
* Develop and publicize an agenda for meetings based on current student concerns in accordance with section 1.6;
* Send a welcome email to new students before the beginning of the semester outlining the nature and purpose of the ESA, detailing how to register for the ESA list-serv, create a profile on the ESA website, and join any other ESA message boards (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.);
* Assign student mentors to incoming students (see section 2.5);
* Plan a welcome event for new students and provide an opportunity for new students to meet continuing students
* Speak at the annual new student welcome and recruitment events about the nature and purpose of the ESA;
* Plan and organize Revels in coordination with the English Program Executive Officer and ESA volunteers;
* Facilitate discussion about current issues on the ESA list-serv and act as administrators of the list when necessary;
* Renew the ESA’s DSC recognition by June 1 of each year by submitting to the Co-Chair for Student Affairs an updated constitution and a list of all Committee members and Co-chairs, their titles, and their email addresses.
* Procure the DSC funds designated for the ESA;
* Manage the ESA and ESA-designated DSC funds;
* Assist the Conference Committee;
* Facilitate meetings between outgoing and incoming committee members.

*Section 2.5 STUDENT MENTORING*

Co-chairs oversee the student-mentoring program which acquaints new students to the program and connects them with current students willing to answer any questions new students may have about the program. Co-chairs are responsible for recruiting current students to act as mentors and assigning them to an incoming students before the beginning of the semester. A list of new students and their research interests are provided by the English Program Executive Officer and, whenever possible, new students should be matched with mentors based on their shared areas of interest.

**Article III: Committee Membership**

*Section 3.1 Types of committees* The ESA oversees student membership on all ESA committees, including those which share governance with the English Program (both standing and ad hoc committees).

Students who represent the English Program to the Doctoral Student’s Council (DSC) and to the Graduate Council are not elected by the ESA, but share the same duties and responsibilities as all ESA committee members.

*Section 3.2 Committee Membership*

All ESA members may serve on ESA committees. Student committee members will be elected following the elections procedure (as defined section 3.6). All committee members and co-chairs serve for one (1) year.

*Section 3.3 Committee Member Duties*

All student committee members serve on committees as representative of their peers in the English Program and work in their best interests. Committee members are expected to report on committee business at ESA meetings, to solicit opinions from their colleagues, and to act in accordance with those opinions and their best judgment.

In addition to duties listed elsewhere in this document, committee members are expected to perform the following tasks:

* Subscribe to the ESA list-serv in order to remain up-to-date on student concerns;
* Attend all committee meetings and ESA meetings except in the case of an emergency or an unavoidable scheduling conflict. If a committee member cannot attend a meeting, it is the committee member’s responsibility to notify the alternate and the other committee members;
* Report on committee business at ESA meetings. If, for some reason, no committee members are able to attend an ESA meeting, at least one committee member should report committee business to the Co-chairs, who will include it in the meeting minutes;
* Present an end-of-term Committee Summary at the final ESA meeting of the year. This report is for the benefit of incoming committee members and should describe the committee's activities over the past year in order to facilitate a productive turnover following the ESA election.

*Section 3.4 Permanent ESA Committees Sharing English Program Governance*

ESA members serve on the following permanent committees responsible for sharing in English Program governance:

* The Executive Committee is composed of four (4) student members, including the ESA co-chairs who serve *ex officio*.
* The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee is composed of two (2) student members.
* The Curriculum Committee is composed of two (2) student members
* Faculty Membership Committee is composed of two (2) student members

As ESA members serving on permanent committees sharing in English Program governance, these members serve both as members of the student-only ESA committees named above and as ESA representatives on the respectively named English Program committees.

*Section 3.5 Ad hoc Committees sharing English Program Governance*

Students also serve on the following ad hoc committees responsible for sharing in English Program governance:

* The Diversity Committee is composed of six (6) student members
* The Friday Forum Committee is composed of two (2) student members who are additionally responsible for making the Friday Forum Proposal form available to students at the beginning of each semester.
* The Alumni and Fundraising Committee is composed of four (4) student members
* The Placement Committee is composed of four (4) student members
* The Recruitment Committee is composed of five (5) student members

As ESA members serving on ad hoc committees sharing in English Program governance, these members serve both as members of the student-only ESA committees named above and as ESA representatives on the respectively named English Program committees.

This section (3.5) of the by-laws may be changed by the co-chairs to reflect the current English Program committee structure without going through the regular process for making changes to the by-laws.

*Section 3.6 Permanent ESA Committees*

* The Course Assessment Committee is composed of six (6) student members who oversee the creation, dissemination, collection, tallying, and public posting of course evaluations*.*
* The Elections Committee is composed of two (2) student members who conduct the election of student committee members and ESA Co-chairs. The elections committee is also responsible for including any valid proposed amendments to the ESA by-laws on the ballot. Candidates are nominated on a nominations ballot sent out in March. The ballot containing all candidates and proposed amendments is sent out in April.

*Section 3.7 Ad Hoc ESA Committees*

The ESA may create ad-hoc committees by following the procedure for taking action outlined in section 1.7.

* The Website Committee is composed of three (3) student members responsible for the design, maintenance, and promotion of the ESA website and ESA social media.
* The Conference Committee is responsible for organizing and running a professional conference for ESA members to present their work to their peers and colleagues. During the nomination period of ESA elections process, ESA members are invited to submit conference topics, with a tentative Call for Papers, for inclusion on the ballot. Any number of ESA members may collaborate to propose a conference topic, but all collaborating members must be willing to serve on the committee. The conference topic that receives the most votes is selected as the topic for the next ESA conference and the members who submitted the topic serve on the Conference Committee.

This section (3.3) of the by-laws may be changed by the Co-chairs to reflect current ESA ad-hoc committees without going through the regular process for making changes to the by-laws. The process for creating ad hoc committees, however, may only be changed by an amendment to the by-laws.

*Section 5.8 Graduate Center Committees*

Students serve on the following Graduate Center committees:

* The Graduate Council is composed of four (4) student members elected for two-year terms.
* The Doctoral Students Council is composed of three (3) student members. The election process for this committee is handled by the DSC.

**Article IV: ESA List-serv**

*Section 4.1 Purpose and Disclaimer*

The ESA list-serv exists to provide an open forum for ESA members to discuss English Program issues, publicize ESA meetings and business, make announcements, and engage in general discussion. List members should recognize that responsibility for postings on this list is with the individual contributors and such postings do not necessarily reflect either ESA or English Program policy. List membership is limited to current and past ESA members, as defined in the ESA Constitution.

**Article V: Amendments**

*Section 5.1 Amendments to By-Laws*

These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed or new by-laws may be adopted by following the procedure for amending by-laws (section 5.2). The sections relating to ad-hoc committees may be updated as is necessary by the Co-chairs to reflect changes in committee structure without following the procedure for amending bylaws (sections 3.5 and 3.7).

*Section 5.2 Procedure for Amending By-Laws*

In order to make a change to the ESA by-laws, a proposal must be made by an ESA member in writing and presented at an ESA meeting, either in person or through a proxy. The proposal must then be seconded by a member in attendance at the meeting, in order to be considered. There is then a period of discussion and a vote at the subsequent meeting, in accordance with the procedure for taking action at a meeting (section 1.7). Once a proposal has been passed by a valid majority vote in an ESA meeting, the proposal shall then be given to the elections committee which my either add the amendment to the elections ballot, or create a special ballot to be sent to all ESA members (generally following the elections procedure). It is the responsibility of the Co-chairs to provide the elections committee with a copy of the proposal for inclusion on the ballot. In order to be adopted, the proposal must gain a simple majority (51%) of votes on the election ballot to pass. Once the amendment is passed, it is the responsibility of the Co-chairs to alter the by-laws accordingly.