Neuroscience Program Graduate Student Council (NSP GSC) Constitution
Last updated May 2014

A constitution is required to officially register any student organization with the Department of Student Life at Michigan State University. The following constitution was designed to meet the specific guidelines outlined by the MSU Department of Student Life (www.studentlife.msu.edu).

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1.
The name of this organization shall be: Neuroscience Program Graduate Student Council (NSP GSC)

Section 2.
The purpose of this organization shall be to a) increase the role of the NSP graduate students in the organization and running of the NSP; b) facilitate camaraderie among NSP graduate students; and c) facilitate communication between NSP graduate students, faculty and non NSP MSU community.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.
Any MSU student may be a member. The NSP GSC will not discriminate on the basis of age, color, gender, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight. Only NSP graduate students may be officers and/or voting members of the council.

Section 2.
Any returning student may become a member (for the following academic year) by expressing their interest at or before the final NSP GSC meeting of the Spring semester. Incoming NSP graduate students will attain membership by expressing interest at or before the first NSP GSC meeting of the academic year. Membership is a one year term. Membership in good standing consists of maintaining good academic standing, attendance at 75% or more of the general meetings as well as contribution in NSP GSC governed planning and activities. A person remains in good standing by obeying the rules of the NSP GSC that are written in the constitution.
ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section 1.

Positions and terms

President:
One member will be elected for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC with a maximum of 3 years of service. Any member who has completed their first year in the NSP is eligible to serve as President.

Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) representative:
One NSP PhD candidate (this rep must have passed the comprehensive exams) will be elected for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) representative:
One NSP PhD candidate (this rep must have passed the comprehensive exams) will be elected for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.

Council of Graduate Students (COGS) representative:
One member will be elected for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.

Student Advisory Council (SAC) officer:
One member will be elected for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.

Research Forum Subcommittee:
Terms on this committee last two years with a new member being elected each year such that one member will be new and one will be a returning member of the research forum subcommittee each year.

Social Chair and Cochair:
Terms on this committee last two years with a new member being elected each year such that one member will be new (cochair) and one will be a returning officer (Chair).

Outreach Chair:
One member will be chosen by the faculty and staff outreach coordinators for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.

Class Representatives:
One member will be elected to represent each class (1-5) for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if re-elected by the NSP GSC.
Cross-campus Liaison (new in 2013-2014):
One member will be elected to represent each geographic cluster for a term of one year (from May 1 to April 30) but may serve for more than one year if reelected by the NSP GSC.

Editor of the NSP Newsletter (new in 2014-2015):
One member will be elected to organize and oversee the production of the newsletter, which will be published once per semester.

Section 2.
Nominations and elections for the positions listed above will take place at the final NSP GSC meeting in the Spring semester with the exception of the Class Representative for the first year class who will be nominated and elected at the first meeting of the Fall semester. Any NSP graduate student may make a nomination and all NSP graduate students present at the election have equal voting. Elections shall be held by anonymous ballot and require a simple majority of voting members present.

Section 3.

Position Description

President:
The responsibilities of the President include coordinating and presiding over meetings of the NSP GSC, taking minutes at the meetings, discussing pertinent issues with the NSP GSC, and disseminating information to NSP students. The president will also give a presentation to interviewing students during recruitment week and organize the annual NSP retreat with the NSP graduate student secretary and a subcommittee.

Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) representative:
GAC handles issues important to individuals in the NSP. The biggest job associated with the GAC representative will aid in NSP recruitment weekend, serve as a member of the admissions committee, and organize student involvement during interview weekend. The GAC representative will also attend all GAC meetings which are held once a month, except during the spring semester when they increase to twice a month.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) representative:
The FAC representative shall discuss issues important to the program as a whole and represent the student body's opinion on what should be changed. In the past, FAC has discussed ways to improve comps, how to improve the admissions process, incentives to get more faculty involved, research forum, etc. This person shall serve as a faculty-student liaison, and may directly improve the quality of our program through his/her efforts. The FAC is required to attend all FAC meetings and provide updates to the NSP GSC.
Council of Graduate Students (COGS) representative:
The COGS rep will attend all COGS meetings (once a month for ~1.5-2 hours). The committee primarily discusses a variety of issues related to graduate student needs. In addition, this individual will serve as a COGS representative on one university committee. The COGS rep will report relevant information to the NSP GSC on a monthly basis.

Student Advisory Council (SAC) representative:
The SAC rep will attend all SAC committee meetings (approximately every other week during the academic year for ~1-1.5 hours). Students meet with the Dean of the college of natural sciences and are given updates of both undergraduate and graduate student issues/affairs that are being discussed. Topics discussed include academic honesty, academic scholarships and awards, the use of additional money within the college, etc. One may be asked to serve on a subcommittee, but you do not necessarily have to volunteer for this.

Research Forum Subcommittee:
Two individuals will plan and coordinate Research Forum each year. This committee will decide what career-enhancing topics students are interested in and set up the research forum schedule accordingly. Other duties include organizing forum sessions and inviting speakers for each research forum session, ensure that a room is reserved and ready, and take attendance at forum. The Research Forum subcommittee will also give an update to the NSP GSC and turn in an attendance record of NSP students to the NSP director at the end of each fall and spring semester.

Social Chair and Co-chair:
These individuals will organize the Annual NSP Holiday Party, the Society for Neuroscience social and any other social events the NSP GSC indicates through a majority vote. They will also maintain records of attendance at each event and provide a written summary of recent social events to the organizers of the newsletter along with pictures if applicable.

Outreach Chair:
The outreach chair will schedule outreach events at local area schools, including organizing our annual Brain Bee competition, Neuroscience Fair, and Brain Awareness Week events as well as coordinate the involvement of NSP members and other volunteers.

Class Representatives:
Class representatives will speak for all members of their entering class at NSP GSC meetings. This would be a good venue to bring up concerns of your fellow classmates regarding coursework, lab rotation, forum, etc. They will also gather and organize content for the newsletter.
Cross-campus Liaison (new in 2013-2014):
Two liaisons will plan and coordinate events that promote student interaction between the Grand Rapids and East Lansing campuses. Activities shall be aimed to bring both groups of students together. In addition, the liaison’s will organize the "Research Day" event every semester which will be held either in East Lansing or Grand Rapids; switch every semester.

Editor of the NSP Newsletter (new in 2014-2015):
One member will organize and oversee the production of the newsletter, which will be published once per semester. Class representatives and other interested parties will help produce content for the newsletter, but it is the editor's job to ensure its successful publication each semester.

In addition all officers shall have the following duties: to attend meetings and contribute to the management of the NSP GSC as well as assist with the execution of the duties of the NSP GSC (e.g. organization of annual NSP retreat, faculty awards, etc).

Section 4.
All officers are expected to attend all NSP GSC meetings. Any officer who is absent more than twice without a prior notification to the president or is failing to uphold their duties as outlined in Section 3 may be removed from their position if 2/3 of the NSP GSC votes to replace them.

ARTICLE IV: OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section 1.
Meetings will occur on the first Thursday of every month (prior to or immediately following seminar) unless a more suitable date and time is identified by the president to all NSP GSC members. Supplementary meetings may be scheduled as required. Quorum consists of 5 officers in attendance.

Section 2.
Meetings will be coordinated by the president with time to hear from each officer listed above in the order in which they’re listed within this document.

Section 3.
The NSP GSC as a whole will serve as a committee (with the formation of sub-committees as necessary) for the following purposes: maintaining morale among NSP students, organization and execution of the annual NSP retreat; organization of nominations for and awarding of faculty awards; student mini-symposium selection; and organization of NSP social events. Also, officers of the NSP GSC will serve as student representatives on the following NSP committees: Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC); Student Advisory Committee (SAC); hiring committee; and the NSP faculty advisory committee (FAC).
ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS

Section 1.
Amendments may be proposed by any NSP GSC officer in good standing at any scheduled NSP GSC meeting.

Section 2.
Proposed amendments will be voted on by the officers of the NSP GSC at the meeting in which the proposal was made. Amendments require a 2/3 vote from the NSP GSC officers in order to be approved.

Section 3.
Amendments will be sent to the NSP GSC faculty advisor (the head of the GAC) for final approval.