

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Policy regarding Political Neutrality and Anti-Discrimination

Preamble

WHEREAS the Mandate, Mission, Vision and Values of the Graduate Students Association of McMaster University ("GSA") is set out at <http://gsa.mcmaster.ca/mandate.html>;

AND WHEREAS McMaster University's Anti-Discrimination Policy, dated October 25, 2001, which applies to all members of the McMaster University community, is set out at:
<https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/General/HR/Anti-Discrimination%20policy.pdf>

NOW THEREFORE:

1. The GSA is a not for profit organization that represents all graduate students of McMaster University on campus and in Ontario/Canada regarding graduate student-related issues such as education, research, mental health, recreation, social activities, funding, intellectual property, etc.
2. The operations, policies and positions of the GSA are to be consistent with the organization's Mandate, Mission and Vision as well as its Values.
3. Recognizing the changing student body, its diversity of interests, political views and practical concerns, the goal of the GSA is to build an open and inclusive graduate student community.
4. In holding itself out as operating for the benefit of all members, the GSA must perform its duties without discrimination, so that no graduate student or graduate student group feels singled out, harassed or discriminated against contrary to the University Anti-Discrimination Policy.
5. The GSA welcomes diversity of opinion and believes that a position of political neutrality can better foster openness and inclusivity than a politicized GSA, as well as ensuring the effective and non-biased support of graduate students.
6. Therefore the GSA shall:
 - a. commit itself to a general policy of political neutrality regarding governmental policy or political issues that do not directly relate to GSA or its members;
 - b. not take positions on political issues, conflicts or situations that do not directly relate to the GSA or its members, and are not consistent with GSA's Mandate, Mission, Vision and Values;
 - c. shall not be involved in any movement, group, party, faction, wing, lobby, or camp that singles out one race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap (disability);
 - d. shall not join or merge with any municipal, provincial, federal or international political party, pressure group, partisan or lobbying organization; and
 - e. seek to ensure that its student representatives are not elected on the basis of their political views, if any.

7. This policy suggests that the GSA should not take a stance on complex foreign political issues that have no bearing on the quality of graduate student life at McMaster, but does not preclude GSA taking stances on specific issues that are directly relevant to the University, GSA, and its students and are consistent with GSA's Mandate, Mission, Vision and Values. However, such issues will likely be few and must be debated and if eventually approved (according to the process set out in the GSA bylaws), approved for their universal benefits.