

Constitution

Constitution of the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Organization of Carnegie Mellon University

Article I - Name

The name of this union shall be the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Organization of Carnegie Mellon University, hereafter abbreviated as MEGSO.

Article II - Object

The object of this union shall be to safeguard and promote the welfare of its members, the Graduate Student Body of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, by providing a system of participatory governance, and by encouraging positive and bilateral interaction between the students and faculty on matters of mutual concern.

Article III - Membership

All graduate students of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University are members of MEGSO by default. All members of MEGSO are eligible to vote in MEGSO elections and hold appointed office. However, only full-time (fees-paying) MEGSO members may hold elected office. A member may resign from MEGSO by submitting a statement to the Executive Board.

Article IV - Executive Structure

MEGSO shall be administered by an Executive Board, composed of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, each of whom are elected by the membership as described in **Article VI**. Additionally, the Executive Board is responsible for filling the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) Representative positions allocated to the Department as described in **Article VIII**.

- A. The Executive Board shall be responsible for the operation of MEGSO and the fulfillment of MEGSO's obligations to its membership.
 1. In order to achieve these ends, it shall have the power to create appointed positions to which to delegate its responsibilities. These positions shall be filled by individuals selected from the membership of MEGSO by consensus of the Executive Board.

2. Any officer may designate a temporary alternate for any of his or her duties.
 3. Every officer of the Executive Board, or that officer's appointed alternate, is obligated to attend all general meetings of the MEGSO membership.
- B. The President shall preside over meetings of the MEGSO membership and be responsible for maintaining an amicable relationship with the faculty and outside organizations.
1. The President must set an agenda for MEGSO membership meetings that addresses the needs indicated by the membership.
 2. The President shall perform all official interactions between MEGSO and the faculty unless the Executive Board specifically appoints another person for this purpose.
- C. The Vice President shall assist the President in carrying out his or her duties, and he or she will be responsible for interactions between the Executive Board and the MEGSO membership.
1. The Vice President shall oversee arrangement of logistical details regarding MEGSO membership meetings.
 2. The Vice President shall serve as the liaison between the general membership and the Executive Board.
 3. The Vice President must adequately respond to legitimate requests from the membership for meetings or services.
- D. The Secretary shall be responsible for recording the events of MEGSO meetings, keeping the MEGSO membership informed of events and organizational matters.
1. The Secretary shall see that all activities of the Executive Board and MEGSO general body are recorded and presented for general viewing by the membership.
 2. The Secretary shall maintain all forms of information dissemination including but not limited to the MEGSO webpage and email distribution.
 3. The Secretary is responsible for overseeing elections of new officials.
- E. The Treasurer shall be responsible for MEGSO financial affairs.
1. The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt of funding from the Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Assembly, in accordance with its policies for funding student groups.
 2. The Treasurer shall manage procurement and payment of supplies and services for MEGSO activities.
 3. Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance and good standing of MEGSO finances.
- F. Vacancy
1. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary may resign by submitting his or her resignation to the general body of MEGSO.
 2. In the event of a vacancy of office, the remaining officers shall assume the duties of the vacant office and may schedule interim elections according to the rules in **Article VI**, Sections A and B.
 3. If the Executive Board is unable to fulfill its duties, the officers or membership shall enlist the faculty advisor appointed by the department to arrange a general

body meeting of MEGSO to elect a new Executive Board.

Article V - Meetings

General membership meetings shall be held throughout the Fall and Spring academic terms and are organized by the Executive Board pursuant to their responsibilities delineated in **Article IV**. The board shall publicize the meeting to the general body through conventional channels including email and postering. The Executive Board is responsible for attempting to inform all members of MEGSO.

- A. All meetings shall be on days when school is in session.
- B. At a minimum, the Executive Board must schedule meetings near the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester.
- C. At the meeting, the Executive Board shall update the membership on recent MEGSO events, efforts, and expenditures.
- D. The President shall update the membership regarding recent and pertinent interaction with the department.
- E. The Executive Board shall hold a short "open floor" session to solicit feedback from MEGSO members in attendance.
 1. Feedback regarding the organization's logistics, future efforts, and other issues of concern should be brought up at this time.
 2. Constitutional Amendments may be presented during this "open floor" session. However, these motions shall not be voted on in the same meeting in which they are brought up.
- F. The membership can compel the Executive Board to convene a General Body Meeting by submitting a petition bearing the printed names, signatures, and phone numbers or email addresses of at least 15% of the current MEGSO members.
 1. Upon receipt of a compelled meeting petition, the Executive Board is obligated to hold a meeting within two weeks.
 2. The meeting must be publicized to the general body through conventional channels including email and postering.

Article VI – Election of the Executive Board

The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary shall be elected by secret ballot in a general election held toward the end of the fall semester of the academic year. This date is intended to allow incoming students to familiarize themselves with the organization. The Executive Board may decide to concurrently hold a general membership meeting during elections.

- A. Logistics
 1. The outgoing Executive Board shall publicize the event through conventional channels including email and postering.
 2. The outgoing Executive Board is responsible for ensuring a quorum of at least

20% of the MEGSO members. In the event that a quorum does not exist, the Executive Board must reschedule the elections in a timely manner.

3. The outgoing Secretary is responsible for the compilation, distribution, collection, and counting of ballots. If the outgoing Secretary is a candidate for a position, he or she must appoint a MEGSO member as a surrogate for vote-counting for that position.
4. Nominations shall be opened at least one week prior to the election and also solicited at the election session prior to the beginning of voting. The outgoing Secretary is responsible for compiling the list of candidates for each position. It is not necessary to appoint a surrogate for this process even if the outgoing Secretary is running for an Executive Board position.
5. Any MEGSO member may nominate. Self-nominations are allowed.
6. It is the right of every member of MEGSO to vote for his or her representatives. To this end, the use of absentee balloting is allowed in all MEGSO executive board elections. Absentee ballots must be on paper and may be submitted in one of two ways:
 - a. A voter may submit a sealed envelope to the Secretary in person, after which the Secretary will log that the voter has entered a vote.
 - b. A voter may submit a sealed envelope to the Secretary without a direct meeting, but the envelope must be printed across the seal with the voter's name. Upon receipt, the Secretary will log that the voter has entered a vote, and then contact the voter to inform him or her that the vote was received. The voter must understand that the secrecy of his or her ballot may be inadvertently compromised when the envelope is opened.

B. Criteria for winning

1. For positions with multiple candidates, the candidate gaining the plurality of votes will be the winner. In the event of a tie for winner, there will be a run-off election among the tied candidates. The Secretary may hold a debate session prior to the run-off election only if it is agreed upon by all of the candidates in the run-off. The run-off elections will continue until one candidate receives a majority of votes.
 - a. In elections with multiple candidates, abstentions are counted towards the quorum but not towards the vote count.
2. For positions in which there is only one candidate, the candidate will be elected by a "yea" or "nay" vote. All members counted as part of the quorum must vote either "yea" or "nay" and the candidate must receive "yea" votes from two thirds of the ballots. If the candidate does not receive enough votes, the Secretary will open the floor to new nominations. The candidate may run again in this election.
 - a. In elections with only one candidate, abstentions are counted as "nay" votes.
3. The new officers' terms start at the conclusion of the election session.

C. Impeachment and Removal From Office

1. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary may be brought up for impeachment by a motion to impeach by any member during the "open floor" session of a General Body Meeting, if that member feels the officer has irredeemably failed in his or her constitutional obligation to the membership.

- a. If the motion is seconded by another member, an Impeachment hearing begins immediately.
- b. The aggrieved members shall air their complaints to the membership and the impeached officer shall give any defense.
- c. The Executive Board shall oversee discussion of the impeachment, and after the discussion has concluded, a vote will be held.
- d. A vote of the membership resulting in 75% of votes in favor of removal shall be sufficient for removal from office.
- e. A quorum of 30% of the MEGSO membership is required for the impeachment vote. All members counted as part of the quorum must vote either "yea" or "nay" on removal.
- f. A removed official is eligible for any elected MEGSO position; however, he or she is not allowed to hold any appointed position assigned by the executive board.

Article VII - Fiscal Policy

It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to allocate MEGSO funds. Care should be taken to use MEGSO funds for events and causes that benefit all MEGSO members. MEGSO maintains no obligation to departmental or outside interests. Participation in MEGSO funded events must be open to all members. The MEGSO Executive Board or a representative must be part of the budgeting and planning stages for the event if it is to be funded ensuring that a fair cost share among the participating groups can be established.

- A. The Executive Board is expected to plan and execute several events throughout the year which are fully or partially funded by MEGSO.
- B. All expenditures must be approved by the Executive Board.
- C. Any MEGSO member may suggest additional events to the Executive Board. If the member feels his or her request is not appropriately addressed, then the member may initiate discussion at a MEGSO general body meeting.
- D. No outside organization, including the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Carnegie Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon University, may dictate the expenditure of MEGSO funds except with regards to legality or university policy regarding expenditure of student funds in general.

Article VIII - Graduate Student Assembly Representatives

The Executive Board must insure that all the seats allotted to the Department on the Graduate Student Assembly are filled. These positions are seen as ambassadors of the Department to GSA and are critical for timely and meaningful communication between MEGSO and GSA.

- A. Any member of MEGSO may serve as GSA Representative.
- B. All GSA Representative seats will come up for renewal at the beginning of each Fall semester.
- C. The Executive Board may extend the Representative's term upon his or her consent and

the unanimous vote of the Board.

- D. A GSA Rep may resign at any time, at which point the Executive Board is responsible for finding a new Representative.
1. The Board will email the MEGSO membership notification of vacancy and solicit candidates interested in filling the vacancy.
 2. If there are fewer or as many interested persons as there are seats available, the Executive Board may appoint the interested party as Representative without vote of the general membership by unanimous vote of the Board. It may also decide to have a binding "yea" or "nay" vote of the membership as outlined in Article VI, section B, part 2.
 3. If there are more interested parties than available seats, the Executive Board must hold a vote at a General Body Meeting in a timely manner, pursuant to the relevant sections of **Article VI**, *sections A and B*.
 4. The Representative may be removed from office under the rules of **Article VI**, *section C*.

Article IX - Amendment

Proposed amendments to this Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Executive Officers at least one week prior to a general body meeting. The Executive Officers must make a recommendation on the proposed amendments at least one day prior to the general body meeting. To be adopted, an amendment must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote at the meeting. There must be a 30% membership quorum and voters counted toward this quorum must vote "yea" or "nay" on the amendment.

Article X - Ratification

This Constitution shall be immediately in effect after being accepted by a meeting of at least 25% of the total membership of MEGSO. A vote of 90% of the members present at the Ratification meeting shall be sufficient to accept the Constitution.

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