

# Constitution of the Computer Science Students' Association

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## I. Name and Purpose

The name of this organization shall be the Computer Science Students' Association (CSSA) of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York . The name of the highest elected body that represents students in the PhD Program in Computer Science shall be the Student Steering Committee (hereafter, "SSC").

The purposes of the SSC shall include but not be limited to:

1. Representing student interests in communication with the program's chair and Executive Committee.
2. Promoting an atmosphere of community and sociability for the welfare of students in the Computer Science program.
3. Representing the interests of and establishing and enacting policy for students in the Computer Science program.
4. Organizing a meeting for the whole student membership of the program each semester to solicit ideas for activities and events; and provide a report from student representatives to all program standing committees, Graduate Council, and the Doctoral Students' Council (hereafter, "DSC").
5. Coordinate with the Elections Committee to facilitate elections for all vacant positions to program standing committees, Graduate Council, and the DSC and facilitating student representation on all program ad hoc committees.
6. Organizing and funding, in coordination with program standing committees, activities and events of general, professional, and social interest to students in the Computer Science program.
7. Fostering ongoing relationships with alumni for the mutual benefit of the program's students and alumni.
8. Maintaining the Computer Science lab to promote a social academic workspace for all students in the program.
9. Maintaining the CSSA website as a resource for student organized activities and ensuring that the program website is also maintained with all relevant resources and information for students.
10. Acting as a formal channel of communication between the DSC and students in the Computer Science program.

11. Overseeing expenditure of the DSC program allocation or any additional funds raised for the CSSA; and
12. To undertake other initiatives as needed and as decided by the students to improve any aspect of the program in which students have a rightful role.

## II. Membership

### A. Voting Membership

The voting membership of the SSC shall be composed of, ex officio, all elected student representatives and elected alternates to the program standing committees, Graduate Council, and the DSC Program Representative(s).

### B. Elections

The election of the DSC Program Representative(s) shall take place each spring under the supervision of the DSC. The election of student representatives to program standing committees and Graduate Council shall take place each spring under the supervision of the student representatives to the Elections Committee.

Nominations for vacant positions shall open by midnight on March 15th and notice shall be sent to all students in the program at least three days in advance. Any student in the program may nominate any other student in the programing, including him or herself. The nomination period shall be closed as of midnight on April 1st.

Students shall be notified of their nomination within three days and shall be presumed to accept nomination unless they decline the nomination in writing by midnight on April 10th.

Nominations and elections shall be conducted through any verifiable and time-stamped medium accepted by a simple majority vote of the SSC. Separate ballots shall be prepared for each committee and write-in votes shall be allowed on any ballot. All ballots must be sent to students by midnight on April 15th and the election period shall be closed at midnight on April 30th. Ballots submitted after this time shall be considered invalid.

The student representatives to each committee shall be those nominees who received the most votes in that election, with the total number of representatives not to exceed the total number of seats for that committee. If a student is nominated on several ballots, the votes received on one ballot shall not count towards the other(s). Tied votes shall be decided by the Elections Committee, which shall first ask the tied candidates to decide among themselves who shall serve and lacking consensus among or response from all candidates, shall draw names in a chance lottery.

The elected alternates for each standing committee representative shall be the runners-up in the election who received the most votes, with one alternate for each committee seat filled.

Alternates for a committee may attend committee meetings as members of that committee if an elected representative to that committee is unable to attend. If a representative vacates his or her position for any reason then the Elections Committee shall ask the alternates to decide among themselves which alternate shall assume that position until end of term and lacking consensus among or response from all alternates, shall draw names in a chance lottery. If no alternate is available then a special election shall be conducted to fill the vacancy.

Students shall be notified of their election within three days and shall be presumed to accept election unless they decline in writing by midnight on May 5th.

If the initial ballot-based election fails to fill all vacancies then the SSC may call a special meeting of all students in the program where candidates may be nominated and elected to fill vacant positions.

### **C. Recall**

The DSC Program Representative(s) shall be subject to recall according to the procedures enumerated in the DSC Constitution. The other voting representatives and alternates of the SSC are subject to recall from the SSC either by a signed petition of two-thirds of the students in the program or a three-quarters majority vote of the SSC. A representative cannot be recalled unless he or she has been notified in writing at least five business days before the presentation of the petition to the SSC or before the meeting at which the motion may be entertained. All student representatives to program standing committees and Graduate Council are subject to recall from their respective committees.

Representatives who miss three meetings of the committee for which they are elected or three meetings of the SSC in a single school year without arranging for an alternate to attend in their place will be automatically recalled and will be ineligible for elections in the following year.

## **III. Officers**

The representatives-elect and continuing members of the SSC shall convene by May 31 of each year to elect a chairperson of the SSC for the following academic year.

The duties of the chairperson shall include but not be limited to:

1. Convening and presiding over all meetings of the SSC or, in the case of absence, appointing a designee from among the elected SSC representatives.
2. Implementing the policies and decisions of the SSC and acting as principal spokesperson for students in the program.
3. Reporting to the SSC all affirmative actions he or she has taken to implement the policies and decisions of the SSC.
4. Maintaining accurate lists of all student representatives to program standing committees, Graduate Council, and the DSC.

## IV. Meetings

The SSC shall hold at least two meetings each semester. The chairperson of the SSC shall distribute an agenda at least one week before a scheduled meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, an SSC member who is not the chair shall be designated as the secretary of that meeting with the consent of the majority of the voting members. All meetings shall be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised and comply with New York State Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Law. All members of the public may attend any meeting of the association without vote and also without voice unless so recognized to speak by the chair. Members of the public may not attend portions of meetings conducted in a legitimate executive session unless so authorized by the chair.

A quorum of the SSC shall consist of five representatives or 50% of the non-alternate voting members, whichever is smaller.

## V. Amendments

A proposed amendment to this constitution may be considered by the SSC upon written presentation to it by any voting member thereof or by a petition of 30% of students in the program. Written notice of the proposed amendment shall be sent to every voting member at least ten business days before the meeting at which it is to be considered. An amendment may be passed by a two-thirds majority vote. Any amendment adopted by the SSC shall be distributed to students in the program for ratification. The amendment shall be considered ratified unless rejected by a simple majority vote with at least 10% of the students in the program responding within 20 business days of distribution.

## VI. Ratification

This constitution shall be submitted for review and comment to the students of the Computer Science program. Following this discussion, the constitution will be ratified by a majority vote of the student representatives to program standing committees, Graduate Council, and DSC Program Representative(s).