

# Resolution to Change the Structure of the Officers and Executive Committee of MIT EECS GSA

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Approved by the Executive Committee on March 19, 2007 (13 for, 0 against, 5 abstaining).

Approved by a General Body Meeting on April 9, 2007 (32 for, 0 against, 1 abstaining) .

## Motivation

Given the recent expansion and growth of the Association, the duties of some of the Officers have expanded such that it is no longer realistic for one individual to perform the responsibilities of the office effectively without undue burden on the individual. One case is the Secretary, who has the responsibility of attending all Association meetings and taking minutes of the proceedings. This is becoming very difficult. Thus, we propose to abolish this office and distribute its tasks to other Officers. Another case is the President, who has the responsibility of planning and presiding over both Executive Committee Meetings and General Body Meetings, which is a time-consuming task, in addition to other important duties. By having two Co-Presidents who are focused exclusively on running General Body Meetings, relations with the department and other groups, and overall supervision of the Association, and three area Vice Presidents who run the Executive Committee Meetings and oversee particular Committees, the leadership of the Association can far more effectively carry out the group's mission.

As it currently stands, there is no established role for more experienced members to mentor and share experiences with newer members. By creating two Co-Presidents and three area Vice Presidents and explicitly defining the mentoring duties of each position, we hope to be able to transfer knowledge and experience in a manner that scales with the growth of the organization.

Since the size of the Executive Committee has gradually grown as well, it is no longer realistic to schedule exec meetings where all members can attend regularly and contribute adequately. More importantly, the scope of the meetings have expanded beyond what is appropriate. In order to plan more effectively the number of activities that GSA is sponsoring, event organization needs to be coordinated and discussed with smaller, more agile subgroups of the members to ensure meeting efficiency. Recent experience with the Orientation and Visit Weekend planning suggests that dividing and moving the topics discussed at current exec meetings into the agendas of smaller, more focused meetings result in more participation and a better sense of ownership among the members. Thus, we propose to reduce the number of individuals on the Executive Committee (the six Officers only, unless others are added by legislation), who would focus the exec meetings on coordinating general Association affairs rather than details.

In recognition of the importance of communicating and archiving Association activities and the growth of the Publicity Committee, we also propose changing its name to the Publications Committee, making its Chair one of the three area Vice Presidents, and more explicitly defining its responsibilities.

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## Legislation

1. Be it enacted that, effective May 1, 2007, the Constitution of EECS GSA shall be amended in the following manner.
  - (a) Article IV, Section 1 currently reads:

There shall be four Officer positions within the EECS GSA: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. No person may hold the same Officer position, Acting or otherwise, for more than two and a half years after January 31, 2005.

It shall be amended to read:

There shall be at least two Officer positions within the EECS GSA: at least one President, one Treasurer, and any other Officer positions to be determined by the By-laws. No person may hold the same Officer position, Acting or otherwise, for more than two and a half years.
  - (b) The sentence “The President shall be the *ex officio* Chair of the Executive Committee” shall be removed from Article IV, Section 2.
  - (c) Article VI, Section 2 currently reads:

The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the Members of the EECS GSA for terms lasting no longer than 400 days. The terms for all Officers shall begin and end at the same time.

It shall be amended to read:

The Officers shall be elected by the Members of the EECS GSA for terms lasting no longer than 400 days. The terms for all Officers shall begin and end at the same time.
  - (d) The phrase “any three members” in Article VI, Section 5 and Article VII, Section 2 shall be amended to become the phrase “any third”.
  - (e) The phrase “The President” in Article VII, Sections 1 and 2 shall be amended to become the phrase “The President or Co-Presidents”
2. Be it enacted that, effective May 1, 2007, the Bylaws of EECS GSA shall be amended in the following manner.
  - (a) Article I (Duties of Officers) shall be completely rewritten as:

### Article I. Duties of Officers

#### Section I–1. Co-Presidents

There shall be two Co-Presidents. They shall oversee the operations and activities of the Association. They shall call and preside at the General Body Meetings and maintain minutes from these meetings. They shall interface with other organizations, the departmental administration, and the outside world, including regular meetings with the department head. They shall ensure that the Association’s workload is distributed such that the Association’s activities do not place an undue burden on any Member or set of Members. They shall mentor the other members of the Executive Committee, and their own successors.

## **Section I–2. Vice Presidents**

There shall be three Vice Presidents. They shall call and preside at the Executive Committee Meetings and maintain minutes from these meetings. Each one shall be responsible for overseeing and informing the Executive Committee of developments within a specific domain, which are described below. They shall be responsible for mentoring and providing resources to enable members to accomplish their goals, coordinating and communicating with the rest of the Association on their own domain, and encouraging new initiatives in their own domain.

## **Section I–3. Vice President of Publications**

The Vice President of Publications (or “VPP”) shall be the *ex officio* chair of the Publications Committee.

## **Section I–4. Vice President of Academics and Diversity**

The Vice President of Academics and Diversity (or “VPAD”) shall oversee the operations and activities of the Academic, Research, and Careers Committee, the Diversity Committee, and all other related programs.

## **Section I–5. Vice President of Orientation and Student Life**

The Vice President of Orientation and Student Life (or “VPOSL”) shall oversee the operations and activities of the Orientation Committee, the Athletics Committee, the Social Committee, and all other related programs.

## **Section I–6. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall receive, disburse, and account for all funds of the Association and its activities, present a written report of finances at least once per year, coordinate all budget and financial decisions, prepare the budget for the next fiscal year to be voted upon by the Executive Committee, and seek out additional sources of funding. The Treasurer shall mentor his or her own successor, and coordinate with his or her own predecessor, on these tasks.

(b) Article II, Section 3 currently reads:

## **Section II–3. Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the EECS GSA, have overall coordination of nominations, finances, and budgets not delegated to other committees, prepare an agenda for each General Body Meeting, and may deal with all matters pertinent to the Association. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers, Chairs of Standing Committees, other persons appointed (and removable) by the Association through the passing of legislation, and, should they not already be members of the Executive Committee, the EECS departmental representatives to the MIT Graduate Student Council (“EECS GSC reps”). An EECS GSC rep shall have the right to relinquish his or her membership on the Executive Committee for the current term of office in writing to the Officers. Any three members of the Executive Committee shall have the ability to call for the removal of an EECS GSC rep from the Executive Committee. Removal shall require the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Committee followed by the approval of two-thirds of the Members voting at the next General Body Meeting such

that quorum is met. The Executive Committee shall convene at the call of the President, or at the request of two of its members.

It shall be amended to read:

### **Section II–3. Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the EECS GSA, have overall coordination of nominations, finances, and budgets not delegated to other committees, prepare an agenda for each General Body Meeting, and may deal with all matters pertinent to the Association. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers and other persons appointed (and removable) by the Association through the passing of legislation. The Executive Committee shall convene at the request of any of its members.

(c) Article II, Section 7 currently reads:

### **Section II–7. Publicity Committee**

The Publicity Committee is a Standing Committee responsible for advertising GSA events to the EECS Graduate Student Body. The Publicity Committee shall coordinate this responsibility with the Secretary.

It shall be amended to read:

### **Section II–7. Publications Committee**

The Publications Committee is a Standing Committee responsible for facilitating the publicizing, recording, and archiving of GSA events and activities to and for the EECS Graduate Student Body. The tasks of this Committee shall include, but not be limited to:

- Maintaining Association documents,
- Maintaining the Website and Calendar,
- Maintaining the e-mail lists,
- Coordinating communication from the Association to Members,
- Advertising Association events and activities,
- Photographing and archiving events, and
- Publishing regular newsletters.

(d) Article IV (possibly soon to be renumbered to Article V), Section 1 specifically mentions some Officers in the election details. It shall be amended in the following manner:

- i. Clause 2: If the Board of Advisors amendment is not successfully passed, “The Secretary” becomes “The Vice President of Publications”.
- ii. Clause 4: If the Board of Advisors amendment is not successfully passed, “the Secretary” becomes “the Vice President of Publications”.
- iii. Clause 9: If the Board of Advisors amendment is not successfully passed, the first instance of “the President” becomes “the Co-Presidents”, the first instance of “he or she” becomes “they”, and the second instance of “the President” becomes “a Co-President”.
- iv. Clause 10: The sentence “Elections shall proceed in the following order: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.” becomes the two sentences “Elections shall proceed in the following order: Co-Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Treasurer. The presiding officer of the election shall decide the order among the Vice Presidents after consulting with the candidates.”

- (e) Article V (possibly soon to be renumbered to Article VI), Section 2 (Presidential Vacancy) currently reads:

If the Office of President becomes vacant before the election for the next President, the Vice President shall immediately become Acting President for the rest of the term of office and the Office of Vice President shall become vacant. If the Office of Vice President is also vacant when the Office of President becomes vacant before the election for the next President, the regulations specified in the next Section shall apply. If the Office of President becomes vacant after the election for the next President, the President-Elect shall become the Acting President for the rest of the term of office and vacate any GSA position he or she holds at the time.

It shall be amended to read:

If the Office of exactly one of the Co-Presidents becomes vacant, the remaining Co-President may appoint someone to serve in that position in an Acting role. If the Offices of both Co-Presidents become vacant, the Executive Committee may appoint one Member to serve in one of those positions in an Acting role, and the new Acting Co-President may appoint someone else to serve in the other position in an Acting role. Upon confirmation at the next General Body Meeting through legislation, the Acting Co-President(s) shall take office as Co-President(s) for the rest of the term of office. If the Acting Co-President(s) fail(s) to secure confirmation at the next General Body Meeting, the office immediately becomes vacant again and the appropriate body may re-appoint someone to serve as an Acting Officer. Two Acting Co-Presidents serving together shall be confirmed or rejected individually. Anyone who serves in a position in an Acting role may not be appointed more than one consecutive time in that Acting role.

- (f) Article V (possibly soon to be renumbered to Article VI), Section 3 (Officer Vacancies Other Than the Presidency) currently reads:

If any Officer position other than the Presidency becomes vacant, or if the Office of Vice President is also vacant when the Office of President becomes vacant before the election for the next President, the Executive Committee may appoint someone to serve in that position in an Acting role. Upon confirmation at the next General Body Meeting through legislation, the Acting Officer shall take office as an Officer for the rest of the term of office. If the Acting Officer fails to secure confirmation at the next General Body Meeting, the office immediately becomes vacant again and the Executive Committee may re-appoint someone to serve as an Acting Officer. Anyone who serves in a position in an Acting role may be not appointed more than one consecutive time in that Acting role.

It shall be amended to read:

If any Officer position other than the Presidency becomes vacant, the Executive Committee may appoint someone to serve in that position in an Acting role. Upon confirmation at the next General Body Meeting through legislation, the Acting Officer shall take office as an Officer for the rest of the term of office. If the Acting Officer fails to secure confirmation at the next General Body Meeting, the office immediately becomes vacant again and the Executive Committee may re-appoint someone to serve as an Acting Officer. Anyone who serves in a position in an Acting role may be not appointed more than one consecutive time in that Acting role.

3. Be it enacted that, for the purposes of the April 2007 election, the Officers may direct the election for the new positions available on May 1, 2007.