

## **THE PPGSA CONSTITUTION**

### **Article I - Name, Purpose, and Non-Discrimination Policy of the Organization.**

**Section 1.** The official and recognized title shall be "Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association."

**Section 2a.** The purpose of the Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association (PPGSA) is as follows:

- 1) To promote communication and interaction between students, faculty, staff, and administrators;
- 2) To provide a forum for discussing pertinent issues;
- 3) To serve as a vehicle for acting on students' requests for information and their suggestions for broadening and improving the quality of their educational experiences
- 4) To promote the participation of graduate students in the discipline of Plant Pathology at national and international scientific meetings relevant to their educational experience.
- 5) To promote the interaction between the department of Plant Pathology and the community through outreach activities.

**Section 2b.** The Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association (PPGSA) is a non-profit organization, thus making profit is not the primary function of the organization. Funding of the activities are provided through volunteer-based activities, such as charities. PPGSA will use these funds to sponsor student travel for its graduate student members to professional scientific meetings, to sponsor invited guest speakers, to send PPGSA graduate student members to give guest seminars at other universities, and to support outreach events related to plant pathology within the community.

### **Section 3.**

This organization does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, programs, admission, and employment.

As a student organization at The Ohio State University, The Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association expects its members to conduct themselves in a manner that maintains an environment free from sexual misconduct. All members are responsible for adhering to University Policy 1.15, which can be found here: <https://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy115.pdf>.

If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleIX.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at [titleIX@osu.edu](mailto:titleIX@osu.edu).

**Article II - Membership: Qualifications and categories of membership.** All currently enrolled graduate students in the Department of Plant Pathology are automatically a member of the PPGSA. Currently enrolled graduate students and undergraduate students of other disciplines are welcome to join the PPGSA with full voting rights but will be unable to serve as officers due to the nature of those positions. Exceptions to the rule of those who can serve as officers can be made if the student meets ALL of the following conditions; 1. Is a graduate student. 2. Is active in PPGSA (attends meetings, participates in PPGSA events, etc). 3. Is advised primarily by a faculty member in the Plant Pathology department. Others such as faculty, alumni, professionals, etc. are welcome to participate as non-voting associate or honorary members. Active participation in the organization is a personal decision for each member. Full-voting members of PPGSA are eligible to apply for grants to support travel to professional scientific meetings and to participate in the student travel exchange program (see Article VII). Non-voting associate or honorary members are not eligible for these benefits. No dues are charged.

### **Article III - Methods for Removing Members and Executive Officers**

III. a. If a member engages in behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, violates the organization's constitution or by-laws, or violates the Code of Student Conduct, university policy, or federal, state or local law, the member may be removed through a majority vote of the officers in consultation with the organization's advisor. The violation for which the member or officer is being removed must be written and the organization's advisor approve that this behavior is in violation of the constitution. The vote to remove a member or officer can occur by a special vote outside of the regular meetings and must occur within a year after the violation has taken place.

III. b. Any elected officer of the chapter may be removed from their position for cause. Cause for removal includes, but is not limited to: violation of the constitution or by-laws, failure to perform duties, or any behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, including violations of the Student Code of Conduct, university policy, or federal, state, or local laws. The Executive Committee may act for removal upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the executive board in consultation with the organization's advisor.

III.c. In the event that the reason for member removal is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or cannot otherwise be shared with members (e.g., while an investigation is pending), the executive board, in consultation with the organization's advisor, may vote to temporarily suspend a member or executive officer.

### **Article IV – Organization Leadership**

The elected officers and their duties are as follows:

*President.* Oversees the actions of the other elected officials; acts as liaison between students, faculty, and staff; expresses student opinions as a member of the PPGSA; informs students of departmental issues; calls and conducts graduate student meetings; appoints various committees as the need arises, recommends students for graduate studies committee, academic affairs committee and vision committee (positions interact with and are at the discretion of the faculty) after first confirming their willingness to serve if selected. It is encouraged that the president remains as an advisor ex officio for at least one semester after their term comes to an end.

*Vice President.* Assists president in the presidential duties listed above; serves as acting president when president is unable to fulfill his or her duties. Oversees the near-peer mentoring program for new graduate students. Must be located on the campus opposite of the President to facilitate the President's role in absentia for pressing issues.

*Secretary.* Is responsible for maintaining the PPGSA's records and files; serves as a liaison between prospective new students and the department of Plant Pathology; sends new students information about the department, housing, university facilities, and the Columbus and Wooster area, if needed.

*Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts.* Is responsible for the PPGSA's finances. PPGSA funds are kept in an account within the Department of Plant Pathology. A proposed budget for each year should be made and given to all officers for events such as plant sales, visiting exchange students, retreats, or other activities. The Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts will maintain communication with the Department of Plant Pathology's fiscal officer to ensure the agreed upon budget is being followed. A small portion of funds obtained by PPGSA may be kept outside of the Plant Pathology Department's account and custodied by the Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts to be used in emergencies. The Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts will have the option of serving for two years. If the Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts desires to serve only one year they should inform the outgoing President of that fact during the nomination process at the end of the first year.

*Advisor.* Must be a full-time assistant, associate, or full professor in the department of Plant Pathology, and is selected by the PPGSA at the beginning of each academic year to serve a one-year term beginning September 1. in accordance with its constitution and bylaws. The PPGSA faculty advisor is certified by the Office of Student Life every 2 years by completing Student Organization Advisor Training. The faculty advisor oversees all actions of the PPGSA and provides consul when deemed necessary.

## **Article V- Election / Selection of Organization Leadership**

**Section 1.** Elections for the PPGSA offices are held during the Summer term each year and the term of office begins on the first day of Autumn semester. Nominations are taken from the voting members at large and the ballot is drawn up after the nominees have expressed their willingness to serve. All members who are currently enrolled as a plant pathology graduate student at The Ohio State University are eligible to vote and hold office. The format of the ballots is chosen by the members of PPGSA each year, and can include e-mail ballots, paper ballots, or a combination as decided by a simple majority at a meeting held in Summer term.

**Section 2.** The election is conducted by the outgoing president. Officers are elected by a simple majority of the votes cast. At least 51% of the voting membership must be present. Members

elected are limited to a one-year term in their elected office. The Treasurer and Secretary of Accounts will be limited to two consecutive years in office. Members who have served in one office are eligible for nomination only in offices that they have not served.

#### **Article VI - Executive Committee: Size and composition of the Committee.**

The Executive Committee is comprised of the organization leaders and chairpersons of the standing committees. It represents the general membership, conducts business of the organization between general meetings of the membership, and reports its actions at the general meetings of the membership.

#### **Article VII - Standing Committees: Names, purposes, and composition.**

The following committees and positions are to be established each year as they serve functions vital for the success of PPGSA.

**Plant Sales Committee.** Headed by an elected chairperson for each campus. Other committee members are volunteers or are appointed. The main function of this committee is to meet regularly to ensure that the planning, organizing, and conducting of the annual fundraising is conducted at the highest standards to ensure a steady source of income for PPGSA. This committee is to be formed by the end of the first week of Autumn semester. All students are encouraged to participate in plant sales located on their campus. Both campuses' income reported ultimately to the treasurer or proxy. It is imperative that the appointed chairperson for each campus be involved in all aspects of the sale the previous year.

**Travel Grant Committee.** Headed by an elected chairperson. Other committee members are volunteers or are appointed. The main function of this committee is to meet regularly to ensure that the planning, organizing, and granting of student travel grants is conducted properly. It is crucial that this committee represents a wide range of students to ensure fairness of grant evaluation. This committee is to be formed by the end of the first week of Autumn semester.

**Student Exchange Representative.** Headed by an elected individual from PPGSA. This individual will function as a liaison with colleges involved with the student exchange program. This person will arrange housing and seminar times for individuals visiting Ohio State Department of Plant Pathology and establish connections with student exchange representatives from participating universities. The committee is also responsible to guarantee fairness on selection of the students that will participate in the exchange.

**Student Seminar Committee.** Headed by an elected chairperson. Other committee members are volunteers or are appointed. The main function of this committee is to plan and organize the end

of the year seminar for new students. The elected chairperson will also function as a liaison between students and faculty concerning the weekly seminar.

**Student Social Committee.** Headed by an elected chairperson. Other committee members are volunteers or are appointed. The main function of this committee is to plan and organize social events throughout the year for PPGSA members and other members of the department who wish to participate. Activities may include but are not limited to these ideas: retreats, mushroom forays, nature walks, potlucks, and dinners. It is important that these events are considered for both campuses.

**Graduate Studies Committee Representative.** The President will nominate two current Plant Pathology graduate students to the Department Chair at the beginning of the fall semester to serve as the new member on the graduate studies committee. One student will be selected by the Chair and/or faculty and will begin their term as PPGSA representative to the Graduate Studies Committee. This position will be on a one-year rotation.

**Academic Affairs Committee Representative.** The President will nominate two current Plant Pathology graduate students to the Department Chair at the beginning of the fall semester to serve as the new member on the Academic Affairs committee. One student will be selected by the Chair and/or faculty and will begin their term as PPGSA representative to the Academic Affairs Committee. This position will be on a one-year rotation.

**Vision Committee Representative.** The President will nominate two current Plant Pathology graduate students to the Department Chair at the beginning of the fall semester to serve as the new member on the Vision Committee. One student will be selected by the Chair and/or faculty and will begin their term as PPGSA representative to the Vision Committee. This position will be on a one-year rotation.

**Outreach Committee.** Headed by an elected chairperson. Other committee members are volunteers or are appointed. The main function of this committee is to both create a greater student awareness and understanding of plant pathology in order to broaden the numbers of future plant pathologists in our department and across the country as well as to increase community awareness of the general nature of plant pathology. The committee will meet at least once a semester to discuss upcoming events, plan new ones, and constantly be finding ways to integrate plant pathology into the community around us. Events will include presence at OSU/OARDC agricultural events and PPGSA plant sale.

#### **Article VIII – Advisor(s) or Advisory Board: Qualification Criteria.**

Advisor must be a full-time assistant, associate, or full professor in the department of Plant Pathology, and is selected by the PPGSA at the beginning of each academic year to serve a one-year term beginning September 1. The PPGSA faculty advisor is certified by the Office of Student

Life every 2 years by completing Student Organization Advisor Training. The faculty advisor oversees all actions of the PPGSA and provides counsel when deemed necessary.

## **Article IX – Meetings and events of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency.**

*Section 1.* PPGSA meetings are held at least once per semester and attendance at 50% of events hosted may be required for membership each academic term except for summer. Additional meetings can be scheduled as the need arises and are called by the president. The meetings will be held in the department of Plant Pathology conference rooms at the Columbus and Wooster campuses. Communications will be established via speaker phone or video link. At the discretion of the PPGSA members, a meeting can be scheduled so that all students meet in person on either the Wooster or Columbus campus.

*Section 2:* Allocation of PPGSA funds requires a simple majority of votes from the voting membership present. PPGSA sponsored activities can be voted on via e-mail ballots open for one week, only after being decided to be voted upon at an official PPGSA meeting. For the established committees below in amendment I and III, funds can be allocated with only the approval of the committee members to facilitate the carrying out of their duties, i.e. the plant sales committee purchasing pots and/or the travel grants committee paying a recipient their award. PPGSA may make monetary donations to the American Phytopathological Society with unrestricted guidelines, and on behalf of a full-voting member of PPGSA or staff/faculty of the Department of Plant Pathology due to unforeseen health crises or natural disaster. PPGSA may make no more than a total of \$500 contribution within a fiscal year and can be made at any time.

*Section 3.* Any activity that does not require the use of PPGSA funds can be initiated as a PPGSA activity with a simple majority of votes from the voting membership present. At least 51% of the voting membership must be present before an item is put to vote. Members at the meeting will fulfill the quorum; however, the meeting with the voting has to be announced to all the voting membership at least one week in advance.

## **Article X – Attendees of Events of the Organization: Required events and their frequency**

The organization reserves the right to address member or event attendee behavior where the member or event attendee's behavior is disruptive or otherwise not in alignment with the organization's constitution.

**Article XI – Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements.** Proposed constitutional amendments should be submitted in writing to the president. Amendments must be disseminated according to agree upon ballot measures, similar to those for elections, to all members at least one week prior to the close of the ballot. At least two-thirds majority of positive votes is necessary to accept the amendments.

**Article XII – Method of Dissolution of Organization** In the event of PPGSA dissolution all assets will be forfeited to the department of Plant Pathology at The Ohio State University. PPGSA will be dissolved if the organization is unable to fill the role of student officers as described by this constitution for more than 3 years.

### **Amendment I**

To include the description of the near-peer mentoring program as mentioned within the duties of the Vice-president.

**Near-peer mentoring program.** Headed by the vice president. This program aims to facilitate the transition of incoming graduate students into the departmental processes and culture. The leaders in this program pair all new graduate students with senior graduate students. The pair must meet at least once a month to discuss important milestones and processes that occur during a graduate student's first year in a program. New students have the option to opt out of the program if they deem it not helpful to their progress.