

# BY-LAWS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Amended May 11, 2006; Effective May 11, 2006.  
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## Article I. Duties of Officers

### Section I-1. President

The President shall call and preside at meetings of the Association. The President shall oversee the operations and activities of the Association and all committees. The conduct of meetings shall be the responsibility of the presiding officer. The President may appoint assistants with the approval of the Executive Committee, in the form of legislation passed at a General Body Meeting, and may designate a member of the Association to serve as Parliamentarian.

### Section I-2. Vice President

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence and coordinate the information flow to and from Members.

### Section I-3. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for recording, posting, and filing of minutes of all Association meetings, notification to all Members and the general public of all meetings of the Association, maintaining the files of the Association, and liaising with the communications media.

### Section I-4. 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 semester, coordinate all budget and financial decisions, and prepare the budget for the next fiscal year to be voted upon by the Executive Committee.

## Article II. Committees

### Section II-1. Committee Structure

The Association may establish Committees (or boards) to pursue specific goals of the Association. Those Committees provided for in the By-laws shall be referred to as Standing Committees. Other committees may be formed by passing legislation at a General Body Meeting; these shall be referred to as *Ad Hoc* Committees. All *Ad Hoc* Committees shall terminate when the term of the Officers under which they were

created expires. The membership of Committees shall consist of Committee Chairs (the number of which shall be determined by those voting in the elections for the Committee Chairs), volunteers from the EECS Graduate Student Body and *ex officio* members as specified by the Committee guidelines or appointed by the Association. Any Member of the EECS GSA may inquire into the proceedings of any Committee and the Association may pass legislation at a General Body Meeting to suspend or unsuspend a Committee. A Committee's chairpersons shall call and preside over all meetings and shall enlist members at their discretion.

## **Section II–2. Committee Procedures**

Committees established by the EECS Graduate Students Association must operate under the GSA Constitution and By-laws. Committees shall report on their activities to the Association on a regular basis, inform the Executive Committee of current developments, maintain pertinent documentation, and handle the responsibilities of distributing publicity or otherwise communicating with the EECS Graduate Student Body. Committees may also form subcommittees, as well as adopt their own official operating guidelines or amendments thereof. For Standing Committees, this shall require amendments to the By-laws. *Ad Hoc* Committees may do so through the passing of legislation at a General Body Meeting, unless their mandate specifies otherwise.

## **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.

## **Section II–4. Social Committee**

The Social Committee is a Standing Committee whose responsibility is to foster and promote events and activities that enhance the social environment for members of the EECS Graduate Student Body.

## **Section II–5. Academic, Research and Careers Committee**

The Academic, Research and Careers Committee (or simply "Academic Committee" for short) is a Standing Committee responsible for examining issues students may have regarding the academic or research structure of the department. It should also promote seminars, career development activities, and related topics.

## **Section II–6. Orientation Committee**

The Orientation Committee is a Standing Committee that shall organize and oversee the orientation of new EECS graduate students, as well as the open houses and visit days for prospective EECS graduate students.

## **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.

## **Section II–8. Athletics Committee**

The Athletics Committee is a Standing Committee responsible for organizing teams of EECS graduate students to play in MIT’s intramural sports leagues. Students can also use the mailing list to find buddies to play pick-up games.

## **Section II–9. Advocacy Committee**

The Advocacy Committee is a Standing Committee responsible for incorporating issues pertinent to under-represented groups in the department, such as, but not limited to, women, ethnic minorities, international students, and LGBT, into events already planned by the GSA and coordinating events solely geared at addressing these issues.

## **Article III. General Voting Procedures**

All elections for offices of the Association shall be done by the Instant Runoff Voting procedure defined as follows.

### **Section III–1. Uncompetitive Elections: No More Candidates than Positions**

For an election in which the number of available positions is greater than or equal to the number of candidates, the following procedure shall be used. A vote shall be taken independently for each candidate to determine if that candidate should be elected to the given position, or if the position should be left vacant. A simple majority of those voting shall be required to elect the candidate.

### **Section III–2. Single-Winner Elections with Multiple Candidates**

For an election with multiple candidates and only one winner, the following procedure shall be used. Voters are to list the candidates in order of preference and the first-choice votes for each candidate shall be counted. If no one receives an (absolute) majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest first place votes shall be eliminated. Each vote for the eliminated candidate shall then be transferred to the candidate, among those candidates not yet eliminated, listed next in the voter’s preferences. If a voter’s ballot does not list any such candidates, the ballot shall be considered an abstention for the remainder of the voting process. This process of dropping the candidate with the fewest votes and transferring ballots to the next choice candidate shall continue until a candidate receives a majority of the non-abstained votes. If there are ever ties between multiple candidates for fewest number of votes at any time during this process, and if it is mathematically impossible for the method by which the ties are broken to affect the outcome of the election, then all the candidates with the fewest votes shall be dropped. If, on the other hand, a method of breaking the ties is required to determine the outcome of the election, those ties shall be broken according to the following ranked criteria for each such candidate:

1. The number of top-choice votes the candidate received on the first round, then second round, then third round, and so on.
2. The average of the candidate’s rankings at each round so far.
3. The average of the candidate’s rankings among surviving candidates on each of the ballots of the other candidates still in the race. If the candidate does not appear on a ballot, then the candidate’s ranking for that ballot shall be considered to be the the candidate’s (tied) rank for this round.

If there are still ties, then the Officers shall decide how to break them.

### Section III–3. Competitive Multiple-Winner Elections with Multiple Candidates

For an election in which the number of candidates exceeds the number of available positions, and there is more than one position available, the following procedure shall be used. Define the threshold to be the smallest integer greater than (and not equal to) the real number obtained by dividing the total number of non-abstained votes by  $(N + 1)$ , where  $N$  is the number of available positions. Voters are to list the candidates in order of preference and the first-choice votes for each candidate shall be counted. Any candidate who obtains the threshold number of votes shall be declared elected and all ballots with first-choice votes for the candidate beyond this threshold shall be set aside. If there are any remaining available positions, the election proceeds to Process A.

**Process A:** The vote from any voter whose ballot was set aside in the previous step shall now be redistributed to the candidate, among those candidates not yet eliminated, listed next in the voter’s preferences. If a voter’s ballot does not list any such candidates, the ballot shall be considered an abstention for the remainder of the voting process. The threshold shall now be recalculated based on the number of remaining positions available and the number of non-abstained votes that have not gone towards a candidate that has already been elected. If any candidate now meets or exceeds the threshold, he or she is declared elected, and, if any available positions remain, Process A is repeated until no one has more than the threshold number of ballots. If any available position remain, the election proceeds to Process B.

**Process B:** The candidate with the fewest votes shall be eliminated. Each vote for the eliminated candidate shall then be transferred to the candidate, among those candidates not yet eliminated, listed next in the voter’s preferences. If a voter’s ballot does not list any such candidates, the ballot shall be considered an abstention for the remainder of the voting process. This process of dropping the candidate with the fewest votes and transferring ballots to the next choice candidate shall continue until a candidate meets or exceeds the threshold. The election now proceeds to Process A again and the cycle continues until all slots are filled. If there are ever ties between multiple candidates for fewest number of votes at any time during this process, those ties shall be handled in the same manner as in Section III-2.

## Article IV. Election Details

### Section IV–1. Election of Officers

1. All Members of the Association are eligible to run for any GSA Officer position, except as specified in Sections IV-1 and IV-3 of the Constitution.
2. The outgoing set of Officers shall set the date, time and location of the elections for new Officers at least 30 days prior to the election. This date must be in between March 1 and April 15, inclusive, and cannot be held on a day on which MIT does not hold classes. The Secretary shall announce the date, time and location of the elections to Members at least 21 days prior to the elections.
3. Candidates must secure a nomination in order to participate in an election for an Officer position. Nominations shall be declared open beginning at 21 days prior to the elections. A nomination consists of written messages to the Executive Committee signed by at least two Members of the Association, where all such signatures do not include the nominee.
4. Candidates must formally accept a nomination, either orally at a General Body Meeting or in writing, in order to verify their desire to run for an Officer position. As soon as possible after a candidate accepts his or her nomination, the Secretary shall be responsible for providing all relevant information about the candidate on the Website.
5. Nominations for all Officer positions shall close 24 hours prior to the elections unless fewer than three nominations have been accepted for an Officer position by that time, in which case nominations for

that position shall remain open until the election. At this point, a nomination shall consist of a motion by any Member, including the nominee himself or herself, which is seconded by another Member. Such nominations shall require the consent of the nominee to be considered valid.

6. Nominees who cannot be present at the election shall, by a written statement sent to the Officers, appoint someone to act on their behalf at the election.
7. Members who cannot be present at the election and want to vote shall, by a written statement sent to the Officers, either appoint someone to vote on their behalf at the election or state their voting preferences.
8. A quorum of ten Members shall be required to proceed with the elections. If the qualifications for a General Body Meeting is also met, then the election shall also be considered as and may act as a General Body Meeting. Absent Members who followed the procedures of the previous item shall be counted as part of this group. If quorum is not reached within 30 minutes after the published starting time of the elections, a new election date, time and location shall be decided by the Officers and announced within 48 hours. The new election date must be in April. Additional nominations may be made subject to the rules above. If quorum is not reached at the second election date, then the outgoing set of Officers shall appoint the incoming set of Officers.
9. If the President does not participate in the election, he or she shall preside over the election. If the President participates in an Officer election, he or she shall appoint someone to preside.
10. Elections shall proceed in the following order: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Any unsuccessful candidate may run for one of the remaining positions without any further nomination procedure. In the event that no one is nominated for a position, the position shall remain vacant.
11. Elections shall begin with each of the current Officers explaining the duties of his or her office. This shall be followed by speeches from each of the candidates of no more than five minutes each. The attendees of the election shall have the chance to ask questions of the candidates.
12. The candidates will be asked to leave the room and the attendees of the election shall discuss the candidates. Once a motion to close discussion is seconded, voting will take place.
13. After Officer elections there shall be a transition period in which the Officers-elect will be instructed in the responsibilities of their office. The terms of office of the outgoing Officers shall expire at noon Eastern Daylight Time on May 1 of each year at which point the Officers-elect shall officially take office.

## **Section IV–2. Election of Committee Chairs**

1. All Members of the Association are eligible to run for any Committee Chairpersonship, except as specified in Section IV-3 of the Constitution, and the last clause of this Section.
2. The Officers shall elect the Committee Chairs. The Officers must at the time of election state the term of office of each Committee Chair, which may not end after the term of office of the current Officers. The Officers shall decide at the election the number of Chairs a Committee shall have. If a Committee has more than one Chair, those Chairs shall share the same term of office.
3. If the term of office of the Chair or Chairs of a Committee exceeds six months, the Committee Chairs must secure the approval of a General Body Meeting through legislation within those six months in order to serve the entire term. If the Committee Chairs fail to secure such approval, their term of office shall expire at the end of those six months. If a Committee has more than one Chair, those Chairs shall be considered for approval as a single group. Any Chairs who fail to secure such approval cannot hold that position for the six months after the end of the term for which approval was not given.

4. The Chairs of a Committee may, by unanimous approval, decide to expand the number of Chairs of that Committee and appoint additional Members to those positions for the current term of office; this shall require the approval of a majority of the Officers. If the remainder of the term of office exceeds six months, the Committee Chairs (both new and old) of that Committee must secure the approval of a General Body Meeting through legislation within those six months in order to serve the remainder of the term. If the Committee Chairs fail to secure such approval, their term of office shall expire at the end of those six months. Those Chairs shall be considered for approval as a single group. Any Chairs who fail to secure such approval cannot hold that position for the six months after the end of the term for which approval was not given.

## **Article V. Vacancies**

### **Section V–1. The Creation of a Vacancy**

If a Member holding a position in the GSA ceases to be Member by failing the eligibility requirements of Article III of the Constitution or by giving up membership in writing to the Executive Committee, allows his or her term of office to expire without a successor-elect in place, is removed from office in accordance with Section VI-5 of the Constitution, or resigns the position in writing to the Executive Committee, the position shall be considered vacant immediately.

### **Section V–2. Presidential Vacancy**

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.

### **Section V–3. Officer Vacancies Other Than the Presidency**

If any Officer position other than the Presidency becomes vacant, or if the Office of Vice President is also vacant when 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.

### **Section V–4. Vacancies in Committee Chair Positions**

If the Chairpersonship of any Committee with only one Chair becomes vacant, or if all the Chairpersonships of any Committee with multiple Chairs become vacant, then the the Officers shall elect a new Chair or Chairs for that Committee in accordance with Section IV-2. If a strict subset of Chairpersonships of any Committee with at least two Chairs becomes vacant, the remaining Chairs of that Committee may elect Members to fill those vacancies for the remainder of the term of office subject to the approval of a majority of the Officers. If the remainder of the term of office exceeds six months, the approval process stated in Section IV-2 Clause 4.