**The Veterinary Medicine Graduate Students' Association**

**of the University of Calgary By-Laws**

**As approved on October 5, 2021**

**ARTICLE I** – **NAME**

1. The organization shall officially be known as "The Veterinary Medicine Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary", hereinafter referred to as the "Association".
2. Commonly the Association may be referred to as "VMGSA".

**ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES**

1. The objectives of the Association shall be:
2. to promote and serve the intellectual, academic, cultural, social and recreational interests of the graduate students of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, hereinafter referred to as the "Faculty";
3. to officially represent the interests of the graduate students of the Faculty.
4. to foster interaction among graduate students of the Faculty.

**ARTICLE III - GOVERNANCE**

1. The government of the Association arises from, and shall always follow, the principle of democratic rule.
2. The Association shall have two branches of governance: the Executive, and the Graduate Council, hereinafter referred to as the "GC".

**ARTICLE IV** - **MEMBERSHIP**

1. Membership in the Association shall consist of a single group of members, defined as;
2. All persons registered and who pay full or part-time fees to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, herein after referred to as the "FGS", as graduate students at the University of Calgary under the supervision or co-supervision of a faculty member in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, shall be members of the VMGSA.
3. Active membership in the Association shall cease at the end of the student's final registered year as a graduate student in the FGS at the University of Calgary.
4. Active Members of the Association shall have the following rights:
5. to be represented on the Graduate Representative Council (GRC), Faculty meetings, and other bodies of the University through the Association's duly elected or appointed representatives; and
6. to participate in the Association through its structures, services, and By-Laws.
7. Active Members of the Association shall have the following obligations:
8. to observe the By-Laws of the Association; and
9. to pay fees levied by the Association in accordance with the By-Laws of the FGS.

**ARTICLE V** - **EXECUTIVE**

1. The Executive shall be elected by Active Members, acclaimed if only one person seeks an office, or appointed by the Executive with due diligence in the event that no persons seek an office and no nominations arise from a General Meeting.
2. The Executive of the Association shall consist of the following officers:
3. President,
4. Vice President Academic,
5. Vice President Social,
6. Vice President Finance and Operations, and
7. Secretary.
8. No officer shall hold more than one of the Executive offices at any time. Only Active Members may serve as Executive officers.
9. The Executive shall perform duties as outlined in the Association's By-Laws.
10. Any officer of the Executive may resign at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the President. The President may resign at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the VP Academic. The resignation takes place after seven (7) days and is irreversible. The resigning Executive officer may not run in a by-election for the vacant office resulting from his or her resignation. An Executive officer must resign from office upon the termination of his or her registration at the University of Calgary.
11. If any elected, acclaimed or appointed office of the Executive becomes vacant, other officers shall assume the duties of that office as directed by the Executive or by the GC if necessary, until such time as the vacancy is filled.
12. If the President resigns, is impeached or is otherwise unable to continue in their role, the order of succession is as follows:
13. The Executive member, who has been a registered graduate student in the Department the longest shall be deemed the immediate successor to the President, and the remaining Executive members shall succeed after that person.
14. The person so designated will assume the office of Acting President, fulfilling all duties of the President - while still fulfilling the duties of their original office - until such time as a by-election can be held to fill the position of President.
15. Meetings of the Executive shall be held at a minimum three (3) times per year, or at the discretion of the President, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least two (2) other voting members of the Executive. A motion duly proposed at a meeting of the Executive shall be deemed passed by the Executive if it receives three (3) or more affirmative votes.

**ARTICLE VI** - **DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

1. Joint Responsibilities
2. Executive will be elected annually in May and will hold office from June 1 to May 31 of each year.
3. The Executive shall be jointly charged with the responsibilities of;
   * 1. Fiscal management of the Association's funds.
     2. Relaying to the Executive and GC the comments, questions, and concerns from the membership that are of relevance to the Association.
     3. Providing all documents generated by their respective offices to the Secretary.
     4. Submitting reports and agenda items to the President for Council meetings and General Meeting agendas.
     5. Two members of the Executive shall be a representative for the Association on the Graduate Representative Council (GRC).
     6. At least one member of the executive shall serve as a representative on other committees and councils as needed
     7. Meetings of the Executive shall be held at a minimum three (3) times per year, or at the discretion of the President, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least two (2) other voting members of the Executive.
     8. Executive meetings will be held in accordance with Article X.
4. President: Further to joint responsibilities;
5. The office of the President shall be open to any student who has been an Active Member for a period of not less than one academic semester at the time they would take office, and who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.
6. The President shall chair all Executive Meetings, and all meetings of the GC unless absent, in which case another member of the Executive shall chair the meeting.
7. The President shall compile meeting agendas with duties including receiving and compiling reports from all other Executive members and committees.
8. The President shall enforce due observation of the By-Laws, policies, and Standing Resolutions of the Association and undertake all presidential duties described therein.
9. The President shall enforce due observations of the University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association's (herein referred to as **GSA)** Departmental Graduate Students' Association (herein referred to as DGA) Administrative Policy handbook and undertake to ensure all requirements of said policy are met as described therein.
10. If they meet the requirements set forth by the GSA, the President shall be one of the Faculty's graduate student representatives on the GRC.
11. The President shall act as chief communications officer with all University and Faculty organizations, except where another officer is so appointed by the Executive.
12. The President shall be one of the two signing officers.
13. Vice President Academic: Further to joint responsibilities;
14. The office of the VP Academic is open to any Active Member who is enrolled in a graduate program in the Faculty, and who intends to remain an Active Member in such a program until the end of the usual term of office.
15. VP Academic shall act as an advocate and provide academic assistance for all members.
16. The VP Academic shall plan and execute academic events.
17. The VP Academic shall produce and maintain a list of facilities and procedures to aid members.
18. Vice President Social: Further to joint responsibilities;
19. The VP Social shall plan and execute social events.
20. The VP Social shall notify the membership and other members of the Faculty (if applicable) of events.
21. The VP Social shall ensure that social events follow all applicable rules and laws as described in the DGA Administrative Policy handbook.
22. Vice President Finance and Operations: Further to joint responsibilities;
23. The VP Finance and Operations is open to any Active Member who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.
24. The VP Finance and Operations shall be the senior budgeting officer for the Executive and shall oversee all financial operations of the Association. This is to include the financial state of the Association as well as any committees authorized to spend Association monies on behalf of the Executive. They shall also ensure that financial statements are current and accurate for the annual report to the GSA by April 15th of every year.
25. The VP Finance and Operations shall be one of the two signing officers.
26. The VP Finance and Operations shall report on the financial state of the Association at all Executive and GC meetings, and examine the financial statements of the Association on a monthly basis.
27. In addition, the VP Finance and Operations shall prepare a draft budget each September for approval by the GC and monitor the budget throughout the year to ensure that monies are invested wisely and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a not-for-profit organization.
28. Secretary: Further to joint responsibilities;
29. The office of Secretary is open to any Active Member who intends to remain an Active Member until the end of the usual term of office.
30. The Secretary shall act as the primary communications officer on behalf of the Association with graduate students and graduate student groups, and shall be responsible for communication within the Association, announcements of all meetings, shall ensure that the minutes of meetings are taken and duly submitted, and shall maintain custody of all minutes of the Association.
31. The Secretary shall be responsible for reviewing the Association By-Laws and policies.
32. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of Active Members through coordination with staff in the Faculty.

**ARTICLE VII- GRADUATE COUNCIL**

1. The Graduate Council (GC), shall consist of the Executive as well as all Active Members of the Association.
2. The GC shall be the policy-making body of the Association. All Executive officers, all committees and other groups formed by the Association, and all representatives to Graduate Students' Association (GSA) or other University of Calgary organizations, boards or other bodies are accountable and answerable to the GC.
3. The GC has the authority to enforce appropriate behaviour by all representatives of the Association. If it is deemed necessary by the GC, a representative of the Association (including a member of the Executive) may be removed from his or her position by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a GC meeting at which quorum is present.
4. The GC will provide volunteers for committees of the Association or the Faculty when required.
5. The GC shall have the authority to assign members to act on their behalf on the Executive as outlined in Article VIII, sections 16 and 17.
6. The GC shall have the authority to remove any member of the Executive or any committee of the Association by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at any formally announced meeting at which at least ten (10) Active Members of the Association are present. In such an event, the VP Academic shall be notified forthwith. If the VP Academic is the Executive member removed, the President shall be notified forthwith; the position shall be filled by the GC at its earliest possible convenience via a by-election (see Article VIII, sections 16 and 17).

**ARTICLE VIII- ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

1. A General Election for all elected Executive offices shall be held each year during the month of May. The term of the newly elected Executive shall begin June 1 and end May 31 of the following year.
2. The Executive is responsible for setting the date of other elections and by-elections as necessary.
3. Every April, the Executive shall appoint a Chief Returning Officer, hereinafter referred to as the CRO.
4. The CRO shall be an Active Member of the Association or a non-returning member of the executive who shall remain impartial and non-partisan as pertains to all elections, and who shall be answerable to the GC for proper conduct of the General Election.
5. All campaign materials must be approved by the CRO prior to public dissemination. In the event that campaign materials are to be displayed or distributed, these materials cannot contain misinformation, slander, inappropriate endorsements, or discriminatory content. The CRO, at their sole discretion, has the authority to order removal of any campaign materials they deem inappropriate or in violation of the by-laws of the association. The CRO may remove any candidate from the election for violation of these standards after a suitable warning. Appeals of the CRO's decision will be filed with the current President of the Executive. Only a unanimous vote by the Executive can overrule the CRO's decision.
6. The CRO shall announce the holding of an election at least fourteen (14) days prior to the opening date of the election. This announcement must include the procedures for nominating and for voting, including the time period for each.
7. Nominations shall be opened fourteen (14) days prior to the opening date of the election and will be officially closed by the CRO in a pre-election General Meeting of the GC after taking any nominations from the floor.
8. If an insufficient number of nominations have been made by the end of this period, the nomination period for that position can be extended by seven (7) days at the discretion of the CRO. If an extension is granted and no additional nominations come forward, the Executive shall appoint a member to the position .
9. After the nomination period is closed by the CRO in a pre-election General Meeting, members will have a period of up to three (3) business days to vote by secret ballot in a manner clearly stated in the announcement of the General Election given under Section 6.
10. Ballots received after this prescribed period shall be invalid.
11. Nominations for all elected Executive offices prior to the pre-election meeting shall be in writing and shall be signed by the nominator, who must be an Active Member, and shall bear the signature of the nominee signifying acceptance of the nomination. No Active Member may nominate more than one person for each elected office.
12. Nominations from the floor of the pre-election General Meeting shall be moved by an Active Member, and may include the nominee themselves, and must be agreed to by the nominee in person.
13. After the end of the voting period, the ballots shall be counted by the CRO. Each candidate has the option of appointing a scrutineer to witness the counting.
14. A majority (greatest number, 50% + 1 in the case of two candidates) of votes shall constitute election to office in the case of all Executive offices. A nominee shall also be elected to a given position by acclamation if no other nominations are made for such office. In the case of a tie, the GC shall cast a deciding vote based on a majority (greater than 50%) vote at a Special Meeting to be called by the CRO. The CRO shall make public the names of the successful candidates and shall submit a written report at the earliest opportunity, including the election tallies, the number of spoiled ballots and any irregularities that may have taken place, to the incoming President.
15. Officers elected in May shall have a term of one (1) year, beginning June 1.
16. Should a vacancy in an elected, acclaimed or appointed position arise during the usual term of office, The Executive shall, at their discretion, open nominations for by-election as set out in Section 4, or appoint an Active Member to hold the vacant position until it would naturally end in May. Any by-election will include a Special Meeting, to be called by the Executive, as outlined in Section 4 to allow for nominations from the floor. Only those who are eligible to vote in the GC shall be permitted to vote in a by-election.

1. The term of office for Executive officers elected in a by-election shall commence immediately upon declaration of a successful candidate, and lasts until the next regular Executive is installed, as per Article VII.

**ARTICLE IX- FINANCES**

1. The Executive, in consultation with the GC, shall have the power to invest monies in the name of and on behalf of the Association while having due regard for the security of such investment.
2. The Executive shall prepare an annual budget of revenues and expenditures for the Association. Once this budget has been approved by the GC, the Executive shall expend such monies within the limits of the budget. Any extra-budgetary expenditures of Association monies shall require the approval of the GC, and any revenue shortfalls must be reported to the GC at its first subsequent meeting.
3. The VP Finance and Operations shall prepare a financial statement for the Association at the end of the Association's fiscal year, for presentation at the annual General Meeting.
4. Any withdrawal of funds from an Association account shall be signed by the VP Finance and Operations and countersigned by the President
5. The financial records of the Association shall be open to examination by the GSA, the Faculty, or any Active Member after due notice has been given to the VP Finance and Operations. The VP Finance and Operations, with the President, shall establish a suitable time and place, with the examination taking place on the University of Calgary campus in the presence of at least one member of the Executive.

**ARTICLE X- GENERAL MEETINGS**

1. A regular General Meeting of the Association shall be held each year no later than October 1. This General Meeting shall be referred to as the Annual General Meeting, hereinafter referred to as the AGM. Executive may call additional general meetings by a majority vote.
2. All meetings of the GC, including the AGM, shall be run in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order or by vote of the GC. A minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote by those present shall be required in order for the GC to pass a resolution modifying the rules of order for the duration of that meeting.
3. The Speaker of the GC shall be the President of the Executive, or another member of the Executive appointed by President. While fulfilling the role of Speaker, the President (or other Executive officer) will continue to hold a vote on any motions or resolutions, and shall hold an additional tie-breaking vote in the event of a tie vote of the GC.
4. All Active Members of the Association may attend GC meetings, participate in discussions and vote. The GC may resolve by majority (greater than 50%) vote to discuss any matter in camera as necessary.
5. The business of each meeting of the GC shall include the following:
6. The reading, consideration, and approval of the minutes of the previous GC or AGM Meeting;
7. A report by the Speaker, including presentations by visiting speakers/presenters;
8. The consideration of each proposed amendment to the By-Laws, Standing Resolutions or Policies, when due notice of such proposed amendments has been received in accordance with Article XIII of the by-laws;
9. Reports of Executive officers, including the financial report by the VP Finance Operations.
10. Committee reports and reports by any other representatives of the Association;
11. Other business as the GC deems appropriate.
12. Quorum for GC meetings shall be satisfied by the attendance of at least five (5) Active Members, excluding officers of the Executive. Active Members may be represented in person only. If quorum is not achieved at a meeting of the GC, the quorum for the next meeting shall be met by five (5) Active Members, excluding officers of the Executive. Proxy voting is not permitted.
13. A motion passed at a meeting of the GC may be rescinded as per Robert's Rules of Order, by a motion at a General Meeting, or by Referendum.
14. The Secretary shall ensure that notice of all GC meetings and the agendas thereof is given by appropriate means to all Active Members not less than seven (7) days prior to the scheduled meeting. The documentation for each meeting shall include;

A proposed agenda;

A summary of proposed amendments to the Standing Resolutions, Policies, or By-Laws received in accordance with Article XIII of the bylaws.

A description of where the complete text of such proposed amendments may be viewed by the membership.

1. The records of meeting minutes of the Association shall be open to examination by the GSA, the Faculty, or any Active Member after due notice has been given to the Secretary.
2. Special General Meetings may be called by either a decision of the Executive, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least 5% of the Active Members requesting such a meeting.
3. A Referendum result (see Article XII) may be reversed at a GC meeting only if the percentage of all Active Members who cast a vote on the reversal at the GC Meeting exceeds the percentage of all Active Members who cast a ballot on the relevant Referendum question.
4. The Secretary shall ensure that, when a vote is cast, the minutes include the number of votes for and against and any abstentions of any motions considered at a GC meeting.

**ARTICLE XI** - **EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

1. Meetings of the Executive shall be held at a minimum three (3) times per year, or at the discretion of the President, or upon receipt by the President of a petition signed by at least two (2) other voting members of the Executive.
2. All Active Members of the Association may attend Executive meetings and participate in discussions. Only members of the Executive will have a vote at Executive meetings.
3. A motion duly proposed at a meeting of the Executive shall be deemed passed by the Executive if it receives a majority of votes.
4. The Speaker of the Executive shall be the President of the Executive, or another member of the Executive appointed by the President. While fulfilling the role of Speaker, the President (or other Executive officer) will continue to hold a vote on any motions or resolutions and shall hold an additional tie­ breaking vote in the event of a tie vote.
5. Except where the By-Laws, or a Standing Resolution or policy of the Association has authorized precedence, the Executive shall have all authority to resolve all business of the Association.
6. The business of each meeting of the Executive shall include the following:
7. The reading, consideration, and approval of the minutes of the previous Executive Meeting;
8. Reports of Executive officers, including the financial report by the VP Finance and Operations.
9. Committee reports and reports by any other representatives of the Association;
10. Other business as the Executive deems appropriate.
11. Quorum for Executive meetings shall be satisfied by the attendance of at least three (3) officers of the Executive. If a quorum is not achieved at a meeting of the Executive, the quorum for the next meeting shall be met by two (2) of the Executive. Proxy voting is not permitted.
12. The Secretary shall ensure that notice of all Executive meetings and the agendas thereof is given by appropriate means to all Active Members not less than two (2) days prior to the scheduled meeting. These documents shall include;
13. a proposed agenda;
14. a summary of executive and committee reports
15. The Secretary shall ensure that, when a vote is cast, the minutes include the number of votes for and against and any abstentions of any motions considered at an Executive meeting.

**ARTICLE XII - REFERENDA**

* 1. A question shall be submitted for decision by Referendum only upon (i) resolution by the Executive, (ii) resolution by the GC at a General Meeting, or (iii) by receipt by the VP Academic of a petition to hold a Referendum on such question, signed by at least ten (10) Active Members.
  2. Once a referendum has been initiated, the Executive shall, at its first subsequent meeting, set the date of the Referendum. If the Referendum was initiated by a petition, the Referendum date must be no more than thirty (30) days later.
  3. A member of the Executive (excluding the President) shall act as Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the Referendum, shall have the rights, responsibilities, and liabilities in the Referendum equivalent to those described under Article VIII for the General Election, and shall not have a vote on the Referendum question.
  4. The CRO, in consultation with the Executive, shall ensure the wording of the Referendum is clear and unambiguous and that it does not seek to unfairly influence the result of the Referendum. Final wording of Referendum questions shall be approved by the Executive.
  5. The CRO shall announce the Referendum at least fourteen (14) days prior to when it will be held. The announcement must include the question(s) being considered and the procedure and dates for voting.
  6. Active Members shall have a period of up to three (3) business days in which to vote on the Referendum question(s) in a secret ballot. Ballots received after this prescribed time shall be invalid.
  7. Executive officers (excluding the **CRO)** shall retain their rights to advocate or endorse any position as individual Active Members. However, no member of the Executive, as an officer, may advocate or endorse any position on a question submitted for Referendum unless a majority (greater than 50%) of that body is in favour of that position, as indicated by vote.
  8. Any published statements advocating or endorsing a position or positions on a question or questions submitted for Referendum, or any such statement by a member of the Executive in any publication shall:

1. Clearly state that the statement or statements represent the views of the author or authors only and not the views of the Association or the Executive, and
2. Shall, in the case of Association-sponsored publications, seek and publish representative views in an impartial manner.
   1. Benefits may be offered through the Association to all sides of a Referendum question, including but not limited to equal access to Association facilities, funds, and/or publications; where such benefits are made available, they will be made available in an equal and unbiased distribution.
   2. At the end of the voting period, the ballots shall be counted by the CRO. Each side of a question shall be permitted to appoint one scrutineer to witness the counting. The CRO shall make public the results of the Referendum and shall submit written reports at the earliest opportunity, including the number of "Yes" votes, the number of "No" votes, the number of spoiled ballots and any irregularities that may have taken place, to the President and the GC.
   3. Referenda shall establish Association policies by majority (greater than 50%) vote, or By-Law amendments by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, subject to the provisions of the By-Laws.
   4. A Referendum may reverse a General Meeting decision only if the percentage of all Active Members who cast a ballot on the relevant Referendum question exceeds the percentage of all Active Members who cast a vote on the relevant General Meeting motion.
   5. For the purpose of interpreting this By-Law, the date of the Referendum shall mean the last day on which voting may occur in accordance with Section 6.

**ARTICLE XIII- AMENDING/CREATING OFFICIAL ASSOCIATION DOCUMENTS**

1. Proposals to amend the By-Laws must be submitted, in writing, to the VP Academic no later than five (5) business days prior to the date of the GC meeting for the first reading. The Executive shall ensure that the wording of each duly proposed amendment is clear and unambiguous. The proposed amendments shall be made available to all members of the Association as per regular GC motions.
2. Amendments to the By-Laws may be made by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote at any General Meeting, with a single reading for information and ratification. They may also be made by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote in a Referendum, in accordance with Article XII.
3. Amendments passed at a General Meeting shall take effect fourteen (14) days after the meeting unless a request for a Referendum on the amendment is made in accordance with the By-Laws before then. Under
4. such circumstances, the decision of the General Meeting shall remain pending, and shall be subject to the results of the Referendum.
5. Standing Resolutions may be established, and policies of the Association may be created or amended, as per Sections 1 to 3 of this Article.
   1. For the purpose of interpretation, a Standing Resolution of the Association shall mean a binding directive of indefinite duration, established by a General Meeting or Referendum, and does not include Standing Resolutions of the Executive or any other body within the Association.
   2. For the purpose of interpretation, a policy of the Association shall mean a general statement of principle, established by a General Meeting or Referendum, and does not include policies of the Executive or any other body within the Association.

**ARTICLE XIV** - **DETERMINING A "MAJORITY"**

1. The following rules shall be used to determine a majority vote, unless specifically noted otherwise in a By-Law or Standing Resolution.
2. A simple majority is to be greater than 50%.
3. A two-thirds majority is to be greater than 66.7%.