
AGLSP

CONSTITUTION
(Revised October 1999)

ARTICLE I THE TITLE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The title of the Association shall be the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purposes of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs include:

- a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among graduate programs of related curricula, structures, and goals
- dissemination of the concept and goals of Graduate Liberal Studies
- fostering high standards in Graduate Liberal Studies Programs
- guidance for institutions considering initiating programs of Graduate Liberal Studies
- promotion of public awareness of the programs
- cooperation in such areas as the granting of transfer credits among member programs
- solicitation of private and public funding in support of the programs and their students

ARTICLE III DEFINITION OF THE GRADUATE LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAMS

Although the programs represented by the members of the Association vary considerably in size, organization, sponsoring institutions, and details of curriculum, they share a common purpose: to offer mature students a graduate degree which is interdisciplinary in nature and non-professional in intent (that is, not specifically intended to train students for a particular vocation, to provide accreditation for a profession, or to prepare students for further graduate study). The programs specifically adhere to the values of liberal arts education, but at the graduate level, offering students drawn from a variety of backgrounds and professions an alternative to the usual specialized programs. Among degrees commonly offered by the Liberal Studies Programs are the *Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS)*, *Master of Liberal Studies (MLS)*, and *Master of Liberal Arts (MLA)*.

All programs are interdisciplinary. Their objective is to provide an alternative approach to continued learning by offering a program for students who seek broad, interdisciplinary paths to knowledge - and normally, to do this for student bodies comprised of part-time students (evening classes or intensive summer courses). In summary, the intention is a unified liberal arts curriculum at the graduate level that meets the substantive criteria in Article IV. These goals can also be defined in terms of the students' motivations in enrolling in these programs. These range from career related concerns to the desire for intellectual stimulation. These varying interests are subsumed in a concern for personally rewarding further education in a humanistic context.

In responding to these concerns, the Graduate Liberal Studies Programs differ from other continuing education programs, which may also serve such students, in that they are degree programs, carefully structured, coherent in curriculum, founded on a set of requirements, and rigorous in the intellectual challenge they pose for participants. Their interdisciplinary curricula may be said to extend the liberal arts character of American undergraduate education to the graduate level. They are graduate programs - formally so in requiring the bachelor's degree for admission,

but more significantly in the maturity expected of the students, the expectation of responsible and frequently independent work and thought, the level of discourse in classes and of comprehension necessary to meet degree requirements (papers, examinations, projects, and the like). They represent then, a particular mode of graduate study, in breadth intentionally different from traditional departmental graduate programs, in structured curriculum and academic rigor unlike less consciously ordered programs of continuing education.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Charter Members:

The Charter members of the Association are those who had Graduate Liberal Studies Programs in operation prior to September 1, 1975, and who were represented at the conference of October 2, 1975, or at one of the three earlier conferences of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs. Those institutions, in order of founding Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, are Wesleyan University, The Johns Hopkins University, New School for Social Research, St. John's College at Annapolis, Southern Methodist University, The University of Oklahoma, Hollins College, Metropolitan College of Boston University, Dartmouth College, University of Southern California, Georgetown University, Drew University, and University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Section 2. Membership Categories:

There are four categories of membership: Associate and Full, Affiliate and Fellow. Full and Associate memberships are open to institutions only. Affiliate and Fellow memberships are intended for individuals and organizations.

(a) **Associate Membership:**

Associate membership is open to institutions which, while not actually involved in a Graduate Liberal Studies Program, have special concern for such programs, a particular interest in participating in the activities of the Association, and often are in a development phase during which the Association can offer assistance and advice. Associate members are entitled to all the privileges of Full members except vote in matters of alteration of the Constitution and membership elections.

The application process for Associate membership requires that two criteria be met for acceptance: (a) an understanding of and agreement with the purposes of the Association (see Article II-Purpose), and (2) evidence of their intention to explore seriously Graduate Liberal Studies programming or to develop a Graduate Liberal Studies Program. Evidence of a serious exploration will be indicated by, but not limited to, actions such as: establishing a Committee to assess Graduate Liberal Studies programming for the institution; seeking consultation through the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs or other agencies to study the feasibility of Graduate Liberal Studies programming; willingness to report annually to the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs regarding developments and progress. Admission is given on a majority vote from the Membership Committee following application to the President or nomination by one representative of a member institution. Normally Associate membership shall be for a period for no longer than five years, after which the Association will review the status of that member.

(b) **Full Membership:**

Full membership is open to institutions of higher learning (through their designated representatives) offering Graduate Liberal Studies Programs which substantially correspond to the definition above. Only one representative from each member institution is empowered to vote or to hold office in the Association. Additional institutional representatives may serve on committees or otherwise serve in an advisory capacity to the officers and Board of Directors of the Association. Representatives of any institution interested in the graduate liberal studies program concept are also welcome to participate in Association meetings (see below). Full membership is limited to those institutions actually offering Graduate Liberal Studies Programs.

Formal application may be made to the President when the applying institution has been represented at one or more meetings of the Association, provided attending membership institutions with a description of its program, and held Associate membership in the Association for a period of one year. Election to membership requires a simple majority of Full Member institutions; voting may

be carried out by mail. The President will select a Membership Committee of three representatives of member institutions to review membership applications and make nominating recommendations to the Association.

Associate members who apply for Full membership will be required to satisfy the following substantive and technical criteria before being elected to Full membership status.

Substantive Criteria

- (1) The applying institution will give evidence that the institution has taken steps to establish clear administrative responsibility for the program in the form of an appointment of a dean, director or other administrator to conduct the program. The administrator of the program must have adequate and on-going voice in the decision-making process of the institution and appropriate autonomy for program-specific decisions, especially concerning program structure and methods of delivery.
- (2) The program of the applicant must indicate incorporation of graduate liberal studies philosophy and avoid a narrowly professional or technical orientation. The description should include the student population to be served and the appropriateness of the curriculum, including delivery modes, to that population. In all cases, the curriculum will be based on thoughtful interaction with texts and exchange of ideas with other students and faculty. For all modes of learning, from campus classrooms to courses by internet or independent study, it is the responsibility of the degree granting institution to monitor and review all the learning that its students undertake and to guarantee program quality. An institution applying for membership in AGLSP should be able to show what method or process is in place to guarantee that quality.
- (3) Programs must require some inter- or multi-disciplinary core course(s) or special liberal studies seminar(s) created specially for the program. Such courses must be delivered in ways that require and promote student interaction and discussion. Resources of faculty, facilities, equipment, and materials required for such delivery must be in place.
- (4) Programs should explicitly address the needs of adult students, e.g., academic counseling, flexible scheduling and/or other procedures that recognize the special circumstances of adult students. Applicants must ensure student access to all materials, printed and electronic, needed to complete a rigorous graduate curriculum.

Technical Criteria

- (5) The institution shall have been an Associate Member of the Association for a minimum of one year and have been represented at a minimum of one meeting.
- (6) The institution shall have made an oral presentation of its institutional Graduate Liberal Studies Program to an Association meeting or a meeting of the Board of Directors.
- (7) The institution shall make formal application for Full membership by letter addressed to the President.
- (8) The institution shall have received a favorable review of its materials and program and be recommended for Full Membership by a majority of the Membership Committee.
- (9) The institution shall have had a Graduate Liberal Studies Program in operation for at least one year and will supply documentation in the form of a program description, as well as catalogs, brochures, evaluation reports, or other illustrative material.
- (10) A report to the Association of a site visit to the institution by a Full Member of the Association is required following the procedures outlined by the Association.

(c) **Fellows:**

In an honorary category of non-voting membership are those who hold memberships without fee, called Fellows of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs. The title of Fellow is

extended to persons who have provided substantial assistance to the Association. Nominations come from any member but are reviewed by the Membership Committee and in turn are voted on by Full Members of the Association. When elected, a Fellow is available for counsel and advice, serves as a consultant to other programs, and is welcome at the Annual Association meetings. Fellows may continue membership until they request to be withdrawn from the Association.

(d) **Affiliate Members:**

Non-voting membership shall be open to organizations and individuals who have a professional interest in the purpose of the Association. These Affiliate members are welcome to attend the annual Association meetings and to participate as non-voting members. Affiliate membership is granted to applicants upon recommendation of a majority of the Membership Committee.

Section 3. Membership Committee:

The President will select a Membership Committee of three representatives of Full Member institutions to review membership applications and make nominating recommendations to the Association. (See Article V, Section 1.)

Section 4. Maintenance of Good Standing and Loss of Membership:

The welfare and leadership of the Association depend upon the maintenance by members among themselves of the criteria established for election to membership. One of the main ways such standards are maintained is through the collegiality of regular Association meetings. Another is through the careful preservation of quality in on-going programs.

Should a member institution fail to attend at least one Association meeting in a period of three years, or should the Membership Committee conclude there is cause for concern about the condition of a member program, the Committee will initiate an inquiry into the current state of that program.

If, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, the program no longer meets the criteria for membership in the Association, the Membership Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors that the institution be placed on probation. Reasons for the recommendation shall be clearly stated. The institution shall be invited to make a formal response to the Board of Directors.

Probationary status for an institution shall be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The period of probation and the steps necessary to restore good standing shall be clearly stated by the Board.

If, at the end of the probationary period, the institution has not met the requirements for removal of probationary status, the Board of Directors shall recommend to the Association dismissal of the institution. Such dismissal shall be determined by a majority vote of the Full membership.

ARTICLE V. POWERS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1.

The executive officer shall have the title of President and shall serve for a two-year term to be succeeded by the Vice-President. The President shall be responsible for issuing calls to and preparing agenda for Association business meetings, for responding to requests for consideration and advice on Liberal Studies Programs, for coordinating invitations to guest participants and meetings, representing the Association at other association meetings, coordinating requests for membership in the Association and response to such requests by member institutions, appointing the membership committee, nominating committee, and Program Chair. The office of the President shall be restricted to Full Members of the Association. At least one term must elapse before the President would be eligible for election to the office of Vice-President.

Section 2.

There shall be a Vice-President elected at an annual meeting for a two-year term. The Vice-President shall take office at the beginning of the next fiscal year. The Vice-President will be an ex officio voting member of the Board of Directors. The office of Vice-President shall be restricted to Full Members of the Association. The Vice-President shall be responsible for assisting the

President of the Association, including completing special projects at the request of the President and representing the Association at meetings of other professional organizations at the request of the President. The Vice-President shall be President-Elect of the Association and shall become President of the Association upon expiration of the President's term of office.

Section 3.

There shall be a Secretary-Treasurer elected at an Annual Meeting for a two-year term. The Secretary-Treasurer shall take office at the at the beginning of the next fiscal year and be responsible for collecting and maintaining records of member dues, preparing minutes and transcripts of Association meetings, coordinating the collection and issuing of information requested by member institutions, in consultation with the President preparing a budget for presentation to the Board of Directors and the membership. The Secretary-Treasurer will be an ex officio voting member of the Board of Directors. The office of Secretary-Treasurer shall be restricted to Full Members of the Association. At least one term must elapse before the Secretary-Treasurer would be eligible for re-election.

Section 4.

The President of the Association will be assisted in fulfilling his duties by a Board of Directors. Membership on the Board of Directors will be restricted to Full Members of the Association. The Board of Directors will be composed of six (6) Full Members of the Association with terms of three years each. At the Annual Meeting of the Association, two(2) members will be elected to the Board to provide staggered terms and continuity on the Board. At least one year must elapse before a member may be re-elected to the Board.

The election of the first Board shall be as follows: two (2) members elected for a one year term, two (2) members elected for a two year term, two (2) members elected for a three year term.

The President of the Association will be an ex officio voting member of the Board and will chair the meetings of the Board. The Board will meet twice annually to advise the President on all phases of the activities of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs. One of these meetings will be scheduled during the session of the Annual Meeting of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs.

The Board shall act as a steering committee, carry out executive actions, represent the Association, execute policy decisions reached by the membership, initiate policy and budgetary recommendations, expend funds for projects approved by the membership, apply for grants, organize fund raising, propose dues, propose and review proposed changes to the Constitution.

Section 5.

A Program Chair shall be appointed by the President at the Annual Meeting and will take office at the conclusion of that meeting. The Program Chair will be responsible for planning agendas for the Association (except for business meetings, for which agendas are the responsibility of the President), for identifying discussion topics and guest speakers, and for coordinating sessions of Graduate Liberal Studies Workshops for program planners. The Program Coordinator will serve as chairman or designate a chairman for conference discussion sessions and Graduate Liberal Studies Workshops and shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Board of directors.

Section 6.

Additional officers and the methods of their election or appointment may be established by vote of a majority of member institutions.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS AND DUES

Section 1.

At least one meeting of the Association, the annual meeting, shall be held in each calendar year, usually in the fall.

Section 2.

Additional meetings may be called by the President or by a majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 3.

Annual dues for membership will be proposed by the Board of Directors and approved by a majority of members attending the Annual Business Meeting. The fiscal year of the Association of Graduate

Liberal Studies Programs will run from January 1 through December 31. Membership in the Association will correspond to the fiscal year.

ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Section 1.

Election for Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer shall be held biennially at the Annual Meeting of the Association.

Section 2.

Elections for two members of the Board of Directors shall be held each year at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3.

A slate of nominees for Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and the Board of Directors shall be prepared by a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the President. Two of these shall be members of the Board of Directors. The slate shall be circulated to the membership thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting. The actual election will take place at the Annual Meeting with provision for nominations from the floor. In the event a new office is created, a Nominating Committee shall be formed by the President and a slate of nominees for a new officer shall be circulated to the membership for a thirty (30) day period. In addition to nominees identified by the Nominating Committee, provision must be made for nominations from the membership at large. After the thirty day period has expired, an election shall be held with ballots distributed to members by mail. Election by mail ballot requires a majority of those voting.

Section 4.

Other Committees may be created as needed.

ARTICLE VIII. PROCEDURE AND VOTING

Section 1.

Meetings of the Association will be governed by procedures given in the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 2.

A quorum shall consist of those member institutions, both Full and Associate, present at the Annual Meeting or at a called meeting, notice of which has been given to all members.

Section 3.

Action may be taken by the Association upon a majority vote of a quorum, except where noted in the provision of this Constitution or when a change in the Constitution or subsequent bylaws is proposed.

Section 4.

Should the President of the Association resign or otherwise be unable to complete the term of office as described in Article V., Section 1 of the Constitution, the Vice-President shall assume the office of President and shall complete the term of office of the former President. Upon completion of that term, the Vice-President shall complete a two-year term of office as President of Association, as described in Article V., Section 2 of the Constitution.

Should the office of Vice-President or Secretary-Treasurer become vacant, the President of the Association shall appoint a Nominating Committee and conduct a special election as described in Article VII., Section 3 of the Constitution.

Replacements for individual vacancies among the Board of Directors may be made by the Board of Directors for the expiration of the term affected.

ARTICLE IX. ASSOCIATION GUESTS

Since a primary concern of the Association is to provide opportunity for institutions which currently do not offer Graduate Liberal Studies Programs to share the experience and exchange of information among representatives of extant programs, representatives of non-member colleges and universities are cordially invited to attend and participate in Association meetings.

ARTICLE X.**AMENDMENTS**

Proposals for amendments may originate from members of the Association to the Board of Directors. Such proposed amendments will not come to the floor at the Annual Meeting without the review of the Board of Directors. Proposed amendments must be available to the Secretary-Treasurer for circulation to the members of the Association thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Ratification of amendments will require a majority vote of the Full Members.

ARTICLE XI.**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION/ORGANIZATION**

Said corporation/organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organize under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any Federal tax code).

No part of the net earnings of the corporation/organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the corporation/organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501 (c) (3) purposes. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation/organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation/organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation/organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation/organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or (b) by a corporation/organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code).

Upon the dissolution of this corporation/organization assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the Federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.