

CSBGU Constitution

1. Name of Organization

The official name of the organization will be Cell and Systems Biology Graduate Union, hereafter referred to as the CSBGU.

2. Purpose and Mission Statement

The purpose of the CSBGU will be to bring all the graduate students in the Graduate Department of Cell and Systems Biology at the University of Toronto together in one student organization. A general goal should be to celebrate the innate diversity of our Graduate Department, building on to common interests for its members.

2.1. The CSBGU should promote an inclusive dialogue between students within the Graduate Department.

2.2. The CSBGU should inform graduate students and represent them on issues and events that consist of academic, administrative, and extra-curricular nature, with a particular focus on topics that affect or influence the quality of the graduate student life and mental health.

2.3. The CSBGU will function as a liaison between graduate students and departmental staff for discussions, planning, and general communications.

2.4. The CSBGU will plan and participate in the planning of academic, social, and recreational events that benefit graduate students in the Graduate Department.

2.5. The CSBGU serves a non-profit function within the University of Toronto and will not engage in activities that are commercial, except for those activities required for the funding and support of CSBGU events.

3. Membership

Membership in the CSBGU is automatically granted to all graduate students whose base Graduate Department is Cell and Systems Biology at the University of Toronto at the St. George, Scarborough, and Mississauga campuses.

Each member will have the following rights within the CSBGU:

3.1. To participate and vote in group elections and meetings.

3.2. To express, discuss, and propose concise ideas.

3.3. To engage in the participation and/or organization of events that are reasonable and lawful.

3.4. Incoming graduate students who are not yet registered in the Cell and Systems Biology Graduate Department may participate in CSBGU activities at the discretion of the Executive but will not have voting rights.

4. CSBGU Executive Body

The Executive is the governing body of the CSBGU and is composed of three positions. All three positions and their responsibilities are described below.

4.1. President or Co-Presidents. The President or Co-Presidents will organize and chair all CSBGU meetings, ensuring that these meetings are advertised adequately at least 4 days in advance to all CSBGU members. It is important to fill this position with two senior graduate students, ideally with previous CSBGU experience, and based on the Ramsay Wright and Earth Sciences buildings (one Co-President per building). The President or Co-Presidents will be the principal liaisons between the CSBGU and the departmental administration and faculty, organize executive elections every year, coordinate and oversee all CSBGU-sponsored activities, and ensure that all CSBGU members are informed of meetings and events through email communication. Along with the Treasurer, the President- or Co-Presidents will hold signing authority for financial documents and grant applications.

4.2. Secretary. The Secretary will be responsible for taking minutes, recording taken decisions in all CSBGU meetings; the minutes should be distributed among the CSBGU. Additionally, the Secretary should advise the President or Co-Presidents about pending issues during or after the completion of a CSBGU council meeting.

4.3. Treasurer. The Treasurer will be the main responsible for the CSBGU yearly budget, tracking funds and expenses as well as issuing cheques for reimbursements, holding signing authority with the President or Co-Presidents. The Treasurer will ensure that the petty cash is balanced and accounted for. At the end of their term, the Treasurer should present an annual financial statement, which should be approved by the President or Co- Presidents and displayed to the incoming Treasurer and President or Co-Presidents.

5. CSBGU Non-Executive Body

The CSBGU Non-Executive Body is formed by graduate student representatives who are elected by the CSBGU student body. Their positions and responsibilities are described below.

5.1. Graduate Student Union (GSU) Representative (two representatives per term). The GSU representatives will attend all GSU general meetings, take notes, and inform the CSBGU membership of relevant issues and developments by providing a summary of GSU meetings during CSBGU meetings. If a representative cannot attend a meeting, they must arrange for another CSBGU member to attend on their behalf. The participation of GSU representatives in the preparation and submission of GSU grants is fundamental.

5.2. CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) Representative. The CUPE representative will attend meetings held by CUPE and represent the interests of the CSBGU at those meetings. The CUPE

representative will hold their position from January to December of the same academic year that all other members are elected.

5.3. Ombudspersons. The Ombudspersons will function as resources for CSB graduate students that wish to confidentially address a serious conflict between them and their supervisor, other student, or an administrative member of the Graduate Department. The Ombudspersons will, to the extent of their capabilities, help students obtain support from appropriate groups, as required. Additionally, the Ombudspersons should coordinate at least two mental health support activities per term, designed to improve the mental health status of CSBGU members in a confidential, judgement-free environment. Mental health and wellness activities should be performed in consultation with the Faculty of Arts and Science Mental Health Coordination.

5.4. Career and Professional Development Officers. The Career and Professional Development Officers will oversee the organization and coordination of at least one career development event per term. The main aim of such events should be to expose graduate students in CSB to different career options, possibly inviting alumni and or industry experts/faculty from outside the Graduate Department to interact and provide advice to current graduate students.

5.5. First Year Representative. The First Year Representative must be at least a second-year MSc or PhD student in charge of helping new graduate students with their initial steps in the Graduate Program. The First Year Representative should provide guidance, support, and advice about success strategies, motivation techniques, social events, and time management tactics to new graduate students.

5.6. Fundraising Officer. The Fundraising Officer will oversee finding the appropriate financial resources to support CSBGU events; among their responsibilities, the Fundraising Officer will coordinate and organize the CSBGU Holiday Party raffle and lead the annual donation collection from local businesses.

5.7. Sports Coordinator. The Sports Coordinator will organize sports teams among the CSBGU community. The coordinator will be responsible for the registration in Intramural Leagues as well as the organization of internal competitions, games, and other activities.

5.8. Communications Director. The Communications Director will oversee and update the CSBGU website (www.csbg.u.utoronto.ca) and all social media accounts (Facebook – csbgrad, Instagram – csbg, Twitter - @CSBGSU). The Communications Director will help with the design and advertisement of some social and academic events, with help from the council member responsible for the events.

5.9. Seminar Representatives. The Seminar Representatives will coordinate with external speakers for CSBGU organized talks as well as lead the Graduate Speaker Committee, which oversees the invitation of external speakers to CSB weekly seminars, in consultation with the faculty member(s) serving as the CSB Seminar Series Coordinator(s). Additionally, the Seminar Representatives will help coordinate the schedule for the CSBGU student and postdoc seminar. The Seminar Representatives will stay for an extra term to

invite the following academic year's speakers for the Fall term. Additionally, the Seminar Representatives will help incoming Seminar Representatives transition into their roles during this time.

5.10. Social Representative. The Social Representative will oversee planning and advertising of social events for the CSBGU, including parties, pub nights, movie nights and other related events. In addition, for each event, the Social Representative will have the help of at least one more council member to coordinate social events more easily.

5.11. Speaker. The CSBGU Speaker will primarily ensure that council meetings are conducted in a respectful, organized, and smooth way. The Speaker shall have no vote during council meetings and will serve as moderator of the discussion. The Speaker will call the meeting to order as soon as a quorum is present. Additionally, the Speaker will receive, state, and submit to vote all motions and announce the result of the vote.

5.12. UTM and UTSC Representatives. The CSBGU will have one representative at each of the two satellite campuses in Mississauga and Scarborough. The function of these representatives will be to function as liaisons between students in their respective campus and St. George, ensure that CSBGU members in their campuses are adequately represented and heard during CSBGU meetings, and occasionally organize social events pertinent to their campus. Additionally, in case of need, the UTM and UTSC representatives will fulfill the role of ombudsperson at their campus.

5.13. Research Day Representatives. The Research Day Representatives are a neutral position in the CSBGU and are not responsible for event planning within the CSBGU. They will act as a liaison between the CSBGU and the Research Day committee and help with duties within the Research Day committee as required. Additionally, they will gather information from the student body via the CSBGU meetings and communications that will help the Research Day Chairs plan an event that is engaging for all tri-campus CSB graduates.

6. Council Meetings and Voting

Council Meetings should occur a minimum of four times per academic year, depending on needs (i.e., to discuss the organization of events, budgeting, and grant application, etc.). The CSBGU meetings will:

6.1. Be organized at convenient times and locations, which will be decided by the CSBGU Executive and Non-Executive Body.

6.2. Be advertised via email, at least four days in advance so that any member of the CSBGU can propose topics for the agenda and attend the meeting.

6.3. CSBGU Council meetings (consisting of the Executive and Non-executive bodies) will be considered in quorum by an attendance of at least two-thirds, or 60% of council members, whichever is lesser.

6.4. General meetings (consisting of the Executive, Non-executive, and general membership) will be considered in quorum by an attendance of at least 10% of the CSBGU members.

Emergency meetings of the CSBGU Council may be called on one day notice by:

6.5. The President or Co-Presidents.

6.6. Petition of one-third of the council members.

Voting during CSBGU meetings will be called upon the end of a discussion by the CSBGU Speaker, who will oversee vote counting and announce the final decision. A tie vote will lead to the motion in question being defeated; if a decision needs to be reached, the Speaker shall have the tie-breaking vote. A voting majority is defined by obtaining at least 51% of the votes.

In the absence of the Speaker, any CSBGU council member can take their role during a meeting, but this member will have to hold their vote. The Secretary should take note of these changes, and decisions and their notes should be included in the meeting minutes.

7. General Elections and Council Terms

7.1. General elections will be called by the President or Co-Presidents every year in July. A nomination period of one week should be held to allow CSBGU members to nominate themselves or other members to hold a position in the next CSBGU council.

7.2. If two individuals are nominated for the same council position, the last person to be nominated will be given the option to desist of the position and hold a different available position or to run in a general election against the other nominee.

7.3. Elections shall be held by a secret physical or online ballot and should be advertised at least 2 weeks in advance; during this period, candidates will be allowed to run an austere campaign.

7.4. Any member of the Executive or Non-Executive bodies may be recalled by two-thirds of the CSBGU membership held at a general meeting.

7.5. Within five days of the general election, a list of the elected council member's names will be officially announced via email.

7.6. If a CSBGU member is not able to vote during the election period, early voting arrangements should be made at the member's request.

7.7. The term of office for all CSBGU council members is twelve months and will commence September 1 following the election, unless specified otherwise.

7.8. Any member of the CSBGU council is allowed to serve on the council in any position for a maximum of three years. However, if a position remains vacant following the end of the nomination period, this rule can be waived if a current member is interested in continuing their service and no more than one-third of the CSBGU membership opposes their continuity.

8. CSBGU Funds

The CSBGU funds should be used only in a manner that benefits the majority of CSB graduate students, according to the discretion of the CSBGU and subject to its approval by the Executive body. To prevent the misuse of financial resources:

8.1. The Treasurer should prepare a financial statement approved by the Executive body, which should include an overall balance of transactions and funds, including bank accounts and petty cash. This statement should be presented to the newly elected Executive body before their term begins.

8.2. Should the CSBGU cease to exist at any time, the future of the existing funds should be decided in a general meeting.

8.3. Any corruption or funds misuse should be appropriately investigated and documented, resulting in the expulsion of the council member involved, prompting to call a general election, if necessary.

9. Constitution Amendments

Amendments and repeals may be approved at a general meeting, voting, or online consultation by a two-thirds vote of those present at a general meeting. In case of an online vote, the voting campaign will be announced with a one-week notice; during this time, CSBGU members can propose changes or provide suggestions. At least 10% of CSBGU membership participation is required to amend or approve changes to this Constitution; if the 10% minimum participation is not reached with an online vote, a general meeting should be held. Any changes to the Constitution must be reported to the GSU for ratification.

10. Accessibility

10.1. The Constitution will be made available to anyone upon request.

10.2. An electronic copy will be available on the CSBGU website.

This Constitution was last amended on July 24, 2023. Approved on August 29, 2023.

Sitting Co-Presidents: Paul Jerome Gamueda and Tammy Lee

Treasurer: Rowan Naidoo

Secretary: Racquel Singh

GSU Representatives: Xinyi (Lynn) Liang and Eduardo Ramirez Rodriguez

CUPE Representative: Tamar Av-Shalom

Ombudspersons: Elina Kadriu and Iyeh Mohammadi Champiri

Career and Professional Development Officers: Kathryn McTavish and Clare Breit-McNally

First Year Representative: Linda Li

Fundraising Officer: Samuel Delage

Sports Coordinator: Andrew Duncan

Communications Director: Andrew Cheon

Seminar Representatives: Christine Nguyen and Leo Xu

Social Representative: Kailynn MacGillivray

Speaker: Stephen Bordeleau

UTM and UTSC Representatives: Mahmoud Bitar and Jeffrey Kates