

Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee  
Bylaws and Standard Operation Procedures

## Letter of Intent

The Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee (SOC) will be an organization committed to the goal of nurturing a lively academic and political community. In addition to overseeing student concerns in the Cultural Studies program, the major work of the SOC will be to provide a framework for organizing extracurricular events.

These events will include invited speakers, panel discussions, and presentations that will be open to the GMU students, faculty, and staff, as well as to the public in general. Owing to the commitments of Cultural Studies as a field of study, these events will be focused on interdisciplinary inquiry into the mechanisms of culture and the politics of cultural studies. Through these events, the central goal of the SOC is to establish a sense of community among the graduate students in the Cultural Studies department, the graduate students in other departments, and the general intellectual community here at George Mason.

Events organized by SOC have as their goal the formation of connections between Cultural Studies students and other groups on campus. These events will facilitate intellectual dialogue between students and faculty from various departments and disciplines. They will therefore facilitate cross-disciplinary intellectual dialogues and debates. These events will also serve to establish connections between students in the Cultural Studies program and students in other graduate programs at GMU. As public events, they will provide an opportunity to make connections with students and faculty from other universities, especially those universities in the Consortium program.

The SOC recognizes and values the breadth of intellectual inquiry and political opinion at GMU. By building stronger connections among a number of groups, we hope to set up a system in which students, faculty, staff, and the larger public community are able to communicate and nourish their intellectual pursuits and political commitments.

## **Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee | Bylaws**

### Article I: Name of Organization

1. The name of this organization is the Cultural Studies Student Organization Committee, hereafter denoted by the acronym "SOC" or "S.O.C."

### Article II: Purpose of Organization

1. To discuss and act upon student concerns in the Cultural Studies program and act as ombudsman for students in the program.
2. To elect student representatives to the Committee of the Whole and all standing committees at the beginning of the Fall semester for one-year appointments.
3. To elect student representatives to the Admissions Committee at the beginning of the Fall semester for two-year alternating appointments. This student must be finished with 30 credit hours including core requirements.
4. To elect a student representative that will assist the Faculty member in charge of planning the Cultural Studies Colloquium in accordance with the Cultural Studies bylaws.
5. To plan and carry out student-organized activities, such as new student orientations, a student mentoring program, student-oriented campus activities, and student reading groups.
6. To propose, debate, and vote upon issues concerning Cultural Studies programming and policies. Decisions will be based upon a simple majority of those present at the time of voting. Student representatives shall then make recommendations to the appropriate committees. If appropriate, results of votes taken by the Cultural Studies Student Organization Committee shall be made public to the larger Cultural Studies community.

### Article III: Membership

1. Membership in this organization will not be restricted on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, religion, gender or age.
2. For the purposes of this Article, the term "student" is defined as admitted (degree seeking) to the Cultural Studies Program; in all instances, "student" shall be construed strictly in accordance with (a) the official policies and procedures governing student status at George Mason University and (b) all applicable provisions of the George Mason University Catalog. "Local" refers to students doing their work in the general vicinity of GMU; "off-site" refers to students doing their work in areas far enough from GMU as to restrict their attendance at committee functions.
3. The Cultural Studies Student Organization Committee (SOC) shall consist of all members of the Cultural Studies student body.
4. As the program is dispersed and many members are not actively involved in Committee business, their power in the formal committee business is limited by and only by the extent to which they exercise those powers.

5. Likewise, as the program is dispersed, members who are local should make every effort to include off-site members in committee business and off-site members should work with local members to actively consider ways that they can all participate.
6. Neither admittance to the Cultural Studies program nor membership in the Cultural Studies SOC will be restricted on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, sex, or age.

#### Article IV: Officers

1. All members of the SOC are eligible to run for any position on the executive board, EXCEPT for the admissions committee, who must be third year or higher.
2. Officers should make every attempt to attend meetings and events of the SOC.
3. If a majority of the student body, by a vote taken at a special meeting, finds an officer unable to fulfill their responsibilities, that officer can be relieved of their duties.
4. Following the election of a new officers, the newly elected officers and outgoing officers shall meet for a new officer training.
5. Outgoing officers shall remain in a mentorship role for the new officer for a period of up to one year.

#### Article V: Elected Officers

1. Co-Chair
  - Two co-chairs shall be elected to the SOC.
  - The terms for co-chairs shall be two years, staggered and renewable for no more than one term thereafter.
  - Co-chairs shall call and preside over meetings of the Cultural Studies SOC and act as official representatives of the Cultural Studies student body in negotiations with the Director, the Executive Committee, and other administrative entities.
  - Co-chairs are responsible for attending all required trainings offered by the university for student organizations.
2. Treasurer
  - A Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term, renewable for as long as they retain local student status.
  - The treasurer shall be responsible for attending all required trainings offered by the university for student organizations
  - Keep records of all income, expenses and purchase orders made by the SOC and render a full report at all SOC meetings.
3. Secretary
  - A Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term, renewable for as long as they retain local student status.

- The Secretary shall be responsible for attending all required trainings offered by the university for student organizations.
  - The Secretary shall be responsible keeping meeting minutes and distributing to the SOC body as well as presenting the minutes for approval at all SOC meetings
  - The secretary shall chair any committee, ad hoc or standing, that will create and share correspondences of the program, students and/or alumni.
  - Secretary must distribute minutes to the SOC within a week of the meeting.
4. Graduate Student Liaison
- A Graduate Student Liaison shall be elected for a one-year term, renewable for as long as they retain local student status.
  - The Graduate Student Liaison shall serve as liaison to the Graduate and Professional Student Association's Fairfax Campus Assembly for the entire school year.
  - The Graduate Student Liaison shall render a full report of all GAPSA meetings to the SOC body.
5. Admissions Committee
- Members of this committee must be in their 3rd year of the program or higher to serve.
  - Two members of the SOC shall be elected to serve on the Admissions committee.
  - The terms for the admissions committee shall be two years, staggered and nonrenewable.
  - The admissions committee shall work with the chair of Cultural Studies to review application materials for prospective students and render a report for the SOC body as necessary.
  - The admissions committee shall work with the co-chairs of SOC to support accepted students' day and new student orientation.
6. Professional development chairs
- The terms for co-chairs shall be two years, staggered and renewable.
  - Coordinates any professional development opportunities including but not limited to Critiquing Culture events.
  - Co-chairs are responsible for attending all required trainings offered by the university for student organizations.

#### Article VI: Executive Board

1. The executive board shall be comprised of the co-chairs, secretary, treasurer, graduate student liaison, professional development chairs and any additional appointed chairs.
2. Executive board members should make every effort attend all convened meetings.
3. The executive board shall meet as necessary to coordinate any administrative needs of the SOC.

4. Meetings of the executive board shall be open to all SOC members. The executive board will send out all notifications and invitations to meetings to SOC members in advance of the meeting.

#### Article VII: Committees

1. Committees shall be created to advance any ideas, programs or projects decided on by the SOC.
2. Upon agreement that a committee shall be created, an SOC member shall be appointed chair (or co-chair) and will be responsible for convening all meetings and rendering a report to the SOC body.

#### Article VIII: Advisor

1. The primary advisor shall be a full-time member of the faculty or staff at George Mason University. The advisor may offer guidance and support for the organization but may not have a vote.
2. The advisor shall be selected by the founding members and the term of the advisor shall be reviewed annually by the SOC. If the majority of SOC members find the advisor to be ineffective or counterproductive in their duties, a new advisor may be nominated and elected in a process similar to electing student co-chairs.

#### Article IX: Nominations and Elections:

1. Nominations for board members shall take place in person during the March SOC meeting, after which elections will be held online prior to the final SOC meeting of the semester, most commonly held in April.
2. SOC members can be nominated for any position, if eligible, or may nominate themselves.
3. Nominations and nomination acceptances can be made by proxy.
4. Nominees are then made effective by accepting the nomination with a second from an additional SOC member.
5. After nominees are made official, all nominees shall have their qualifications sent over the CS student listserv.
6. Elections shall take place each spring and must occur by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
7. As the two co-chairs have staggered terms, one co- chair will be elected to the SOC annually.
8. Elections will be held via online election platform determined by the SOC members.

#### Article X: Impeachment

1. Should an elected officer fail to perform the responsibilities or abuse the privileges of their elected position, the officer shall be subject to impeachment and removal from their office.
2. If the majority of SOC members find an officer to be ineffective or counterproductive in their duties, a new officer may be nominated and elected in a process similar to electing student co-chairs.

#### Article XI: Meetings

1. The Cultural Studies SOC shall meet at least twice every semester, but as close to monthly as is possible.
2. The Co-chairs shall preside over the meetings, but any member may present new business.
3. Discussions may also begin or carry over on the CS student listserv.
4. There is no attendance policy, but if a vote is taken at a meeting and a course of action is decided, then that vote must be effectual. That is, in order to exercise student voice and vote, one must make every effort to attend meetings.
5. Votes shall be made effectual by a simple majority.
6. Special meetings can be called by either co-chair at the request of any student member.

#### Article XII: Finance:

1. There will be no dues required for membership
2. If money is required for an event, the treasurer shall work with the committee or chair of the event to create a budget and execute any spending.
3. All receipts of purchases must be saved and recorded. A full report of all spending must be rendered to the SOC body.

#### Article XIII: Amendments and Ratification

1. Amendments as they are needed, can be suggested at a special or regular meeting of the SOC. If agreed upon, the recommendation shall be written up and shared on the CS student listserv for discussion and voted at the next regular meeting.
2. Ratification of this document shall become effective upon approval by a 3/4 vote of the membership
3. Student Involvement must review all amendments in the same manner as a completely new constitution.

## Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee | Standard Operating Procedures

### Article I - Membership

1. Each incoming member of the SOC will receive the SOC manual and participate in the New Student Orientation
2. If a member cannot attend the New Student Orientation, a special orientation session should be convened by elected board members.

### Article II - Elected Officers Duties:

1. Co-Chairs
  - a. Works collaboratively with executive board to create agenda;
  - b. Meets with faculty chair as necessary to share needs of student body;
  - c. Convenes regular meetings of the SOC;
  - d. Represents the SOC at GMU student body meetings and meetings of GMU RSOs as necessary;
  - e. Administers and executes events, programs and initiatives as agreed upon by the SOC or provides for the delegation of those responsibilities;
  - f. Must attend all RSO trainings as required by GMU.
2. Treasurer
  - a. Must keep accurate records of all spending by SOC and render a full report to the SOC body;
  - b. Responsible for transferring all record keeping documents to incoming treasurer;
  - c. Must attend all RSO trainings as required by GMU.
3. Secretary
  - a. Keeps minutes of the SOC meetings and Executive Board meetings and distributes/posts for SOC members;
  - b. Minutes must be distributed one week after the meeting takes place;
  - c. Suggests and executes new forms of maintaining communication to SOC members. Such as Facebook groups, wiki, or gmail listservs;
  - d. Maintains all copies of the minutes, bylaws, SOPs and SOC orientation packet;
  - e. Must attend all RSO trainings as required by GMU.
4. Graduate Student Liaison
  - a. Represents the SOC and all concerns of the body at all GAPSA meetings;
  - b. Assigns a representative to attend a GAPSA meeting if they are unable to attend the meeting;
  - c. Renders a report of the GAPSA meeting at all SOC meetings;
  - d. Shall encourage participation of GAPSA events and share all SOC and Cult Studies events to GAPSA.



5. Admissions Committee
  - a. Shall meet with faculty ExCom to review applications of prospective students.
6. Professional development co-chairs
  - a. Coordinates any professional development opportunities including but not limited to Critiquing Culture events;
  - b. Co-chairs are responsible for attending all required trainings offered by the university for student organizations.
  - c. Must attend all RSO trainings as required by GMU

#### Article III:

##### Standing Committees and Special committees:

- The critiquing culture and newsletter committees shall be standing committees of the SOC.
- Special Committees shall be created to execute all ideas and initiatives as agreed upon by the SOC and can be moved to a standing committee by vote of the SOC.
- Each committee shall be comprised of no fewer than two members.

##### Critiquing Culture (CC) Committee

- Shall be a standing committee convened by the SOC to act as a professional development opportunity for SOC members
- The professional development co chairs shall chair the committee.
- chairs shall request committee members and convene all meetings
- CC shall feature paper presentations, workshops and/or speakers or another event as decided upon by the CC Committee

##### Newsletter

- The SOC shall create a biannual newsletter to distributed to the SOC body.
- The Newsletter committee shall be chaired by the secretary
- The secretary shall solicit members of the committee and convene all meetings as necessary

#### Article IV

##### Amendments

- Amendments to this document can be proposed at any regular meeting of the SOC and can be ratified by simple majority