

Spanish and Portuguese Graduate Students' Association (SPGSA)

Constitution

1. Statement of Purpose.

The Spanish & Portuguese Graduate Student Association (SPGSA) acts as a bridge between graduate students, our faculty colleagues, and the wider UCLA community. Members of this annually elected student organization represent Spanish & Portuguese graduate students at faculty meetings, Humanities Council meetings, and with the departmental Graduate Affairs Committee and Lower Division Council. SPGSA organizes quarterly meetings to discuss issues relevant to graduate students, to share career planning and academic professionalization information with peers, and to create a social forum to involve new and continuing graduate students in our scholarly community. SPGSA also provides support to other graduate student organizations including the Annual Graduate Student Conference, Motus Sodalis, the Mentorship Program, and the publication *Párrafo*. The members of SPGSA will adhere to all University policies as outlined in the Handbook for Officially Registered Student Organizations.

2. Statement of Non-Discrimination.

The SPGSA, in accordance with applicable federal and State law and University policy, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, or citizenship. SPGSA also prohibits sexual harassment. This policy applies to the SPGSA membership, access to organization programs and activities, and the general treatment of members.

3. Statement of Confidentiality.

All SPGSA members are expected to maintain all conversations regarding SPGSA matters confidential. If confidentiality is not maintained, all SPGSA members will vote on the consequences of this action with the option of discharging an SPGSA member from the board.

4. Organizational Structure.

The following positions will be voted on by SPGSA members as described in section 4 or on an as-needed basis:

4.1 *President*. Duties of the SPGSA President include organizing, announcing, and conducting SPGSA meetings and attending monthly Faculty meetings to represent graduate student interests. The President also meets on a quarterly basis with the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate studies.

4.2 *Vice President*. The Vice President acts as an alternate for both the President and

Humanities Council Representative, attending faculty meetings and Humanities Council meetings when the other officers are unable to do so. The Vice President attends Graduate Affairs Committee meetings in order to represent graduate student interests, when necessary. The Vice President also assists the President in the organization of SPGSA meetings. The Vice President will co-attend meetings when possible. If, at any point, the President is unable to continue his or her post, the Vice President will assume the President's responsibilities until SPGSA determines a new President by majority vote. The position of Vice President may remain unfilled.

4.3 Humanities Council Representative. The Humanities Council Representative attends monthly meetings of the Humanities Council to access campus-wide GSA funding and to keep members up-to-date on issues affecting the larger graduate student population. The Humanities Council Representative also acts as SPGSA treasurer as he/she is in charge of the annual budget allocated to our graduate students by the University. In this capacity, he/she also works with other department student groups to share SPGSA funding resources and find other campus resources. The Humanities Council Representative may keep a working relationship with the Union.

4.4 Secretary. The Secretary acts as an alternate for both the Vice President and Humanities Council Representative, attending faculty meetings and Humanities Council meetings when the other officers are unable to do so. The Secretary records the minutes from the SPGSA meetings for future reference. These minutes will be typed out and uploaded to Google Drive. The Secretary receives and ensures the completion of funding requests for departmental organizations and then submits them to the SPGSA team for approval. Should the position of Secretary remain unfilled, the Vice President will carry out the Secretary's duties.

4.5 T.A. Representative. The T.A. Representative (TAR) advocates on behalf of all graduate teaching assistants employed by the department. The T.A. Representative is expected to keep a working relationship with the T.A. Coordinator (TAC) and the Lower Division Coordinator. The TAR cannot assume his/her SPGSA responsibilities if he/she is the current TAC. If the elected TAR is designated as TAC by the Lower Division Coordinator, then TAR duties will be transferred to the runner-up of the SPGSA elections.

4.6 Motus Sodalitatis - Lectures and Symposia Committee (2 members). The Committee's two members organize and lead a student group (which may include non-SPGSA volunteers) in charge of inviting guest speakers to our department for the following academic year and managing the logistics of these academic events. Given the long-term nature of its duties, the Committee's tenure will be two years (with year two duties being limited to handling essential bureaucratic and logistical issues).

4.7 Undergraduate Liaison (2 members). The Undergraduate Liaisons are in charge of creating connections between the SPGSA and its undergraduate equivalent, currently called USPI. The duties include attending USPI meetings, working closely with the department's Undergraduate Advisor, scheduling workshops and panels (minimum 3 per academic year—preferably one or

two per quarter) centered on the professional development of undergraduate students, and collaborating with undergraduate students to address concerns that affect the entire student body.

4.8. *Treasurer.* The treasurer is responsible for overseeing the annual budget for SPGSA. Allocation decisions will take place democratically among grad students. They will keep an open and transparent management of funds, reporting at every SPGSA meeting of the Association's account movements.

4.9. *Professional Development.* In this position, the main duty consists of providing professionalization workshops throughout the year on the topics that graduate students consider essential for their professionalization.

Duties of Entire Team. In the case that a member is unable to attend a meeting, another member will be selected to present him or her based on common agreement. All SPGSA Members will review and vote on solicitations of funding. SPGSA members also work together to plan the End-of-the-Year Party.

5. Creation and Erasure of Positions – objective.

5.1. *Objectives:* If the need arises to institutionalize any role that would benefit the graduate students of the department, a new position can be created. The aim is that the duties of this role will be perpetuated in time and a democratic, open, inclusive and fair rotation of the people responsible will be ensured. Therefore, positions will be voted on annually and different students can be in charge of providing the necessary service to the community.

For the same reason, if a position is no longer necessary, it can be removed.

5.2. *Procedures for the creation and erasure of positions:* A position may be created after at least one year of designing and testing structural strategies that will address a set of specific needs. After said year, the graduate students in the Spanish & Portuguese department will vote to create an official SPGSA position encompassing the role being filled during the trial year. If students vote in favor of creating a position, the position will appear on the next SPGSA elections ballot. In the time between the creation of the position and SPGSA elections, the position may be filled by one or more volunteer(s).

The erasure of positions will occur by vote. At least three quarters of students must agree to erase a position.

6. Operating and Voting Procedures

6.1 *Meetings.* Active members of SPGSA will convene meetings to be arranged by the President.

At least one meeting should be held per quarter, preferably during the week before a Faculty meeting.

6.2. *Membership and Voting Privileges.* Membership is open to all graduate students of the Spanish and Portuguese department at UCLA and to other graduate students affiliated with the department. Voting privileges will be granted to all graduate students in good standing with the department.

6.3 *Voting Procedure for Positions of President, Vice President, Humanities Council Representatives, and T.A. Representative.* The graduate students of the Spanish & Portuguese Department will vote for these year-long positions during Spring quarter of the previous academic year. Nominations may be made by any student, but nominees must be notified and must confirm their nomination before the ballot is emailed to graduate students. Votes will be cast by anonymous ballot through an electronic poll, and will be tallied the online poll. Should an officer be unable to fulfill his or her duties, a vote will be held at the next SPGSA meeting to fill the position.¹

6.4 *Voting Procedure for Representatives to Departmental Committees.* These positions will be voted on during the first SPGSA meeting of the year. Should a committee representative be unable to fulfill his or her duties, a vote will be held at the next SPGSA meeting to fill the position.

7. Description of Spanish & Portuguese Graduate Student Groups

7.1 *Graduate Student Conference.* The Department of Spanish and Portuguese hosts an annual graduate student conference regarding Hispanic and Lusophone Literature, Linguistics, and culture. The conference generally takes place in the Spring quarter.

7.2 *Motus Sodalitatis.* Motus Sodalitatis is a graduate student organization of the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese that provides a forum for graduate students to present their work in progress to their peers and professors in order to receive feedback and foster dialogue within our academic community. This organization provides an ideal opportunity for doctoral students to present their dissertation research and for students submitting papers to conferences or journals to gain experience in presenting and discussing their work. Professors are also encouraged to share their work in progress.

7.3 *Student Mentorship Program.* In the Student Mentorship Program, prospective/first year students are paired up with current students ideally in the same field (e.g. those interested in Latin American literature are paired up with those currently studying Latin American literature at UCLA). To provide incoming students with some support, they are paired with someone who has been in your place. The mentor answers any questions the mentee may have about UCLA, the

¹ Note: In case the electronic option is not possible, voting will occur using a written ballot. The written ballot will be turned in to the department's front office and tallied by a group of 3 impartial SPGSA members.

Department, faculty, life in Los Angeles, etc. and acts as his or her buddy/consultant.

7.4 *Párrafo*. *Párrafo* is a trilingual publication--English, Spanish, and Portuguese--that features collaborations within the fields of literature, the arts and culture. Produced by the students of the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, *Párrafo* started as a fanzine in 2004 and has evolved into a more artistic magazine and website. To this day there have been six editions primarily related to the Luso-Hispanic world. *Párrafo* publishes images (photographs, reproductions of art, engravings, etc.), as well as stories, poems, literary reports, and non-academic essays.

8. Provision for Financial Records.

The SPGSA will be responsible for providing, at the request of the University, all financial records and receipts of expenses incurred while sponsoring University sponsored events, and for maintaining such records as they pertain to monies received from the University Student Programming Funds. The task will be managed by the Humanities Council Representative or by an appointed member, with approval from the officers. Any spending of SPGSA monies must be approved by the majority of SPGSA members including sponsorship of events, meetings costs, etc. Vote may take place either in person or online, but all members reserve the right to vote.

9. Provision for Amendments to this Constitution.

This constitution may be amended, by majority vote of all enrolled graduate students in the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese.