

## **Texas A&M Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association Constitution**

### **Article I – Name**

**Section 1** – The name of this club or organization shall be the Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association.

### **Article II – Purpose/Mission Statement**

**Section 1** – The purpose of this club or organization shall be to promote graduate students professionally and socially within the agricultural economics department at Texas A&M.

**Section 2** – The Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association will engage in a variety of activities designed to promote the association’s purpose. These activities will include, but are not limited to:

1. Meeting and Workshops: Regular general body meetings, guest speaker events, and skill-building workshops that promote relevant topics to the association’s focus, such as leadership, professional development, academic support, etc.
2. Social Events: Activities aimed at fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among members, such as networking events, social mixers, and recreational outings.
3. Community Service and Outreach: Initiatives that involve contributing to the local community, including volunteer opportunities, charity fundraisers, and service projects aligned with the organization's mission.
4. Collaborations and Partnerships: Collaborative events or programs with other student organizations, academic departments, or external entities (such as local businesses or nonprofit organizations).
5. Conferences and Competitions: Participation in relevant academic, professional, or cultural conferences, as well as competitions or showcases, to further the development and visibility of the organization.
6. Fundraising and Sponsorship: Activities aimed at raising funds for the organization, including sponsorships, donations, and organizing fundraising events.

**Section 3** – The Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association is affiliated with Texas A&M University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which provides support, resources, guidance, etc. This relationship enhances the organization's ability to carry out its mission by connecting members to a broader network of professionals and students, as well as offering access to resources and opportunities within the larger organizational structure. This affiliation does not limit the group's independence, but it provides valuable support and fosters a sense of community within a larger framework of shared interests and objectives.

**Section 4** – The Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association shall abide by the following:

- 41.1.1. Have an approved faculty or staff advisor, employed at a level consistent with the categorization of the organization and committed to upholding the expectations of an advisor as defined in the “Acknowledgement of Student Organization Advisor Expectations” and the [Student Organization Manual](#).
- 41.1.2. Annually renew their recognition with Student Activities. An organization’s annual recognition cycle should begin in the month that the organization elects or selects leadership, as defined by the organization’s constitution. Each organization must provide: signatures of the University advisor and the student officers authorized to withdraw money; the names and contact information of all advisors and officers of the group; an up-to-date profile of the student organization; and a

current constitution and by-laws that comply with the provisions outlined in the [Student Organization Manual](#). Student leader and advisor trainings must also be completed during the renewal period. Texas A&M may identify required enhanced expectations for organizations with a specialized/higher degree of risk or affiliation with the university.

- 41.1.3. Deposit and withdraw all funds of the organization in the Student Organization Finance Center and/or with a University fiscal account unless an on-campus banking exemption has been submitted and approved by Student Activities.
- 41.1.4 A student organization must maintain a name and mission that distinguishes it from other existing organizations. Organizations may not be formed for the purpose of participation in illegal activities or activities that violate the rights of others.
- 41.2. Students selected, elected or appointed as officers (an officer is an individual in a leadership position as defined in the organization's constitution) in officially recognized student organizations shall:
  - 41.2.1. Have a minimum cumulative and semester grade point average (GPA) as stated below and meet that minimum cumulative and semester GPA in the semester immediately prior to the election/selection/appointment, the semester of election/selection/appointment, and semesters during the term of office.
    - 41.2.1.1. For undergraduate students, the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 2.00 and for first professional students the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 2.50. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration unless fewer credits are required as they complete the final stages of their degree. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may qualify toward a grade point average prior to election/selection/appointment if at least six credit hours have been taken during the course of either the full or two summer session(s).
    - 41.2.1.2. For graduate level students the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is a 3.00. In order for this provision to be met, at least five hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration unless fewer credits are required as they complete the final stages of their degree. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may qualify toward a grade point average prior to election/selection/appointment, if at least five credit hours have been taken during the course of either the full or two summer session(s).
  - 41.2.2. Be in good standing (see 27.1.2) with the University and enrolled:
    - 41.2.2.1. At least half time (six or more credit hours), if an undergraduate or first professional student (unless fewer credits are required to graduate in the spring and fall semesters) during the term of office. A student enrolled in the Blinn TEAM or Engineering Academy at Blinn College-Bryan programs is eligible to hold an office, as long as the student is meeting all applicable eligibility requirements outlined herein.
    - 41.2.2.2. At least half time (five or more credits), if a graduate level student (unless fewer credits are required in the final stages of their degree as defined by the Continuous Registration Requirement) during their term of office.

### **Article III – Membership**

**Section 1** – Membership in this club is open exclusively to students currently enrolled at Texas A&M University. All members must be active students, maintaining full-time or part-time status at the university. The association is restricted to only Texas A&M University students and does not permit non-student members to participate in official activities or hold office.

**Section 2** – Membership in this club is open to all students who meet the following criteria:

1. Academic Majors/Minors: Membership is open to students of all academic disciplines.
2. Special Qualifications: Any other special qualifications (such as leadership experience or prior participation in related activities) may be set forth by the club but must be non-discriminatory and reasonable in nature.

**Section 3** – Membership in this association is open to all meeting the above criteria, irrespective of race, creed, color, gender, class, age, nation of origin, nationality, disability, marital status, religion, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

**Section 4** – This section outlines the procedures for disciplining or removing a member from the organization. The process is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and an opportunity for members to be heard.

1. Reporting Concerns:

Any member of the association may report concerns regarding the behavior or actions of another member. Reports should be submitted in writing to a designated officer. The report must include a description of the behavior in question, relevant dates, and any evidence supporting the concern. Anonymous reports may be submitted, but the organization encourages transparency and accountability.

2. Notice to the Member:

Upon receiving a report of a potential violation, the member in question will be notified in writing by the association's executive board. The notice will include:

- A summary of the concern(s) raised.
- The specific behaviors or actions that are under review.
- A statement informing the member of their right to respond to the allegations.

The notice will also include a date for a meeting or hearing (if applicable) where the member can address the concerns.

3. Opportunity to Share Perspective:

The member in question will be given a fair opportunity to respond to the reported concern. This may be done in a meeting with the executive board, at which the member can:

- Present their side of the situation.
- Provide any evidence or information they believe is relevant.
- Ask questions and clarify any points of concern.

The meeting should take place within a reasonable timeframe, ensuring that the member has adequate time to prepare their response.

4. Decision-Making Process:

The disciplinary decision will be made by the association's executive board or another designated group of decision-makers as outlined in the association's bylaws. The board or decision-makers will review all relevant information, including the original report, the member's response, and any other evidence presented. A decision will be made based on the facts and in accordance with the association's policies and values.

In cases of severe misconduct or violations of university policies, the executive board may seek advice or involvement from university administrators to ensure that the association's actions are aligned with university standards.

5. Possible Outcomes:

After the review, the executive board may determine one of the following outcomes:

- No Action: If the concern is not substantiated or if the behavior in question is deemed acceptable within the context of the organization's values, no further action will be taken.
  - Warning: A formal warning may be issued if the behavior is considered inappropriate but not severe enough to warrant removal. The warning will outline the expectations for the member's conduct moving forward and include consequences for further violations.
  - Probation: The member may be placed on probation for a specified period. During probation, the member must demonstrate improved behavior and comply with any additional conditions set by the executive board.
  - Suspension: The member may be suspended from participation in the organization for a set period, during which time they will not be allowed to attend meetings, events, or hold any position within the organization.
  - Removal: In cases of severe or repeated misconduct, the member may be removed from the organization. Removal may occur if the behavior is inconsistent with the organization's values, disrupts the group's functioning, or violates university policies.
  - Other Outcomes: Depending on the nature of the issue, additional outcomes may be considered, including but not limited to required mediation, counseling, or community service. These alternatives will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. Appeal Process:  
If the member disagrees with the outcome or disciplinary decision, they may appeal the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the association's executive board or to an alternative body designated for appeals, as specified in the organization's bylaws. The appeal must outline the reasons for disagreement and any new information that may impact the decision.

## **Article IV – Officers/Executive Board**

**Section 1** – The officers of this organization must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a minimum cumulative and semester grade point average (GPA) as stated below and meet that minimum cumulative and semester GPA in the semester immediately prior to the election/appointment, the semester of election/appointment and semesters during the term of office.
  - a. For undergraduate students, the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 2.00. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may be applied to this provision. In order for summer coursework to qualify toward a grade point average prior to election/appointment, at least six credit hours must have been taken during the course of either the full or two summer session(s).
  - b. For graduate level students the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is a 3.00 and for first professional students the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 2.50. In order for this provision to be met, at least four hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may be applied to this provision. In order for summer coursework to qualify toward a grade point average prior to election/appointment, at least four credit hours must have been taken during the

course of either the full or two summer session(s) unless fewer credits are required as they complete the final stages of their degree.

2. Be in good standing with the university and enrolled:
  - a. At least half time (six or more credit hours), if an undergraduate student (unless fewer credits are required to graduate in the spring and fall semesters) during the term of office. Students enrolled in the Blinn TEAM program are also eligible to hold an office, as long as the student is meeting all applicable Blinn TEAM requirements and is in good standing with the program.
  - b. At least half time (four or more credits), if a graduate level student (unless fewer credits are required in the final stages of their degree as defined by the Continuous Registration Requirement) during their term of office.

**Section 2** – The officers of this club or organization shall be: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, GPSG Senator, GAC Representative, Branding Committee Chair, Travel Grant Representative, Social Chair, and Seminar Committee Chairs (2).

**Section 3** – General Responsibilities of GSA Officers will be to attend monthly meetings of GSA, serve as liaison for graduate students, bring graduate student concerns to GSA meetings, and disperse GSA meeting information to graduate students. The responsibilities for individual office are as follows:

• **President**

- Preside at all general and officer meetings.
- Call special meetings as needed.
- Appoint all chairpersons and members to special committees.
- Execute the laws of the Graduate Student Association (GSA).
- Work with Department to set meeting days/dates for upcoming year.
- Work with GSA officers and Departments to develop budget for upcoming year.

• **Vice President**

- Organize the first meeting of the newly elected Officers.
- Develop agenda for GSA meeting three days prior to meeting; send agenda to secretary to disperse to GSA board members.
- Temporarily serving in the President's place in cases of absence or incapacity.
- Assisting the President in the aforementioned duties.
- Coordinate with the Social Committee to plan at least 2 events per semester.

• **Treasurer**

- To provide a budget report at each monthly meeting.
- Work with the President and Advisors to develop budget for upcoming year and maintain the GSA budget.
- Apply travel grants, provided by the department.

• **Secretary**

- Take minutes at regularly scheduled meetings.
- Send meeting reminder one week before monthly meeting.
- Send agenda and minutes from prior month to GSA board members three days prior to meeting; copy Department officials.
- Send communications to GSA Officers as directed by the president; copy Department officials.
- Create GSA newsletter for faculty and students.

• **GPSG Senator**

- Represent the AGEC GSA with respect to the university-wide Graduate Student Council (GSC) and report those happenings with the department.

- Provide summary of past meetings at each GSA officer meeting.
- **GAC Representative**
  - Sits on the Graduate Advisory Council (GAC) to provide graduate student perspective on departmental decisions pertaining to graduate students (i.e. curriculum, testing, etc.).
  - The GAC representative must be a PhD student who has completed and passed their qualifying exam and preliminary examinations.
- **Branding Committee Chair**
  - Work with the AGEC department to keep the website up-to-date and functional in terms of student profiles and recent events on the home page.
  - Provide information to secretary about personal branding to include in newsletter.
  - Run the association's social media accounts.
- **Travel Grant Representative**
  - Maintains budget and applications of travel grants, provided by department.
  - Provide application information to secretary to post in newsletter.
- **Social Chair**
  - Develop an itemized budget for supporting the social goals.
  - Meet with department to plan orientation events for the beginning of each academic year.
  - Coordinate functions, schedule locations of events as necessary.
- **Seminar Committee Chairs (2)**
  - Seminar committee chair(s) are elected separately at the end of the academic year for a 2-year commitment (alternating one new chair is elected each year).
  - Responsible for managing/planning the seminar series in conjunction with the Seminar Committee Faculty members.

**Section 3** – The term length for each position, except for the seminar committee chairs, will be one year from September 1 to August 31. The seminar committee chairs length of term will be two years from May 1 to April 30.

**Section 4** – An officer may be removed from their position if they fail to fulfill their duties, violate the association's bylaws, or act in a manner detrimental to the association's purpose. The removal process should be as follows:

1. **Initiation of Removal:** A written petition signed by at least 50% of the association's active members or a majority of the officer team may be submitted to request the removal of an officer.
2. **Notice to the Officer:** Upon receiving a report of a potential removal, the officer in question will be notified in writing by the association's executive board. The notice will include:
  - a. A summary of the concern(s) raised.
  - b. The specific behaviors or actions that are under review.
  - c. A statement informing the officer of their right to respond to the allegations.
  - d. The notice will also include a date for a meeting or hearing (if applicable) where the officer can address the concerns.
3. **Investigation and Hearing:** Upon receipt of the petition, a special meeting will be convened, and the officer in question will be given the opportunity to present their case. The association's officer team will conduct a fair review and ensure that the officer is afforded due process.
4. **Voting on Removal:** Following the investigation, a vote will be held to determine whether the officer should be removed. A two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at the

meeting is required for removal.

5. Replacement: If an officer is removed, the position will be filled according to the association's established procedures for vacancies, which may involve a special election or appointment by the officer team.

**Section 5** – To ensure transparency and effective communication within the association, officers will be required to provide regular reports to the membership. These reports will include updates on their duties, accomplishments, and any important association developments.

1. Frequency of Reports: Officers must submit written or oral reports at least once per month during a regularly scheduled meeting.
2. Availability of Reports: All reports will be made available to the members via email, the association's website, or posted in a designated common area accessible to all members.
3. Content of Reports: Reports should cover any activities, events, or matters related to the officer's responsibilities and should include any upcoming initiatives, budget updates (if applicable), or actions taken on behalf of the association.

## **Article V – Elections**

**Section 1** – Elections for club officers will be held annually in August to ensure the new officers are in place at the start of the academic year. The Association Advisor or a designated Election Committee will oversee the election process.

1. Announcement of Elections: The elections will be announced at least two weeks prior to the scheduled election meeting. Announcements will be made through the association's email list, social media pages, and posted on bulletin boards around the campus.
2. Nominations: Nominations for candidates will be accepted during the first week of the election period. Members may nominate themselves or others.
3. Announcement of Results: The Election Committee or Association Advisor will announce the election results immediately after the ballots are counted. The results will also be posted in a prominent location and sent to the association's email list for full transparency.

**Section 2** – If an officer position becomes vacant during the term, the following procedures will apply:

1. Temporary Appointment: The officer team may appoint a member to temporarily fill the vacant position until a special election can be held.
2. Special Election: A special election will be scheduled as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the vacancy occurs. A nomination period will be opened, and candidates will be given an opportunity to campaign.
3. Interim Officers: If a vacancy arises for an officer position that is vital to the club's operations (e.g., President or Treasurer), the officer team may elect an interim officer to serve until the vacancy is filled.

**Section 3** – Voting in elections will be conducted using the following procedures:

1. Method of Voting:
  - Online Voting Platform: If deemed appropriate by the officer team, an online voting platform (e.g., Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, or a secure voting system provided by the university) may be used to facilitate voting, particularly for remote or hybrid meetings. The platform will ensure that all votes are confidential, and results will be automatically compiled and presented by the Election Committee or designated person.
  - Secret Ballot (Optional): In cases where voting by an online voting platform is not

feasible, elections will be conducted via a secret ballot to ensure voter privacy. Ballots will be collected and counted by the Election Committee or another neutral party.

- Show of Hands (Optional): In cases where voting by secret ballot is not feasible (e.g., very few candidates), the club may opt for a vote by show of hands, but this will only apply in specific circumstances where all members agree.

2. Election Majority:

- A candidate will be elected if they receive a majority vote of 50% plus one of the votes cast.
- If no candidate receives a majority, a runoff election will be held between the top two candidates. If there is still no majority after the runoff, the decision will be made by the officer team or association advisor based on the best interest of the club.

### **Article VI – Meetings**

**Section 1** – Regular meetings of this club shall be held once a month during the academic year. The President or officer team shall have the authority to call meetings as needed.

The Secretary is responsible for notifying members of upcoming meetings. Notifications must be sent via email at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Notifications will include the meeting's agenda, time, date, and location (or virtual platform details, if applicable).

Members are also encouraged to check the association's official communication channels, such as the website or social media, for any updates or changes.

**Section 2** – A quorum for conducting business at any meeting shall consist of 50% of the active members of the voting membership. This ensures that sufficient representation is present to make decisions on behalf of the club. If the quorum is not met, no official business or voting may take place at that meeting.

**Section 3** – The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order governs the meetings of this club on all matters not specifically addressed in the constitution or bylaws adopted by the membership. This set of parliamentary procedures will be used to ensure order and fairness during meetings, including voting processes, debate on issues, and motions. The use of parliamentary procedure is voluntary but is strongly recommended to maintain structure in all formal meetings.

### **Article VII– Advisors**

**Section 1** – The club shall have at least one full-time Texas A&M University faculty or staff advisor who shall serve as the official advisor to the association. The advisor must be a full-time employee of Texas A&M University and will provide guidance and support to the club in accordance with the University's policies and student organization guidelines.

**Section 2** – The advisor shall be selected by the Election Committee created by the association. The selection process will involve an open discussion where members may suggest faculty or staff members who they believe would be a good fit for the role of advisor. Once a candidate is chosen, the President of the club will formally approach the individual to request their acceptance of the advisor position. The advisor's term will be one year, with the option for reappointment at the beginning of each academic year, contingent upon mutual agreement between the advisor and the officer team.

**Section 3** – The responsibilities of the association advisor shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Guidance and Mentorship: The advisor shall provide advice and support to the association's

officers and members, ensuring the association operates in accordance with its mission and goals.

2. **Compliance with University Policies:** The advisor shall ensure that the association adheres to all policies and procedures outlined in the Student Organization Manual provided by the Office of Student Activities.
3. **Attendance at Meetings:** The advisor is encouraged to attend regular association meetings and events, when possible, to provide oversight, support, and guidance.
4. **Financial Oversight:** The advisor shall help the association ensure proper management of funds, particularly if the association is engaging in fundraising activities or has a budget allocation.
5. **Approval of Activities:** The advisor must approve all major activities, events, and initiatives before they are presented to the student body or the wider community.
6. **Assisting with Association Administration:** The advisor shall assist with the administrative aspects of the association, such as submitting forms to the Office of Student Activities, ensuring the association remains in good standing, and facilitating any necessary paperwork for events or funding requests.
7. **Ensuring Compliance with Campus Policies:** The advisor will ensure that all events and association activities are in compliance with campus policies, including but not limited to those concerning safety, risk management, and the conduct of the organization's members.

If the responsibilities outlined above conflict with the guidelines established by the Office of Student Activities, the policies set forth by the Office of Student Activities shall take precedence.

## **Article X – Finances**

**Section 1** – This association will operate without membership dues. Instead, the association will seek funding through other means, such as:

1. **Fundraising:** The association may organize fundraising events and activities to raise money for its operations and events.
2. **Donations:** The association may accept donations from members, faculty, alumni, or other organizations to support its activities.
3. **Campus Funding:** The association may request funds from the Office of Student Activities or other campus sources, as available, to support specific events or projects.
4. **Grants and Sponsorships:** The association may apply for grants or seek sponsorships from local businesses or organizations to fund its operations.

The Treasurer will be responsible for overseeing all incoming funds and ensuring they are used appropriately for club activities.

**Section 2** – The association's finances will be managed by the Treasurer, who is responsible for ensuring accurate financial records are kept and that funds are allocated appropriately. The following accounting procedures will apply:

1. **Income Allocation:**
  - Funds received through fundraising, donations, and other sources will be allocated necessarily for event expenses, operational costs, and other project or initiatives as approved by the membership, subject to approval by the officer team.
2. **Expenditure Approval:**
  - Any expenditure above \$100 must be approved by a majority vote of the officer team or general membership.
  - All requests for expenditure will be submitted in writing, with a detailed budget, to the Treasurer and the officer team for review and approval.

3. Financial Records:
  - The Treasurer shall maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records, documenting all incoming funds and expenditures.
  - A monthly financial report will be presented at each general meeting, detailing the current balance, recent income, and expenses.
4. Bank Accounts:
  - The club may establish a bank account to manage its funds, with the Treasurer serving as the primary account holder. At least two club officers (e.g., President and Treasurer) will be authorized signatories on the account to ensure proper oversight of financial transactions.
  - The organization is required to bank with the Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC) and/or University Fiscal Department.
  - All funds will be deposited within one business day of collection
5. Audit and Oversight:
  - The organization's advisor will sign and approve each expenditure before payment.
  - An annual financial review will be conducted by a faculty advisor or neutral club member to ensure that the club is in compliance with financial policies and procedures.
  - The financial review will be presented to the membership for approval, and any concerns will be addressed immediately.

## **Article XI – Constitutional Amendments**

**Section 1** – This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership. The process for proposing and passing amendments will be as follows:

1. Proposal of Amendments:
  - Amendments to the constitution may be proposed by any active member of the club, including officers or the general membership.
  - Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the officer team for review. The officer team will then ensure that the proposed amendments are consistent with the goals and values of the association and with Texas A&M University policies.
2. Distribution of Proposals:
  - Once an amendment is proposed, a written copy of the proposed changes must be distributed to all association members at least five (5) business days in advance of the meeting where the vote will take place. This distribution will be made through the association's official communication channels, such as email or other platforms.
  - The proposal will also be included in the meeting agenda to ensure all members are informed.
3. Meeting for Amendment Vote:
  - Proposed amendments may only be voted on at an official business meeting of the association. This ensures that the proposed changes are discussed and that all members have the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns before voting.
  - A quorum, as defined in Article VI, Section 2, must be present in order for a vote on amendments to take place.
4. Approval of Amendments:
  - An amendment will be adopted if it receives two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at the meeting.
  - If an amendment is passed, it becomes effective immediately unless otherwise

specified in the proposal.

5. Submission of Revised Constitution:

- After the constitution is amended, the Secretary or a designated officer must submit a revised copy of the amended constitution to the Office of Student Activities This ensures that the updated version is officially recorded and on file.
- The association will annually submit a copy of its constitution to the Department of Student Activities for review. This copy will be made available to association members, upon request.

## **Article XII – Bylaws**

**Section 1** – In addition to the constitution, the association may adopt bylaws to govern its operations and activities. Bylaws are intended to address secondary policies or procedural details that complement the primary guiding rules outlined in this constitution. Bylaws may include policies on specific roles and responsibilities of officers, meeting protocols, event planning, membership expectations, or any other aspects of club operation not covered by the constitution.

1. Nature of Bylaws:

Bylaws are considered secondary to the constitution and should not conflict with the constitution's primary principles or with college policies. They may be amended or added by a simple majority vote of the general membership, following the same process outlined for amending the constitution, though the voting threshold may differ.

2. Approval and Amendments:

- Proposed bylaws or amendments to existing bylaws must be submitted to the membership at least five (5) business days before they are discussed and voted upon.
- Bylaws or amendments to bylaws shall take effect immediately upon approval unless otherwise specified in the proposal.

3. Relationship to the Constitution:

The constitution shall take precedence over the bylaws in the event of any conflict. If any bylaw is found to be in violation of the constitution, it will be considered invalid and subject to amendment or removal.