

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT GSSWSR**

**Graduate Student Association (GSA) and GSA Executive Committee (GSAEC)**

Officers are elected annually, in April, to serve for the following academic year. Meetings are generally held monthly to discuss various fundraising and service opportunities supported by ABSW. Participation in the annual NABSW conference is encouraged and partially supported by ABSW funds and fellowships from GSSWSR. Each September, as per the policies of the

## **Procedures Specifying Students' Rights to Participate in Academic and Student Affairs Policymaking:**

Generally, students participating on committees must have completed one year in the program. The Committee on Policy includes one returning MSS student and one returning PhD student; the Committee on the master's Curriculum includes two returning MSS students; Faculty Search committees include one returning MSS student and one returning PhD student.

Opportunities to serve on standing governance committees are communicated at the beginning of each school year by the Student Service Coordinator (SSC). The SSC works with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to facilitate recruitment of students for committees. These committees include the Curriculum Committee, Policy Committee, Field Advisory Committee, Student Representative to the Board of Advisors, Student Representative to the Board of Trustees, Student Representative to Graduate Council, and Student Representative to the College Budget Committee. The final student selection is done by the Student Services Coordinator with the Dean. Student members of each committee report back to the Graduate Student Association and on some occasions, survey the student body or facilitate focus groups on various curricular or policy issues. This information is available in the GSSWSR Handbook and Catalog and is accessible to students through the "Student Services" Moodle site. Information about opportunities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs is also distributed electronically via our "Student Services Digest".

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of GSSWSR consists of the entire MSS student body. It is how students participate in many aspects of the school's governance and is the best opportunity to participate in the school community beyond the classroom's boundaries. All students are provided information, starting at orientation, about existing student groups and organizations, and are also told about the process for starting new student groups and organizations. Students are also encouraged to become involved in college-wide organizations if these student groups are of interest to them. Connection with the GSA is the primary way that students participate in many aspects of the School's Governance and is an important opportunity

The GSSWSR holds monthly “Community Conversations” as time set aside for group meetings with students, faculty, and staff. Each semester, these community forums include opportunities to discuss issues that impact the community such as the timing of classes, curricular issues, ethical dilemmas, and topical areas of interest. In addition, Faculty Academic Advisors, the Student Services Coordinator, the Dean, and the Assistant Dean for Administration, maintain an “open door” policy to meet with students around any individual or group issues or concerns. The Dean holds open office hours that students can sign up for utilizing the Calendly application. Many of the standing committees at the GSSWSR hold open conversations/meetings as opportunities for students to raise issues/concerns and to share ideas for growth and improvement. For example, the Curriculum Committee will hold open “town halls, sharing the work of the committee, but also asking for student input and feedback.

**Provides Opportunities for Student Organization:**

In AY 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to adapt the governance structure to best meet the needs of the students. The GSA Executive Committee (GSAEC) was piloted and remains active. The purpose of the GSAEC is to coordinate graduate student initiatives, share relevant information from committees with the student body, promote the visibility of the GSSWSR both within and outside the College, and provide an open forum for discussion of issues related to graduate student life at the GSSWSR. GSAEC meetings are held twice per semester or more frequently, as needed. The GSAEC is comprised of all representatives to faculty committees and one representative from every existing student organization or affinity group in a given academic year. Any student can attend a GSAEC meeting with permission from the Convener (the Student Services Coordinator). The Convener schedules GSAEC meetings, communicates scheduling with students, and takes and disseminates meeting notes. All GSAEC members in attendance receive a copy of the meeting notes. The GSA works best when most students participate. To enable the maximum number of students to hold leadership positions, students may only hold one such position at a time, unless special permission is granted from the Student Services Coordinator.

### **How do students form other organizations at the GSSWSR?**

While the GSA provides many opportunities for active involvement, students may still create a new student organization or an affinity group to address a specific interest that is beyond the focus of the GSA. An affinity group is a sub-group of the Graduate Student Association. They do not receive independent funding from the school, nor do they have a formally structured governing body like the larger student organizations: GSA and ABSW. Applications for forming a new affinity group are made available and reviewed in the fall and spring semesters only by the Student Services Coordinator. Students are encouraged to explore the activities of the GSA and/or ABSW and any group already in existence at GSSWSR before applying to start a new affinity group. If a student finds that these organizations are not able to focus on their area of interest, and they can identify at least 5 like-minded peers, they can choose to apply to create an affinity group. However, the affinity group must be different than any already existing at GSSWSR. Applications for forming an affinity group are accepted in the beginning of the fall (September 1- October 30) and spring (January) semesters only. Any new group requires at least five members. New affinity groups should submit the Application Form (included below) during the specified times. The members listed as contact persons for the group will be notified via email if their group has been approved or if anything needs to be clarified. If funding is desired, the new affinity group must submit a written request to the Student Services Coordinator for review. All requests for funding are subject to approval by the GSA and Student Services Coordinator and the availability of funds. Below is a description of current student organizations:

**Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW)** ABSW is the Bryn Mawr student chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW). The NABSW was formed in 1968 during the Civil Rights Movement, initially as an advocacy group to address social issues and

Inc., the Philadelphia Chapter. Amongst other things, it seeks to disseminate and exchange

**GSSWSR Student Affinity Group Application Form**

Students interested in petitioning to form a student affinity group at GSSWSR must submit this form to John Edwards, Student Services Coordinator.

**Name of student submitting form**

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First

Last

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Email

\_\_\_\_\_ Student ID# (required)

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**Name of Affinity Group**

**Statement of Purpose:** Please describe in detail the group’s decision-making process (majority consensus, etc.)

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**Primary Contact**

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First

Last

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Email

**Secondary Contact**

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First

Last

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Email

**Program Options:**

The program has only one (1) option.

**Program Options:**

*Select One:*

The program has only one (1) option.

Our response/compliance plan is the same for all program options.

Our response/compliance plan differs between program options in the following ways: