

Constitution of the University of Montana Wildlife Biology Program Graduate Student Association

Article I: Name of Organization

- 1 The name of this organization is Wildlife Biology (WBIO) Program Graduate Student Association of The University of Montana (WBGSA).

Article II: Purpose and Goals

- 1 The WBGSA is an association of and for graduate students of the Wildlife Biology Program of the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Division of Biological Sciences within the College of Humanities and Sciences, and the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. Its purpose is to represent the needs, interests, and perspectives of graduate students of the program. The WBGSA will represent the diversity, common goals, needs, and perspectives of graduate students in the WBIO program to WBIO faculty and administration offices. It will also serve to represent the students of the WBIO program to the greater university-wide Graduate Student Association (GSA). The organization will draw upon all areas of graduate education within the school for membership and elected officers.
- 2 The goals of the WBGSA are:
 - a To promote the interests and welfare of all WBIO graduate students;
 - b To serve as a commons for all WBIO graduate students to provide input on WBIO policy, curriculum, and operation;
 - c To serve as a conduit of information relevant to graduate education in WBIO and University of Montana (UM);
 - d To promote an intellectual and social community of graduate education within the program as well as with other organizations in the wider university, including but not limited to the Graduate Student Association and the Interdisciplinary Collaborative Network;
 - e To collaborate with faculty in the organization of each semester's graduate seminar and proposals for and selection of outside speakers and funds associated with bringing in these speakers;
 - f To sponsor opportunities for academic and professional development among its members.
 - g To advocate for organizational policies, practices, and guidelines that recognize and support racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and cultural diversity, in

addition to supporting students with disabilities within WBIO.

- 3 The WBGSA is a graduate student organization that is recognized by the UM Graduate Student Association and will support their work to enhance the graduate student experience at UM.

Article III: Membership

- 1 All graduate students enrolled in WBIO are members of WBGSA. There shall be no other criteria for membership.
- 2 *Non-discrimination:* The WBGSA shall not discriminate where discrimination is defined as denying individuals membership or appointment on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, political affiliation, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, place of residence, or sexual orientation.
- 3 Members will not be required to pay any dues to the WBGSA. Currently, graduate students pay a fee each semester to support the activities of the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM). As the university-wide Graduate Student Association develops, this fee may be reallocated to be used solely by the university-wide GSA.
- 4 The WBGSA will hold business meetings at least three times a semester during or after weekly graduate seminars (currently held on Fridays from 1-3pm) as called by the executive committee, though meetings can be called by any member if one is not scheduled.
- 5 Incoming students will receive information provided by WBGSA in their acceptance package and will learn more about the WBGSA during orientation.

Article IV: Responsibilities

The WBGSA shall assume the following responsibilities:

- 1 Hold meetings of the WBGSA.
- 2 Plan and hold community social events for the WBGSA and broader WBIO community.
- 3 Aid in organization and execution of the WBIO Graduate Seminar each semester.
- 4 Collaborate with faculty in the organization and management of funds for outside speakers brought to the WBIO Graduate Seminar.
- 5 Provide information on UM GPSA and Interdisciplinary Collaborative Network activities and functions.
- 6 Maintain a faculty liaison position that represents graduate student interests with the faculty and administration of WBIO.

Article V: Administration

The WBGSA executive officers shall serve on an executive committee. This committee shall meet at least three times a semester and shall assure that the responsibilities of the WBGSA are fulfilled. The elected positions on the executive committee shall be: Administrator, Graduate Seminar Coordinator, Faculty Liaison, Undergraduate Liaisons (2), and DEI Committees Liaison. Candidacy will be voluntary, and interested students will have the opportunity to announce intended candidacy in graduate seminar near the end of each semester (see Article VIII). Executive committee members shall commit to serve one semester in their positions and must be registered as WBIO graduate students for the entirety of their term. Executive committee members shall coordinate closely to avoid unnecessary overlap in communications with WBIO faculty and administration.

- 1 Administrator:** Develop acceptance package for newly admitted students, act as liaison between WBGSA and the university-wide GPSA by serving as a GPSA Senator and attending monthly meetings. Maintain the WBGSA webpage, coordinate graduate student contributions to media and communication outlets (e.g., blog posts), and publicize events and arrange social events.
- 2 Graduate Seminar Coordinator:** Facilitate WBIO Graduate Seminar with faculty advisor each semester, and invite guest speakers, including both within program and external. The Seminar Coordinator shall also work with the DEI Committees Liaison to diversify the speaker lineup and should aim to schedule at least one seminar per academic year that pertains to DEI topics and one seminar per academic year that pertains to 'whole-scientist' development more broadly (e.g., graduate mental health and well-being, work-life balance, leadership, career trajectories, etc.).
- 3 Faculty Liaison:** Attend faculty meetings and report notes to the full graduate body, while representing graduate student concerns and needs. Lead communication with faculty as needed by WBGSA.
- 4 Undergraduate Liaisons (2):** Serve as a point of connection between graduate and undergraduate students. Inform graduate students of opportunities to interact with, mentor, or support undergraduates at different stages in their educational careers. Encourage and inform undergraduate students about opportunities to further their educational or professional development. This position can take many forms. Duties include:
 - Each liaison will attend at least one meeting of The Wildlife and Fisheries Societies per month.
 - Attend WBGSA officer meetings.
 - Inform undergraduates of graduate students looking to hire techs.

- Announce/encourage opportunities for graduate students to interact with undergrads (e.g. if societies are looking for a guest speaker or are hosting job skills/volunteer opportunities, Rapid Fire, etc.).
 - Be a general contact point undergraduates know and can approach about anything (e.g. applying for jobs/grants/grad school, questions about grad school, etc.).
- 5 DEI Committees Liaison:** Attend college- and/or program-level DEI committee meetings and report notes to the full graduate body, while representing graduate student concerns and needs. Lead communication between WBIO and FCFC DEI committees as needed by WBGSA.
- This position can take many forms. Duties include:
 - Serve as a point of connection between the WBGSA committee and WBIO program-level and FCFC-level DEI committees. Collaborate with the Seminar Coordinator on one seminar per academic year (see Graduate Seminar Coordinator description above).
 - Inform WBIO graduate students of opportunities to collaborate with and learn from BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other students/professionals from diversity backgrounds in ecology (*e.g.*, bring in invited guest speakers from tribal colleges or tribal wildlife management agencies).

In addition to the executive committee, a guest speaker committee shall coordinate visits for the invited external speaker for graduate seminar each year. A minimum of two students shall serve on the committee and be responsible for arranging all logistics of the speaker's visit, including travel and daily schedule. Committee members shall commit to their roles through the conclusion of the speaker's visit, which may be up to a year after the speaker accepts the invitation. To form this committee, the Graduate Seminar Coordinator shall first arrange voting for external guest speakers, invite the selected speaker, and receive acceptance of the speaker invitation. The Graduate Seminar Coordinator shall then hold elections to form the guest speaker committee. Members may announce their candidacy for this committee at this time. Voting shall take place during seminar, with the committee comprising of the two members who receive most votes.

Article VI: Amendments

- 1 Amendments to this constitution can be made at any time by distributing drafted changes to the membership body and voting. To be adopted, a simple majority (51%) of the membership present in the meeting must participate in a vote within seven days of distribution of the changes with the plurality voting in favor of adopting the amendment.

Article VII: Removal/Resignation of Officers

- 1 In the case of a member of the executive committee not fulfilling the duties described above, removal may be deemed necessary. If this is agreed upon unanimously by the executive committee (other than member in question), then the issue of removal should be voted on by the entire membership. To be adopted, a simple majority (51%) of the membership must participate in the vote with the plurality voting in favor of removal.
- 2 In the case of resignation before completion of the term on an executive officer, a new member shall be identified via appointment or special election within the first month of the following semester.

Article VIII: By-Laws

Elections:

- 1 Elections for the executive committee shall occur near the end of each spring and fall semester for positions for the upcoming semester. The current executive committee shall arrange a meeting for WBGSA members to initiate elections. This meeting shall take place within 6 weeks of the end of the semester during graduate seminar (or immediately following seminar if no times are available during seminar). At this time, a WBGSA member interested in running for a position must announce candidacy.
- 2 Elections, if needed, will be anonymous by paper ballots or online. If online, e-mail ballots will be sent to all WBIO students during the week following the WBGSA meeting described in 1, above. Voting will occur over the following 7 days, and the candidate for each office that receives the plurality of votes will assume the office. The committee will be finalized after voting closes and no later than the last Friday of the semester.
- 3 In the case of no students running for a position, an appointment by the WBGSA Administrator during the first month of the new semester shall be made.

Seminar Scheduling:

The opening date for scheduling is communicated to students in advance, and beginning on that date students can email the student coordinator to schedule. There will be a priority scheduling period of two (2) weeks, where requests for dates can be made. If multiple people want the same date, priority will be given to thesis or dissertation defenses, followed by proposal defenses, followed by other types of talks. After the priority scheduling period has closed, additional requests will be processed on a first come first serve basis.

Constitution completed on February 7, 2014.

Constitution ratified on February 14, 2014.

Constitution amended on November 6, 2015.

Constitution amended on April 29, 2016.

Constitution amended on September 2, 2016

Added Seminar Scheduling by-law without a set priority scheduling period.

Constitution amended on April 7, 2017

Seminar Scheduling by-law: set priority scheduling period to two (2) weeks.

Constitution amended on January 13, 2021

Added DEI Committees Liaison position. Vote held via doodle poll: 27 yay; 0 nay

Constitution amended on April 23, 2021

Added collaboration specification for DEI Liaison and Seminar Coordinator. Vote held during seminar: 29 yay; 1 nay