

# CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT AND CONTINGENT FACULTY CAUCUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF NARRATIVE

## **Article I: Name**

The name of this organization will be the Graduate Student and Contingent Faculty Caucus (hereafter Grad and Contingent Caucus, or GCC) of the International Society for the Study of Narrative (hereafter ISSN).

## **Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of the GCC is to assess the needs and represent the interests of graduate students, early career scholars, and other scholars with unstable or precarious employment status within the ISSN, and to provide fellowship, support, and advocacy for such individuals as they pursue their work in the field of narrative studies. As such, the GCC endeavors to:

- Identify and assess the diverse needs of its members;
- Provide a space for members to discuss their professional and scholarly interests, raise concerns about their experiences within the field, and seek representatives who can advocate on their behalf;
- Connect members to mentors within the GCC and within the larger ISSN;
- Provide professionalization opportunities for members in the form of sponsored panels, workshops, and/or networking events at ISSN annual conferences;
- Assist new scholars in learning about and integrating into the field of narrative studies;
- Recognize the wide range of challenges faced by its members and provide support in facing these challenges, including but not limited to assistance in:
  - securing funding for scholarly work and professional development;
  - preparing for the job market;
  - connecting graduate students to committee members or readers;
  - integrating narrative studies into the classroom;
  - publishing scholarly work; and
  - navigating the cultural and institutional challenges of trans- and international scholarship;
- Maintain an online presence that provides members with access to the GCC and furthers these goals;
- Hold a caucus meeting as part of each ISSN Annual Conference, in order to discuss caucus matters and initiatives; and
- Maintain a consistent, mutually beneficial relationship with the ISSN's Executive Council, with the aim of furthering these goals.

## **Article III: Membership**

### Section 1: Membership Eligibility

Membership in the Grad and Contingent Caucus is granted to all current members of the ISSN who fall into one of the following groups:

- Current graduate students; or
- “Contingent-employment scholars”, i.e., independent scholars with limited or no institutional support, or who hold short-term or other unstable (e.g., non-tenure-track) appointments at academic institutions.

All ISSN members belonging to one of the above categories are de facto members of the GCC; participation in caucus activities is not required for membership.

### Section 2: Member Rights

All members of the Grad and Contingent Caucus are eligible to run for GCC officer positions (but see Section VI.1), vote in elections and on caucus matters, and benefit from all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the caucus.

### Section 3: GCC Inclusion Policy

The Grad and Contingent Caucus follows a policy of inclusion, welcoming members without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexuality, gender, age, physical or mental (dis)ability, HIV status, political affiliation or belief, citizenship, veteran status, military obligations, or marital or relationship status. The GCC strives to build solidarity among all of its members, and will actively seek to advocate on behalf of marginalized groups and underrepresented persons.

## **Article IV: Executive Committee**

### Section 1: Executive Committee Role

The executive power of the Grad and Contingent Caucus will be vested in the GCC Executive Committee. This committee is responsible for the enactment of all caucus initiatives and for holding an annual caucus meeting as part of the ISSN Annual Conference.

### Section 2: Executive Committee Makeup

The GCC Executive Committee will consist of four elected officers: President, Vice President, and two Members-at-Large. The Executive Committee reserves the right to appoint other GCC members to temporary officer positions for the purposes of assisting in caucus initiatives; such ad-hoc officers will act on behalf of the caucus and retain officer status only through the completion of assigned initiatives, and are not counted in Executive Committee votes as outlined

in Sections IV.3, VI.2, and IX. Similarly, the Executive Committee is empowered to establish such ad-hoc committees as may be deemed advisable, and to appoint the membership thereof.

### Section 3: Removal of Officers

A member of GCC Executive Committee may be removed through a vote of no-confidence, which is accomplished through the concurrence of at least two thirds of all voting caucus members and at least two other officers. In the case of the removal of a member of the Executive Committee by these means or any others, the remaining Executive Committee members will appoint, if deemed necessary, a temporary replacement to fulfill the duties of the vacated office until an official election can be held.

## **Article V: Powers and Duties of Officers**

**President:** The President shall assume responsibility for the GCC Executive Committee's strategic work and the implementation of caucus initiatives in accordance with this constitution. The President will also serve as a representative of the GCC on the ISSN Executive Council, and as such will be responsible for attending all Executive Council meetings. The President is responsible for all communication between the ISSN Executive Council, the GCC Executive Committee, and GCC members. In addition, they shall determine the agenda of the annual caucus meeting.

**Vice President:** The Vice President shall work with and assist the President in various duties, acting as a stand-in if necessary. They will manage internal committee affairs, such as overseeing and delegating various tasks to ad-hoc officers and committees in accordance with Section IV.2. The Vice President is also responsible for attending all ISSN Executive Council meetings alongside the President.

**Members-at-Large:** The two Members-at-Large will provide advice and aid to the officers on an ongoing basis in carrying on the business of the caucus, including but not limited to assisting in the execution of caucus initiatives.

## **Article VI: Officer Term Lengths and Requirements**

### Section 1: Officer Diversity Requirements

In the interest of attending to the diverse needs of all GCC members, the Executive Committee should include at least one officer representing each of the following constituent populations: current graduate students; contingent-employment scholars as defined in Section III.1; scholars primarily based in the United States; and scholars based primarily outside of the United States.

Furthermore, as a pair, the President and Vice President should include one graduate student and one contingent-employment scholar (that is, if the President is a graduate student, then the Vice President should be a contingent-employment scholar, and vice versa).

These requirements may limit the eligibility of potential nominees to officer positions in some years. The requirements may be waived in extreme circumstances where the caucus is unable to find nominees representing all groups; however, the Executive Committee is strongly encouraged to recruit nominees to fulfill these requirements.

The GCC Executive Committee should revisit the terms of this section at least every five years (in 2025, 2030, etc.) to determine whether these requirements adequately reflect the demographics and changing population of ISSN and GCC members, and to amend if necessary.

## Section 2: Officer Terms

Under normal circumstances, the President and Vice President will each serve one-year terms in the following fashion: at the end of the Vice President's one-year term, they move into a one-year term as President, and the existing President moves off of the Executive Committee. New Vice Presidents are elected annually, with the expectation that they will move into the President role in their second year; Presidents are not elected directly. This system is designed to ensure that incoming Presidents have at least one year of officer experience, and that Vice Presidents have one year to acclimate to officer duties before taking the office of President.

In the event that a Vice President is unable to take on the role of President after their term as Vice President, a President should be directly elected as part of the annual election process. In this case, the outgoing Executive Committee is highly encouraged to seek out nominees with prior experience (e.g., as Members-at-Large) to stand for the office of President.

Members-at-Large will be elected to one-year terms, but will have the option to extend their term by one year with the approval of the other three members of the Executive Committee. (After two years in this position, a Member-at-Large will be required to run for re-election.)

## Section 3: Inaugural Officer Positions (2020 Election)

In order to maintain stability during the caucus's early years, the inaugural President will be directly elected in 2020 and will serve a two-year term. The inaugural Vice President will serve a typical one-year term ending in 2021, at which point they will have the option to stay on for a second year as Vice President, with the expectation that they will move into the President role in their third year (2022–23). If the inaugural Vice President does not take this option in 2021, a new Vice President will be elected in that year. In either case, the schedule outlined in Article VI.2 will be established and maintained going forward.

## **Article VII: Voting Procedures**

### Section 1: Executive Committee Elections

GCC Executive Committee elections (for President, Vice President, and/or Members-at-Large, as necessary) will take place online, concurrently with the general election of the ISSN. The current Executive Committee is responsible for soliciting suggestions for nominees from the caucus membership, and members are encouraged to self-nominate. All members of the GCC are eligible to vote, and positions will be awarded to nominees who receive a plurality of cast votes, provided that they also fulfill the diversity requirements outlined in Article VI.1 (see that article for further information, including on situations in which these requirements could be waived).

### Section 2: Other Voting

When deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee, members may be requested to vote on other matters important to the caucus, including amendments to this constitution. Such votes may take place in-person at annual caucus meetings, or remotely online. Unless otherwise noted, votes will be carried by a simple majority of cast votes; but see Article IX, on amendments to the constitution.

## **Article VIII: Meetings of Members**

### Section 1: Annual Meetings

The GCC Executive Committee is responsible for holding an open meeting at the ISSN Annual Conference to discuss caucus matters. Agenda items may include, but are not limited to: announcement of and preparation for future caucus initiatives; solicitation of suggestions for future initiatives; and votes on caucus activities.

### Section 2: Other Meetings

An extraordinary meeting may also be called by a decision of the Executive Committee, or upon the request of at least 25% of the membership, to be held virtually and open to all caucus members. No such meeting may be held unless all the members receive adequate notice and access to the proceedings.

The Executive Committee is also authorized to conduct closed-door committee meetings as necessary to facilitate the regular execution of caucus initiatives.

### Section 3: Meeting Agendas and Minutes

The agenda for all open meetings shall be available to members online prior to meetings. Minutes shall be made available online within a reasonable time after open meetings.

## **Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution**

This constitution may be amended with the approval of at least two thirds of voting members and three of the Executive Committee officers. Such votes may take place at the annual caucus meeting; online at the time of officer elections; or, in extraordinary circumstances in which amendments are deemed urgent by the Executive Committee, online as an ad-hoc vote.

Whenever possible, proposed amendments should be provided to all members at least 30 days prior to voting, during which time members are encouraged to submit concerns and comments on the proposed changes. The Executive Committee is responsible for communicating significant concerns to the membership at large prior to voting.