# GAPSA

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION AT **GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

# Officer Elections

## 2025-2026

### GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

### ELECTION INFORMATION

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER CANDIDACY INFORMATION PACKET

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## About the Graduate and Professional Student Association

The purpose of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA) is to establish a forum through which graduate and professional students can address issues affecting them, advocate for the greater good of the community, grow professionally and socialize with one another, and create a stronger graduate community that promotes personal and academic success. The goal of GAPSA is to bridge the gap between faculty and graduate students, build a stronger connection between University Life and graduate students, conduct professional development programs for graduate students, create social outlets for graduate students, build the strength of the graduate community, enhance the graduate experience, and increase Mason's competitive edge.

## Structure

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA) comprises only one elected governing body, known as the Executive Board, which consists of the President, the Executive Vice President, the Vice Presidents of Regional Campuses, and the Director of Communications. GAPSA's Executive Board is responsible for the general operation of the organization and for being the collective voice of all graduate and professional students.

## Executive Officer Position Descriptions

Summaries of the responsibilities of the Executive Officer positions follow. Additional responsibilities are outlined in the GAPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

### President

The President is responsible for overseeing all aspects of GAPSA. The President shall preside over and set the agenda for all Association meetings. The President may only vote in the case of a tie.
- The President shall be elected by the entire electorate and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of GAPSA.
- It is highly recommended that the President be based on Fairfax Campus at least part of the time due to the volume of meetings that take place on Fairfax Campus, including, but not limited to, meeting with George Mason University's Vice President of University Life, Senior Associate Provost for Graduate Education, and the advisors to GAPSA, and all-day Board of Visitors meetings, Graduate Council meetings, search committee meetings, and University committee meetings.
- The President shall liaise with the Student Government and Faculty Senate.
- The President shall set the agendas and chair the meetings of the Executive Board and General Assembly.
- The President shall be the voting student representative to the Graduate Council.
- The President has veto power over all resolutions passed by the General Assembly. All resolutions must be signed or vetoed by the President.
- The President shall only cast a vote in the case of a split body.
- The President is responsible for meeting with the Executive Officers and GAPSA advisors regularly.

- The President will be offered a half-time graduate professional assistantship (GPA) with the expectation that they will work 10 hours/week on average. The President must be a full-time graduate or professional student in a degree-seeking program to accept the assistantship.

## Executive Vice President

The Executive Vice President (EVP) shall maintain the records of the Association and support the President in the administration of the Association. The EVP shall act in an official capacity on behalf of the President in the absence of the President and shall hold a voting seat in the General Assembly unless chairing. It is highly recommended that the EVP be based on Fairfax Campus. The EVP is responsible for meeting with the Director of Graduate Student Life and other advisors to GAPSA.

- The EVP shall be elected by the entire electorate.
- The EVP shall maintain the records of the Association and support the President in the administration of the Association.
- The EVP shall be the non-voting student representative to the Graduate Council.
- The EVP shall be parliamentarian and secretary of the Executive Board and the General Assembly.
- The EVP shall hold a voting seat in the General Assembly.
- The EVP shall work on general programming for the GAPSA population.
- The EVP is responsible for attending regular (i.e., biweekly) meetings with the Executive Board.
- The EVP shall meet regularly with the GAPSA advisers.

## Vice Presidents of Regional Campuses

The Vice Presidents of Regional Campuses shall represent the interests of the graduate and professional students from one of George Mason's regional campuses and shall be based at the regional campus they represent by being a student in one of the graduate or professional programs housed on that regional campus or working or living on that campus. There shall be a Vice President of the Mason Square (Arlington) Campus, Vice President of the Fairfax Campus, and Vice President of the Science and Technology Campus. The Vice Presidents of Regional Campuses are responsible for meeting with the Director of Graduate Student Life, GAPSA advisors, and University Life staff/faculty on their campus. They are voting members of GAPSA's General Assembly.

- The Vice Presidents shall be elected by the entire electorate.
- The Vice Presidents shall hold voting seats in the General Assembly.
- The Vice Presidents shall hold town halls or other programs to understand and address the needs of the graduate and professional student population at their regional campus and to help set the agenda for the General Assembly.
- The Vice Presidents shall be responsible for all communication for their respective campus.
- The Vice President of each campus is responsible for attending regular (i.e., biweekly) meetings with the Executive Board.
- The Vice Presidents shall meet regularly with the GAPSA advisors.

## Director of Communications

The Director of Communications (hereafter called "DC") shall act as the external communication officer for the Association and lead efforts for engaging graduate and professional students through communications.

- The entire graduate and professional student body shall elect the DC.
- The DC shall be responsible for all marketing communications, including social media.
- The DC shall coordinate between GAPSA and the Graduate Newsletter team regarding the Association's news and events publications and attend regular (weekly) planning meetings.
- The DC shall hold a voting seat in the General Assembly.
- The DC shall meet regularly with the GAPSA advisors.
- The DC is responsible for attending regular (i.e., biweekly) meetings with the Executive Board.

# GAPSA ELECTIONS PROCESS

## As stated in the GAPSA Bylaws:

**4.2. Candidate Eligibility**

4.2.1. All candidates shall be currently enrolled in a graduate and/or professional degree-seeking program(s) at George Mason University.

4.2.1.1. The candidate must remain an enrolled graduate or professional student at George Mason University for the duration of their term in office.

4.2.2. Any candidate running for a Vice President position to represent one of Mason's three campuses must be taking classes, living, and/or working on said campus and have plans to do so throughout their term in office.

4.2.3. Only eligible graduate or professional students who have submitted a valid application before the application deadline will be included on the ballot for the elections.

4.2.4. All officers must be in good academic and conduct standing with their graduate program and with George Mason University at the time of election and throughout their terms.

**4.3. Candidacy Application Review Process**

4.3.1. All candidates shall complete and submit a candidacy application.

4.3.2. The GAPSA Advisor(s) shall validate all submitted application form(s) and review candidates' eligibility within the published election timeline.

4.3.2.1. An application is considered valid if it contains all the information the prospective candidate must provide.

4.3.2.2. Candidates are eligible if they meet the eligibility criteria described in the candidacy eligibility section.

4.3.2.3. GAPSA Advisor(s) will notify candidates of their eligibility and the validity of their applications.

4.3.2.4. The decision of GAPSA Advisor(s) regarding the validity of any submitted application and eligibility of candidates is final.

3.3.1. GAPSA Elections shall take place between mid-March and the end of April and last no longer than three days.

## 4.4. Campaign Rules

4.4.1. Campaigning may commence after the validation of applications and announcement of candidacy.

4.4.2. All flyers and posters may only be posted on public bulletin boards on campus and must follow university posting guidelines.

4.4.2.1. Candidates may not post directly on glass, walls, doors, outdoors, fences, etc.

4.4.3. Candidates may only disrupt classes, on-campus events, or activities when campaigning if the professor or event organizer approves.

4.4.4. Libelous or slanderous campaigning is not allowed.

4.4.5. Vandalism, removing opponent materials, and attacking candidates in a personal and/or false manner is also prohibited.

4.4.6. Intimidating, harassing, using, or threatening the use of force, violence, or persistent undesired presence of campaign members to influence voters' decisions is not allowed.

4.4.7. Candidates are strongly encouraged to ask before they act if they are unsure a campaign activity is acceptable. Failure to do so they shall be accountable for their behavior.

4.4.8. Candidates are responsible for the actions and behaviors of their campaign teams and proxies.

4.4.9. All campaign materials, including all posters, flyers, and other printed materials, must be removed from campus(es) by the following day after the election polls have been closed.

## 4.5. Campaign Violations and Penalties

4.5.1. Violations of the campaign rules and any actions considered impermissible by the GAPSA Executive Board, in consultation with the GAPSA Advisors, may result in penalties deemed fit for the behavior at the discretion of the GAPSA Executive Board.

4.5.2. Violations will be identified based on first-hand accounts received by the GAPSA Executive Board from individuals affected by the violations.

4.5.3. The GAPSA Executive Board shall decide on any penalties for candidates violating campaigning rules.

4.5.3.1. Members of the current Executive Board who are candidates in the relevant election shall not participate in this process.

4.5.4. Where half of the GAPSA officers seek re-election, the GAPSA Advisor(s) shall lead the campaign violation and penalties process described in this section.

## IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

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| Applications Available | Tuesday, March 4, 2025 |
| Applications Due | Sunday, April 6, 2025, 11:55 PM |
| Review of Applications and Qualifications | Monday, April 7 - Friday, April 11, 2025 |
| Announcement of Candidates and General Campaigning | Monday, April 14: Candidates will be announced, and general campaigning begins through Thursday, April 24, 2025. |
| Meet the Candidates | Friday, April 18, 2025 |
| Election Voting Opens | Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 12:00 AM |

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| Election Voting Closes | Thursday, April 24, 2025, 11:55 PM |
| Election Results Announced | Monday, April 28, 2025 |
| Transition Meeting/Retreat | Friday, May 9, 2025 |

## CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

1. Candidates may not engage in "negative" campaigning.  All campaigning should be conducted in a positive and professional manner.  Negative campaigning includes slander, vandalism, removal of opponent materials, and any action deemed by the current GAPSA executive board to attack a candidate in a personal and/or false manner.
2. All flyers and posters may ONLY be posted on public bulletin boards on campus and must follow university posting guidelines.  Candidates may not post directly on glass, walls, doors, outdoors, etc.
3. Candidates may not disrupt any classes, on-campus events, or activities when campaigning unless approved by the professor or event organizer.
4. All campaign materials must be removed from campus(es) by **Friday, April 25, 2025**.  This includes all posters, fliers, and other printed materials.
5. All questions about acceptable campaign practices should be addressed to Muna Al Taweel at [maltawee@gmu.edu](mailto:maltawee@gmu.edu). If you are unsure if something is acceptable, you are strongly encouraged to ask before you act.

## MEET THE CANDIDATES

This year, candidates will participate in a Meet the Candidates session, hosted by the current Executive Board for Mason's graduate and professional student populations. This meeting will be recorded and will appear on the election website and GAPSA communications. This recording may be used by candidates in their own marketing and campaigning. The selected date for the session is **Friday, April 18, 2025, 12-2pm (time tentative)**. Candidates whose eligibility has been confirmed will receive an email from Dr. Julie Choe Kim, Director of Graduate Student Life and advisor to GAPSA, and will be notified of the date and time of the Meet the Candidates event.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can I run for more than one position?
A: No, since there are only 6 elected positions.


2. Can Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Program (BAM) students run for a position?

A: Only students who have fully matriculated into a graduate or professional degree program (after the bachelor's degree is conferred) may run. BAM students who are taking graduate courses before receiving their bachelor's degree are not eligible to run for a GAPSA officer position.

3. Can I still be a part of this organization if I don't run for an elected position?
A: Yes, GAPSA is meant as an outlet to voice concerns, gather together as graduate students, and network with each other. We need and want as many grad students as would like to participate in the Assembly and on various committees.

4. Can I still run for a position if I am a part-time student?
A: Yes, GAPSA is open to all degree-seeking graduate and professional students, whether they are full-time or part-time students. The President must be a full-time graduate student in a degree-seeking program in order to accept the graduate professional assistantship offered.

5. When does the term of office begin and end for each position?
A: All elected offices hold a one-year term, beginning **July 1, 2025,** and ending **June 30, 2026**.

6. How much time will holding a leadership position take?
A: The amount of time spent in a leadership position and devoted to the organization is dependent upon the position. The following are minimum estimates of the time required by each position:
   - President: minimum of 10 hours per week on average during the academic year (AY), plus additional work during the summers at the beginning and end of their term
   - Executive Vice President: 7 hours per week on average during the AY
   - Vice Presidents of Regional Campuses: 5 hours per week on average during the AY
   - Director of Communications: 5 hours per week on average during the AY

7. How will officers spend their time?
A: Officers will be expected to attend biweekly Executive Board meetings, usually ranging from 1.5-2 hours; regular meetings with GAPSA advisors (1-2 hours/month); monthly General Assembly meetings, usually lasting 1.5 hours; committee meetings; a transition meeting with outgoing and incoming officers; 2 all-day retreats, one per semester; and GAPSA events. Officers should consider that commute time does not count toward the weekly average work time.

8. Do officers of GAPSA receive compensation?
A: The President will be offered a part-time graduate professional assistantship with a stipend and tuition benefits. The other GAPSA officers will receive scholarships, based on meeting expectations. Officers will be required to sign an agreement to terms in order to receive compensation.

9. Do I have to campaign?
A: No, that is why each applicant is asked to include a biography about themselves and a candidate statement, as well as participate in the Meet the Candidates event, to share what

makes them qualified for the position so each voter can make an informed decision.

10. When is the deadline for applications?
A: **Sunday, April 6, 2025, 11:55 PM**.

11. How will elections be conducted?
A: GAPSA elections will take place online through the Mason 360 platform (mason360.gmu.edu). Email instructions will go out to all eligible voters prior to the opening of voting.

12. When will the election take place?
A: Elections begin on **Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 12:00 AM** and end on **Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 11:55 PM.**

13. How will I be notified of the outcome of the election?
A: Candidates will be notified whether they have or have not acquired an elected position via email. Election results will be announced to the public on the GAPSA website on **Monday, April 28, 2025**.

# CANDIDACY APPLICATION PROCESS

**How to Apply**
- Applications for GAPSA Executive Officer positions must be submitted using the online form at https://cglink.me/2d7/s95629. You will be required to log in to access the form. You will have the ability to edit your submission until the application deadline.
- Applications must be submitted by **Sunday, April 6, 2025, 11:55 PM**.

**Overview of GAPSA Executive Officer Candidacy Application**
The online application (https://cglink.me/2d7/s95629) requests the following information:
- **Part 1: Candidate Information**
  - First and Last Name
  - G Number
  - What Executive Officer position are you seeking?
  - Academic Department
  - College/School
  - Degree Program (master's, doctoral, or JD)
  - Expected date of graduation (month/year)
  - Campus where your academic department is located
  - Campus(es) where you attend classes, work, and/or reside (please describe)
  - During the **2025-2026 academic year**, will you be a full-time student or a part-time student? *Graduate students are considered full-time if they are enrolled in at least 9 graduate credits per semester OR hold a full-time assistantship and are enrolled in at least 6 graduate credits per semester. Additional definitions are available at http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/.*
  - Would you be able to attend a Meet the Candidates session on Friday, April 18, 2025 (tentatively 12-2pm)? Please provide additional information, if needed.
  - Would you be able to attend a 4-hour Executive Officer Transition Retreat for outgoing and incoming officers on **Friday, May 9, 2025** (4 hours long, specific time TBD)? Please provide additional information, if needed.
- **Part 2: Contact Information**
  - Current mailing address
  - GMU email
  - Preferred email (if not GMU)
  - Phone Number
- **Part 3: Open Response Questions** (Please note that these responses will be posted online as submitted to help voters make an informed decision. No edits or revisions will be permitted after the submission deadline.)
  - A brief biography and candidate statement about why you would be qualified for this position (no longer than 500 words in total).
  - Will you be able to meet the time commitments and expectations of the position? Describe your probable availability for the **2025-2026 academic year**, as well as other ongoing time commitments (e.g., classes, work, organizational involvement).
- **Part 3a: Additional Questions for Candidates for Director of Communications:** (Please note that these responses will be posted online as submitted to help voters make an informed decision. No edits or revisions will be permitted after the submission deadline.)
  - Please describe your experience with using graphic design tools, including but not limited to Canva. (Maximum 50 words)
  - Please describe your experience with using social media for outreach and engagement. (Maximum 50 words)

- - What experience do you have with website content management, including but not limited to using WordPress? (Maximum 50 words)
    - Please provide a sample of your communications work. Your sample should be no more than 3 pages (8.5"x11") and should show examples of graphic design, social media, and/or relevant other communications work.
- **Part 4: Attestation and Certification**
    - Are you in good academic and disciplinary standing with the University?
    - By clicking here, I give permission to Graduate Student Life to verify my enrollment information and academic and disciplinary standing.
    - I hereby certify that I have read the information contained in the GAPSA Executive Officer Candidacy Packet and that I have supplied truthful information on this Candidacy Application Form and additional application materials.
    - I hereby certify that I have read the GAPSA Constitution and Bylaws, including Article IV of the Bylaws addressing Elections.

**Questions?**

If you have questions, please contact Muna Al Taweel, Graduate Professional Assistant for Graduate Student Leadership and Advising and co-advisor to GAPSA, at maltawee@gmu.edu.