

The Constitution for TripleG (Geography Graduate Group) of Michigan State University

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name: The name of this organization shall be **TripleG**, which stands for Geography Graduate Group.

Section 2. Purpose: The broad goals of the organization, TripleG, are to build strong ties between graduate students, faculty, and staff within the department of Geography at Michigan State University. Specifically, the functions of TripleG include:

- 1.** The building of solidarity, community and fun within the department
- 2.** The presentation of a unified voice for Geography Graduate students
- 3.** The continued building of departmental status and respect
- 4.** The sharing of information
- 5.** The building/recruitment of the Geography Graduate program
- 6.** The furthering of funding opportunities
- 7.** The promotion of academic collaboration and scholarship
- 8.** The continuity of the aforementioned functions

TripleG seeks to operate independently from other Michigan State University organizations, though it may seek to cooperate with them in a synergistic manner.

Article II: Membership

Section 1. Membership Any MSU student may be a member; however, the group is aimed at Graduate students in Geography. This organization will not discriminate on the basis of age, color, gender, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight. Only MSU students may be officers and/or voting members.

Section 2. Membership Standing In order to become an official member of the organization one should e-mail the current TripleG secretary and indicate ones desires to become a member. Additionally, one must register with the online forum community, which can be accessed at <http://www.tripleg.geo.msu.edu/forum>. A TripleG member remains in good standing by obeying the rules written in this constitution, by participating in the online community, and by attending meetings. On campus members must attend one meeting per semester; off campus members must participate in the online forum.

Article III: Elections/Officers

Section 1. Election Procedures

1.1 Nominations: All nominations are to be submitted anonymously and electronically through the online forum. The web coordinator will be responsible for the operation of the nomination procedure. All nominations may be declined. The top three nominations for each position will be asked if they would like to run. A student may only run for one position. If a student is nominated for more than one position they may choose for which office they wish to run. If they decline a nomination, the next most nominated student will be asked to run until three nominees are found for each position. In the case of only two accepting nominees, elections for that position will proceed with those two candidates. In the case of only one accepting nominee, that nominee is awarded the

position without an election. In the case of a nomination tie win which both people accept their nomination, both will be on the ballot. Only graduate students in the Geography Department at Michigan State University are eligible to serve as officers.

1.2 Elections: All officers will be elected by a majority vote among the three nominations for each position. In the case of co-presidents: of the three nominees the two with the most votes win the two positions. In the case of a final election tie there will be on re-vote. If a tie persists, the two individuals will act as co for the position. All elections are to be completed anonymously through the online forum community.

1.3 Resignations: Once elected, an officer may resign for any reason. In this case, a special election for the position will be held before the individual resigns their duties. All resignations must be formally logged by the club and submitted to the secretary in writing (in the event that the resigning officer is the secretary the resignation should be submitted in writing to a co-president of the secretary's choice).

1.4 No confidence: A vote of no confidence can be called by any member at any time against any officer, with guaranteed confidentiality by contacting Sharon Ruggles, the Departmental Graduate Secretary (note: this is not the TripleG secretary). Any vote of no confidence will be forwarded to the TripleG secretary and both co-presidents to be voted on by the entire TripleG community. Votes of no confidence must be agreed upon by a 2/3 majority vote.

Section 2. Officers

2.1 Co-presidents (x2): The co-presidents will conduct all club meetings, act as the primary contact for TripleG business, and coordinate and support all executive board duties and efforts. One co-president will attend COGs (Council of Graduate Students) meetings and one will attend GEU (Graduate Employees Union) meetings. The arrangement of attendance within these two bigger organizations will be determined by the co-presidents, though they may consult TripleG for input if they wish.

2.2 Secretary: The secretary keeps minutes of all club meetings, records the results of votes and club business for posterity, and maintains clear orderly archives to allow for term to term (and year to year) continuity. The secretary also maintains the TripleG e-mail list and distributes all official correspondence.

2.3 Treasurer: The treasurer maintains all TripleG financial business and will manage or limited finances.

2.4 Web coordinator: The web coordinator maintains the TripleG website and administrates/manages TripleG's online forum community including, but not limited to, online voting, discussion moderation (and the appointment of discussion forum moderators) and will work with Wilson Ndovie in order to update the online community. This is a yearly position due to the steep learning curve involved and the difficulties of rapid technological change.

2.5 TripleG Faculty Meeting Representative: The faculty meeting representative will attend all faculty meetings and present to the faculty relevant TripleG information and updates. The representative will also be authorized to vote on behalf of the graduate students in all matters the representative deems as non-crucial to the graduate students. For crucial issues a consensus among TripleG members is necessary. In this case the representative will report crucial information to the graduate student body within one week of the faculty meeting to the graduate students at large.

2.6 GeoClub Representative/Activities Coordinator/ Fun times Specialist: This position will be the liaison between the GeoClub and TripleG. They will also be the TripleG point person for yearly fun events such as the welcome picnic/BBQ. They will be responsible for all fun TripleG activities and coordinate these with the GeoClub activities. The representative will keep GeoClub informed of relevant TripleG business and vice versa.

2.7 Graduate Student Technology Liaison: The technical liaison actively works as the mediator between the graduate student body and departmental and university computer administrators. These actions include voicing the concerns of grads to the department chair and technical staff, as well as passing on information to the graduate student body. Additionally, the Tech Liaison is responsible for monitoring the smooth functioning of the lab space and common computers in the department with a particular focus on grad use of these facilities, and would be responsible for reporting any issues to the technical staff in the department. This is a yearly position due to the steep learning curve involved and the difficulties of rapid technological change.

Article IV: Operating Procedures

Section 1. Meetings

Meetings are to be held once per month, one week before faculty meetings where/when applicable. The proposed meeting agendas are to be posted to the online forum or made otherwise available one week before meetings where possible and also should include approval of past meeting minutes, new business, old business, and announcements.

Section 2. Rules of order

2.1 Meeting decorum: Members may speak after being called on by a co-president (or otherwise designated facilitator) after they raise their hand.

2.2 Motions: Motions can be called by any member and be called for, but not limited to, the following purposes: Making an addendum to bi-laws, tabling a discussion topic, formation of committees, or calling for a vote (must specify need for online vote or within meeting vote). The motion must be seconded for the action to proceed (i.e. voting, discussion, holding an event, spending money).

2.3 Presidential veto: Any motion can be tabled at any time (or other appropriate action taken) if both co-presidents act together to veto said topic; however, this veto power can be overruled if three of the remaining six executive members agree to override the co-presidential veto.

2.4 Meetings: Meetings can only proceed if 4 officers and 5 group members are present. Voting at meetings can only take place if there is a quorum of at least 1/3 registered members (including officers).

2.5 Voting: Votes on all items must be passed by 2/3 majority of members present at any meetings (with the exception of officer elections, see Article III Section 1.2 and amendments, see Article V Section 2). Online votes must be passed by 2/3 of members involved in the vote which must be at least 1/2 of all registered members (currently, with 38 members this would mean at least 19 must participate in a vote and 12 of the 19 must agree to the item). The person motioning this vote can decide if they would like an online vote or a meeting vote (this may or may not be based on the presence of a voting quorum).

Section 3. Online community code of behavior (if you are unfamiliar with what an “online forum community” may be please see the Wikipedia entry for “online forum” at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_forum).

3.1 Statement of General Behavior: At all times students participating in the online community of TripleG will adhere to the guidelines for student conduct set forth in the Student Handbook and Resource Guide (available in PDF form at: <http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm>). These regulations cover such things as malicious use of university resources and excessive use of profanity. Also prohibited under these regulations, though not limited to these examples, would be the defamation of character of a member of the Michigan State University community, posting of

pornographic materials, or the posting of copyrighted information without permission. Essentially, all members of TripleG should act courteously and with reasonable professionalism while interacting in person or online. While the online community need not be rigid or formal, it is important to be respectful and to avoid posting potentially offensive materials. In our online academic interactions in the ANGEL system, the University reminds us that we must “respect the rights of faculty and other students.” Behavior in the TripleG online forum community should also conform to this requirement.

3.2 Access restraints: The TripleG online forum has four levels of users as outlined below: 1. Forum Administrators/moderators: these members control the forum and have complete access to the functioning and content of the forum. At a minimum the officer position of Web coordinator has Forum Administrator access. Forum administrators will also set up voting within the “elections” discussion and work to answer forum related questions. 2. Officers: these members are those who have been elected to TripleG office. As needed, the Forum Administrator may grant certain special privileges to TripleG officers (e.g. the secretary may be granted access to the notes/minutes section of the forum). 3. TripleG members: these members are those who have expressed interest in being informed of TripleG activities and who have registered for an account which has been approved by the Web coordinator. These members will be able to create new posts and reply to posts in designated active forum threads. 4. Guests: these are non-members who are interested in what is going on in the TripleG community and may include faculty, staff, prospective graduate students, administrators, or anyone who stumbles upon the TripleG forum. By default, most forum discussion threads and posts are not viewable by guests, though some guests may be granted access by the Forum Administrator. Guests have no privilege to post, reply, or otherwise act within the online forum community outside of the designated discussion for use by non-members. All TripleG members should keep in mind that posts in the online community are potentially readable by anyone who wishes to do so.

3.3 Violation of Guidelines: In the rare occasion that these guidelines or those set forth in the Student Handbook and Resource Guide or other MSU codes of behavior are violated, the violator will be warned in writing by the co-presidents of TripleG. Upon a second violation the TripleG member who has behaved inappropriately will be referred to the Geography Graduate Advisor for further action, which may include the lodging of a formal complaint with the University’s judicial board. Additionally, upon a second violation, forum access may be suspended for that user. Please be aware that individuals who are offended may take judicial action against other individuals of their own accord if they so desire. Such action would be completely independent of the TripleG community and any official warnings that may be issued. If a TripleG member feels that the guidelines for behavior have been violated it is encouraged, but not required, that individual discuss their objection with the offending individual. Because online expression of opinions and attitudes can be less intuitive and less nuanced than expression in person, many objections or seemingly offensive comments may actually have been posted without the intent to be offensive. In an event that an offended TripleG member does not wish to approach the offending member, they should discuss the matter with a TripleG officer of their choice who will then bring the issue forward at the next meeting.

Article V: Amendments

Section 1. Proposal of amendments Any member can propose an amendment to the constitution during the “new business” section of any official TripleG meeting. If the

individual cannot be present at the meeting they can have another TripleG member propose it for them.

Section 2. Ratification of amendments An amendment can be added to the constitution by a member motioning to amend the constitution and two members seconding the motion. A majority of members present at the meeting may vote to pass the amendment at which time it becomes ratified.