



COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Code of
Ethics & Values

Preamble

CGS has adopted this *Code of Ethics and Values* (hereinafter referred to as *our Code*) to ...

- 1) Help members carry out the mission espoused in the *CGS Constitution*.
- 2) Establish basic standards of ethical conduct for members of CGS during their tenure as members of CGS, across their academic, professional, and personal life domains.
- 3) Determine a transparent and public baseline for the conduct of members of CGS for those who are not members of CGS, such that non-members may understand CGS's shared values, hold members of CGS accountable for their conduct, and raise concerns surrounding the conduct of members of CGS when appropriate and necessary.

For the purposes of this code, a member of CGS is defined as any member of CGS acting in any capacity for the organization, including (and *not* limited to): Elected Executive Officers, CGS Committee Chairs, Presidential Appointees, Delegates, Senators, and members of CGS committees who might not serve in other CGS roles.

Every member of CGS, by participating in CGS, implicitly agrees to act in accordance with the standards set forth by the code. The values enumerated in this code represent values approved by a majority vote by members of the Council, and is therefore considered a binding position, as with any other matter (legislative or otherwise) voted upon, and approved, by the Council.

CGS members recognize that adherence to the code emphasizes not only the explicit letter of the code as written, but the spirit of the code as well. Insofar that while not every ethical behavior or unethical behavior can be listed below, these values, descriptions, and examples are to be taken as starting and reference points for members of CGS to reflect on, consider, and adjust (as needed) their conduct in order to best engage as themselves, with their constituencies, and with graduate students as a whole across OSU.

The Values and Ethical Priorities of CGS

CGS values *service*. We understand that at its core, CGS is a service-based and service-focused organization and student government. We value the impact that service through advocacy, programming, and community can have on the graduate community as a whole at OSU. No act of labor or service is too big or too small to make a concrete impact. CGS values all contributions to bettering graduate students' lives at OSU.

- E.g., We view all roles as equal in this organization. Officers are not more valuable than delegates, delegates are not more valuable than committee members, etc. Each CGS role contributes different and valuable time, information, and actions in our work together.
- E.g., We again affirm that all labor in service of our fellow graduate students is valuable.

CGS values equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity. We believe that all identities are valid, and that all graduate students belong at OSU. We work to combat bigotry. We do not value peace over justice for ourselves or our constituents. We honor the needs and experiences of all graduate students at OSU.

- E.g., We honor the diversity of personal and professional self-expression that is represented across not only CGS, but also the graduate student population as a whole.
- E.g., Members of CGS do not engage in any forms of bigotry in any modality.
- E.g., Members of CGS use their institutional power, platform, and privilege to advocate and work toward better working, living, and learning conditions for all constituents.

CGS values responsibility and integrity. We undertake this work not for recognition, personal gain/advancement, or transactional reasons. We share information as appropriate, necessary, and able, and do not purposely obfuscate in ways that make decisions or processes opaque to our colleagues and constituents. We do not use our roles in ways that would make constituents question our ethical or moral code, or in ways that would give even the appearance of impropriety on our parts.

- E.g., We do not utilize or leverage our positions for individual gain (i.e., financial reward, clout/recognition, exerting undue influence on university processes).
- E.g., The CGS President and Vice President during their terms of office will not apply for or accept awards with monetary value from the Ohio State University's Graduate School, and will not apply for or compete in the Hayes Forum, the Career Development Grant, or the Ray Travel Award. In short, they will not put themselves in situations where there is the appearance of their office granting them special consideration or access to such awards and grants from CGS or the Graduate School, quid pro quo behavior with the Graduate School or its administrators/employees, or other such unethical behavior that jeopardizes advocacy of CGS and the trust of graduate students from which CGS derives its authority.
- E.g., We, as CGS members, recognize that (regardless of role) our actions and thoughts can always be perceived to be representative of CGS as a whole, and work to not abuse or misrepresent our roles and the power, access, and legitimacy these roles afford us.
- E.g., We only take credit for work we have done, and we acknowledge those who have helped us in accomplishing goals.

CGS values collaboration, cooperation, and solidarity. We do not treat discussions, discourses, or conversations as zero-sum games where there are winners and losers. We work to address differences or disagreements. We do not engage in petty scorekeeping or settling amongst ourselves. We do not let disagreement get in the way of our shared work and goals.

- E.g., We interact with each other with respect and good faith, and do not attack, domineer, or silence one another when conflict arises. We interact in discourse without contempt.
- E.g., We work to compromise where and when appropriate, and understand that at times compromise will be necessary for competing/differing needs amongst our constituents.
- E.g., We acknowledge that ultimately our interests as graduate students are aligned, and that a rising tide lifts all boats.

CGS values transparency and communication. We know that advocacy doesn't and can't happen in a vacuum. Therefore, we seek out the input of our constituents, and work to hear from all graduate students as much as possible in our work, so we can

best represent their needs, thoughts, and concerns. We make sure to share information in a timely manner, knowing that graduate students deserve to be looped into changes and discussions that have bearing on their lives and careers at OSU, and to know what we are doing and how we are representing and working for their needs.

- E.g., We seek to represent the views, issues, questions, and concerns of my constituents, and not just our own challenges as graduate students. We seek to represent constituents' views, issues, questions, and concerns even when they don't necessarily align with our own experiences.
- E.g., When being called-in by a colleague or constituent, we do not react in attacking, harassing, or violent ways. We work to communicate and come to a better understanding of each other's points, concerns, and needs.
- E.g., CGS members and CGS as a whole work to proactively communicate information through email, newsletters, meeting notes, open and public full body meetings, social media, and other appropriate avenues of communication both internally as an organization, and externally to those who are not involved directly in CGS's work.

CGS values *commitment and follow-through*. We do our best to work proactively, and to devote reasonable and appropriate time and energy to our roles, advocacy, and shared work. We understand that at times we may fail for various reasons, in large or small ways, but will work to acknowledge, own, and learn from those failures, and to move toward doing better in the future.

- E.g., We do our best to attend all meetings as appropriate to our roles, as outlined in the governing documents, knowing that our constituents and colleagues rely on our commitment, input, and contributions.
- E.g., We uphold the processes and requirements outlined in the governing documents (i.e., the CGS Constitution, the CGS Bylaws & Standing Rules, and other relevant documents), with an eye toward justice, transparency, and equity in our elections, legislation, procedural, discussion, and decision-making processes.
- E.g., We seek help, assistance, or input from colleagues and/or advisors when necessary to accomplish a task.
- E.g., We prepare for meetings by reviewing appropriate materials, do our best to show up on time, and engage in good-faith in our roles in CGS.

CGS values *community and care*. We prioritize and honor our physical, emotional, social, and mental health. We know that we cannot pour from empty cups. We work to take care of not just our constituents, but also our colleagues in CGS and ourselves in order to be able to do our best work in a sustainable way. We believe in mutual aid. We believe in showing up for ourselves and our colleagues, friends, and constituents.

- E.g., We honor that while our work is important, we must take care of ourselves, and not put our health (mental, emotional, or physical) at risk.
- E.g., We acknowledge when we have hurt or wronged someone, and the impact that can have, even if not intended.
- E.g., We will seek out mediation through each other, CGS advisors, or other avenues or persons when necessary to mediate, address, and resolve conflict.
- E.g., We do not intentionally inflict harm or violence on one another, in any form that harm or violence may take. We work to remedy harm when it is done.
- E.g., We "get curious, not furious" when things go wrong, and escalate appropriately as needed if concerns are not resolved, or conflict not addressed. We know that we do not know everything

about each other's lives, and that sometimes neglect and conflict are not purposeful or malicious, but can be a signs of crisis.