CONGRESS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS
Prospective Representative Information Packet
Dear Prospective COGS Representative,

Thank you for your interest in serving the 26th Congress of Graduate students. Through involvement with COGS we hope that this experiences will foster creative participation and leadership that benefits the graduate student community, COGS as an entity and your personal desire to serve the Florida State community and sharpen your professional skills.

It is best that you read this packet to evaluate if COGS is best suited for your skills and time. If you see that COGS is a place that you will excel in service and professional development, and if Fall SGA elections has passed, solicit graduate students from your college to sign your petition. Once your petition is completed correctly, you will be ready to become a member of COGS.

Near the end of this packet you will find names, phone numbers and email address for COGS officers and professional staff. If you have any questions or concerns about this packet, becoming a representative of COGS or Student Government, please contact COGS’ Program Associate, Whitney N. Brown.

With Thanks,

The 26th Congress of Graduate Students
Florida State University
What is COGS?
The Congress of Graduate Students (COGS) is the official representative body of all post
baccalaureate, special, masters, specialist, professional, and doctoral students at Florida State
University.
In accordance to the Student Government Constitution, COGS is a funding board of the Student
Government Association solely responsible for allocating all of the A&S fees it receives from
graduate students to graduate students each year.

Who will I be representing?
Each college and school of FSU is represented through liaisons or to advocate for a COGS
(representative of COGS, hopefully you) to lobby and address needs of their prospective school.
Additionally, representatives are not limited to just their college, school, or department, but
represent SGA and the Florida State University as a whole.

What services and programs does COGS provide to graduate students?
COGS provides outstanding services and programs to enrich graduate student life. COGS
provides funding for various Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and graduate students
who wish to engage themselves through research and professional exchanges (e.g.,
conferences). Furthermore, COGS funds projects throughout Florida State that assist graduate
students.

What is time commitment?
General Assembly meetings are held twice every month on Mondays starting at 6:30pm.
Committee meetings and other special events are also part of a representative’s service in
COGS. COGS is systematically structured to not be a burden on graduate students. Many of
our processes are productive, allowing graduate students time to focus on academics, research
and family.

What are the perks?
Service to the graduate student community – Don’t you want to serve your graduate student
body? These students study just like you do and need support, and additionally we have some
more perks for you below:
- Interdisciplinary relationships that will enhance your network
- Leadership and professional development
- A hands-on experience in academic and administrative budgeting and policy.
- Enhancement of your professional CV/Resume
- Allocate A&S fees to graduate RSOs from colleges, schools, and departments.
- Create policies and programs that will shift graduate students’ lives in a forward
direction.
Though COGS representatives are not paid, this small but impactful allocation of time bears
huge significance to you and the FSU student body and community. It is also a great way to
meet people and become involved in campus life.

General Duties and Responsibilities of COGS
- Defend the interests of graduate, special, masters, specialist, professional, doctoral and
post-baccalaureate students in graduate student life, services, and academics.
- Manage the funds within its purview in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Work to ensure the greatest participation by graduate students in the immediate
governance of, and policy development for, Florida State University.
✓ Provide an official voice through which the opinions of the graduate student body may be expressed.

**Standing Committees**
All representatives are expected to serve on a committee. Committee meetings are usually held once a month and are brief.

The **Internal Affairs Committee** focuses on the following areas:
- Prepare and distribute the monthly COG newsletter
- Oversight and accountability for COGS Programs
- Hear cases of impeachment and removal prior to the full assembly
- Maintain attendance records and initiate removal proceeding for members who are no longer in compliance with attendance requirements
- Outreach to fill vacant seats in the Assembly
- Keep the website information updated
- Oversight of the expenditure of the COGS budget
- Relations between COGS and SGA, MSC, LSC
- All other areas in which the Chair and the Speaker agree the committee should focus on

The **Student Affairs Committee** focuses on the following areas:
- Academics and Honor Policy
- Parking and Transportation
- Housing and Dining
- Library
- Health and Wellness
- Social and Community Programming
- All other areas in which the Chair and the Speaker agree

The **Student Advocacy Committee** shall focus on the following areas:
- Graduate Student pay and funding
- Childcare
- Relations with Graduate Assistants Union
- Diversity on Campus
- All other areas in which the Chair and the Speaker agree

**I am ready to serve as a COGS representative! Now what?**

**Completing the petition**
You will need to find fellow graduate students from your college that support your petition to become a COGS representative. Your “Petition to Fill a Vacant Seat” will be attached to this packet. A PDF version is also available on the COGS website (sga.fsu.edu/cogs).

Obtain 20 signatures from graduate/professional students in your college/school, or a number that represents 10% of your college's/school's graduate/professional population, whichever is less.

Or, if you are petitioning for an advocacy seat, obtain 20 signatures from any graduate/professional students at Florida State. They need not be students in your college/school.

**Submitting your petition to COGS**
The completed petition must then be taken to COGS Program Associate, Whitney Brown in the SGA Office in Thagard Building, Room 446. She will verify that everything is in order and let you know about the next meeting to which you will need to be present in order to be sworn in. You will also receive an e-mail or phone call from our Deputy Speaker for Judicial Affairs or another COGS officer to ensure that you are prepared.
What to expect at your first meeting

Being a Representative in COGS is not only a great professional experience, it is also very fun! You will meet many new people from across many different colleges and schools on the campus of FSU, so make sure you are prepared to make some new friends. Here are a few tips for preparing for your first meeting:

✔ You will be introducing yourself to the body so make sure you look nice – business casual is fine. You should be able to tell us what college you are from, any experience you have in student government here at FSU or at another institution, experience you have in service related activities, why you would be a good representative of COGS, and any other information you might want us to know. Keep in mind that you will only have a couple of minutes to do this.

✔ After your introduction the floor will be open to questions. Some typical questions that members of the body might ask include, but are not limited to:

1. Do you know about our committees and do you know which one you would like to serve in? (You can find in the front of this packet and in our code, which is available at sga.fsu.edu/cogs.)
2. Do you know of any current issues in your college or at the university that you are looking forward to working on?
3. How did you hear about COGS?
4. Have you ever worked with COGS as a student?

✔ Most information about the COGS Code, the internal rules of procedure, grant information, and past COGS minutes can be found at sga.fsu.edu/cogs. We invite you to take a quick look to get yourself acquainted.

✔ At our meetings, we follow the internal rules of procedure as well as parliamentary procedure. Don’t worry if you don’t know about these, you will learn. We will help you throughout the meetings and pretty soon, you will be just as well-versed as the governmental representatives on C-SPAN.

✔ You may want to “like” us on Facebook or “Follow” us on Twitter. Please tell your friends, too!

✔ ALWAYS, feel free to ask questions! We are so happy you are here to learn, teach, serve, and work hard!
PETITION TO FILL A VACANT SEAT

If you wish to represent your college or school in the Congress of Graduate Students, please complete this form and submit it to room 446 in the SGA Offices on the 4th floor of the Oglesby Union. Thank you very much for your willingness to serve your fellow graduate students in COGS.

Your name: _________________________________ _______________________________________
College/School: ______________________________ Major: _________________________________
Department Phone: ___________________________ Home Address: __________________________
City: _____________________________ Zip Code: _______________________________
Contact Number: __________________________ Email: __________________________________

We, the undersigned graduate/professional students assign the above named person serve as a representative in the Congress of Graduate Students, for our college/school of ___________________________; or as an advocate for _________________________________.

**PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY**

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(If your college/school (not department) has fewer than 200 graduate students, only 10% of the number of students is required to sign the petition.)