THE GRADUATE ASSOCIATE ORGANIZATION
OF THE CENTER FOR CULTURE, HISTORY, AND ENVIRONMENT (CHE)

Governance Bylaws
Revised 5/5/2011

PREAMBLE – A SHARED MISSION

The Graduate Associate Organization of the Center for Culture, History, and the Environment (CHE) affirms a shared mission of understanding how knowledge, beliefs, political economy, and culture have shaped, and been shaped by, the environment by fostering the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and research among graduate students active within CHE. Specifically, we engage in education, outreach, and community research projects to address how nature, in all its myriad forms, is inextricably bound to every aspect of human culture, history, economy, politics, environmental policy, health, and justice. The Graduate Associate Organization exists to enact these goals.

ARTICLE I -GOVERNANCE

TITLE 1 -PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1 -PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Subsection (1) -The Graduate Associate Organization of the Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE)

1. The Graduate Associate Organization consists of the Graduate Student Associates (grad associates) and their elected leadership, an Organizing Committee that includes two Graduate Student Representatives to the CHE Steering Committee.

Subsection (2) – The Organizing Committee

1. The Organizing Committee consists of the co-chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and the CHE PA, who serves ex officio as a voting member. Organizing Committee members shall sit for one-year terms, which run from July 1-June 30.

2. The Organizing Committee is the executive body of the grad associate organization and shall: (a) enact policy, develop programs, and authorize expenditures to further our shared mission; (b) aim to catalyze the activity of CHE grad associates when developing events and programming; and (c) seek to increase leadership opportunities for grad associates.

3. The grad reps shall alternate in chairing meetings of the Organizing Committee, and shall convene the Committee at least twice per fall semester and
twice per spring semester, business warranting. These meetings are open to all grad associates.

4. The Organizing Committee shall have the authority to approve individual expenditures that further the shared mission of the grad associates; expenditures exceeding 10% of the annual budget must be approved by a vote of the membership.

5. The Organizing Committee shall have the authority to encumber funds into the next fiscal year to secure future programming.

6. As necessary, the Organizing Committee may create committees to further our shared mission.

7. In the event that a grad rep becomes incapacitated or is for any other reason unable to exercise his or her responsibilities, the Organizing Committee shall facilitate a special election with the Director of CHE to elect an interim representative for the remainder of the current academic year.

Subsection (3) – Graduate Student Representatives

1. The Graduate Student Representatives (grad reps) must be grad associates of CHE and must be registered graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The grad reps serve for a term of one (1) year running from July 1 to June 30, with the expectation that they will aid incoming CHE graduate associate leaders during the following year. They may serve for up to two (2) consecutive one-year terms. The grad reps are elected according to the process described in the Governance Bylaws of the Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE).

2. The grad reps shall: (a) represent the interests of the CHE graduate associates at large to the CHE Steering Committee; and (b) report to associates on actions taken by the Steering Committee that pertain to the graduate associates.

Subsection (4) – Secretary

1. An elected position, the Secretary shall: (a) keep clear and succinct minutes of all grad associate meetings and meetings of the Organizing Committee; (b) post these minutes to the grad associates' website so that members have an opportunity to correct the minutes (c) maintain a list of CHE graduate associates to determine the quorum for meetings; and (d) in general, facilitate communication among members by posting notices of upcoming meetings and CHE events organized by grad associates.

Subsection (5) – Treasurer

1. An elected position, the Treasurer shall: (a) oversee all funds and securities belonging to the Graduate Associate Organization, and receive, deposit, or disburse the same under the direction of the Organizing Committee; (b) keep full and accurate accounts of the finances of the graduate associates; and (c) in general, help
the members to determine how funds may best be used to further our shared mission.
2. Once every year, before the election, the incumbent Treasurer shall present a financial report to the members.

Subsection (6) – Graduate Associate Organization Members
1. All CHE grad associates are automatically members of the Graduate associate Organization.

2. Members shall be active in CHE affairs by planning events and contributing their skills and experience on grad associate projects that further our shared mission.

TITLE 2 -VOTING AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1 - VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

1. All CHE Graduate Associates have voting rights in the CHE Graduate Associate Organization.

SECTION 2 – VOTING PROCEDURES AND QUORUM

1. For the purposes of grad associate meetings, twenty percent of all members shall constitute a quorum for voting.

2. Voting by secret ballot may be conducted electronically.

SECTION 3 -ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. In the spring of each year, the Organizing Committee shall assist the Director of CHE in electing new graduate associate leaders according the Election Procedures determined by the Governance Bylaws of CHE. The voting shall take place no later than the end of the spring semester. Members shall be notified of the election and ballots distributed at least one week before the deadline for voting.

TITLE 3 -MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION

SECTION 1 -MEMBER MEETINGS
1. The grad reps shall typically convene a meeting of the members once during each of the fall and spring semesters to report on and seek counsel on major initiatives, programs, and expenditures. If, in the opinion of the Organizing Committee, there is insufficient business to warrant holding a meeting, the Secretary shall so notify the membership. The meeting time and location shall be announced at least one week in advance, and the agenda no less than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Any member may request to place an item on the agenda.
SECTION 2 - ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. The time and location of Organizing Committee meetings shall typically be announced one week in advance, and the agenda no less than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. A quorum of three members is necessary for the Organizing Committee to meet and take any action. Any member who so wishes may attend on a non-voting basis, except under circumstances when the Organizing Committee goes into closed session according to circumstances permitted by Wisconsin’s Open Meetings Law.

2. Any CHE graduate associate, whether a member of the Organizing Committee or not, may request to place an item on the committee’s agenda.

TITLE 4 – BYLAW REVISIONS

SECTION 1 – BYLAW REVISION PROCEDURE

1. Any revision of the bylaws requires a majority vote of all the CHE grad associates.

2. Any member may submit revisions to the agenda of an Organizing Committee meeting, which shall draft the bylaw revisions.

3. The Organizing Committee shall then call a member meeting to consider the bylaw revisions.

4. The Organizing Committee shall revise the bylaws to reflect both the views expressed at the member meeting and our shared mission.

5. The bylaw revisions are adopted following a majority vote of all members, which may be conducted electronically.