Radio-Television-Film Graduate Student Organization
Charter and By-Laws

September 12, 2011
Radio-Television-Film Graduate Student Organization
Provisional Charter and By-Laws

August 31, 2011

I. Purpose

The goals of the Radio Television Film Graduate Student Organization (RTFGSO) are the following: (a) to serve as a representative body for addressing major issues and concerns of all Radio-Television-Film graduate students (MA, MFA, PhD); (b) to promote professional development of its membership; (c) to promote cohesion between the media studies graduate student body and the graduate production student body through social events, academic forums, and symposia.

II. Membership

RTFGSO’s General Body consists of all current graduate students (PhD, MA, MFA) in the Department of Radio-Television-Film at UT-Austin in good standing with the University. Unless specifically noted, all elected positions are open to any RTF PhD, MA, or MFA student.

The main elected leadership body of RTFGSO is the RTFGSO Board. It must always consist of six (6) members. Three (3) of these seats must be filled by MFA Production students. Three (3) of these seats must be filled by MA/PhD Media Studies students. All members get an equal vote in Board meetings. This body makes many decisions regarding the regular business of RTFGSO and brings major decisions to the General RTFGSO body for a vote.

RTFGSO General Body also elects one (1) representative as Media Studies Graduate Student Representative and one (1) representative as Production Graduate Student Representative. Representatives to departmental search committees are also elected as needed.

Terms for all representatives last one academic year.

III. Faculty Advisor

The RTFGSO will operate under the auspices of a faculty advisor to be selected each term by the RTFGSO Board.

VI. Description of Elected Positions

RTFGSO Board is the central representative voting body of the RTFGSO. The Board consists of six (6) elected members. Three (3) members must be MFA production students at all times. Three (3) members must be MA/PhD studies students at all times. All members get an equal
vote in Board meetings. This body makes many decisions regarding the regular business of RTFGSO and brings major decisions to the General RTFGSO body for a vote. Primarily, the RTFGSO Board’s chief role is to foster transparency and representation in all departmental decisions and interactions. They function as the chief advocate for the concerns and needs of any member of the RTFGSO General Body.

RTFGSO Board’s secondary role is to foster the continued development of the RTFGSO organization. As needs for new by-laws, amendments, and/or elected positions become apparent, the Board is charged with drafting, revising, and amending this document and presenting it to the General Body for ratification.

*RTFGSO Media Studies Graduate Student Representative* serves as a nonvoting representative of the RTFGSO in non-confidential faculty, budgetary, and Graduate Studies Committee meetings and in meetings of the University Graduate Student Assembly. The Media Studies Graduate Student Representative acts as a liaison between faculty and the RTFGSO Board. The Graduate Student Representative is expected to regularly report to the RTFGSO Board. The Graduate Student Representative is not a voting member of the RTFGSO Board, except in the case of a tie.

*RTFGSO Production Student Representative* serves as a nonvoting representative of the RTFGSO in non-confidential faculty, budgetary, and Graduate Studies Committee meetings and in meetings of the University Graduate Student Assembly. The Production Graduate Student Representative acts as a liaison between faculty and the RTFGSO Board. The Graduate Student Representative is expected to regularly report to the RTFGSO Board. The Graduate Student Representative is not a voting member of the RTFGSO Board, except in the case of a tie.

*RTFGSO Departmental Search Committee Representative* serves as a graduate representative on departmental search committees. During any term where a departmental search committee is in session, the Committee Representative acts as a liaison between the RTFGSO Board, the General Body, and the departmental search committee. The RTFGSO Departmental Search Committee Representative is not a voting member of the RTFGSO Board. Eligibility for RTFGSO Departmental Search Committee Positions is dependent upon the position the search committee is seeking to fill. A production search committee position is only open to production graduate students, and a media studies search committee position is only open to media studies graduate students. The RTFGSO Board may organize elections for these positions at any time during an academic year on the basis of need.

### V. Elections:

All voting to elect any representatives of RTFGSO or any other major RTFGSO decision will happen only in RTFGSO General Body meetings by a simple majority. Elections for Board and Representative positions are conducted in May for the following academic year.
VI. Eligibility for Elected Positions

Elected positions are open to any MA, MFA, or PhD student. MFA students are eligible for any Production board or representative position. MA or PhD students are eligible for any Media Studies board or representative position. There are four requirements for a graduate student to be a candidate for any of RTFGSO’s elected positions: (a) they must be an RTF graduate student at UT-Austin in good standing for the entire duration of their term; (b) they must be on campus at UT-Austin the entire duration of their term; (c) any term consists of two consecutive semesters (the fall and spring semester of an academic year) (d) no elected representative can serve longer than two consecutive terms.

VII. Nominations

The nomination period for elected positions shall be open for no less than two weeks. Nominees may only run for one elected position per term. All nominees are self-nominated. Nomination forms must be distributed electronically no less than three weeks before election, and must consist of basic biographical information and a two hundred word position statement. Nominees are encouraged to limit their external campaigning to this statement. This information must be distributed electronically to the general body no more than one week before election.

VIII. Voting Procedures

To vote in elections or on referenda, members are strongly encouraged to be present in-person at the time of voting. Production graduate students will vote for Production board members and representatives. Media Studies graduate students will vote for Media Studies board members and representatives. If a member is unable to attend a meeting during which an electoral vote or a vote on referenda is being cast, an electronic vote will be accepted during the two days immediately preceding the day of the election (i.e. if the election takes place on a Friday, electronic votes will be accepted on Wednesday and Thursday only). Notice of a vote will be posted electronically at least one week prior to voting. No late votes will be counted.

IX. Description of Meetings

RTFGSO General Body Meetings may be convened at any time by a simple majority vote of the RTFGSO Board and must adhere to the following by-laws:

(a) General body meetings must be convened no less than twice per semester.
(b) The General Body must be notified of the meeting no less than one week in advance.
(c) The notice must also include references to any subjects that may be voted on at scheduled meeting.
(d) Meetings are organized and led by the RTFGSO Board
(e) Any member of the General Body wishing to speak to the body and/or the Board may do so at a General Body Meeting.
RTFGSO Board Meetings may be convened at any time by any member of the Board and must adhere to the following by-laws:

(a) Board must meet no less than once per month during an academic session.
(b) Board meetings consist of the Board, the Media Studies Graduate Student Representative, the Production Graduate Student Representative, and the Departmental Search Committee Representatives when a search committee is in session.
(c) Board may convene a meeting of the RTFGSO General Body at any time by a simple majority vote.
(d) Board meetings are open and may be attended by any member of the General Body.
(e) Any General Body member who wishes to address the Board with any concern may do so if invited by a Board representative.

X. Recall Elections

If any elected member of the RTFGSO proves unable to perform his or her assigned duties for any reason, they may be recalled through a two-step process.

(a) RTFGSO Board must approve a General Body Recall election by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote
(b) General Body must approve of recall by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote
(c) RTFGSO must organize an election within three (3) weeks to fill the vacant post

XI. Ratification of Charter and By-Laws

The ratification of this charter shall be enacted by simple majority vote. At which time, the provisional board shall organize general elections for all positions within no less than three weeks from ratification.

XII. Amendment of By-Laws

This document may be amended by a two-step simple majority vote, consisting firstly of a vote by the RTFGSO Board to propose an amendment and followed by a simple majority vote by the General Body to ratify the amendment.