

Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta

Standing Orders of GSA Council

GSA Council Meeting Procedures

Authority of GSA Council:

Post-Secondary Learning Act:

95(2)d: "The council of a student organization may make bylaws governing ... the calling of meetings of the council and the quorum and conduct of business at those meetings."

Composition of GSA Council: As set out in Section C: GSA Council, GSA Bylaw, GSA Council, Section C.BYL.2.1, GSA Council is comprised of the following:

- "All Directly-Elected Officers as voting members,
- All Council-Elected Officers and Deputies as non-voting members,
- One (1) graduate student elected from each department, faculty, or extra-departmental unit at the University that offers a graduate program (Departmental Councillors) as voting members,
- Ten (10) Councillors-at-Large (CALs) as voting members, and
- The GSA Directors as non-voting members."

Meetings of GSA Council: The Speaker of GSA Council sets the meeting dates annually. GSA Council normally meets monthly on Mondays at 6:00 pm. If lacking sufficient agenda items, up to two (2) meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Speaker and President – but never two (2) sequential meetings.

GSA Council meetings are attended by GSA Council members, GSA management, staff and invited guests. Members of the public are required to sign in with the Speaker and will be given a guest placard. They may not speak or vote. GSA Council may choose to close meetings by a simple majority vote, in which case only GSA Council members and GSA staff may attend; others require a GSA Council vote.

Special meetings have specific and limited agendas and may be called when important matters arise for decision either between regular meetings or at a time when pressure of business would not allow them to be adequately disposed of at a scheduled meeting. Provisions governing scheduled meetings shall apply to special meetings. With reasonable notice (when possible five (5) working days ("Working Day" means a day the GSA office is open)), special meetings may be called by the Speaker following receipt of any of the following (as set out in Section C: GSA Council, GSA Bylaw, GSA Council, Section C.BYL.3.2):

- "A Motion of GSA Council at any GSA Council meeting,
- A Motion of the GSA Board,
- A petition signed by ten (10) or more members of GSA Council, to be received by the GSA Board, or
- A petition signed by at least one hundred (100) Members of the GSA."

Quorum for any GSA Council meeting shall consist of thirty (30) voting members of GSA Council.

GSA Council Coordinator and Recording Secretary: The GSA Executive Director will assign a manager as the Coordinator of GSA Council and a staff member as Recording Secretary to GSA Council.

Normal Agenda Template:

- I: Approval of Agenda
- II: Approval of Minutes
- III. Receiving Names of New Councillors and Introductions
- IV: Presentations and Councillor Announcements
- V: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates
- VI: Reports from Directly-Elected Officers, GSA Committees and Management, and Questions
- VII: Question Period
- VIII: Adjournment

Agenda: Agenda items normally come to GSA Council from the GSA Board or other GSA Standing Committees. Councillors who wish to place an item on the Agenda should contact the Speaker.

Copies of the first Agenda mailing (ie the bulk of the agenda material) is sent to all GSA Council members at least one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting by the Recording Secretary to GSA Council on instruction by the Speaker. Substantive items received after this initial mailing date are added at the discretion of the Speaker. Reports for information are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting.

Changes to the Agenda made at meetings require a two-thirds majority vote of those present.

Minutes: GSA Council Minutes are taken by the GSA Council Recording Secretary and are circulated with the Agenda for the following meeting. Open session Minutes are posted on the GSA website. Closed session Minutes are confidential; brief notes will be taken by the Executive Director or delegate.

Role of Speaker: "The Speaker is responsible for presiding over all meetings of GSA Council" (Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, Section D.BYL.3.3.a). The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in GSA Council so that GSA Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, the Deputy Speaker will act. If neither is available, the President will act.

Attendance: Attendance at GSA Council is governed by GSA Policy. See Section C: GSA Council, GSA Policy, GSA Council Attendance.

Discussion: The Speaker regulates the flow of discussion.

Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the GSA Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of GSA Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.

Notice of Motion: A Notice of Motion is a written advance notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at a future meeting of GSA Council. It must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the Agenda. Contact the Speaker for details.

Amendments to a Motion: An amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to the subject of the Motion. Friendly Amendments are those which are acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Motion being amended.

Motion to Refer: A Motion to Refer allows GSA Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of GSA Council.

Motion to Defer: A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.

Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows GSA Council to lay aside a Motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to GSA Council.

Motion to Rescind: A Motion to Rescind allows GSA Council to cancel or stop an entire Motion that had already been adopted.

Motion to Reconsider: A Motion to Reconsider allows GSA Council to return to a Motion that has been voted on *at the meeting*, in an instance where new information emerges or the situation changes, allowing GSA Council to consider and vote anew, as if GSA Council had not previously voted on the Motion.

Motion to Adjourn: This Motion must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote of those present.

GSA Council Members' Prerogatives: Any member may ask a question for information or about the decorum of GSA Council.

Voting: Voting is by majority vote of those present unless otherwise stated. Abstentions are called for at the discretion of the Speaker.

Councillor Voting Ethics: All members of GSA Council are charged with promoting and protecting the well-being of the GSA and serving their constituents. Councillors are charged with acting ethically and rising above local interests.

Challenging the Speaker: If a member of GSA Council considers that a ruling made by the Speaker is not in order, a Councillor may appeal the Speaker's ruling. If this happens, the Speaker will give a brief explanation of his/her ruling. After questions and debate, the Speaker then asks this question: "Is the ruling of the Speaker upheld?" A majority (or tied) vote is needed for approval of the Speaker's ruling. If the ruling of the Speaker is overturned, the Speaker is bound to take the necessary remedial action to correct the situation.