Outline of Issue

Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on GSA Membership Definitions

Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That GSA Council APPROVE, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA Governance Committee and the GSA Board, the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section B: Members and associated changes throughout GSA Bylaw and Policy, as shown in the attached double column document and track changes document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and the approval of GSA Council in the case of GSA Policy.

NOTE: This is the first reading of proposed changes to GSA Bylaw, proposed changes to GSA Policy are presented for information. The second reading of proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and approval of proposed changes to GSA Policy will be presented at the April GSA Council meeting.

Background:

The attached proposal for recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy address the following:

- Throughout GSA Bylaw and Policy, there are inconsistent references to “GSA members” and “graduate students.” The recommended changes would ensure the use of consistent terminology within GSA Bylaw and Policy by distinguishing that “GSA members” include both registered full-time or part-time graduate students and those who are not required to be actively registered (i.e., a graduate student on leave who has opted not to register while on leave), while “graduate students” would include both GSA members and a very small sub-group of individuals studying at the U of A but not considered GSA members (i.e., a very small number visiting students who may only be paying tuition and fees to their home institution and not the U of A).

- Clarification that “GSA members” can run for Directly-Elected Officer and Council-Elected Officer positions, vote in GSA General Elections and Referenda, and access GSA services, whereas while “graduate students” do not have access to these things, the GSA continues to advocate on issues that affect them and they are eligible to serve on University committees (it is beyond the scope of the GSA to dictate which graduate students are eligible to serve on University committees as this is the purview of the University).

- Removing the category of honorary membership, as there is currently no substantive difference between associate membership and honorary membership.

- Addition of a central statement outlining the services that GSA members have access to through their membership.

- Clarification that GSA membership fees are only assessed in the fall and winter terms.

The GSA Governance Committee recommended this proposal to GSA Council at its 7 February 2019 meeting. The GSA Board reviewed and recommended this proposal to GSA Council at its 27 February 2019 meeting.

Jurisdiction:

Section F: Standing Committees, GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section F.POL.4.2.a
The GSA GC will “advise GSA Council on matters of GSA Bylaw and Policy not in the purview of any other GSA Standing Committee, or other governance issues, and recommend changes to GSA Council.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, Section A.BYL.1.2
“These Bylaws … may be amended by two (2) two-thirds majority votes of GSA Council held on seven (7) calendar days’ notice of Motion and no less than one (1) week apart.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, Section A.BYL.2.2
“GSA Policy is under the jurisdiction of GSA Council and may be amended by a simple majority vote of GSA Council at any meeting of GSA Council.”

Prepared by L Hareuther, J Tanguay, and C Thomas for 18 March 2019 Council