Date: 7 September 2018
To: GSA Council
Re: Recommended Changes GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I: Elections

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

Over the spring and summer 2018, the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) met several times (27 March, 10 April, 24 April, 9 May, 6 July, and 12 July) to discuss changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections. The recommended changes were developed in considering continuous year-long discussions of concerns raised repeatedly from one GSA General Election to another, in reviewing a research document comparing elections regulations from students’ associations across Canada, and lastly, in discussing issues that were raised in the 2018 GSA General Election.

The recommended substantives changes before you can be summarized as follows:

- Removal of the extensive list of qualifications for the GSA CRO position, given that it has been difficult to assess the degree to which each candidate for this position possesses these qualifications;
- Removal of slates and emphasizing that candidates will campaign individually (as a means to avoid an overly oppositional environment and to foster an inclusive environment. This is also consistent with GSA Bylaw and Policy that candidates can only be elected as individuals);
- Introduction of a new requirement that candidates will only distribute campaign materials through emails to their personal contacts (current regulations surrounding the use of other campaign tools, such as social media, remain as they currently appear) and a prohibition on utilizing moderated mailing lists;
- New requirement that all candidate campaign printing to be done using SUBPrint (to provide a level playing field for candidates);
- Removal of the prohibition on campaigning in spaces where swipe card access is needed, given that current wording in GSA Bylaw and Policy prohibits candidates from campaigning within their own departments or labs if they are located behind locked doors; and
- Introduction of a new section on alleged breaches that outlines the elements candidates will be required to submit when bringing forward a formal complaint about any alleged breach of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections.

In addition to these substantive changes, the GSA ERC recommends restructuring the GSA Chief Returning Officer’s (CRO) portfolio to ensure that the current duties of the CRO and the current mandate of the GSA ERC are aligned. These recommended changes don’t modify the duties of the CRO or the mandate of the GSA ERC; it simply reorganizes current elements in a more logical way.

Finally, as noted in the Outline of Issue, if the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections are approved, parallel sections in GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda will be updated accordingly to ensure alignment.

I look forward to presenting these changes to you at the September meeting of GSA Council and welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Leigh Spanner, Chair of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee