

Suggested Motion

That the GSA Council **APPROVES** the implementation of GSA Council Standing Orders and **APPROVES** the associated GSA Bylaw and Policy amendments.

New Policy

A.BYL.1.3 The GSA maintains the following additional governing documents:

A.BYL.1.3.c - GSA Standing Orders

C.POL.4.2 GSA Council meetings will operate in accordance with GSA Council Standing Orders as well as GSA Bylaw and Policy. If a Standing Order contradicts GSA Policy, the Speaker will consult with the ED (or delegate) to determine which takes precedence.

All subsequent policy lines will have their policy numbers shifted accordingly.

GSA Council Standing Orders

A Guide for GSA Council Meeting Operations and Procedures



Last Revised:

2025

First adopted by GSA Council on:

2025

CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	3
GSA COUNCIL MEETING STANDING ORDERS.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Important Emails.....	4
Section 1 - Overview of Standing Orders.....	5
A. Authority of Standing Orders.....	5
B. Modifications to Standing Orders.....	5
Section 2 - Mandate and Accountability.....	6
A. Mandate of GSA Council.....	6
B. Accountability and Conduct.....	6
Section 3 - Meeting Scheduling.....	7
A. Meeting Scheduling.....	7
B. Special Meetings.....	8
Section 4 - Meeting Composition and Attendance.....	9
A. Composition.....	9
B. Attendance.....	9
C. Other Attendees and Guests.....	10
Section 5 - GSA Council Meeting Procedures.....	11
A. Quorum.....	11
B. Order of Business.....	11
C. Agenda.....	12
D. Meeting Minutes.....	13
E. Starting the Meeting.....	14
F. Council Elections.....	14
G. Reports.....	15
H. Presentation Items.....	16
I. Action Items and Motions.....	17
J. Discussion Items.....	19
K. Question Period.....	19
L. Closed Sessions.....	19
M. Meeting Adjournment.....	20
N. GSA Council Meeting Records.....	21
Section 6 - Rules of Debate.....	22
A. Speaking Order.....	22
B. Basic Steps in Debate and Discussion.....	22
C. Incidental Motions.....	23
D. Subsidiary Motions.....	24
E. Speaker's Rulings and Prerogatives.....	26
Section 7 - Disciplinary Action in Council Meetings.....	28
Standing Orders Revision History.....	30

GSA COUNCIL MEETING STANDING ORDERS

Introduction

C.POL.4.2 - GSA Council meetings will operate in accordance with GSA Council Standing Orders as well as GSA Bylaw and Policy. If a Standing Order contradicts GSA Policy, the Speaker will consult with the ED (or delegate) to determine which takes precedence.

The GSA Council Standing Orders serve as the operational guide for all affairs pertaining to the GSA Council. GSA Council members are expected to be familiar with and uphold the procedures outlined in this document.

The Standing Orders described in this document are an extension of existing GSA Bylaw and Policy. Where any contradictions between the Standing Orders and the GSA Policy (namely Section C) are present, the Speaker and ED (or delegate) will determine whether a specific policy or order takes precedence on a case-by-case basis.

When citing a standing order, the notation should begin with SO followed by the section number, then bullet number and any sub-bullets. For example: SO.5.K.3.a, which refers to Section 5 (GSA Council Meeting Procedures), subsection K (Question Period), bullet 3, sub-bullet a.

Important Emails

- Speaker - gsa.speaker@ualberta.ca
- Deputy Speaker - dspkgsa@ualberta.ca
- President - gsa.president@ualberta.ca
- Administrative Assistant - gsaca@ualberta.ca
- Associate Director - gsaad@ualberta.ca
- Executive Director - gsaed@ualberta.ca

Section 1 - Overview of Standing Orders

A. Authority of Standing Orders

1. GSA Council Meetings will operate in accordance with GSA Council Standing Orders.
2. GSA Council Meetings will observe Robert's Rules of Order where possible.
 - a. For the purposes of Robert's Rules of Order, a session will be defined as a single GSA Council meeting.
 - b. For the purposes of Robert's Rules of Order, members of the assembly refers to GSA Council members while members of the society refers to GSA general members as defined in GSA Bylaw and Policy.
3. If the Standing Orders contradict GSA Policy, the Speaker, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), will determine which takes precedence.
4. If the Standing Orders contradict Robert's Rules of Order, Standing Orders take precedence.
5. If the GSA Bylaw and Policy, Standing Orders and Roberts' Rules of Order fail to provide direction on a particular matter, the Speaker will decide and make a ruling based on precedence and best practices, in consultation with the Deputy Speaker and/or ED (or delegate) as needed).

B. Modifications to Standing Orders

1. Any GSA Council member can propose modifications to the Standing Orders directly to the GSA Council. Modifications may include (but not limited to) wording adjustments to create clarity, removal of a specific order, addition of a new order, completely reorganizing the document structure etc.
2. Standing Orders may be modified (but not wholly abolished) by a simple majority vote (50% + 1) at any given GSA Council Meeting, and approved changes will take effect immediately.
3. Standing Orders may be wholly abolished only by unanimous agreement between all GSA Council members currently attending at a given GSA Council Meeting.
4. Grammatical, typographical or simple/mundane structural changes can be made by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker without a formal proposal or vote by GSA Council.
5. Updated versions of the Standing Orders document will be emailed to GSA Council members and posted to the GSA website within one (1) business day of any amendments following approval/certification by the Speaker.

Section 2 - Mandate and Accountability

A. Mandate of GSA Council

1. The mandate of GSA Council is to fulfill all responsibilities listed in Section 95 of the Post-Secondary Learning Act (C.BYL.1.1). These responsibilities include (but might not be limited to):
 - a. Approval of changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy
 - b. Approval of the annual GSA operating and labour budget
 - c. Approval of major financial initiatives proposed by the GSA Board and relevant stakeholders within or outside the University of Alberta
 - d. Approval of referenda proposals ahead of the annual GSA General Elections
 - e. Ratification of the annual GSA General Elections results
 - f. Creation or dissolution of standing committees to carry out specific mandates
 - g. Discussion of strategic work plans, financial audits, information presentations etc. as it pertains to the business and affairs of the GSA
 - h. Holding regular meetings to stay up-to-date on the current/ongoing affairs of the GSA

B. Accountability and Conduct

1. All members of council must hold each other accountable both within and outside of regular meetings. Identified breaches in conduct (as described in *Section H* in GSA Bylaw and Policy) should be reported to the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB).
2. All members of council are expected to declare any conflict of interest or conflict of commitment as defined in *Section H* in GSA Bylaw and Policy.
3. Identified conflicts should be reported to the Speaker (if it pertains to or occurs in GSA Council meetings) or to the GSA ACB.
4. All GSA Council members are expected to observe the highest standards of professionalism and respect to all individuals.
5. All GSA Council members are expected to uphold and observe conduct policies outlined by the University of Alberta and the GSA.

Section 3 - Meeting Scheduling

A. Meeting Scheduling

1. The Speaker and ED (or delegate) sets the GSA Council schedule annually.
2. GSA Council meetings typically occur once per month on the third or fourth Monday of each month from 5:00PM until 8:00PM, subject to the availability of the University Chambers.
 - a. There must not be a gap of greater than five (5) weeks between two consecutive GSA Council meetings except in the case of a meeting cancellation.
 - b. In the event a meeting would coincide with a University-recognized holiday or a municipal, provincial or federal election, the Speaker and ED (or delegate) will schedule the meeting for another day or time, in accordance with SO.3.A.2.a.
3. GSA Council Meetings are held in a hybrid format, taking place in-person in the University Chambers and online via Google Meet or Zoom (or other online conference apps if necessary).
4. The date and/or time of a GSA Council meeting may be moved by the Speaker in consultation with the GSA President and ED (or delegate). Notice of such a change must be given at least five (5) working days prior to the new date.
 - a. The reason for moving a meeting will be provided in the email notice.
 - b. GSA Council meetings may be moved if at least 10 council members send a request to the Speaker.
 - c. GSA Council meetings can only be moved to a date within the same month.
5. Up to two (2) GSA Council meetings may be cancelled per year by joint approval of the Speaker and GSA President in consultation with the ED (or delegate) provided there is no urgent or outstanding business.
 - a. Sequential GSA Council meetings may not be cancelled.
 - b. Notice of a meeting cancellation must be given at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting (except in the case of an emergency).
6. The First Mailing of an upcoming scheduled GSA Council meeting will be sent to all GSA Council members via email at least five (5) working days prior to that meeting.
7. The Second Mailing of an upcoming scheduled GSA Council meeting will be sent to all GSA Council members via email at least one (1) working day prior to that meeting.
8. All meeting packages will be made available or updated on the GSA Website shortly after the First and Second Mailings respectively.

B. Special Meetings

1. Special meetings of GSA Council will 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. Procedures governing scheduled meetings will apply to special meetings (C.POL.4.4.a)
2. With reasonable notice (when possible five (5) working days), special meetings will be called by the Speaker following receipt of any of the following (C.POL.4.4.b):
 - a. A motion of GSA Council at any GSA Council meeting
 - b. A motion of the GSA Board
 - c. A request to the Speaker by at least ten (10) members of GSA Council
3. A Special Meeting will occur within 2 weeks of a motion or receipt of the 10th GSA Council member's request.
4. Special Meetings may be scheduled outside of traditional GSA Council Meeting times.
5. The First Mailing of a Special Meeting of GSA Council will be sent out at least two (2) days prior to the meeting.
6. The Second Mailing (if necessary) of a Special Meeting of GSA Council will be sent out at least one (1) day prior to the meeting.
7. Special Meetings are subject to the same Standing Orders as scheduled GSA Council meetings.

Section 4 - Meeting Composition and Attendance

A. Composition

1. GSA Council composition is defined in C.POL.3.1.
2. GSA Council meetings are chaired by the Speaker.
 - a. If the Speaker is absent, the Deputy Speaker will assume the role of Speaker.
 - b. If both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are unavailable, the line of succession will be followed as described in GSA Bylaw and Policy.
 - c. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker are considered non-voting members.
 - d. The prerogatives of the Speaker are outlined in *Section 6.E - Speaker's Rulings and Prerogatives*.

B. Attendance

1. All GSA Council members are expected and are required to attend all GSA Council meetings, including Special Meetings. See *C.POL.6 - Attendance* and *C.POL.3.2.a.ii*.
2. Attendance will be logged at least once at each GSA Council meeting.
 - a. Council members are responsible for recording their own attendance by scanning the QR code displayed at each GSA Council meeting.
 - b. Failure to log attendance may result in a recorded unexcused absence for that meeting.
3. GSA Council members must inform the Speaker as soon as possible of an anticipated absence, or at the next best possible time in the event of an emergency. Failure to do so may result in an unexcused absence.
4. If a departmental councillor misses 2 meetings in a row or misses a total of 3 meetings, their seat will be declared vacant. The Speaker will reach out to the department to request the election of a new departmental councillor.
5. If a Councillor-at-Large misses 2 meetings in a row or misses a total of 3 meetings, their seat will be declared vacant. The Nominating Committee will work to fill the seat.
6. Departmental councillors are encouraged to send an alternate in their place if they anticipate being absent at a GSA Council meeting. Both parties will be required to submit a proxy form via email to the Speaker and Administrative Assistant.
 - a. The proxy form can be obtained by emailing the Speaker or Administrative Assistant.

- b. The proxy form is valid for only one alternate and lasts for the duration of the primary councillor's term. A new form must be completed for a different alternate.
- 7. DEO absences will be reported to the GSA Board and ED (or delegate). Repeat absences will be reported to the ACB. DEOs do not have alternates.

C. Other Attendees and Guests

- 1. Alternate councillors may attend alongside their departmental councillor as non-voting members. Alternate councillors attending in place of their departmental councillor will be considered voting members so long as the appropriate steps are taken.
- 2. Standing Committee Chairs and members who are not departmental councillors, CaLs, or DEOs may attend GSA council meetings as non-voting members. Their attendance to all meetings is not mandatory.
- 3. The GSA Finance Team (which includes the GSA Finance Manager and GSA Accountant) and/or legal counsel and/or other related parties may attend GSA Council meetings as non-voting members. Their attendance to all meetings is not mandatory.
- 4. Any GSA members who pay membership dues are welcome to attend GSA Council meetings as guests. Notifying the Speaker is preferred but not required. They will not have speaking privileges extended to them by default. Guests cannot vote.
 - a. Please refer to *Section 7* for restrictions as it pertains to suspended DEOs or individuals removed from their position as DEO by ACB. .
- 5. Members of the public who do not fit any of the aforementioned criteria may attend GSA council meetings as guests after seeking approval from the Speaker. They will not have speaking privileges extended to them by default. Guests cannot vote.
- 6. Guests invited as presenters may speak during their presentation and/or action item. They may not speak during other action or presentation items. Guests cannot vote.
- 7. If a guest wishes to speak, it is best that they direct questions or concerns through a council member. However, with the Speaker's discretion, a guest may be granted speaking privileges.

Section 5 - GSA Council Meeting Procedures

A. Quorum

1. Quorum of any GSA Council meeting is thirty (30) voting members.
2. If quorum is lost at any point during the meeting, GSA Council members may elect to adjourn the meeting or continue the meeting informally.
 - a. If the meeting proceeds informally, no formal business may be conducted and no motions pertaining to action items can be voted on.
 - b. Only subsidiary motions may be voted on where relevant.

B. Order of Business

1. The standard order of business shall be followed:
 - a. Land Acknowledgement
 - b. Speaker's Business
 - c. Approval of the agenda
 - d. Approval of meeting minutes
 - e. Welcome and/or farewell to GSA Council members
 - f. Announcements by GSA Council members
 - g. Council Elections (chaired by the Nominating Committee)
 - h. DEO, CEO and committee reports
 - i. Presentation items
 - j. Discussion items
 - k. Action items
 - l. Oral question period
2. Occasionally, there may be a Closed Session.
3. A recess may be called by the Speaker at any point during the meeting. Recesses may not last more than 10 minutes.

C. Agenda

1. Agendas for GSA Council meetings will normally include the Order of Business previously described, accompanied with approximate time allotments per item.
2. The agenda is circulated in the First and Second Mailing.
3. All GSA Council members may submit items for the agenda to the Speaker subject to the following guidelines:
 - a. Additions to the agenda must be received by the Speaker prior to 12PM two Fridays prior to a scheduled GSA Council meeting.
 - b. Specifics on the kind of information needed as part of an item submission are described in the relevant subsections.
 - c. The Speaker, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), will review submissions to ensure no breaches of GSA Bylaw and Policy.
 - i. Agenda items are generally approved but the Speaker reserves the right to reject proposed agenda items if there are identified breaches of GSA Bylaw and Policy, real or perceived conflicts of interest, or if the Speaker deems the item to be out of order. The reason for rejection must be communicated to the person submitting the item.
 - ii. The submitter may amend the item based on the feedback from the Speaker and resubmit it.
 - iii. Modifications to an item are permitted up until 12PM on the day of the release of the Second Mailing.
 - d. Additions to the agenda after the First Mailing but before the Second Mailing will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Speaker reserves the right to approve or reject any agenda submissions made after the First Mailing.
 - i. Factors that influence this decision may include the current state of the agenda (i.e. how many pending action items or presentations), urgency of the agenda item, the order requests are received etc.
 - e. Additions to the agenda after the Second Mailing can only be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority vote of GSA Council before the agenda is approved at the start of the meeting.
4. The agenda must be approved at the start of every GSA Council meeting by a simple majority vote.
 - a. Any amendments to the agenda before approving the agenda require a two-thirds (67%) majority vote by the GSA Council. A vote to approve the agenda must occur right after.

- i. Amendments may include introducing new items, removing items, reordering the agenda etc.
 - ii. Each amendment requires a separate vote.
- 5. New item additions to the agenda may not occur after the agenda is approved.
 - a. This does not apply to subsidiary motions as described in *Section 6 - Rules of Debate*.
 - b. Motions raised during substantive discussion in a GSA Council meeting which may have significant impacts on the operations of the GSA may be voted on per the discretion of the Speaker in consultation with the Deputy Speaker and/or ED (or delegate). Otherwise, such a motion would be automatically deferred to the next GSA Council meeting.
- 6. Agenda items may not be reordered after the agenda is approved. However, the Speaker will make a ruling on whether agenda items can be reordered should a presenter be late or absent, or if the meeting is running ahead or behind schedule.
- 7. Items may be removed from the agenda, tabled or deferred to another meeting after the agenda is approved by a vote of GSA Council as described in *Section 6 - Rules of Debate*.

D. Meeting Minutes

- 1. A summary of the most recent GSA Council meeting is circulated to all GSA Council members within one week after a meeting.
- 2. The meeting minutes of the last GSA Council meeting are typically circulated in the First Mailing.
- 3. After approval of the agenda, the GSA Council will vote to approve the meeting minutes via a simple majority vote (50% + 1).
- 4. Amendments to the meeting minutes can be sent via email to the Speaker and Administrative Assistant.
 - a. The Speaker reserves the right to verify the amendment via the meeting recording or transcript and rectify accordingly.
- 5. Amendments to the meeting minutes can be made prior to approval of the minutes in a GSA Council meeting.
 - a. The Speaker reserves the right to verify the amendment via the meeting recording or transcript and rectify accordingly.

6. Amendments to the meeting minutes after they are approved must be approved by GSA Council by two-thirds majority vote.
 - a. The Speaker reserves the right to verify the amendment via the meeting recording or transcript and rectify accordingly.

E. Starting the Meeting

1. The meeting will proceed once the Speaker verifies quorum has been reached by counting the number of voting members present.
2. The Speaker will call the meeting to order, announcing the time and the current number of attendees.
3. The Speaker will read out the Land Acknowledgement.
4. The Speaker will make any announcements relating to any pressing business or GSA Council affairs (also known as Speaker's Business).
5. The Speaker will call for the approval of the agenda.
 - a. This requires a mover and a seconder followed by a simple majority vote.
6. The Speaker will call for the approval of the meeting minutes.
 - a. This requires a mover and a seconder followed by a simple majority vote.
7. The Speaker will ask if there are any new or departing GSA Council members.
 - a. New members may give a few remarks to introduce themselves. The Speaker will extend a warm welcome to the GSA Council.
 - b. Departing members may give a few remarks as a farewell. The Speaker will thank them for their service on GSA Council.
8. The Speaker will ask if there are any announcements from GSA Council members.
 - a. GSA Council members are welcome to briefly announce any upcoming events or initiatives such as GSA-led social events, campus-wide events, GSA General Elections etc.
 - b. Announcements do not require Speaker approval but the Speaker reserves the right to interrupt or limit announcements

F. Council Elections

1. The GSA Council will hold elections to fill standing committee seats, vacant councillor-at-large seats and councillor-elected officer positions.

2. The Speaker will exit the chair and the GSA Nominating Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair or delegate) will assume the role of Acting Speaker.
3. The procedures for Council Elections are determined by the GSA Nominating Committee.
4. All voting members of GSA Council are eligible to vote in Council Elections unless otherwise specified.
5. The GSA Nominating Committee reserves the right to modify the policies surrounding Council Elections.
 - a. Where the Standing Orders contradict the GSA Bylaw and Policy surrounding the GSA Nominating Committee, the GSA Bylaw and Policy will take precedence.

G. Reports

1. A maximum of thirty (30) minutes will be dedicated to reports from DEOs, CEOs, Standing Committee Chairs and GSA Management (referred to as a reporting member in this section).
2. Reporting members must submit their report to the Speaker and Administrative Assistant at least 48 hours prior to the release of the Second Mailing.
 - a. Reports received after this are included in the meeting package per the discretion of the Speaker and will be distinguished with a "late submission" label.
3. Reports typically include a list of meetings attended and important project updates or discussions since the last GSA Council meeting.
4. GSA Council members are expected to read the reports prior to the GSA Council meeting.
5. During the GSA Council meeting, the reporting member should provide a summary of their report and highlight some key points. Each reporting member should be respectful of other reporting members and be concise, ideally taking no more than 3 to 4 minutes for their report.
 - a. GSA Council members are assumed to have read the reports prior to the GSA Council meeting.
 - b. Reporting members may also state "as submitted" instead of providing a summary. This may be advised by the Speaker if time is constrained.
6. GSA Council members are welcome to ask each reporting member questions pertaining to their reports.

- a. Questions from the GSA Council will be permitted after each report, and in addition, can be taken after all reports are discussed.
- 7. If an inaccuracy in a report is identified or raised, the reporting member will be given an opportunity to correct it or clarify the inaccuracy. Refusal or failure to correct or clarify may result in a complaint filed with the GSA ACB (or GSA Board if the reporting member is the ED, or ED if it is a staff member).

H. Presentation Items

- 1. GSA members, campus community members and stakeholders are welcome to deliver a presentation to GSA Council.
- 2. Presenters may be invited by a Council member with approval of the Speaker, or may directly send a request to the Speaker to give a presentation.
- 3. A request to deliver a presentation must be submitted to the Speaker.
 - a. The request should contain a 1-2 sentence description of the presentation as well as an estimated length of the presentation.
 - b. Presentation requests after this deadline will not be honored.
 - c. If a GSA Council meeting is moved earlier, the initial deadline will be honored.
 - d. The Speaker, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), reserves the right to reject a presentation request if there are urgent action items that demand priority or if there are already other outstanding presentations.
- 4. Presenters are to send a copy of the powerpoint file (or other presentation file) to the Administrative Assistant at least 1 day prior to the meeting.
- 5. A presentation may not be longer than thirty (30) minutes including a question period.
 - a. Normally, no more than three presentations will be permitted per meeting. Additional presentations may be approved on a case-by-case basis, factoring in other pressing matters such as outstanding discussion or action items.
 - b. Longer presentations may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Speaker in consultation with the ED (or delegate) depending on the existing agenda items, urgency of the presentation, and other factors.
- 6. Presentations are traditionally accompanied by a 5-10 minute question period. GSA Council members are welcome to ask questions to the presenters on matters related to the presentation.

- a. If there are outstanding questions after the allotted time elapses, GSA Council members may be asked to either hold their questions until the open question period or to directly contact the presenter.
- 7. In the May and September GSA Council meetings, the Speaker and ED (or delegate) will deliver a 15-minute onboarding presentation for new council members. The presentation will cover basic foundational principles of GSA Council including the mandate and responsibilities of GSA Council, the governance structure of the GSA, and a simplified overview of the Standing Orders and other important elements of GSA Bylaw and Policy.
 - a. GSA Council members who join in other months may request a one-on-one or smaller group session.

I. Action Items and Motions

- 1. Action items encompass important or urgent business requiring the approval of GSA Council, such as bylaw and policy changes, the annual budget, ratification of the annual GSA General Election results etc. Action items are typically accompanied with a suggested motion.
- 2. Action items may be submitted by any Council member per the guidelines in SO.5.C.3. While there are no standardized guidelines for action items or motions, submissions must contain the following information:
 - a. A clear suggested motion
 - i. Typical wording for this may include “BE IT RESOLVED THAT...” or “THAT THE GSA COUNCIL APPROVE...”
 - b. Appropriate background or context as it relates to the item, and a clear rationale as to why the motion should be adopted.
 - c. Whether any appropriate consultations with relevant Standing Committees were undertaken
 - i. The lack of consultations will not necessarily result in a submission being denied, but may provide a strong support for the motion in the Council.
 - d. Suggested length for presentation, discussion and debate (up to a maximum of 30min)
 - i. This is primarily for agenda scheduling. The actual item may take more or less time to resolve.
- 3. Should an action item be submitted with insufficient information, the Speaker in consultation with the ED (or delegate) will provide aid in obtaining the necessary

information. Should the submitter refuse to provide the necessary information, the Speaker may rule the submission out of order.

4. The Speaker, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), reserves the right to reject proposed action items if there are potential breaches of GSA Bylaw and Policy, real or perceived conflicts of interest, or if the Speaker deems the item to be out of order. A clear reason for rejection must be communicated to the person submitting the item.
 - a. This decision can be appealed. If appealed, the Deputy Speaker in consultation with the ED (or delegate) will determine a final outcome.
5. The GSA Administrative Assistant or Speaker may contact the submitter to clarify motion structure and formatting for the agenda.
6. Action items are presented to the GSA Council in the order by which they were received.
 - a. Action items deferred from previous meetings take precedence over newer action items.
 - b. Second readings of Bylaw changes take precedence over all action items.
7. Each action item will be allocated a minimum of 5 minutes, up to a maximum of 30 minutes. The length of the debate can be adjusted as described in *Section 6 - Rules of Debate*.
8. The Speaker will introduce the motion and presenter, and will call for a mover and seconder. The presenter of the motion usually will be a mover. The presenter of a motion will be given time to present the motion and explain any important or relevant details.
9. After the presenter finishes, the GSA Council will be allowed to discuss, ask questions and debate, following the Rules of Debate outlined in *Section 6 - Rules of Debate*.
10. Rarely, an action item may require a Closed Session debate. The rules outlined in *L. Closed Sessions* will also apply in such cases.
11. After the debate has concluded or if the allotted time runs out, the Speaker will call for a vote on the motion.
 - a. Motions will be voted via Google Form. GSA Council members will be given up to 2 minutes to vote.
 - b. The presenter of a motion may request to have the vote conducted by raising hands. Such a request will be honored if there are no objections from a GSA Council member.
 - c. All motions must be voted on during open sessions. No action items can be voted on in a Closed Session.

- d. The Speaker reserves the right to call for a vote if they determine that the discussion or debate is no longer productive or is looping on itself.
- 12. After a motion is voted on, the Speaker will announce the tallied results and whether the motion passes or fails. Results are based on the total votes cast, not the number of members present.

J. Discussion Items

- 1. Discussion items may stem from a presentation item or may be independent.
- 2. Normally, discussion items are platforms for members to openly discuss current affairs, upcoming projects or proposals, or to seek guidance from GSA Council.
- 3. Discussion items are not associated with action items or motions.
 - a. However, at times an immediate action item or motion may arise from a discussion item.
 - b. Motions raised during substantive discussion which may have significant impacts on the operations of the GSA may be voted on per the discretion of the Speaker in consultation with the Deputy Speaker and/or ED (or delegate). Otherwise, such a motion would be automatically deferred to the next GSA Council meeting.
- 4. Discussion items are subject to the Rules of Debate as described in *Section 6*.

K. Question Period

- 1. GSA Council members are welcome to ask questions that may not have been addressed during the meeting.
- 2. GSA Council members are welcome to ask questions about affairs related to the GSA and its operations or the broader campus community that may not have come up during the meeting.
- 3. GSA Council members may submit written questions to the Speaker.
 - a. Questions must be received by the Speaker or Administrative Assistant before the release of the Second Mailing.

L. Closed Sessions

- 1. Closed Sessions are platforms for confidential discussion pertaining to GSA affairs.

2. The Speaker must be notified if a Closed Session is to be added to the agenda before the release of the Second Mailing. The Speaker should be made aware of the expected contents of the Closed Session.
3. A motion to begin Closed Session requires a mover and a seconder followed by a simple majority vote.
4. All GSA Council members are able to participate in Closed Sessions and must abide by the Confidentiality Agreement signed at the start of their term. Guests (including GSA general members and members of the public) may not be present in Closed Sessions.
5. Information shared in Closed Sessions is strictly confidential and must not be discussed in any official or unofficial capacity outside the Closed Session.
 - a. Content from Closed Sessions may be discussed in later Closed Sessions.
 - b. Identified breaches in confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and established legal frameworks in Edmonton, Alberta and Canada.
6. Closed Sessions will be minuted and recorded, but these materials will be kept sealed and password-protected by the Speaker, Administrative Assistant and ED (or delegate).
7. Other than a motion to exit a Closed Session or related procedural motions, no action items or motions can be voted upon in a Closed Session.
8. All discussions in a Closed Session will continue to observe the rules outlined in *Section 6 - Rules of Debate*.
9. If an offense occurs in a Closed Session, the procedures outlined in *Section 7 - Disciplinary Action* in Council Meetings will be followed.
 - a. In this scenario, ACB may be informed of Closed Session information that is only relevant to the offense in order to provide context if an ACB complaint is deemed necessary.
 - b. The complainant should consult with the Speaker and ED (or delegate) to determine what information can or cannot be disclosed.

M. Meeting Adjournment

1. Scheduled GSA Council Meetings are typically fixed to adjourn at 8PM. The fixed time to adjourn will be confirmed in the agenda. A meeting can be adjourned without a vote upon reaching this time, or within 10 minutes.
2. Prior to ending the meeting, another QR code will be displayed to record attendance.

3. A motion to adjourn a GSA Council Meeting ahead of the fixed time requires a simple majority vote.
4. A motion to extend a GSA Council Meeting requires a simple majority vote.
5. Special Meetings may have a different fixed time to adjourn, which will be stated in the agenda. The same rules aforementioned apply.

N. GSA Council Meeting Records

1. All GSA Council meeting packages will be made available on the GSA website.
2. All GSA Council meetings will be audio recorded and minuted.
3. Transcripts and audio recordings of open sessions will be stored by the Speaker, Administrative Assistant and ED (or delegate).
 - a. GSA members may request access to recordings or transcripts by contacting the aforementioned individuals.
4. GSA Council members and guests may choose to record audio or video of the meeting. It is strongly advised to inform the Speaker who will inform attendees.
 - a. GSA Council members can not record Closed Sessions (other than the Speaker and Administrative Assistant for record-keeping purposes).
5. Transcripts and audio recordings of closed sessions will be kept sealed and password-protected by the Speaker, Administrative Assistant and ED (or delegate).
 - a. GSA Council members may request to view these materials. Requests will be assessed by the Speaker in consultation with the ED (or delegate).
 - b. Distribution of these materials is strictly prohibited and identified breaches may be dealt with in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and established legal frameworks in Edmonton, Alberta and Canada.

Section 6 - Rules of Debate

A. Speaking Order

1. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker will track the speaking order (also known as the Speaker's List) and duration on a spreadsheet.
 - a. The spreadsheet may be shared with the GSA Council by Council member request or at the discretion of the Speaker.
2. Each Council member may speak for a total of up to 5 minutes per item.
 - a. This limit is waived for the presenter of the motion to allow them to address questions or concerns effectively. However, the Speaker reserves the right to limit their participation to allow other participants to speak.
 - b. A Council member may not pass on unused time to other members.
 - c. If a Council member has exhausted their time to speak but wishes to speak further, the Speaker may allow an additional 1 minute depending on the current state of the debate and the length of the Speaker's List.
3. With respect to a debate on a motion or action item, the speaking order will alternate between for and against viewpoints as best as possible.
4. Priority in speaking order will be given to members who have not spoken at that GSA Council meeting yet.
 - a. A Council member may choose to allow someone else to speak before them and take their turn after.
5. GSA Council members may call an Incidental Motions at any point by raising their hand, announcing that they'd like to raise one, then wait for the Speaker to call on them. See Section 6C - Incidental Motions.
6. Only members in attendance can participate in debate or discussion. Absent members may not participate or cast a vote on a motion.

B. Basic Steps in Debate and Discussion

1. These rules apply to any debate, discussion and question period at a GSA Council meeting
2. When there is someone speaking, all others must be respectful, give their attention and listen.

3. GSA Council members who wish to speak must raise their hand or placard and wait patiently.
 - a. The Speaker upon recognizing a raised hand will try to non-verbally communicate that the member is added to the Speaker's List if someone else is currently speaking.
4. The Speaker will call upon the member to speak. The member shall introduce their name and position/department before speaking.
5. Council members must address only the Speaker while participating in debate or discussion.
6. GSA Council members must not speak to the character, motivations or intent of any other individual and must keep their arguments to the merits of the item being discussed. *Ad hominem* attacks against any individual will not be tolerated. Comments made this way will be considered out of order.
7. GSA Council members must not shout at other members or make inappropriate gestures. Such actions will be considered out of order.
8. The Speaker reserves the right to enact disciplinary orders outlined in *Section 7 - Disciplinary Actions* should a Council member act out of order.

C. Incidental Motions

1. GSA Council members may call a Point of Order, Information, Parliamentary Inquiry, Privilege or Personal Privilege (also known as incidental motions) at any point.
2. When a Council member raises an incidental motion, the current speaking member will be allowed to finish their sentence.
3. The Speaker will call on the member raising the incidental motion immediately. The Council member will state the reason for calling the incidental motion. The Speaker will determine a corrective course of action to address the incidental motion raised immediately.
4. Incidental motions do not require a mover or a seconder and are typically not subject to debate.
5. Incidental motions must not be used as a means to participate in the debate.
6. Point of Order is made when a Council member believes a Standing Order, GSA Bylaw and Policy, or legislation is violated, or if a member is acting out of order.

- a. Where a Council member rises on a Point of Order, citing the violation of a federal, provincial or municipal law, the member must provide a copy of that law to the Speaker at the time the Point of Order is raised.
7. Point of Information is made when a Council member has an urgent question about the current action or discussion item.
8. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry is made when a Council member has an urgent question about the rules of the meeting or procedural matters.
9. Point of Privilege is made when a Council member would like to address a problem or concern about the meeting environment, such as inability of members to hear or see, room temperature, external noise disturbances etc.
10. Point of Personal Privilege is made when a Council member would like to address a problem regarding their participation in the meeting, such as incorrect attendance record, missed opportunity to speak etc.

D. Subsidiary Motions

1. During the debate or discussion of a motion, subsidiary motions may arise.
2. All subsidiary motions require a mover and seconder. Votes are conducted by hands raised.
3. Subsidiary motions cannot be made until at least one person (including the presenter) has spoken or presented.
 - a. There may be exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
4. When making a subsidiary motion, the mover must state the rationale for it.
5. Subsidiary motions are subject to debate of up to 5 minutes. This debate cannot be extended.
6. Motion to Amend is made when a Council member wishes to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion. It requires a simple majority vote.
7. Motion to Defer is made when a Council member wishes to defer an item to a later GSA Council meeting. It requires a simple majority vote.
 - a. If there are outstanding items at the end of a GSA Council meeting, they are automatically deferred to the next meeting and do not require a vote.
8. Motion to Table is made when a Council member believes a motion should be set aside for a time. It requires a simple majority vote.

- a. At least one item of business must be addressed before a tabled motion is addressed.
- 9. Motion to Kill a Motion is made when a Council member believes a motion should be dropped and not addressed again. It requires a two-thirds majority vote.
- 10. Motion to Refer is made when a Council member believes a standing committee should deliberate further on a motion. It requires a simple majority vote.
 - a. The specific standing committee must be stated when the motion is made.
- 11. Motion to Divide the Question is made when a Council member believes a motion should be split up into multiple motions. It requires a simple majority vote.
- 12. Motion to Limit the Debate is made when a Council member believes a discussion or debate should be limited to a certain amount of time or a certain number of speakers. It requires a simple majority vote.
- 13. Motion to Call the Question is made when a Council member believes a discussion or debate has exhausted itself and that the vote should be called. It requires a two-thirds majority vote.
- 14. Motion to Extend the Debate is made when a Council member believes further discussion is warranted on a particular action item. It requires a simple majority vote.
 - a. A specific time increment must be provided.
- 15. Motion to Rescind is made when a Council member believes a previously adopted motion should be rescinded. It requires a two-thirds majority vote.
- 16. Motion to Reconsider is made when a Council member believes that a motion that has been voted on should be re-evaluated and voted on again.
- 17. Motion to Recess is made when a Council member believes a recess/break should occur. It requires a simple majority vote.
 - a. The duration of the recess must be specified.
- 18. Motion to Adjourn is made when a Council member believes the current meeting should end. This motion is not debatable. It requires a simple majority vote.
- 19. Motion to Extend the Time is made when a Council member believes the current meeting should be extended beyond the fixed time to adjourn. It requires a two-thirds majority vote.
 - a. A proposed end time must be given.

E. Speaker's Rulings and Prerogatives

1. When a potential breach of the Standing Orders, GSA Bylaw and Policy or university-derived conduct policies is identified during a GSA Council meeting, the Speaker will make a ruling on how to resolve such a matter. Some examples of rulings may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Disallowing a motion if it contravenes GSA Bylaw and Policy, Post-Secondary Learning Act, Labour Relations Code or any legal framework in Edmonton, Alberta or Canada.
 - b. Limiting discussion if the Speaker believes the conversation is looping on itself.
 - c. Restricting or allowing the participation of guests in discussions.
 - d. Disciplinary action against a guest or Council member acting out of order (See Section 7 - Disciplinary Actions)
2. When making a ruling on a matter, the Speaker will refer to GSA Bylaw and Policy and the Standing Orders first. If either document fails to provide guidance, the Speaker will refer to Robert's Rules of Order.
3. Where the GSA Standing Orders, GSA Bylaw and Policy, and Robert's Rules of Order fail to provide direction on a matter, the Speaker will make a ruling using their best judgement based on best practices or precedent. The Speaker may consult with the Deputy Speaker and ED (or delegate) for further guidance or assistance.
4. Whenever the Speaker makes a ruling, they must provide an explanation immediately, citing relevant policy or evidence. An explanation of the ruling may also be included as part of the Speaker's report in the GSA Council meeting summary.
5. When researching and deliberating on a ruling, the Speaker may call a Recess for up to 5 minutes. Additional time may be permitted by a simple majority vote if the Speaker requests it.
6. Any Council member may challenge the Speaker's ruling.
 - a. When a ruling is challenged, the Speaker will explain their ruling and cite any supporting evidence.
 - b. The Speaker will then call a vote on whether the GSA Council wishes to overturn or uphold the ruling. Overturning the ruling requires a two-thirds majority vote.
 - c. When calling the question, the Speaker will first ask for all in favour of the Speaker's ruling, then ask for all against the Speaker's ruling, then any abstentions.
7. The Speaker should not participate in debate or discussion other than to provide context within GSA Bylaw or Policy, information pertaining to the GSA governance structure,

procedural matters or urgent information that does not disrupt the neutral and impartial nature of the role. The Speaker should use their best judgement when addressing these matters and remain neutral and impartial at all times.

8. If the Speaker believes that an urgent matter has been overlooked on a particular motion or discussion, the Speaker may choose to participate in the debate but must first vacate the chair.
 - a. If the Speaker relinquishes the chair this way, the Deputy Speaker (or delegate) will assume the chair and the Speaker will be considered a non-voting GSA Council member.
 - b. The Speaker can not reassume the chair until the pending item has been disposed of.
9. If the Speaker wishes to present a motion, it must be approved by the Deputy Speaker and ED (or delegate). The Speaker must vacate the chair during the debate and discussion of their motion by the GSA Council.
10. The Speaker does not have the right to vote on motions or during Council Elections. However, if there is a tie vote on a motion, the Speaker may cast a vote to break the tie.
 - a. Where a two-thirds majority vote is required, the Speaker may cast a vote only if it alters the outcome.
 - b. The Speaker may not vote to force a tie in a simple majority vote.
 - c. The Speaker may not vote on challenges to their rulings.
 - d. The Nominating Committee reserves the right to allow or disallow the Speaker to break any ties in Council Elections.
11. If a Council member believes that the Speaker is abusing the aforementioned privileges or in breach of the Standing Orders, they may move to order the Speaker to vacate the chair until the end of the current GSA Council meeting. Such a motion requires a two-thirds majority vote.
 - a. GSA Council members are strongly advised to file a complaint with the ACB depending on the severity of the breach.

Section 7 - Disciplinary Action in Council Meetings

1. When a Council member identifies disorderly conduct by another attendee, they may raise a Point of Order to address the matter.
2. If a guest is acting out of order or is being disruptive, the Speaker may order their removal from the meeting. This does not require a vote by council. A guest may not appeal this ruling.
 - a. In the case of virtual attendance, the meeting host may remove the individual from the meeting room per the Speaker's order.
 - b. In the case of in-person attendance, if the individual does not leave on their own, University of Alberta Protective Services may be engaged to remove them.
3. If a Council Member is deemed to be acting out of order or is being disruptive (ex. aggressive behaviour, shouting, inappropriate name-calling, attacks against individuals, use of swear words etc.) the Speaker may order the member to retract their statement and be silent for the remainder of the meeting.
4. If a Council Member continues to be disorderly despite the order, the Speaker may call a vote to expel the individual from the remainder of the meeting. This requires a simple majority vote.
 - a. In the case of virtual attendance, the meeting host may remove the individual from the meeting room per the Speaker's order.
 - b. In the case of in-person attendance, if the individual does not leave on their own accord, University of Alberta Protective Services may be engaged to remove them.
 - c. Conditions for their return may be set (such as an apology or retraction of a problematic statement).
5. If a guest or Council Member is actively hostile or dangerous or acting in a way that compromises the safety of other attendees (including but not limited to the use of discriminatory language, use of sexual language, sexual harassment, threats of violence, use of violent gestures or other examples of misconduct outlined in the University of Alberta's Student Conduct Policy and other university-related agreements or legislation etc.), the Speaker should immediately call a recess and order the removal of the offending member immediately without a vote.
 - a. In the case of virtual attendance, the meeting host may remove the individual from the meeting room per the Speaker's order.
 - b. In the case of in-person attendance, if the individual does not leave on their own accord, University of Alberta Protective Services may be engaged to remove them.

- c. Depending on the nature of the situation, University of Alberta Protective Services may order an evacuation from the inperson meeting venue. Should this occur, the meeting will be immediately adjourned until further notice.
 - d. Depending on the severity of a Council Member's offense and irrespective of a virtual or inperson environment, a report may be filed with appropriate law enforcement bodies, the Student Success and Experience office, and/or with the GSA ACB (if the member is a GSA Officer as defined in GSA Bylaw and Policy).
 - e. Depending on the severity of the guest's offense and irrespective of a virtual or inperson environment, a report may be filed with appropriate law enforcement bodies and with the Student Success and Experience office.
 - f. In accordance with the Canadian Human Rights Act, "the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted".
6. If a member of the GSA Council considers their own order to be silent or their own removal to be out of order, they may appeal and challenge it as if it were a Speaker's Ruling.
 7. In the event a Departmental Councillor is found to have breached standing orders and/or faced disciplinary action, their seat may be declared vacant. The Speaker and ED (or delegate) will reach out to the respective department to request the election of a new departmental councillor as soon as possible.
 8. In the event a Councillor-at-Large is found to have breached standing orders and/or faced disciplinary action, their seat may be declared vacant. The Speaker and ED (or delegate) will inform the Nominating Committee to initiate proceedings to fill the vacancy.
 9. A GSA Officer suspended with pay by ACB under H.POL.14 must seek the Speaker's approval to attend GSA Council Meetings. Where required, the Speaker may consult with the ED (or delegate) or the ACB before approving or denying such a request. If approved, the attendee will be considered a guest with no speaking privileges. GSA Council can not overturn ACB rulings.
 10. A GSA Officer permanently removed from their position resulting from a formal ACB decision or a departmental councillor removed under SO.7.7 must seek the Speaker's approval to attend GSA Council Meetings. Where required, the Speaker may consult with the ED (or delegate) or the ACB before approving or denying such a request. If approved, the attendee will be considered a guest with no speaking privileges. GSA Council can not overturn ACB rulings.

Standing Orders Revision History

Date of Revision	Certified by	Summary of Change(s)