



INTRODUCED AT THE JANUARY, 2005 GSC GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE VOTED ON AT THE FEBRUARY, 2005 GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

Amendment to the Description of Legislative Processes in the GSC Constitution / Bylaws

Summary and purpose of this amendment:

The current descriptions of legislative process given in the Constitution and Bylaws (under the headings of voting procedures and procedures for Council meetings) are very lacking and do not accurately reflect how the Council has been operating for many years. This amendment addresses these issues in the following ways:

- ◇ The Bylaws currently state that Roberts Rules of Order should be used as a means of maintaining order at Council meetings. However, these rules of order are very complicated, requiring formal motions to be made for even the most minor of things. Experience has shown that attempting to follow Roberts Rules leads to confusion and inefficiency. This amendment removes the restriction for using Roberts Rules, and instead simply states that the “presiding officer shall follow a Parliamentary procedure to be made available to the Council”.
- ◇ The current Constitution and Bylaws state nothing at all about the actual legislative process – including how an item is voted upon, the timeline for voting, what items may be put up to vote, etc. In addition, there is currently no guideline for how many votes are required to pass a piece of legislation. Over the past few years, a set of procedures have been developed and followed for all of these things, and this amendment incorporates these procedures into the Bylaws to ensure that there is no confusion in the future.



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GSC Constitution, Article VI currently reads:

Article VI. Voting Procedure

Each representative shall have one vote on all matters.

GSC Bylaws, Article IV currently reads:

Article V. Procedures for Council Meetings

The President shall call monthly meetings of the Council. At the end of each meeting, the next meeting time will be set, and schedule changes may only be made with at least two weeks notice. The conduct of meetings shall be the responsibility of the presiding officer appointed by the President. Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail unless they are in conflict with the Constitution or Bylaws. The Council may make additional rules for the conduct of meetings. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum. Meetings shall be open to all graduate students.

Items will be placed on the agenda for Council meetings from the minutes of the previous meeting, from the past Executive Committee meeting, or through petition in writing by ten graduate students. Additional agenda items may be placed at the discretion of the President.

Special meetings of the Council may be called to consider a special item or items of business, by the President, by two members of the Executive Committee, by four Council members, or by petition of any ten graduate students. Special meetings must be announced at least two weeks in advance and may not take place within two weeks of a regularly scheduled meeting.

When a vote is taken, the taking of the roll of voting members and the vote count shall be the responsibility of the Vice President, or of a Council member appointed by the presiding officer if the Vice President is absent or recused from the vote. Proxies may be appointed by written request submitted to the Vice President or the presiding officer.



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GSC Constitution, Article VI, should be amended to read as follows:

Article VI. Voting Procedure

Each Council representative, Council committee chair and Council officer shall have one and only one vote on all matters. Unless specified otherwise, voting decisions by the Council shall be made by simple majority of those present at a Council meeting provided quorum has been established. Further voting procedures shall be defined in the Bylaws.

GSC Bylaws, Article IV should be amended to read as follows:

Article V. Procedures for Council Meetings

A. Scheduling of Council Meetings

1. The President shall call monthly meetings of the Council. At the end of each meeting, the next meeting time will be set, and schedule changes may only be made with at least two weeks notice.
2. Special meetings of the Council may be called to consider a special item or items of business, by the President, by two members of the Executive Committee, by four Council members, or by petition of any ten graduate students. Special meetings must be announced at least two weeks in advance and may not take place within two weeks of a regularly scheduled meeting.

B. Conduct of Council Meetings

1. Items will be placed on the agenda for Council meetings from the minutes of the previous meeting, from the past Executive Committee meeting, or through petition in writing by ten graduate students. Additional agenda items may be placed at the discretion of the President. Every Council meeting must allow time for Open Floor.
2. The conduct of meetings shall be the responsibility of the President or their designated presiding officer. This presiding officer shall follow a Parliamentary procedure to be made available to the Council.
3. Meetings shall be open to all graduate students.

C. Legislative Process for Council Meetings

1. Issues to be voted on will be introduced into a two month cycle in which the subject is first brought up for an initial discussion at a Council meeting, and voted upon at the subsequent Council meeting. Representatives will be expected to discuss the matter with their constituencies in the intervening period between these Council meetings, and a venue for further discussion during this time will be provided if deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
2. An item of legislation already voted upon by the Council may be reconsidered if one of the following holds:
 - i. it is shown that there has been substantive change in either the wording of the legislation or related circumstances since the earlier vote
 - ii. the number of abstentions in the earlier vote was large enough to affect the outcome of the vote
 - iii. neither the current set of Council representatives nor Council officers were in place when the earlier vote was taken



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3. In order to proceed with a vote, quorum must be established. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum. A Council member may appoint a proxy by written request submitted to the Vice President or the presiding officer.
4. When a vote is taken, the taking of the roll of voting members and the vote count shall be the responsibility of the Vice President, or of a Council member designated by the presiding officer if the Vice President is absent or recused from the vote.
5. Unless specified otherwise in the Constitution or Bylaws, an article of legislation shall pass if a majority of those voting members present vote in its favor.
6. The Council may vote to temporarily suspend the process described in Article V, Section C, Point 1, allowing immediate action on a legislative item. Doing so shall require a majority vote of the full Council. This suspension shall only be used when following the prescribed legislative process can be shown to substantially diminish the utility of the vote due to external factors.