



**LEGISLATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**BILL SP 2022-001**

**SPRING 2022 SESSION**

Constitution

**Legislative Action:**

Introduced by: David C. Saavedra

1st Reading: LSC Chair

Referred To: LSC

2nd Reading: LSC

Committee Action: Made changes & sent to Council

3rd Reading: Council

Council Action: \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive Action:**

Approved  Vetoed

\_\_\_\_\_  
GPSA President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Unsigned by the President on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 2022. Bill automatically becomes law.

**Legislative Response:**

Veto override vote taken: \_\_\_\_\_ Council Action: \_\_\_\_\_

*Summary of key points:*

*This proposed legislation addresses the GPSA President's priority of assessing GPSA to modernize and improve the functionality and overall structure of the organization.*

- *Rename all (Executive Board) Chair titles to (Executive Director) titles*
- *Rename Lobby to (Political Committee & Political Director)*
- *Remove Programs Committee and Chair*
- *Remove Student Support and Advocacy Committee and Chair*
- *Removes the Executive Board and replaced with the President's Cabinet*

**Found in GPSA Constitution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PREAMBLE**

We, the graduate and professional students of the University of New Mexico hereby establish the Graduate and Professional Student Association, in order to acknowledge and secure the right to pursue continuing education in a diverse community and to ensure fair and just access to resources provided by public institutions or available in the commons. As students with valuable experiences and unique pursuits, as well as common interests and concerns, we are united in our concern for the quality of our academic environment and recognize and affirm our right to organize for the purposes of protecting student welfare and expression. The establishment of this association provides for greater cooperation and influence to preserve and protect the rights of the students at this university including but not limited to the right to freely express ideas and thoughts, the right to have equitable access to a high quality education, and the right to

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46 participate in the processes and institutions that will ensure this education remains worthy and  
47 acceptable, and to advance the interests of the graduate and professional student community.

## 48 **ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION**

### 49 **Section 1. Name**

50 The name of the organization is the Graduate and Professional Student Association of the  
51 University of New Mexico, hereafter referred to as GPSA.

### 52 **Section 2. Objective**

53 To represent and serve graduate and professional students by promoting their rights and interests  
54 as students within the University community through advocacy, education, and financial support.

### 55 **Section 3. Membership**

56 A. Any graduate or professional student enrolled in a degree granting department or school  
57 at The University of New Mexico (the University) and who has paid the GPSA fee for  
58 that semester, as approved by the University of New Mexico Board of Regents (Board  
59 of Regents).

60 B. A student may voluntarily resign their membership, but is not exempt from obligation to  
61 pay GPSA fees.

### 62 **Section 4. Regent Control**

63 This Constitution, including all Constitutional amendments, shall be subject to modification by  
64 and under the control of the Board of Regents.

## 65 **ARTICLE II. EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

66 The Executive Branch is composed of the President, Chief of Staff, Executive Committees,  
67 presidential appointees, and staff.

### 69 **Section 1. President**

70 The President is head of the Executive Branch. Any GPSA member is eligible to run for the  
71 position.

#### 72 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 73 1. Serve as the official representative of GPSA to the Board of Regents and the public.
- 74 2. Serve as Chairperson of the Student Fee Review Board in accordance with its  
75 governing documents.
- 76 3. Have a working knowledge of the GPSA Constitution, Bylaws, policies, and the  
77 duties of positions within GPSA.
- 78 4. Shall have the authority to approve or veto all GPSA legislation, excluding  
79 resolutions. The President shall have the authority to sign on to joint resolutions  
80 with the legislative branch.
- 81 5. Oversee the finances of the Executive Branch, including the executive budget.
- 82 6. Coordinate with Executive Committee ~~Chairs~~ **Directors** and executive staff to  
83 prepare and submit a budget for the Executive Branch to the Council in accordance  
84 with budget procedures.
- 85 7. Supervise the administration of the GPSA Office.
- 86 8. Chair and coordinate the Executive Board.

- 87 9. Appoint Executive Standing Committee **chairs Directors**, with approval from  
88 Council, and appoint representatives to joint Student-Faculty Senate and University  
89 committees.  
90 10. Ensure delivery of executive committee reports at least once per semester to  
91 Council.  
92 11. Produce a public annual GPSA report that shall be available to any GPSA member  
93 upon request.  
94 12. Other duties as defined by the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.
- 95 B. Term of Office  
96 1. The term is one year, beginning at noon of the last day of the spring semester and  
97 ending at noon of the last day of the following spring semester.  
98 2. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as GPSA President.
- 99 C. Payment  
100 1. The President shall receive financial payment for their services. Such payment shall  
101 be set by Council in accordance with University policy. Changes to payment shall  
102 take effect at the start of the next Presidential term.
- 103 D. Removal  
104 1. Removal by Council  
105 a. Impeachment  
106 i. The President may be impeached for willful neglect of office, gross  
107 misconduct, or malfeasance by a majority vote of Council Representatives  
108 at a regular Council meeting.  
109 b. Removal  
110 i. Removal of the President requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council  
111 Representatives at a special meeting called by the Council Chair no less  
112 than five (5) academic days and no more than ten (10) academic days from  
113 the date of impeachment.  
114 ii. Upon removal by Council, the Elections Committee will initiate a recall  
115 election by the GPSA membership.  
116 2. The President shall be relinquished of all powers and privileges immediately upon a  
117 vote of removal.  
118 3. The Council Chair shall serve as Interim President until a special election can be  
119 scheduled within twenty (20) academic days following the removal of the  
120 President.

## 121 **Section 2. Chief of Staff**

122 The Chief of Staff works directly with the President, Executive Board, Staff, and other branches  
123 of GPSA. Any GPSA member is eligible to apply for the position.

### 124 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 125 1. Serve as an alternate representative for the President on official business to the  
126 administration, Board of Regents, and the public.  
127 2. Have a working knowledge of the GPSA Constitution, Bylaws, policies, and the  
128 duties of positions within GPSA.

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- 129 3. Shall have the authority to sign on behalf of the GPSA President for official  
130 business, at the President's behest.  
131 4. Other duties as defined by the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.  
132 B. Term of Office  
133 1. The term is one year coinciding with the President's term of office, beginning upon  
134 appointment by the President and ending at noon of the last day of the following  
135 spring semester.  
136 C. Payment  
137 1. The Chief of Staff shall receive financial payment for their services. Such payment  
138 shall be set by Council in accordance with University policy. The payment shall  
139 neither be increased nor diminished during the duration of their term.  
140 D. Removal  
141 1. The Chief of Staff may only be removed by the President.  
142 2. In the case of removal of the President, the Chief of Staff shall only remain if re-  
143 appointed by Presidential replacement.

### 144 Section 3. Executive Committees

145 Executive Committees shall be established for the purposes of effective governance and will  
146 report directly to the GPSA President. All committee members must be members of GPSA. All  
147 Executive Committee ~~Chairs~~ **Directors** will be appointed by the President.

#### 148 A. Executive Standing Committees

- 149 1. For all Executive Standing Committees, quorum shall be established if more than  
150 half of the voting members are physically present.  
151 2. Grants Committee  
152 a. Shall allocate funds from all GPSA grants and scholarships.  
153 3. Elections Committee  
154 a. Shall administer GPSA elections according to the GPSA Bylaws.  
155 b. Shall conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence in the  
156 integrity and impartiality of the election process and will not publicly support  
157 or campaign for any candidate.  
158 c. Shall distribute a written public report after every election.  
159 4. ~~Lobby~~ **Political** Committee  
160 a. Coordinate long term research and study of legislative issues as directed by the  
161 President.  
162 b. Produce the annual proposed legislative platform.  
163 c. Recommend to the President the appointment of student lobbyists during the  
164 annual New Mexico Legislative Session.

#### 165 ~~5. Programs Committee~~

- 166 ~~a. Implement programs that serve and facilitate interaction between graduate and~~  
167 ~~professional students and the University.~~  
168 ~~b. Foster positive relationships with the University and with the local community~~  
169 ~~through service programs.~~

#### 170 ~~6. Student Support and Advocacy Committee~~

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- 171 a. Assist and advocate for students requesting the support of GPSA.
- 172 b. Act as a GPSA liaison for students and respond to student inquiries about
- 173 GPSA.
- 174 c. Conduct on-campus outreach and education about services and resources
- 175 available through GPSA and the University. Collaborate with graduate and
- 176 professional student organizations.

177 **B. Executive Standing Committee Chairs Directors**

178 1. Duties, Power, Responsibilities

- 179 a. Assemble and administer committees according to the GPSA Constitution and
- 180 Bylaws.
- 181 b. Monitor committee budget and prepare annual budget request.
- 182 a. Provide annual written public report to the President to be included in annual
- 183 GPSA report.

184 2. Term

185 Term of office is from the date of appointment until noon on the last day of the

186 academic year or when letter of resignation is submitted to the President.

187 3. Payment

188 The **Chairs Directors** shall receive financial payment for their services.

189 4. Removal

190 The President can remove a committee **chair director** at any time, but the

191 president must appoint a replacement within twenty (20) academic days of the

192 date of removal.

193 **C. Executive Ad Hoc Committees**

- 194 1. May be created by the President as deemed necessary.
- 195 2. All Executive Ad Hoc Committees shall be dissolved at the end of the term of
- 196 office of the president who created them.

197 **D. Other Committees**

- 198 1. May include, but is not limited to, Joint Student-Faculty, University Committees,
- 199 and other policy making bodies.
- 200 2. Representatives, as appointed by the President, shall maintain communication with
- 201 the Executive Board of GPSA.
- 202 3. Appointed representatives shall attend meetings of their respective committees.
- 203 4. Committee representatives shall submit an annual written report to the President to
- 204 be included in annual GPSA report.

205 **Section 4. Executive Board**

206 ~~An Executive Board consisting of the President, Chief of Staff, Council Chair, and the Chairs of~~

207 ~~the Executive Standing Committees and Joint Standing Committees shall be established for the~~

208 ~~purposes of effective governance by the Executive Branch.~~

209

210 **Section 4. President's Cabinet**

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211 **The President’s Cabinet shall consist of the President, Chief of Staff, Public Affairs**  
212 **Director, Executive Committee Directors, Ad hoc Committee Directors, and Joint**  
213 **Standing Committees. The President’s Cabinet shall be established for the purposes of**  
214 **advisement and effective governance by the Executive Branch.**  
215

## 216 **ARTICLE III. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

217 The Legislative Branch is composed of the Council Chair, Council, Legislative Committees, and  
218 staff.

### 219 **Section 1. Council**

220 All legislative powers in GPSA shall be vested in a Council.

#### 221 A. Composition

- 222 1. The Council shall consist of GPSA Representatives selected through each  
223 Recognized Departmental Student Association (RDSA).
- 224 2. Each graduate and professional RDSA will be entitled to a minimum of one (1)  
225 Representative. Each RDSA representing a degree-granting department or school  
226 with more than one hundred (100) graduate or professional students are entitled to  
227 one (1) additional Representative for each one hundred (100) or part of one hundred  
228 (1-99) graduate and professional students enrolled in the department.

229 B. Council Meetings: Council shall meet on a regular basis during the academic year in  
230 accordance with the bylaws.

#### 231 C. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 232 1. The Council shall make all laws that it deems appropriate and necessary for GPSA.
- 233 2. The Council shall have the authority to override a presidential veto with a two-  
234 thirds (2/3) vote at a meeting.
- 235 3. The Council shall consider budgetary recommendations and vote on the GPSA  
236 budget.
- 237 4. Other duties including, but not limited to, the appropriation of the General Fund and  
238 endowments, approval of GPSA resolutions, impeachment of specified GPSA  
239 officials.

### 240 **Section 2. Representatives**

241 Representatives must be members of GPSA that are selected at will by the RDSA in the  
242 department or school in which they are enrolled.

#### 243 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 244 1. Attend and participate in Council meetings.
- 245 2. Represent respective constituents' concerns and interests to the Council.
- 246 3. Regularly communicate Council business and decisions with constituents.
- 247 4. Representatives are eligible to participate in designated Committees.
- 248 5. All representatives must have the proper credentials on file with the Council Chair.

#### 249 B. Term

- 250 1. Representatives serve at the discretion of their respective RDSAs.

### 251 **Section 3. Council Chair**

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252 The Council Chair must be a member of GPSA and shall be elected by Council at the regular  
253 April Council meeting in accordance with the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

254 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

255 1. The Chair shall:

- 256 a. Call and preside over Council meetings.
- 257 b. Serve as the official representative of the Council to the public.
- 258 c. Serve as an ex officio member on the Executive Board, and Legislative  
259 Committees.
- 260 d. Administer and oversee the Council budget.
- 261 e. Other duties as defined by the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

262 2. The Chair shall not vote in Council, except in the case of a tie.

263 B. Term

264 1. The term is one year, beginning at noon of the last day of the spring semester and  
265 ending at noon of the last day of the following spring semester.

266 2. An individual may serve a maximum of two (2) terms as the Council Chair.

267 C. Payment

268 1. The Council Chair shall receive financial payment for their services. Such payment  
269 shall be set by Council in accordance with University policy. The payment shall  
270 neither be increased nor diminished during the duration of their term.

271 D. Removal

272 1. The Council Chair may be impeached for willful neglect of office, gross  
273 misconduct, or malfeasance by a majority vote of Council Representatives at a  
274 regular Council meeting.

275 2. Upon an affirmative vote of impeachment, Council shall consider a vote of removal  
276 to be held at a special meeting within eleven (11) academic days. The Council Chair  
277 shall be relinquished of all powers and privileges immediately upon a two-thirds  
278 (2/3) vote of removal by Council.

279 3. The Legislative Steering Committee Chair shall serve as interim Council Chair until  
280 an election by Council can be scheduled within twenty (20) academic days  
281 following removal.

282 **Section 2. Section 4. Legislative Committees**

283 Legislative Committees shall consist of Council Representatives.

284 A. Composition

285 1. The Council Chair shall appoint all chairs and members of the Legislative  
286 Committees and shall submit these appointments for approval by Council.

287 2. Council Representatives may recommend nominations for committee positions for  
288 Council consideration.

289 3. Shall be composed of a minimum of five (5) and not more than twelve (12)  
290 Representatives representing a minimum of three (3) RDSAs.

291 B. Legislative Standing Committees

292 1. Steering Committee shall make recommendations regarding legislations sent to the  
293 Council.

- 294 C. Legislative Standing Committee Chairs  
295 1. Duties, Power, and Responsibilities  
296 a. Chairs shall administer committees according to the GPSA Constitution and  
297 Bylaws.  
298 b. The Steering Committee Chair shall oversee the committee and will have no  
299 vote except in the event of a tie.  
300 2. Payment  
301 Legislative Standing Committee Chairs shall receive financial payment for their  
302 services.  
303 3. Removal  
304 The Council Chair can remove a committee chair in accordance with the GPSA  
305 Constitution and Bylaws, but shall present a replacement to Council at the next  
306 regular meeting.  
307 D. Legislative Ad Hoc Committees  
308 1. May be created by the Council Chair with a majority vote of approval from Council  
309 or created by Council with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.  
310 2. All Legislative Ad Hoc Committees shall be dissolved by the end of the session.

311 **ARTICLE IV. JUDICIAL BRANCH**

312 The Judicial Branch is composed of the GPSA Court of Review.

313 **Section 1. Court of Review**

314 A. Jurisdiction

315 The Court of Review shall have jurisdiction over disputes arising under the GPSA  
316 Constitution and Bylaws. The Court may also have appellate jurisdiction as  
317 defined in the GPSA Bylaws.

318 B. Composition

- 319 1. The Court shall consist of a minimum of three (3) Justices, of which no more than  
320 two shall be appointed from the same department or school.  
321 2. There shall be one Chief Justice and no less than two (2) Associate Justices.

322 C. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 323 1. The Court of Review shall hear and have jurisdiction over complaints brought forth  
324 by a GPSA member regarding:  
325 a. Matters arising under the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws  
326 b. Acts of the President, Council Chair, GPSA staff, or other GPSA official when  
327 acting under the authority of GPSA.  
328 2. Members of the Court of Review shall not serve in any other position within GPSA.

329 **Section 2. Justices**

330 A. Term of Office

- 331 1. The term of office for the Chief Justice shall be one year. The term shall begin after  
332 appointment and upon confirmation of the Council, and shall terminate on the last  
333 day of the Spring semester.



- 334 2. The term of office for the Associate Justices shall be for one year. The term shall  
335 begin after appointment and upon confirmation of the Council and shall terminate  
336 on the last day of the spring semester.  
337 3. The President and Council Representatives shall have the authority to recommend  
338 Justices. All recommendations must be considered.  
339 4. All Justices must be approved by the Council.  
340 5. No Justice shall serve more than two terms.

341 B. Payment

342 The Chief Justice and Associate Justices shall receive financial payment for their  
343 services.

344 C. Removal

- 345 1. Justices may be impeached for willful neglect of office, gross misconduct, or  
346 malfeasance by a majority vote of Council Representatives at a regular Council  
347 meeting.  
348 2. Removal of a Justice requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council Representatives at  
349 a special meeting called by the Council Chair following vote of impeachment.

350

351 **ARTICLE V. FINANCE**

352 **Section 1. Fees**

353 Subject to authorization by the Board of Regents, a nonrefundable fee, henceforth referred to as  
354 the GPSA fee, shall be levied on all degree-seeking graduate and professional students. The  
355 University shall collect these fees and forward them immediately to the GPSA.

- 356 A. The GPSA fee shall not exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25) per student per semester and  
357 any increase must be approved through a referendum and by the Board of Regents.  
358 B. Five percent (5%) of the total collected GPSA fees are taken by the University in the  
359 form of an accounting fee payable to the Student Government Accounting Office  
360 (SGAO). The remainder of the total is added to the General Fund.  
361 C. Purpose: Collected fees shall be allocated by the GPSA Council to fund the general  
362 GPSA government and to benefit chartered student organizations and graduate and  
363 professional students through GPSA Committees and Council.

364

365 **Section 2. Oversight and Distribution**

366 A. The Finance Committee (FC)

- 367 1. The FC shall be established as a Joint Standing Committee.  
368 2. The FC shall make recommendations to Council on appropriations and compile and  
369 recommend the GPSA budget in accordance with the GPSA Constitution and  
370 Bylaws.  
371 3. The Finance Committee **Chair Director** and/or **Vice-Chair Associate Director** shall  
372 have all necessary authority to approve budget revisions. The FC shall prepare a  
373 monthly report of revisions to be included as a supporting document for the next  
374 Council Meeting.

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- 375 a. When Council is not in session, the President, Council Chair, and **Grants Chair**  
376 **Director** must jointly review and decide on budget revisions.  
377 B. SGAO acts as the agent of all GPSA financial transactions.  
378 C. The GPSA financial records including, but not limited to, the GPSA budget and  
379 appropriations may be subject to a financial review as requested by a Council  
380 Representative, the President, the Council Chair, or through a complaint filed with the  
381 Court of Review.

382 **Section 3: GPSA Budget**

- 383 A. This budget shall be based upon the anticipated revenue for the upcoming fiscal year as  
384 determined by SGAO.  
385 B. All branches of the GPSA government must follow budget processes as defined by the  
386 GPSA Constitution, Bylaws, and applicable standing rules to be eligible for funding.  
387 C. A final budget must be approved no later than the April council meeting.  
388 D. Forty percent (40%) of the GPSA budget shall be reserved for the Pro-Rated Benefits  
389 Fund.  
390 E. No less than ten percent (10%) of the total GPSA budget shall be allocated to the Grants  
391 Committee as Student Research Grants and Professional Development Grants.  
392 F. No less than five percent (5%) of the GPSA budget shall be reserved for appropriations.  
393 G. Funds not appropriated through the budget process shall be placed in the General Fund.  
394 H. Council shall have the authority to determine the process of reversion of funds allocated  
395 through the budget.

396 **Section 4. Financial Compliance**

- 397 A. GPSA shall be in accordance with all necessary local, state, federal, and University  
398 requirements as determined by SGAO.  
399 B. Student organizations seeking funding from the GPSA budget must be in compliance  
400 with guidelines set by the FC.  
401 C. Misuse of GPSA funds shall result in Council recourse, including Financial Enjoinment.

402 **ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS**

403 The Elections Committee shall administer annual GPSA elections and provide public notice of  
404 elections, in accordance with the Bylaws.

405  
406 **Section 1. General Election**

- 407 A. A general election of the President shall occur in the spring semester of each academic  
408 year.  
409 B. The ballot shall include the opportunity to vote for GPSA President, and may include  
410 amendments, referenda, and any other items approved by Council.  
411 C. A plurality of votes shall decide all items presented on the ballot.  
412 D. All members of the GPSA are entitled to vote in general elections.

413 **Section 2. Council Chair Election**

- 414 A. An election of the Council Chair shall occur at a scheduled meeting.

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415 B. The Council Chair is elected by a majority of votes of eligible representatives present at  
416 that meeting.

417 **Section 3. Special Elections**

418 A. Special elections may be held as called by the Council or the President, or by a  
419 referendum petition. If so called, it must occur within thirty (30) Academic Days.

420 **ARTICLE VII. REFERENDA**

421 A referendum is a ballot initiative put to a popular vote of the GPSA membership.

422 A. Referenda may be submitted by the President with majority approval of Council, or a  
423 petition signed by at least fifty (50) GPSA members. The Elections Committee will  
424 have the authority to verify the signatures on a referendum petition.

425 B. In order to be placed on the general election ballot, referenda must be submitted to the  
426 Elections Committee no later than thirty (30) academic days prior to the general  
427 election.

428 **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

429 Proceedings to introduce a Constitutional amendment may be initiated by any GPSA member.

430 **Section 1. Amendments**

431 Requires a two-thirds (2/3) approval by Council Representatives present at a regular Council  
432 meeting, plurality approval by GPSA members voting in an election, and approval by the Board  
433 of Regents.