

**LEGISLATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**BILL SP 2022-001**

**SPRING 2022 SESSION**

Constitution

**Legislative Action:**

Introduced by: David C. Saavedra

1st Reading: LSC

Referred To: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Action: \_\_\_\_\_

3rd Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

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.*

- *Renamed all Chair titles are to Director titles*
- *Renamed Lobby to Political (Ex. Political Committee/Political Director)*
- *Removes Programs Committee and Chair*
- *Removes Student Support and Advocacy Committee and Chair*
- *Removes the Executive Board*
- *Addition of the President's Cabinet*
- *Addition of Public Affairs Director to Executive Branch*
- *Addition of Attorney General to Judicial Branch*

**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

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46 association provides for greater cooperation and influence to preserve and protect the rights of  
47 the students at this university including but not limited to the right to freely express ideas and  
48 thoughts, the right to have equitable access to a high quality education, and the right to  
49 participate in the processes and institutions that will ensure this education remains worthy and  
50 acceptable, and to advance the interests of the graduate and professional student community.

## 51 **ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION**

### 52 **Section 1. Name**

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

### 55 **Section 2. Objective**

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

### 58 **Section 3. Membership**

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

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

### 65 **Section 4. Regent Control**

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

## 68 **ARTICLE II. EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

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

### 71 **Section 1. President**

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

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

- 75 1. Serve as the official representative of GPSA to the Board of Regents and the public.
- 76 2. Serve as Chairperson of the Student Fee Review Board in accordance with its  
77 governing documents.
- 78 3. Have a working knowledge of the GPSA Constitution, Bylaws, policies, and the  
79 duties of positions within GPSA.
- 80 4. Shall have the authority to approve or veto all GPSA legislation, excluding  
81 resolutions. The President shall have the authority to sign on to joint resolutions  
82 with the legislative branch.
- 83 5. Oversee the finances of the Executive Branch, including the executive budget.
- 84 6. Coordinate with Executive Committee ~~Chairs~~ **Directors** and executive staff to  
85 prepare and submit a budget for the Executive Branch to the Council in accordance  
86 with budget procedures.
- 87

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

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

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

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

- 128 1. Serve as an alternate representative for the President on official business to the  
129 administration, Board of Regents, and the public.

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

147        **Section 3. Public Affairs Director**

148        **The Public Affairs Director works directly with the President, Chief of Staff, Executive**  
149        **Board, Staff, and other branches of GPSA. Any GPSA member is eligible to apply for the**  
150        **position.**

151           **A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities**

- 152                   **1. Oversee and lead the events, programs, and communications from the**  
153                   **organization**  
154                   **2. Implement and coordinate programs that promote an inclusive and**  
155                   **supportive community for graduate and professional students.**  
156                   **3. Create and disseminate promotional materials in print and online,**  
157                   **including on social media.**  
158                   **4. Other duties as defined by the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.**

159           **B. Term of Office**

- 160                   **1. The term is one year coinciding with the President’s term of office, beginning**  
161                   **upon appointment by the President and ending at noon of the last day of the**  
162                   **following spring semester.**

163           **C. Payment**

- 164                   **1. The Public Affairs Director shall receive financial payment for their services.**  
165                   **Such payment shall be set by Council in accordance with University policy. The**  
166                   **payment shall neither be increased nor diminished during the duration of their**  
167                   **term.**

168           **D. Removal**

- 169                   **1. The Public Affairs Director may only be removed by the President.**  
170                   **2. In the case of removal of the President, the Public Affairs Director shall only**  
171                   **remain if re-appointed by Presidential replacement.**

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**Section 3 4. Executive Committees**

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

A. Executive Standing Committees

1. For all Executive Standing Committees, quorum shall be established if more than half of the voting members are physically present.

2. Grants Committee

a. Shall allocate funds from all GPSA grants and scholarships.

3. Elections Committee

a. Shall administer GPSA elections according to the GPSA Bylaws.

b. Shall conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the election process and will not publicly support or campaign for any candidate.

c. Shall distribute a written public report after every election.

4. ~~Lobby~~ **Political** Committee

a. Coordinate long term research and study of legislative issues as directed by the President.

b. Produce the annual proposed legislative platform.

c. Recommend to the President the appointment of student lobbyists during the annual New Mexico Legislative Session.

~~5. Programs Committee~~

~~a. Implement programs that serve and facilitate interaction between graduate and professional students and the University.~~

~~b. Foster positive relationships with the University and with the local community through service programs.~~

~~6. Student Support and Advocacy Committee~~

~~a. Assist and advocate for students requesting the support of GPSA.~~

~~b. Act as a GPSA liaison for students and respond to student inquiries about GPSA.~~

~~c. Conduct on-campus outreach and education about services and resources available through GPSA and the University. Collaborate with graduate and professional student organizations.~~

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

1. Duties, Power, Responsibilities

a. Assemble and administer committees according to the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

b. Monitor committee budget and prepare annual budget request.

a. Provide annual written public report to the President to be included in annual GPSA report.

2. Term

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214 Term of office is from the date of appointment until noon on the last day of the  
215 academic year or when letter of resignation is submitted to the President.

216 3. Payment

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

218 4. Removal

219 The President can remove a committee ~~chair~~ **director** at any time, but the  
220 president must appoint a replacement within twenty (20) academic days of the  
221 date of removal.

222 C. Executive Ad Hoc Committees

223 1. May be created by the President as deemed necessary.

224 2. All Executive Ad Hoc Committees shall be dissolved at the end of the term of  
225 office of the president who created them.

226 D. Other Committees

227 1. May include, but is not limited to, Joint Student-Faculty, University Committees,  
228 and other policy making bodies.

229 2. Representatives, as appointed by the President, shall maintain communication with  
230 the Executive Board of GPSA.

231 3. Appointed representatives shall attend meetings of their respective committees.

232 4. Committee representatives shall submit an annual written report to the President to  
233 be included in annual GPSA report.

234 **Section 4. Executive Board**

235 ~~An Executive Board consisting of the President, Chief of Staff, Council Chair, and the Chairs of~~  
236 ~~the Executive Standing Committees and Joint Standing Committees shall be established for the~~  
237 ~~purposes of effective governance by the Executive Branch.~~

239 **Section 5. President's Cabinet**

240 **The President's Cabinet shall consist of the President, Chief of Staff, Public Affairs**  
241 **Director, Executive Committee Directors, Ad hoc Committee Directors, and Joint**  
242 **Standing Committees. The President's Cabinet shall be established for the purposes of**  
243 **advisement and effective governance by the Executive Branch.**

245 **ARTICLE III. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

246 The Legislative Branch is composed of the Council Chair, Council, Legislative Committees, and  
247 staff.

248 **Section 1. Council**

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

250 A. Composition

251 1. The Council shall consist of GPSA Representatives selected through each  
252 Recognized Departmental Student Association (RDSA).

253 2. Each graduate and professional RDSA will be entitled to a minimum of one (1)  
254 Representative. Each RDSA representing a degree-granting department or school  
255 with more than one hundred (100) graduate or professional students are entitled to

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256 one (1) additional Representative for each one hundred (100) or part of one hundred  
257 (1-99) graduate and professional students enrolled in the department.

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

260 C. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 261 1. The Council shall make all laws that it deems appropriate and necessary for GPSA.  
262 2. The Council shall have the authority to override a presidential veto with a two-  
263 thirds (2/3) vote at a meeting.  
264 3. The Council shall consider budgetary recommendations and vote on the GPSA  
265 budget.  
266 4. Other duties including, but not limited to, the appropriation of the General Fund and  
267 endowments, approval of GPSA resolutions, impeachment of specified GPSA  
268 officials.

269 **Section 2. Representatives**

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

272 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

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

278 B. Term

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

280 **Section 3. Council Chair**

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

283 A. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

- 284 1. The Chair shall:  
285 a. Call and preside over Council meetings.  
286 b. Serve as the official representative of the Council to the public.  
287 c. Serve as an ex officio member on the Executive Board, and Legislative  
288 Committees.  
289 d. Administer and oversee the Council budget.  
290 e. Other duties as defined by the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

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

292 B. Term

- 293 1. The term is one year, beginning at noon of the last day of the spring semester and  
294 ending at noon of the last day of the following spring semester.  
295 2. An individual may serve a maximum of two (2) terms as the Council Chair.

296 C. Payment

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

300 D. Removal

- 301 1. The Council Chair may be impeached for willful neglect of office, gross  
302 misconduct, or malfeasance by a majority vote of Council Representatives at a  
303 regular Council meeting.
- 304 2. Upon an affirmative vote of impeachment, Council shall consider a vote of removal  
305 to be held at a special meeting within eleven (11) academic days. The Council Chair  
306 shall be relinquished of all powers and privileges immediately upon a two-thirds  
307 (2/3) vote of removal by Council.
- 308 3. The Legislative Steering Committee Chair shall serve as interim Council Chair until  
309 an election by Council can be scheduled within twenty (20) academic days  
310 following removal.

311 **Section 2. Section 4. Legislative Committees**

312 Legislative Committees shall consist of Council Representatives.

313 A. Composition

- 314 1. The Council Chair shall appoint all chairs and members of the Legislative  
315 Committees and shall submit these appointments for approval by Council.
- 316 2. Council Representatives may recommend nominations for committee positions for  
317 Council consideration.
- 318 3. Shall be composed of a minimum of five (5) and not more than twelve (12)  
319 Representatives representing a minimum of three (3) RDSAs.

320 B. Legislative Standing Committees

- 321 1. Steering Committee shall make recommendations regarding legislations sent to the  
322 Council.

323 C. Legislative Standing Committee Chairs

324 1. Duties, Power, and Responsibilities

- 325 a. Chairs shall administer committees according to the GPSA Constitution and  
326 Bylaws.
- 327 b. The Steering Committee Chair shall oversee the committee and will have no  
328 vote except in the event of a tie.

329 2. Payment

330 Legislative Standing Committee Chairs shall receive financial payment for their  
331 services.

332 3. Removal

333 The Council Chair can remove a committee chair in accordance with the GPSA  
334 Constitution and Bylaws, but shall present a replacement to Council at the next  
335 regular meeting.

336 D. Legislative Ad Hoc Committees

- 337 1. May be created by the Council Chair with a majority vote of approval from Council  
338 or created by Council with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.



339 2. All Legislative Ad Hoc Committees shall be dissolved by the end of the session.

340 **ARTICLE IV. JUDICIAL BRANCH**

341 The Judicial Branch is composed of the GPSA Court of Review **and the Attorney General.**

342 **Section 1. Court of Review**

343 A. Jurisdiction

344 The Court of Review shall have jurisdiction over disputes arising under the GPSA  
345 Constitution and Bylaws. The Court may also have appellate jurisdiction as  
346 defined in the GPSA Bylaws.

347 B. Composition

348 1. The Court shall consist of a minimum of three (3) Justices, of which no more than  
349 two shall be appointed from the same department or school.

350 2. There shall be one Chief Justice and no less than two (2) Associate Justices.

351 C. Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities

352 1. The Court of Review shall hear and have jurisdiction over complaints brought forth  
353 by a GPSA member regarding:

354 a. Matters arising under the GPSA Constitution and Bylaws

355 b. Acts of the President, Council Chair, GPSA staff, or other GPSA official when  
356 acting under the authority of GPSA.

357 2. Members of the Court of Review shall not serve in any other position within GPSA.

358 **Section 2. Justices**

359 A. Term of Office

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

363 2. The term of office for the Associate Justices shall be for one year. The term shall  
364 begin after appointment and upon confirmation of the Council and shall terminate  
365 on the last day of the spring semester.

366 3. The President and Council Representatives shall have the authority to recommend  
367 Justices. All recommendations must be considered.

368 4. All Justices must be approved by the Council.

369 5. No Justice shall serve more than two terms.

370 B. Payment

371 The Chief Justice and Associate Justices shall receive financial payment for their  
372 services.

373 C. Removal

374 1. Justices may be impeached for willful neglect of office, gross misconduct, or  
375 malfeasance by a majority vote of Council Representatives at a regular Council  
376 meeting.

377 2. Removal of a Justice requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council Representatives at  
378 a special meeting called by the Council Chair following vote of impeachment.

379 **Section 3. Attorney General**

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- 380 **A. Term of Office**  
381 **1. The term of office for the Attorney General shall be one year. The term shall**  
382 **begin after appointment by the President and upon confirmation of the**  
383 **Council, and shall terminate on the last day of the Spring semester.**  
384 **B. Payment**  
385 **The Attorney General shall receive financial payment for their services.**  
386 **C. Removal**  
387 **1. The President can remove the Attorney General at any time, but the president**  
388 **must appoint a replacement within twenty (20) academic days of the date of**  
389 **removal.**  
390

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## 392 **ARTICLE V. FINANCE**

### 393 **Section 1. Fees**

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

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

### 405 **Section 2. Oversight and Distribution**

- 406 A. The Finance Committee (FC)  
407 1. The FC shall be established as a Joint Standing Committee.  
408 2. The FC shall make recommendations to Council on appropriations and compile and  
409 recommend the GPSA budget in accordance with the GPSA Constitution and  
410 Bylaws.  
411 3. The Finance Committee ~~Chair~~ **Director** and/or ~~Vice-Chair~~ **Associate Director** shall  
412 have all necessary authority to approve budget revisions. The FC shall prepare a  
413 monthly report of revisions to be included as a supporting document for the next  
414 Council Meeting.  
415 a. When Council is not in session, the President, Council Chair, and Grants ~~Chair~~  
416 **Director** must jointly review and decide on budget revisions.  
417 B. SGAO acts as the agent of all GPSA financial transactions.  
418 C. The GPSA financial records including, but not limited to, the GPSA budget and  
419 appropriations may be subject to a financial review as requested by a Council

420 Representative, the President, the Council Chair, or through a complaint filed with the  
421 Court of Review.

422 **Section 3: GPSA Budget**

- 423 A. This budget shall be based upon the anticipated revenue for the upcoming fiscal year as  
424 determined by SGAO.
- 425 B. All branches of the GPSA government must follow budget processes as defined by the  
426 GPSA Constitution, Bylaws, and applicable standing rules to be eligible for funding.
- 427 C. A final budget must be approved no later than the April council meeting.
- 428 D. Forty percent (40%) of the GPSA budget shall be reserved for the Pro-Rated Benefits  
429 Fund.
- 430 E. No less than ten percent (10%) of the total GPSA budget shall be allocated to the Grants  
431 Committee as Student Research Grants and Professional Development Grants.
- 432 F. No less than five percent (5%) of the GPSA budget shall be reserved for appropriations.
- 433 G. Funds not appropriated through the budget process shall be placed in the General Fund.
- 434 H. Council shall have the authority to determine the process of reversion of funds allocated  
435 through the budget.

436 **Section 4. Financial Compliance**

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

442 **ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS**

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

445 **Section 1. General Election**

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

452 **Section 2. Council Chair Election**

- 453 A. An election of the Council Chair shall occur at a scheduled meeting.
- 454 B. The Council Chair is elected by a majority of votes of eligible representatives present at  
455 that meeting.

456 **Section 3. Special Elections**

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

459 **ARTICLE VII. REFERENDA**

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

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

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

467 **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

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

469 **Section 1. Amendments**

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