Outline of Issue

Resolution Concerning GSA Council Composition

Suggested Motion:

That GSA Council APPROVE a resolution that, notwithstanding GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section C.POL.3.1.c, effective July 2022 departmental seats from the Faculty of Education on GSA Council will be reflective of the faculty structure as of June 2022, with said resolution to remain in effect pending annual consultation with the GSA Speaker and the departmental representatives, and/or further amendments to GSA Policy concerning the composition of GSA Council (as approved by GSA Council).

Background:

As members may be aware, effective 1 July 2022 the Faculty of Education moved to a non-departmentalized structure. The composition of GSA Council, in parallel with the composition of faculty councils on campus (including that of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)), contains a seat for “one (1) graduate student elected from each department, faculty, or extradepartmental unit at the University that offers a graduate program (Departmental Councillors)” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section C.POL.3.1.c). Accordingly, there are currently seats for Educational Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education (as well as for Library and Information Studies – which will be preserved as a stand-alone unit within Education following 1 July 2022, so is not currently impacted; it can also be identified as an “extra-departmental unit” per Section C.POL.3.1.c).

However, following 1 July, these four seats will, in theory, be collapsed into one as the four associated departments will be amalgamated. This will thus result in a loss of representation on GSA Council. Additionally, as the University moves through its ongoing restructuring process, it is possible that other faculties might also seek to become non-departmentalized. Should this be the case, there will need to be a broader analysis of the composition of GSA Council to ensure it maintains its current breadth of representation. However, in the interim, the GSA Speaker, working with the GSA Council support staff and after consulting with representatives from the various departments in Education, are proposing that GSA Council pass a resolution that would freeze Education seats at their current levels.

The benefits of proceeding in this manner are that this constitutes a flexible solution to an immediate problem that allows for further resolutions to be issued if other faculties move in the direction of non-departmentalization. When things have settled with respect to the University’s restructuring and the more longer term landscape of faculty and department structures is better known, it may necessitate (not just for the GSA but for other University governance bodies as well, such as FGSR Council) further changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy regarding GSA Council composition. However, as of now, these are larger, more long-term conversations while the proposed resolution below addresses the immediate problem.

This matter was reviewed by both the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee.

Jurisdiction:

Post-Secondary Learning Act, Section 95(1):
“...the business and affairs of a student organization of a public post-secondary institution must be managed by a council.”

Post-Secondary Learning Act, Sections 95(2)(c) and 95(2)(h):
“...the council of a student organization may make bylaws governing...” “the number of persons... that the council is to consist of” and “any other matter pertaining to the management and affairs of the student organization.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section C.BYL.1.1
“The mandate of GSA Council is to fulfill all responsibilities listed in Section 95 of the Post-Secondary Learning Act.”