



Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

GPSA Resolution # 15

**Ensuring Equal Representation for Professional
Students in the GPSA**

April 8, 2018

1 **Sponsored by: Manisha Munasinghe, Executive Vice President, GPSA; Matthew Battaglia,**
2 **Ex-Officio Member, GPSA; Gabrielle Kanter, Law School Voting Member, GPSA;**
3 **Cheyenne Cannarozzo, College of Veterinary Medicine Voting Member, GPSA; Samir**
4 **Durvasula, Master’s of Engineering Voting Member**

5
6 **Whereas**, the Preamble to the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA) Charter
7 states: “The purpose of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly is to ensure a
8 direct focus for the continued involvement of graduate and professional school students
9 in the governance of non-academic affairs and in the life of the University, as well as to
10 foster an increased sense of community among all constituencies through shared
11 responsibilities.”; and
12

13 **Whereas**, by its nature, the Assembly is charged with representing the unique and shared needs
14 of both graduate as well as professional students; and
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16 **Whereas**, professional students currently makeup approximately one third of the total graduate
17 and professional student body with an increasing overall enrollment; and
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19 **Whereas**, the three professional schools currently are allocated approximately 15% of the voting
20 seats on the GPSA and approximately 3-4% of the field representative seats; and
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22 **Whereas**, this incongruence is contrary to the purpose of the GPSA, underweights the needs of
23 the professional student body, and focuses the representation and composition of the
24 GPSA primarily around the graduate student community; and
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26 **Whereas**, with the GPSA undertaking extensive discussions about restructuring it is crucial to
27 ensure that professional students are well represented within the Assembly; and
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29 **Whereas**, while the discussion concerning restructuring is ongoing it is unjust to the professional
30 student community to continue to underweight their voice in the Assembly’s voting
31 membership; and
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33 **Whereas**, increasing the number of professional student seats proportionally retains the current
34 balance between the three professional schools and partly ameliorates the overall
35 representative imbalance; and
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37 **Whereas**, the GPSA has historically had difficulty in maintaining representation from students
38 in master's programs in the graduate and professional schools; and
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40 **Whereas**, incoming master's students sometimes do not have enough time before spring
41 elections to consider running for the GPSA position;
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43 **Whereas**, more than 50% of the graduate student population identifies as minority including
44 international, underrepresented minorities, and other minorities; and
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46 **Whereas**, the GPSA also strives to be a diverse and inclusive body that gives all constituents a
47 fair voice and representation regardless of race, country of origin, and other protected
48 status; and
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50 **Whereas**, the GPSA has a chronic problem with staffing its internal committees causing strain
51 and overburden on the increasingly shrinking group of active, older students and
52 negatively affecting the body's ability to effectively advocate for graduate and
53 professional students; and
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55 **Whereas**, voting members are expected to be the most informed and active members of the
56 GPSA; and
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58 **Whereas**, voting members are counted on to vote for resolutions on behalf of their respective
59 divisions and to serve as leaders and points of contact for Field Representatives in their
60 division; therefore
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62 **Be it Therefore Resolved**, that the GPSA Charter § 4.04 §§ A be amended to read:
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64 A. Voting members shall have the following responsibilities:

- 65 i. Remain sufficiently informed about issues brought before the GPSA to cast
66 informed votes on resolutions, formation of committees, and other matters;
- 67 ii. Elect GPSA Voting members;
- 68 iii. Elect GPSA Officers and standing committee chairs
- 69 iv. Each Division shall internally appoint one (1) Diversity and International students
70 (D&I) Representative; this Representative shall attend all Diversity &
71 International Student Committee (DISC) or its successor committee's meetings
72 within the academic year and serve as a contact point and voice for D&I students
73 and relevant concerns;
- 74 v. All voting members must serve as either the Chair or member of at least one



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- 75 GPSA internal committee and shall attend all regularly scheduled meetings of
76 those respective committees;
77 vi. In the years that the Graduate and Professional Community Initiative (GPCI)
78 documents are to be revised, all voting members are required to attend the GPCI
79 revision committee meetings and contribute to drafting the strategic plan;
80 attending meetings of the GPCI revision committee will fulfill the requirement to
81 serve as a member of an Internal Committee.
82

83 **Be it Further Resolved**, that the GPSA Charter § 4.04 §§ B be amended to read:

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85 B. There shall be **twenty-seven (27)** Voting members, composed as follows:

- 86 i. **Four (4)** graduate or professional students enrolled in Master's degree programs
87 as follows: **One (1) at-large, one (1) Master of Public Administration, one (1)**
88 **Master of Engineering, and one (1) Masters of Industrial & Labor Relations.**
89 i. Should any seat designated for a specific degree program remain empty
90 after the conclusion of the fall semester, that seat shall become open to any
91 masters or professional student pursuing a master's degree as an at-large
92 seat.
93 ii. Fourteen (14) from the divisions of the Graduate School as follows: three (3) from
94 Humanities, three (3) from Biological Sciences, four (4) from Physical Sciences,
95 and four (4) from Social Sciences.
96 i. One seat from each of the divisions shall be preferentially reserved for a
97 graduate or professional student enrolled in a master's degree program.
98 Such preference shall result in the seating of a master's student ahead of
99 all non-master's students. Should any of these seats not be filled after the
100 third meeting of the fall semester, the vacancy shall then be open to any
101 graduate or professional student within that division regardless of degree
102 program.
103 iii. **Nine (9)** professional students, **four (4)** from the Samuel Curtis Johnson School of
104 Business, **three (3)** from Cornell Law School, and **two (2)** the College of
105 Veterinary Medicine.
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107 **Be It Finally Resolved**, the Assembly notes that the number of field representatives allocated for
108 professional schools is not adequate to represent the size of the professional student
109 community and instructs the Operations and Staffing Committee to ensure proposals on
110 restructuring consult professional students and include adequate provision for
111 professional student representation within the Assembly.