



## GPSA Student Advocacy Committee Working Procedure

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### **Part I. Purpose**

The Graduate & Professional Student Assembly (GPSA) Student Advocacy Committee works to act on issues of finances, stipend levels, mental health and physical health, child care and the general well being of all graduate and professional students. The Student Advocacy Committee works in consultation with other relevant student and Cornell assembly committees and other interested parties.

### **Part II. History**

The Student Advocacy Committee was established in June 2008 to replace the GPSA Pay & Benefits committee. As stated in the GPSA Charter, "The Student Advocacy Committee [is] charged with investigating the needs and desires of graduate and professional students regarding issues and concerns relating to their finances, mental and physical health, and general well being. These issues shall include but are not limited to stipend levels, health insurance coverage, child care, mental health. The Student Advocacy Committee will work in consultation with other relevant committees and interested parties."

### **Part III. Members**

Any graduate student is eligible to apply to become a member of the GPSA Student Advocacy Committee. Applicants will be reviewed & staffed by the GPSA Operations & Staffing committee. In addition, any graduate student who serves on the following university committees whose focus follows the Student Advocacy Committee will be appointed as *ex-officio* members. These committees may include, but are not limited to:

- Board on University Health Care Services
- University Assembly Transportation Advisory
- President's Council for Alcohol & Other Drugs
- President's Council on Mental Health & Welfare.
- Joint Assembly Financial Aid Review
- Family Services
- Child Care Subcommittee

*Ex-officio* appointments to the Student Advocacy Committee will be made with consent from the currently sitting GPSA Operations & Staffing committee. Once the committee is staffed, the Student Advocacy Committee chair is charged with contacting all appropriate administrative offices and is expected to maintain regular contact throughout the year.

### **Part IV. Committee Meetings**

The Student Advocacy Committee will meet once per month during the months of September, October, November, December, February, March, and April. The Student Advocacy Committee will schedule additional meetings as necessary. All committee members are expected to attend these meetings unless informed otherwise. After the committee chair approves the minutes for each meeting, the minutes will be sent to the GPSA Vice President of Operations, who may then distribute the minutes to all members of the GPSA. All meeting agendas and minutes will be posted to the GPSA Student Advocacy Committee Website, where they will be made available to the Cornell community. Depending on issues at hand, representatives from administrative offices may be invited to come.

### **Part V. Cornell Graduate & Professional Student Resource List**

In 2008, the Student Advocacy Committee prepared a student contact sheet, a resource list for graduate and professional students to find the office and/or contact person they need to contact should they have a particular issue. This resource list is posted on the GPSA Student Advocacy Website. The Student Advocacy committee will review the resource list at least once a semester and submit their revised resource list to the Office of Assemblies for reposting. The newly elected Student Advocacy committee chair will receive from the previous chair the original Word file in order to make these updates.

### **Part VI. Town Hall Meetings**

In order to be more fully aware of the current issues being faced by the graduate and professional student community, the Student Advocacy Committee will hold a town-hall meeting at least once per year, or more often, as deemed necessary by the committee. It will be advertised to the graduate and professional student community via the GPSA representatives, the GPSA-INFO, and the Graduate School Announcements email. These meetings will be set-up with the assistance of the GPSA Events Committee. The Student Advocacy Committee will be responsible for the food and beverages at these meetings. Funding for this event will come solely from the Student Advocacy committee budget. The meetings will have 2 goals:

- (1) To provide a brief overview of current and past advocacy activities of the GPSA and the Student Advocacy Committee
- (2) To gather information and anecdotes on current problems facing the graduate student community

Prior to the meeting, the GPSA Student Advocacy committee will survey the graduate and professional student population as to what issues should be presented. Following these meetings, the Student Advocacy Committee will meet with the GPSA Executive Board, Deans of the graduate school and any other administrative office, as appropriate to present the results.