

2025-26 Bylaw and Policy Committee Annual Report

March 24, 2026 SAGM

Membership

Chair: Rosemary Webb

2025-26 members:

- Maren Akyürek
- Josie Hill
- Chidimma Ike
- Jasmine Padam
- Melody Ray
- Andrea Sadowski
- Annie Wu
- Ruyan Wang (Sept 2025-Jan 2026)
- Kyla Turner, ex-officio, non-voting
- Irfan Tanveer, ex-officio, non-voting

A big thank you to the 2025-26 Committee members for being a delight to work with! They have all done great work and prompted very thorough discussions of our procedures, overall governance, and our proposed amendments. I have full confidence they will carry this good work forward with the transition to our new Chair. All members deserve thanks, and when folks are mentioned by name below it is because they were/are project leads!

Duties of the Committee

The Bylaw and Policy Committee is responsible for overseeing and proposing changes to the governance documents of the GSS. The Committee responds to the needs of the Society through referrals and requests of staff, members, the Graduate Representative Council (GRC), and the Executive Board. Changes should follow the steps outlined in the Bylaw and Policy Committee workflow chart, as dictated by the existing bylaws, policies, and the Societies Act.

Overview of Work Completed

Since October, the Committee has not amended any of our policies. In October, the Committee initiated work on a project reviewing our Constitution, which has been in place unrevised since the GSS' conception. We discussed the need for a thorough review of the GSS' values, including surveying our membership. This will ensure that our governance documents continue to represent our interests, values, and priorities, and allow us to undertake work to advance those priorities. We also began a proposed amendment of Bylaw 6.3b which currently restricts the number of GRC co-reps to 2, as we have encountered problems with this since the University has merged multiple departments into one School (SLLC) and split one department across multiple Faculties (Psychology and Clinical Psychology).

Constitution Review

Kyla Turner prepared a thorough briefing document and proposed amended language for our constitution, which BPC reviewed and further discussed. We determined that the amended language is too broad to bring to our membership for their input. Rather, we must prepare concrete examples for each proposed amendment that includes such information as “the GSS currently does this by...” or “the GSS has acted on this with...” and “putting this language into our constitution would allow the GSS to...”. We discussed how this could be presented to the membership, and how we might ask the membership to articulate what they see as core values of the GSS. One of our BPC members (thank you Annie!) also reviewed survey platforms we can use in membership consultation.

In January, we had to set the work on the Constitution Review aside to turn to more pressing bylaw amendments (more below). As such, this work remains for future uptake. My offboarding documents include a report of work completed and work outstanding for this project.

Bylaw 6.3b

We discussed that more information was needed about how many programs are represented by each academic unit, as this could guide our decision of a more appropriate number of co-reps per unit. BPC members (thank you Melody, Jasmine, and Josie!) began researching how many graduate programs are contained within each unit, which ended up being a challenging task! Similar to the Constitutional Review project, the Bylaw 6.3b amendment project had to be set aside in January, and so the project tracking document and my offboarding documents provide a place to start up again provided BPC has capacity. In the meantime, the GRC is still permitted within our current bylaws (6.3c) to create temporary additional GRC seats should need arise.

Bylaw 10

BPC was tasked with proposing amendments to **Bylaw 10 – Executive Stipends** when it was determined there was a lack of clarity and/or pertinent information within this bylaw. Specifically, we are amending Bylaw 10.3 regarding Stipend Review Committee communicating if a stipend instalment is disapproved to clarify when and how that decision is communicated (thank you Andrea!); additionally we are amending Bylaw 10.4 regarding how an Executive Board member may appeal Stipend Review Committee’s decision to disapprove a stipend instalment. We are outlining the process by which this appeal is to be submitted, what does and does not constitute as grounds for an appeal, scheduling and presentation of the appeal, and the deliberation and voting procedure (thank you Chidimma!). This will hopefully clarify the process for future Executive Board members and members of Stipend Review Committee and GRC. Work on Bylaw 10.3 is well on its way, while 10.4 still requires a few rounds of revisions.

Bylaw 12.4

BPC was also tasked with proposing amendments to Bylaw 12.4 regarding Executive Board members’ leaves of absence. The Committee added language clarifying eligibility for taking leave, namely that Executive Board members must still maintain GSS membership during any leave(s) (thank you Annie and Melody!). This amendment will soon be reviewed by the Executive Board and GRC.

Overview of Incomplete and Outstanding Work

Members should hopefully see the amendments to Bylaws 10.3, 10.4, and 12.4 at the next AGM in October 2026. As this work was brought to us in late January, and it must be first discussed and drafted by the Committee before going through the Executive Board and then GRC, it was impossible to do in time for this SAGM. All transition documents to the incoming Chair, and the preparedness of our committee members, will ensure that projects can smoothly continue or potentially be picked up again (i.e. the Constitution review and Bylaw 6.3b). Of course, the incoming Chair will work with the Committee on whichever projects are most important or relevant for GSS at that time!

Once again I will thank our 2025-26 Committee and recognize their understanding and flexibility as we needed to pivot in January. The members have applied themselves thoroughly to any tasks assigned, for which I am grateful!