Argument in Support of the Referendum Question

Purpose of the Referendum

The purpose of this graduate student referendum is to guide the Graduate Student House Committee (GCHC) as to whether graduate students are interested in automatically being included as non-resident members of the House if they live in university housing. This membership would grant voting privileges in house matters, and include access to the DBar without having to be a guest of a current member, or separately registering at the beginning of each academic year. An opt-out system would be put into place for those students who did not wish to participate. Approval of this referendum would not be a binding decision, but would indicate to the GCHC that students are interested in this proposed structure change and would provide support to move forward.

Conflict with University Compliance

The DBar in the Graduate College must maintain compliance with the New Jersey Club license in order to operate. This license stipulates that alcohol can only be sold to GC resident and non-resident members and up to 9 guests per member on a given night. These guests must leave with their member, are the responsibility of the member at all times while at the bar, and cannot be signed in under a new member if the first decides to leave. With the current policy, students can register for a non-resident membership at any point during the academic year, but according to NJ state law, there must be a 3-day grace period between sign up and access to the bar under that membership. Many students forget to sign up until they want to attend DBar, and then either change their minds and do not come to the bar, or get signed in as a guest by one of their friends.

This causes two primary concerns. First, these guests have no real incentives to leave the bar when their signing member departs, as they live in close enough proximity to usually walk home, and they usually know other people at the bar to not be socially or accommodation reliant on their member. Secondly, given the sheer number of guests signed in this way (2-10 times as many as non-Princeton Graduate Students, depending on the night), it is difficult for the staff to keep track of these guests and ensure they leave with the signing member.

Changes to this policy from opt-in to opt-out for students living in graduate housing would drastically reduce the number of sign-ins required on a given night. This would allow more attention to be paid to those guests who are signed in, and ensure DBar remains in compliance with both university and New Jersey regulation. In addition, with less sign-ins, there is a significant reduction in wait times at the door on busy nights, and likely would also increase DBar patronage, as students are more likely to visit DBar if they do not have to find a friend to sign them in.