

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, 20 April 2020 at 6:00 pm
Held electronically via Zoom

The GSA respectfully acknowledges that the University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

Substantive material is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to give members abundant time to review. Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

Reports from committees, Directly-Elected Officers, and GSA Management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair

OPEN SESSION

**Attached
Numbered Pages**

1. Approval of the 20 April 2020 Agenda (*suggested time: 1 min*)
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 16 March 2020 GSA Council Meeting (*suggested time: 1 min*)
Attachment:
 - i. Minutes from the 16 March 2020 GSA Council Meeting **2.0 - 2.6**
3. Changes in GSA Council Membership (*suggested time: 1 min*)
 - i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members (*If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
 - ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members (*If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last GSA Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

GSA Council Member Announcements

4. GSA Council Member Announcements (*suggested time: 5 mins*)

Presentations

5. Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) (*suggested time: 20 min*)
Marc Waddingham (Vice-President External) will present the item and introduce the guests.

Guests: Chris Bell (Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director) and Jasmine Gill (Vice-President External, Concordia University of Edmonton GSA and Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Director)

Action Items

6. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on GSA Officer Portfolios (*suggested time: 5 min*)
Fahed Elian (President) will present the item.

Attachments:

- i. Outline of Issue **6.0**
 - ii. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on GSA Officer Portfolios: Track Changes Document **6.1**
7. Recommended Changes to GSA Policy on GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information (*suggested time: 10 min*)

Fahed Elian (President) will present the item.

Attachments:

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| i. | Outline of Issue | 7.0 |
| ii. | Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section P: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information: Track Changes Document | 7.1 |

For Discussion

- 8. GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP): Update to GSA Council (suggested time: 30 mins)**
Fahed Elian (President) will present the item.

Attachments:

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|-----|--|------------|
| i. | Overview of GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP) Progress and Initiatives | 8.0 - 8.4 |
| ii. | GSA Board 2019-2020 Strategic Work Plan (SWP) | 8.5 - 8.11 |

Elections

- 9. GSA Council Elections (suggested time – 15 min)**
Radim Barta (GSA Nominating Committee Chair) will present the item.

GSA Councillor-at-Large Positions

a. GSA Councillors-at-Large (CALs) (7 vacancies)

Attachment:

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| i. | Nominees for GSA CALs (7 vacancies) | 9.0 - 9.7 |
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Reports (suggested time: 15 mins)

- 10. President (Fahed Elian, President)**

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| i. | President's Report | 10.0 - 10.4 |
| ii. | GSA Board Report | 10.5 - 10.6 |
| iii. | GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report (no written report at this time) | |
| iv. | GSA Governance Committee Report | 10.7 |

- 11. Vice-President Academic (Dylan Ashley, Vice-President Academic)**

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| i. | Vice-President Academic's Report | 11.0 - 11.1 |
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- 12. Vice-President External (Marc Waddingham, Vice-President External)**

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|-----|--|-------------|
| i. | Vice-President External's Report | 12.0 - 12.2 |
| ii. | GSA Awards Selection Committee Report (no written report at this time) | |

- 13. Vice-President Labour (Shanawaz Mohammad, Vice-President Labour)**

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|-----|---------------------------------------|------|
| i. | Vice-President Labour's Report | 13.0 |
| ii. | GSA Labour Relations Committee Report | 13.1 |

- 14. Vice-President Student Services (Chantal Labonté, Vice-President Student Services)**

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| i. | Vice-President Student Services' Report | 14.0 - 14.1 |
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- 15. Senator (Alesha Reed, Senator)**

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| i. | Senator's Report (no written report at this time) | |
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- 16. Speaker (Pranidhi Baddam, Speaker)**

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| i. | Speaker's Report (no written report at this time) | |
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- 17. Chief Returning Officer (Amritha Prasad, Chief Returning Officer)**

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| i. | Chief Returning Officer's Report (no written report at this time) | |
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| 18. GSA Nominating Committee (Radim Barta, GSA Nominating Committee Chair) | |
| i. GSA Nominating Committee Report | 18.0 - 18.1 |
| 19. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (Jennifer Bertrand, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair) | |
| i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report | 19.0 |
| 20. GSA Management (Courtney Thomas, Executive Director) | |
| i. Executive Director's Report | 20.0 - 20.5 |

Question Period

21. Written Questions (none at this time)

22. Oral Questions

Adjournment

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, 16 March 2020 at 6:00 pm
Held online via Zoom

IN ATTENDANCE:

Fahed Elian (President)	Kyla Cangiano (Anthropology)	Jane Allred (History & Classics)	Matthew Benson (Ophthalmology)
Dylan Ashley (VP Academic)	Allan Yarahmady (Biochemistry)	Jessica Kennedy (Human Ecology)	Shubham Soni (Paediatrics)
Marc Waddingham (VP External)	Jessica Grenke (Biological Science)	Deanna Starr (Indigenous GSA)	Nicholas Ruel (Pharmacology)
Shanawaz Mohammad (VP Labour)	Damandeep Singh (Business MBA)	Muhammad Idrees Afzal (Internetworking)	Hamdah Al Nebaihi (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Chantal Labonté (VP Student Services)	Ke Feng (Business PhD)	Julia Guy (Library & Information Studies)	Julian Chow (Philosophy)
Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)	Calvin Chan (Cell Biology)	Scott Perry (Linguistics)	Robert Reklow (Physiology)
Priyanka Maripuri (Deputy Speaker)	Alvaro Omaña (Chemistry)	Nishant Agrawal (Mathematical & Statistical Sciences)	Elise Sammons (Political Science)
Amritha Prasad (Chief Returning Officer)	Emily Bate (Communication Sciences & Disorders)	Nicole Noel (Medical Genetics)	Lane Liddle (Psychology)
Reza Azadi (Deputy Returning Officer)	Julie Piche (Dentistry)	Kevin Joannou (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)	McKenzie Tilstra (Public Health)
Alesha Reed (Senator)	Cate Peter (Digital Humanities)	Marcus Jackson (Medicine)	Carlee Wilson (Rehabilitation Science)
Md Minhajul Islam (Councillor-at-Large)	Qi Chen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)	Amber Peters (Modern Languages & Cultural Studies)	Jared Fath (Renewable Resources)
Claudia Holody (Councillor-at-Large)	Alexandra San Diego (East Asian Studies)		Yunxuan Chen (REES)
Ronan Noble (Councillor-at-Large)	Areej Alshammiry (Ed Policy Studies)	Britt Fedor; Charbel Baaklini (Neuroscience)	Robert Piazza (Secondary Education)
Armin Norouzi Yengeje (Councillor-at-Large)	Jingyang Gao (Educational Psychology)	Sadie Deschenes (Nursing)	Prof-Collins Ifeonu (Sociology)
Konstantin Tebenev (Councillor-at-Large)	Md Monir Hossain (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Occupational Therapy (Valene Cheah)	
Zhiying Wang (AFNS)	Yina Liu (Elementary Education)	Shayla Mosley; Braden Chow (Oncology)	

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm. Speaker acknowledged the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six and, as this was the first online meeting of GSA Council, Speaker explained the protocol for using Zoom.

Approval of Agenda**1. Approval of the 16 March 2020 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 16 March 2020 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. C Labonté **MOVED**; D Ashley **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes from the 24 February 2020 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 24 February 2020 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 6 March 2020. F Elian **MOVED**; L Liddle **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Changes in GSA Council Membership

3. Changes in GSA Council Membership

i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members: None

ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members: None

GSA Council Member Announcements

4. GSA Council Member Announcements: None

Presentations

5. University Budget and Graduate Tuition Fees

F Elian (President) presented the item and introduced the guest, Dr. Steven Dew (Provost and Vice-President Academic).

S Dew presented on the 2020-2021 University budget, government funding cuts to the institution, proposed 2020-2021 tuition increases, and the University's response to COVID-19. S Dew noted that, in October, the government had delivered a ~\$44 million cut to the Campus Alberta Grant and a \$35 million cut to infrastructure and maintenance. The University was instructed to plan for subsequent 5% cuts for the next three (3) years and, in accordance with the MacKinnon Report, a realignment of funding that would result in less government funding and higher tuition-based funding. The 2020-2021 budget planning process thus included tuition increase proposals, fee increase proposals, rate increase proposals, etc. The GSA Board worked with the Provost and Board of Governors to understand the fiscal situation and communicate the challenges faced by students with respect to tuition and other factors, such as changes to student loans, education tax credits, etc. The budget proposal initially included a proposed 7% tuition increase for 2020-2021. The GSA Board advocated against this and, while continuing domestic course-based students will see a 7% increase, continuing domestic thesis-based students will have a rebate applied to the 7% increase, such that the actual increase paid by them will be 2.67% (tuition rates for continuing international course-based and thesis-based students having been set earlier). S Dew noted that the rebate was planned to be in place for current students for the next four (4) years. On 27 February 2020, the Board of Governors approved the tuition proposal, but the new provincial budget was released with a change in parameters. Rather than the expected 5% cut, the U of A received an 11% cut on top of the 6.9% cut in October 2019. This amounted to a total \$110 million cut from the U of A's Campus Alberta Grant – approximately \$36 million more than anticipated. However, the \$35 million cut from infrastructure was reinstated for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, which will help to address capital projects and deferred maintenance projects. With respect to the increased revenue generated by tuition, 15% will be held for domestic student aid; international student aid will be maintained at 7.55% of all tuition. No changes will be made to the proposed tuition rates, financial aid levels, or Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (increased by 2.67%) that had been previously approved.

S Dew noted that faculties would face expenditure cuts ranging from 5.3% to 8.3% and support units of 9.4% to 12.8%. In response to questions, S Dew noted that the majority of cuts would be decided at the faculty and department level, with consultation. S Dew stressed that the University was prioritizing to minimize the impact of the cuts on the student educational experience and services. He noted that financial aid was increasing and the Dean of Students' budget would be maintained, but significant changes would be made to 'back office' supports. The University is considering eliminating low enrollment programs, reconfiguring faculty arrangements, reducing administrative costs to support University activities, etc in looking for opportunities for cost savings. S Dew also noted that a draft of the budget was anticipated to go to the General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee this week and then back to the Board of Governors for approval next week. The University is expected to present a balanced budget to government by the end of March 2020. There will be a deferral of capital projects to mitigate impacts, but there are major impacts on staff – 400 positions were cut in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, and there could be upwards of 600 more jobs lost in 2020-2021.

S Dew noted that additional constraints on the budget this year were expenditure targets that go beyond a balanced budget. This included spending less money on research, ancillary, etc, and increased revenue. He further noted that the government would introduce performance-based funding in the coming months and the University was still waiting for more information on expenditure targets. S Dew spoke briefly about the metrics for performance-based funding, including increasing domestic enrollment by 1%, maintaining Indigenous enrollment, increasing international enrollment, although this was complicated by COVID-19, reducing administrative costs, and increasing research revenues.

In closing, S Dew spoke about the current COVID-19 situation. Following Alberta's Chief Medical Officer's advice, courses had been moved online and in-person exams in April would not occur; other mechanisms for term-end assessments were being considered. Only Cameron Library would remain open on a restricted basis, building hours would be limited, and only one Computer Lab would be maintained. Research activities in labs could continue for the time being, but researchers should make contingency plans to continue from home or put a hold on research activities on campus if needed.

GSA Council members posed a series of questions, including but not limited to: if the fee increases referenced will apply to current students or those starting in Fall of 2020 (the 7% increase will apply to all existing and incoming course-based students; current thesis-based students will receive a rebate in their fees to reduce this increase, with a commitment to maintain the rebate for the next four (4) years); if the additional cuts would impact Teaching Assistant (TA) positions (cuts will propagate through various departments and faculties differently and those decisions will be made at that level); how this might impact smaller departments (we should expect consolidation into fewer and larger departments and faculties in an atmosphere of academic restructuring; cuts are not ruled out but that is a long term process with clear procedures); how this might affect courses, such as language courses, that require smaller numbers for effective delivery (those decisions will be made at the department or faculty level where they have a better understanding of their own needs and modes of delivery); if graduate students will be involved in consultations at the faculty level (most final decisions will land at the faculty council level, with all stakeholders involved; ultimately, student engagement in these decisions lies with Deans and Department Chairs); if there was a contingency for TA and Research Assistant (RA) pay (TA and RA funding for current contracts would stay in place as work was done remotely); if we should expect a shutdown (impacts have certainly ramped up in the past week taking the University progressively through to the end of all face-to-face instruction; currently considering how to navigate the April exam period and mechanisms for term-end assessments; allowing Working From Home (WFH) to accommodate family responsibilities with the closure of K-12 and daycares; WFH impacts the operations of the University, affecting operating hours, library hours, computing lab hours; current research directive is that the University remains open while other measures are taken to reduce the number of individuals in a room at any given time; some research activity would inevitably be affected; hospital or clinic-based research would fall under the purview of Alberta Health Services; some research activities will need to be suspended; following the direction of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer); would this deplete provincial funding further so that further cuts should be anticipated (current financial situation in the province has dramatically turned for the worse so we should not rule that out but we cannot make contingency plans when we have no new information; currently focused on COVID-19); would research labs be given lead time for a shutdown (goal now was to maintain a level of essential research, as in sustaining animals but not running experiments, but this was under discussion); current directives are such that those caring for dependents are not guaranteed exemptions from research duties, but accommodation was possible (Administration expects reasonable requests for accommodations to be met with compassion and support); if there would be any parking accommodations to avoid transit (the cost of most on-campus parking would be reduced to \$6/day); if any accommodation would be made for international students whose funding stops but who are not able to travel home (mechanisms for financial support are in place, those in need should use them); and if Administration was anticipating a long term impact on tuition revenues (this was a major concern but there was no information currently available).

Action Items

6. GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee for 2020-2021

C Labonté (Vice-President Student Services) presented the item and introduced the guest, Robyn Paches (Program Manager, Studentcare).

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee be set at \$500.36/annum, effective 1 September 2020, with collection from graduate students to begin 1 September 2020.

C Labonté noted that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee would remain at \$500.36 for the next 2 years, with approximately \$30 per member going into the Health and Dental Reserve Fund. R Paches then provided a brief presentation that outlined the role of Studentcare as consultant and administrator of the GSA Health and Dental Plan. He noted that the Health and Dental Plan was established in 2004 by referendum and today there are approximately 5,700 members enrolled; the role of the GSA was to ensure the plan stays in touch with the needs of its members. He further noted that while the 2019-2020 claims report was forthcoming, in 2018-2019, prescription drugs made up 58% of all health claims, while paramedical practices claimed 18%, vision claimed 15%, and 9% of claims were for medical equipment. Under the Dental Plan, in 2018-2019, 80% of claims were for preventative services while 20% were for fillings, endodontics, periodontics, restorative services, and surgery. Per capita health claims in 2018-2019 reached \$223.87, and dental claims were \$166.53. Projections for the future suggest steady use of the Health and Dental Plan, with the current fee of \$500.36 per person covering the Plan cost as well as contributing approximately \$30 to the Reserve Fund.

GSA Council members posed a series of questions, including but not limited to: whether the GSA Plan differed significantly from that of the SU (they are entirely different plans based on different agreements and different health and dental needs and usage levels), whether the cost of the GSA Plan was on par with other institutions (in general graduate plans tend to be more robust than SU plans but in comparison with other GSAs, we are on par), what healthcare trends Studentcare is forecasting (the number of psychology claims has been increasing and are expected to continue to do so), and how Studentcare is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (the Studentcare website now features a Frequently Asked Questions banner; furthermore, travel coverage is being impacted in that destinations for which travel advisories have been issued may no longer be covered and students are encouraged to inquire prior to departing on trips to such destinations; lastly, Chloe by Dialogue is a virtual medial assessment tool that can help members navigate the bombardment of information they are receiving from various channels).

MOTION: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee be set at \$500.36/annum, effective 1 September 2020, with collection from graduate students to begin 1 September 2020. C Labonté **MOVED**; M Waddingham **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. J Kennedy abstained.

7. 2020 GSA General Election Results: To Receive for Information for the Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

A Prasad (GSA Chief Returning Officer) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2020 GSA General Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

President	Marc Waddingham
Vice-President Academic	Sachiketha Reddy
Vice-President External	Anas Fassih
Vice-President Labour	Umesh Nimmathi
Vice-President Student Services	Sridhar Parasharamatham

GSA Council members asked questions, including but not limited to, if the voter turnout was higher or lower than previous years and if there are plans to increase turnout in future (information was available in the report to GSA Council from the Chief Returning Officer but it was lower and this would be further discussed at a planned debrief with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee in the coming weeks) and if there was increased voter apathy in uncontested elections (that is likely one of the reasons for lower voter turnout).

MOTION: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2020 GSA General Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

President	Marc Waddingham
Vice-President Academic	Sachiketha Reddy
Vice-President External	Anas Fassih
Vice-President Labour	Umesh Nimmathi
Vice-President Student Services	Sridhar Parasharamatham

J Kennedy **MOVED**; L Liddle **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**; M Waddingham Abstained.

8. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on GSA Officer Portfolios

Fahed Elian (GSA President) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, as shown in track changes in the attached document and effective upon approval by GSA Council following the second reading.

F Elian noted that changes were aimed at aligning GSA Policy with practice and that further information was presented in the material. There was no further discussion.

MOTION: That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, as shown in track changes in the attached document and effective upon approval by GSA Council following the second reading. F Elian **MOVED**; R Piazza **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Elections

9. GSA Council Elections

Damandeep Singh (GSA Nominating Committee Member) presented the items.

Standing Committees

- a. Nominees for GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) (1 vacancy):
Nicholas Ruel (Pharmacology)

D Singh asked the nominees the following question: "Taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you'd like to serve on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board Chair". The nominee was present and given the opportunity to respond in front of GSA Council members.

Reports

10. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition F Elian shared his hopes that the government would prioritize mental health support and clarify its definitions, for example in defining mental wellness support versus psychological support. He also answered an array of questions from GSA Council members concerning the University's response to the COVID-19 crisis and ongoing work to advocate for increased financial supports for graduate students.

ii. GSA Board Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report

No written report at this time; the committee has not met since its last report to GSA Council.

iv. GSA Governance Committee Report

No written report at this time; the committee has not met since its last report to GSA Council.

11. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition D Ashley stated that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research was working on a mechanism to enable graduate students to switch to part-time status but cautioned that doing so may impact eligibility for scholarships and other funding. He also urged members to stay safe and take care of their mental health in this stressful time. In response to a question, D Ashley noted that the ability to move to part-time status was intended as a mechanism to help students dealing with issues that affected their performance and timeline to degree completion.

12. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition M Waddingham stated that efforts are being made to establish a graduate student residence association, and on different note, mechanisms are being designed to allow for smaller-scale touch points between GSA DEOs and graduate students' departments.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report

No written report at this time; the committee has not met since its last report to GSA Council.

iii. Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Report

No written report at this time.

13. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S Mohammad provided an update on labour negotiations, noting that the current Collective Agreement expired in August and the GSA was entering into negotiations with the University. The GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) had selected members to serve on the GSA Negotiating Team, including legal counsel that specialized in labour and employment law and union matters (given the latest budget news, it was important to be strategic so the GSA had engaged legal counsel to ensure a smooth process). An online town Hall would be held on 19 March to hear from academically-employed graduate students about what they think the GSA's bargaining priorities should be and an online feedback form for those not able to attend was also created (feedback received would be used by the GSA LRC to develop the GSA's opening position, which would be sent to all academically-employed graduate student for approval prior to being submitted to the University to commence bargaining); an online Labour 101 would also be held on 24 March. It was hoped that the opening position would be approved in April and that bargaining would happen over the summer, with a ratification vote scheduled for the fall.

ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted.

14. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Labonté assured GSA Council members that there would be no interruption of the Graduate Student Assistance Program, which can be used as a mental health resource. Further, in light of the earlier discussions about budget cut decisions being made at the faculty level, she reminded members that, if anyone had difficulty being involved in these discussion, they should contact C Labonté or F Elian for assistance.

15. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No written report at this time.

16. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No written report at this time.

17. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Prasad thanked the current Directly-Elected Officers for their continuous hard work and effort and noted that the election ran smoothly; all questions from candidates and students were answered in consultation with GSA Bylaw and Policy and GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) members and official results were announced on 28 February 2020. In closing, A Prasad thanked members of the GSA ERC and the office support team.

18. GSA Nominating Committee

i. GSA Nominating Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted.

19. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

ii. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted.

20. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition C Thomas added that the GSA was grappling with the COVID-19 situation and that, effective 17 March at 12 pm, the GSA office would be shut down until further notice. Staff would work remotely from home; and all services and governance processes would continue to be delivered in an online format.

Question Period

21. Written Questions: None

22. Oral Questions: None

Adjournment

F Elian thanked the office support team for adapting quickly to move the meeting online and Speaker noted that the next meeting would also likely be held online. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Outline of Issue
Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers

Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Governance Committee and following the first reading by GSA Council, **APPROVE** recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, as shown in track changes in the attached document and effective upon approval.

NOTE: This is the second reading of recommended changes to GSA Bylaw. The first reading occurred at the 16 March GSA Council meeting.

Background:

In a previous election for GSA Council-Elected Officer positions, one candidate put their name forward to run for a GSA Council-Elected Officer position while concurrently seeking election to several GSA Standing Committees. Several of the relevant GSA Standing Committees' terms of reference stipulated that those holding GSA Council-Elected Officer positions were ineligible to serve on them (for example, an individual cannot hold the position of the Deputy Returning Officer while also serving as a voting member of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee) but because the elections for both positions were happening in the same GSA Council meeting, a situation arose in which the person elected would immediately have to resign from one of the positions they were elected to. Given the importance of ensuring that GSA Council-Elected Officer positions are filled in order for the business of the GSA to continue with efficiency, this recommended clarification to GSA Bylaw is aimed at closing this "loophole."

This recommended change to GSA Bylaw and Policy was discussed with the GSA Nominating Committee at a meeting on 22 January 2020 and the GSA Governance Committee unanimously recommended this item to GSA Council for approval via email vote on 7 February 2020. The GSA Board reviewed the recommended changes for information and onward transmission to GSA Council at its 26 February 2020 meeting. The first reading of the recommended changes occurred at the 16 March GSA Council meeting.

Jurisdiction:

Section F: Standing Committees, GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section F.POL.4.2.a

The GSA GC will *"advise GSA Council on matters of GSA Bylaw and Policy not in the purview of any other GSA Standing Committee, or other governance issues, and recommend changes to GSA Council."*

Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, Section A.BYL.1.2

"These Bylaws ... may be amended by two (2) two-thirds majority votes of GSA Council held on seven (7) calendar days' notice of Motion and no less than one (1) week apart."

Section D: GSA Officers

... No change

GSA Bylaw: GSA Officers¹

D.BYL.1 General

... No change

D.BYL.2 Directly-Elected Officers

... No change

D.BYL.3 GSA Council-Elected Officers

D.BYL.3.1 Election of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)

D.BYL.3.1.a GSA Council-Elected Officers will be GSA members.

D.BYL.3.1.b The GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) will open nominations for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, and DRO on or about 1 May of every year by email to every GSA member.

D.BYL.3.1.c Nominations for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO and DRO will be submitted in writing to the GSA NoC by 30 May or the next working day.

D.BYL.3.1.d The GSA NoC will follow its legislated process in forwarding one (1) or more nominations to GSA Council, except that the GSA NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process specifies that all vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline.

D.BYL.3.1.e The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, and DRO will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council, for a term lasting from 1 July to 30 June of the following year.

D.BYL.3.1.f In the case of a resignation or other vacancy in the Speaker or CRO positions, as determined by the GSA NoC, the GSA NoC will advertise the position and arrange for election by GSA Council in the most expedient way possible.

D.BYL.3.1.g Candidates are not allowed to run for other positions within the GSA while standing for election to a GSA Council-Elected Officer position and, if elected, may not hold other GSA Council-Elected Officer positions.

... No further changes

Deleted: multiple

Comment [1]: Rationale: Clarification in response to an issue that arose in a previous election of Council-Elected Officers.

¹ Amended by the Annual General Meeting on 28 March 2011. Amended by GSA Council on 14 March 2011, 11 June 2012, 20 January 2014, and 18 June 2018. Editorial revisions made by the GSA Governance Committee on 12 July 2015, 3 April 2017, and 6 October 2017.

Outline of Issue

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section P: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information

Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **APPROVE** recommended changes to GSA Policy, Section P: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information, as shown in the attached document in track changes and effective upon approval.

Background:

The GSA office occasionally receives GSA Academic Travel Grant applications for total anticipated shortfalls of less than \$50. Given that processing time per application amounts to approximately one (1) hour, it is not operatively efficient to approve grants in which the total projected shortfall amounts to less than \$50. This recommended change was developed in consultation with the Vice-President Student Services and was recommended to GSA Council by the GSA Board at its meeting of 18 March 2020; it addresses an operational issue, as opposed to a governance matter.

Jurisdiction:

Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Board, Section F.POL.3.2.a
"The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by GSA Council."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, Section A.BYL.2.2
"GSA Policy is under the jurisdiction of GSA Council (Section C: GSA Council, GSA Bylaw, GSA Council) and may be amended by a simple majority vote of GSA Council at any meeting of GSA Council."

GSA Policy: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information¹**P.POL.1 GSA Academic Travel Grants**

P.POL.1.1 Purpose

- P.POL.1.1.a The GSA Academic Travel Grant (GSA ATG) is funded by the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), a GSA-negotiated benefit to all GSA members.
- P.POL.1.1.b The GSA ATG is intended to help offset the cost of participation in academic activities such as conferences and research trips that are directly related to an applicant's current academic program, as confirmed by either the Supervisor or designate (for thesis-based students) or the Advisor or Department Chair or designate (for course-based students).
- P.POL.1.1.c The GSA ATG can be used to offset the cost of participation in both local opportunities and those necessitating long distance travel.
- P.POL.1.1.d The GSA ATG is not intended to be used to offset the cost of for-credit courses necessary for an applicant's degree program, including any associated travel.

P.POL.1.2 Eligibility

- P.POL.1.2.a Applicants must be GSA members as per Section B: Members, GSA Bylaw, Members, Section B.BYL.1.a and B.BYL.1.1.b.
- P.POL.1.2.b GSA ATG applications can only be submitted no more than six (6) weeks before the academic event (as determined from the date the application is received). Applications received after the academic event has occurred will not be eligible.
- P.POL.1.2.c GSA ATGs will be awarded only for allowable expenses, using the University's regulations on allowable expenses as a guideline (University of Alberta Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL), Travel Expense Procedure and Travel Expense Procedure Appendix A, Schedule of Allowable Travel Expenses), except for hosting expenses, which are not eligible.
- P.POL.1.2.d Applicants may submit a maximum of one (1) GSA ATG application for each specified academic activity and there is no limit to the number of GSA ATG applications a GSA member can submit during their degree program, notwithstanding Section P.POL.1.3, below.

P.POL.1.3 Allocation

- P.POL.1.3.a GSA ATGs are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- P.POL.1.3.b The GSA will offer grants until allocated funding is expended in the specified period (ie 1 April – 30 June; 1 July – 30 September; 1 October – 31 December; 1 January – 31 March).
- P.POL.1.3.c If all available funds have been expended in the specified period, no additional applications will be accepted during that period.
- P.POL.1.3.d A Master's student will be awarded up to a maximum of \$500 during their degree program.
- P.POL.1.3.e A Doctoral student will be awarded up to a maximum of \$1,000 during their degree program, up to a maximum of \$500 in a fiscal year.
- P.POL.1.3.f Applicants will be awarded their shortfall up to a maximum of \$500; applications with total expenses amounting to less than \$50 will not be eligible.

... No further changes.

¹ Approved by GSA Council on 16 May 2011. Amended by GSA Council on 10 December 2012, 24 February 2014, 18 January 2016, 22 February 2016, 20 March 2017, 18 June 2018, and 18 March 2019. Editorial revisions made by the GSA Governance Committee on 9 January 2014, 21 January 2014 (Chair and Vice-Chair under delegated authority from the GSA Governance Committee), 26 June 2014 (Chair and Vice-Chair under delegated authority from the GSA Governance Committee), 4 November 2014 (Chair and Vice-Chair under delegated authority from the GSA Governance Committee), 27 February 2015, 22 August 2016, 12 February 2018 and 27 March 2018, and 25 October 2018.

Comment [1]: Given that processing time per application amounts to approximately 1 hour, it is not operationally efficient to approve grants in which the total projected shortfall amounts to less than \$50.



The 2019-2020 team of GSA Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) developed the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP) from May to June 2019 and presented the finalized Plan to GSA Council in July 2019. The complete SWP is available on the [GSA website](#).

Below is the final update concerning the DEOs' progress in pursuing some of the major goals outlined in the 2019-2020 SWP. As this document is intended as a comprehensive narrative of the 2019-2020 strategic efforts of the GSA DEOs, it includes some reiteration of the updates provided to GSA Council in [October 2019](#) and [January 2020](#).

COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the GSA is working to keep graduate students informed about University directives as well as changing practices and procedures in the face of the growing need for social distancing measures. This include regular updates via the GSA newsletter as well as a number of special bulletins which carry, among others, updates on the GSA Health and Dental Plan (with particular regard to the travel coverage), FGSR academic policies, and Edmonton Transit System service changes. President Fahed Elian participates in daily conference calls on the situation along with prominent members of University administration and Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) who heads the crisis response team.

In accordance with the University's travel directives, the GSA ceased the disbursement of GSA Academic Travel Grants for events requiring travel, but continued to offer funding for events offered online. Additionally, the GSA has responded to rising graduate student need for financial support in the face of social distancing measures or quarantine procedures by providing additional funds via the GSA Emergency Bursary, per the approval of Vice-President Student Services Chantal Labonté. An amount of \$8,900 has been disbursed through this avenue at the time of print.

The bulk of GSA services have continued to be offered remotely, via both email and virtual meetings, following the closure of the GSA office in Triffo Hall on 17 March 2020, which occurred in accordance with University directives. Weekly Reboot Your Writing sessions offered in partnership with the Academic Success Centre also continued to be offered, remotely. The Campus Food Bank, which receives a grant from the GSA (increased for the 2020-2021 fiscal year), has similarly continued to operate to meet the growing needs of its users, many of whom are international graduate students.

Furthermore, Dr. Brooke Milne (Vice-Provost and Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)) invited the GSA to participate in a special vodcast to answer some of the most pressing concerns of graduate students. President Fahed Elian and Vice-President Academic Dylan Ashley participated, and the vodcast was launched on 31 March 2020. It can be found [HERE](#).

With respect to the Spring/Summer 2020 terms, the GSA has participated in a number of discussions based on the temporary elimination of certain Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFS) associated with services that students are unable to access. At the time of print, the University has agreed that students will not be assessed the Athletics and Recreation fee, the PAW Centre fee, or the Spring 2020 U-Pass fee. Further updates are forthcoming.



As responses to COVID-19, and the associated effects of those responses, remain ever evolving, discussions are ongoing in this area.

Improving Student-Supervisor Relationships

GSA DEOs have expended significant effort in this area. Work over the past several months has focused on meetings with Dr. Milne, whose ongoing goal is to improve overall FGSR policies and procedures. Dr. Milne has, after extensive consultation with the GSA, developed mechanisms that will help to guide graduate student-supervisor relationships and provide feedback on a student's academic progress throughout their graduate program. These mechanisms are now slated for final approval in Fall 2020 and expected implementation in Winter 2021, following a pilot program in several departments (currently, no delays are expected in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic). Vice-President Academic Dylan Ashley, alongside President Fahed Elian, advocated extensively for

the creation of these mechanisms at various levels of University governance. Furthermore, Vice-President Student Services Chantal Labonté and Vice-President Academic Dylan Ashley gave a presentation on the importance of exemplary graduate student supervision at the Student Advisors' Conference on 5 March 2020.

Continued advocacy has also yielded the FGSR development of a supervisory college proposal, membership of which is required for faculty who wish to supervise graduate students. Members of this college would undergo training and be penalized for supervisory infractions. Formal discussions of this proposal began in January 2020 in FGSR Council. Various DEOs also participate regularly in other projects aimed at improving the quality of graduate student supervision – as an example, Vice-President Academic Dylan Ashley and Vice-President Student Services Chantal Labonté will both be featured in an upcoming FGSR podcast series on effective supervision.

Michener Park Closure

Work addressing the closure of this major graduate student residence has focused on advocacy for support for students, a bulk of whom are international students and/or students who parent. This past year has seen the creation of the Michener Park Transition Advisory Committee (MPTAC) with the support of Vice-President External Marc Waddingham, who is co-chair of this committee. The mandate of MPTAC has focused on connecting Michener Park residents with community and University resources.

Tuition and Funding

This major strategic priority of the 2019-2020 year has resulted in countless updates to GSA Council and GSA members, in particular since the release of the provincial budget and its immediate and significant impact on the budget of the University. Across the province, graduate students will see significant tuition fee increases, often up to the maximum 7% allowed by government. While continuing domestic course-based students at the U of A will see a 7% increase, advocacy spearheaded by President Fahed Elian has resulted in an agreement wherein continuing domestic thesis-based students will have a rebate applied to the 7% increase, such that the actual increase paid by them will be 2.67% (tuition rates for continuing international course-based and thesis-based students having been set earlier at 4% and 2.67% (after application of the same rebate provided for continuing domestic thesis-based students), respectively). Initial discussions proposed a 7% increase across the board. The University will also set aside an additional 15% of these increases for financial support for graduate students.



Labour, Collective Agreement, and Health and Safety Matters

The Vice-President Labour, Shanawaz Mohammad, in collaboration with the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC), continued the negotiation for the 2018-2020 Collective Agreement for Academically-Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs) over the summer and early fall of 2019. This agreement was ratified by AEGSs in October 2019 and by the University Board of Governors in December 2019.

Work has now commenced for the negotiation of the next Collective Agreement for AEGSs, with a digital town hall having taken place on 19 March 2020. Feedback from AEGSs concerning what they want the GSA to bargain for is also being solicited via other electronic means. Next, the GSA LRC will draft the GSA's bargaining mandate using this information and AEGSs will then vote on this mandate before it is submitted to the University as the GSA's Opening Position to commence bargaining. After 1 May 2020, this work will be led by incoming Vice-President Labour Umesh Nimmathi. Additionally, this year the GSA has retained legal counsel that specializes in labour law and union matters for assistance with negotiations.

The Vice-President Labour Shanawaz Mohammad also continues his advocacy work around the development of mandatory health and safety training for employment supervisors (including those supervising graduate students) on campus. He also has worked directly with graduate students to address reported issues of safety and security for students more broadly on campus. More specifically, the Vice-President Labour and the Vice-President Student Services Chantal Labonté have consulted with key stakeholders on the implementation of standards relating to psychological health and safety legislation, under which the University is expected to operate as of 1 July 2020.

GSA Health and Dental Plan

With the 2014-2020 agreement with Studentcare expiring on 31 August 2020, the GSA initiated a lengthy Request for Proposals process by soliciting proposals from a number of student health and dental plan administrators. President Fahed Elian and Vice-President Student Services Chantal Labonté (with further assistance from Vice-President Academic Dylan Ashley) reviewed these proposals and conducted interviews before ultimately recommending that the GSA Board continue the relationship with Studentcare. The GSA has now commenced negotiations with Studentcare for a new agreement, which is expected to include additional sponsorship funds from Studentcare. This process is expected to be finalized in April 2020.

Support for Students Impacted by PS 752 Tragedy

The unexpected tragedy of PS 752 warranted particular attention in January. Alongside University President, David Turpin; Edmonton Mayor, Don Iveson; Alberta Premier, Jason Kenney; and Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, President Fahed Elian attended the University's Memorial Service on 12 January 2020 and expressed his condolences. Also in attendance were close friends and families of the victims and other prominent members of the community.

Later discussions with Dean of Students, Dr. André Costopoulos, among others, were focused on providing ongoing support to graduate students impacted by the loss personally as well as academically. The GSA advocated to Heather McPherson, Member of Parliament, as well as to Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, for special consideration for international students whose visa applications and study permits were impacted by this tragedy. The GSA further contributed to these efforts via special disbursement of GSA Emergency Bursaries for those impacted. A plaque memorializing the lives of the graduate students lost in the tragedy has also been designed and will be displayed in the GSA lounge at the main entrance of Triffo Hall.

Support for Indigenous Students

The GSA's work to support Indigenous graduate students took two forms: firstly, with the support of Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations), a temporary space in HUB Mall has been identified for the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA), allowing them to establish a home office until more permanent arrangements can be made. This physical space will empower the IGSA to fulfil their mandate and continue their operations on a long-term basis.

Secondly, extensive consultation with the IGSA as well as Dr. Florence Glanfield, Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research), led to the pilot phase of the Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) program, which kicked off in January 2020. FGSR has provided office space for the program in Triffo Hall and has hired a graduate student under the Collective Agreement as the graduate coordinator for SAGE.

Lastly, in order to better equip the GSA to continue the work of supporting Indigenous students, DEOs and members of the GSA staff underwent Indigenous cultural competency training. This training was provided by the Ben Calf Robe Society.

Other Key Projects

Other key projects undertaken by the DEOs in the 2019-2020 year (not including regular advising and assistance provided to numerous individual graduate students throughout the year) include, but are not limited to:

- Ongoing work associated with the Suicide Prevention Framework project, with a particular focus on developing a Toolkit to facilitate grieving and coping with off- and on-campus deaths;
- Extensive ongoing work to support graduate students who parent in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students. Among others, these efforts resulted in the hosting of a Halloween event for small children, and most significantly, the creation of an infant and child care/feeding space in Triffo Hall;
- New partnerships with the Alumni Association and the Community Social Work Team to create the graduate student specific Collective Tea Time, intended to give graduate students the opportunity to make social connections. This program was briefly suspended in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic but is resuming, virtually, on 17 April 2020;
- Continued involvement with the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) as it ramps up its work as an advocacy/lobbying organization for graduate students across the province, as well as participation in meetings of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, allowing the GSA to engage in advocacy at the federal level;
- The Charter of Student Rights, spearheaded by the Students' Union (SU) for the benefit of all undergraduate and graduate students. The GSA proposed the addition of a section dedicated to graduate students which, while noting all the other rights listed apply equally to undergraduate and graduate students, also focuses on the specific rights and responsibilities of AEGSs, given their unique position as students, researchers, and employees of the University. The final document will be presented to the General Faculties Council (GFC) on 20 April 2020 for approval;



- Further development of institutional framework and mechanisms within ab-GPAC, with a particular emphasis on updated on-boarding procedures and government relations training, as well as the establishment of closer ties with partner GSAs. This work was spearheaded by Vice-President External Marc Waddingham as Vice-Chair of ab-GPAC, and President Fahed Elian as a Director of ab-GPAC;
- Significant provincial advocacy work for the betterment of the graduate student experience, facilitated via the organization of and attendance at a number of demonstrations and protests, such as the “Students Not Silent” march, which urged the government to make budgetary considerations for Alberta post-secondary institutions and their students, and the “Red for Ed” march on behalf of teachers and other public sector employees whose work was impacted by the provincial budget. Upcoming elements of this ongoing advocacy work include: an open letter penned by ab-GPAC, Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), and Alberta Students’ Executive Council (ASEC), urging the provincial government to suspend the implementation of the performance-based funding framework for post-secondary institutions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a province-wide advertisement campaign, details of which are forthcoming;
- Further advocacy efforts at the provincial and federal levels has focused on the development of an immigration stream tailored to International students whose research and expertise benefit the local economy. These efforts have yielded a number of positive discussions with government stakeholders and we look forward to offering future updates in this vein.



The Graduate Students' Association Board Strategic Work Plan 2019-2020

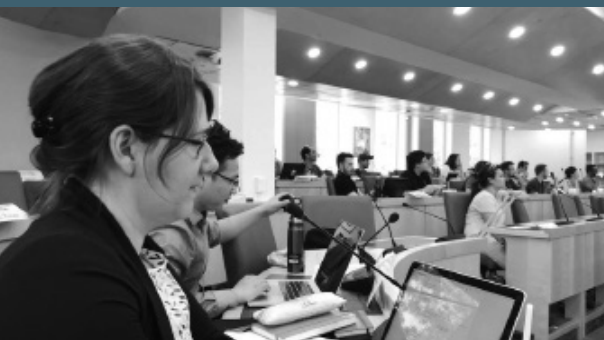
Connect Support Advocate



Our Vision and Mission

To advocate for all graduate students to the University of Alberta and the Alberta Government in pursuit of a safe, supportive, respectful, accessible, and inclusive community that fosters the multi-faceted roles played by graduate students.

The GSA respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.



What is a Graduate Student?

A graduate student is a junior colleague who contributes to their field of study in pursuit of an advanced degree through collaborative work with the professoriate in research, teaching, and the development of University learning environments. These contributions may be accomplished through: extensive coursework and the development of capstone projects, theses, or dissertations (in pursuit of which graduate students are charged tuition and fees); academic employment (for which graduate students are paid); the co-creation and writing of scholarly work; contributing to the securing of academic funding; and participation in the community via presentations, conferences, and community engagement. This multi-faceted role takes place in an environment of mutual respect and fairness aimed at developing skills and knowledge for future careers, and is one that merits appropriate remuneration for labour in service of the enhancement of the institution.

What is the GSA Board's Strategic Work Plan?

The GSA Board's Strategic Work Plan is the document that steers and prioritizes the work and initiatives of the GSA. The GSA sees this as a living document, shifting directions as needed as the provincial, federal, and University landscapes change. It is developed annually with reference to the Strategic Work Plans of previous GSA Boards, and provides a planning document for this and future years.



Graduate students elect GSA leaders each February. Here are the 2019-2020 GSA Directly-Elected Officers (from left to right): Vice-President Academic, Dylan Ashley; Vice-President Student Services, Chantal Labonté; President, Fahed Elian; Vice-President External, Marc Waddingham; and Vice-President Labour, Shanawaz Mohammad.

The Graduate Students' Association

The GSA, as established by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, represents graduate students at the University of Alberta, and provides a wealth of services to its members that enrich the graduate student experience. As a separate corporation, it is both *a part* of the University of Alberta and *apart* from the institution. The GSA Board believes that a healthy organization is nurtured through effective relationships with all stakeholders. To sustain the organization's long-term health and excellent reputation, the GSA fosters a culture of respect and professionalism among staff and graduate student leaders, engages in regular review of governance processes, is committed to transparency and accountability, and ensures an annual transition process that facilitates the on-going education of elected graduate student leaders.



Connect

The GSA provides a wealth of benefits and services to its members that both enrich the graduate student experience and forge connections between graduate students.

The GSA will:

- ◆ Continue to foster a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion among its members
- ◆ Provide guidance to graduate students and aid them in navigating University processes and structures, while advocating for greater transparency around expectations and outcomes for graduate students
- ◆ Maintain engagement in discussions about space on campus

The GSA will create opportunities for graduate student awareness of and engagement with the GSA by:

- ◆ Ensuring the GSA remains responsive, effective, and efficient by regularly reviewing services and seeking feedback from members
- ◆ Evaluating communication methods to broaden engagement with our members
- ◆ Offering orientation and information sessions on key issues
- ◆ Offering engagement and recognition events
- ◆ Connecting with and supporting departmental graduate student groups and networks

Did you know?

The GSA has:

- ◆ graduate student lounges at Triffo Hall
- ◆ rooms available for booking
- ◆ several fun events per year
- ◆ two large orientations specific to graduate students (we also participate in 45-50 departmental orientations annually)
- ◆ a weekly newsletter, website, and social media profiles that highlight events and ways to get involved

The GSA will develop collaborative and positive relationships with:

- ◆ The Government of Alberta, including the Minister of Advanced Education, and the City of Edmonton
- ◆ Members of senior University administration (such as the President, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Dean of Students, the Chair of the Board of Governors, and the Chancellor)
- ◆ Other campus stakeholder associations (such as the Students' Union, the Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta, the Postdoctoral Fellows' Association, and the Non-Academic Staff Association)



Support

All graduate students are entitled to a safe and respectful study and work environment characterized by positive supervisory relationships and free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying.

In its role as a union, the GSA champions, advances, and protects the rights of its members as workers.

The GSA will:

- ◆ Work collaboratively with senior University administration and the Government of Alberta on the implementation of Bill 19 and a predictable tuition model tied to the Alberta Consumer Price Index (CPI), as well as a consultative model concerning fee increases
- ◆ Actively review and participate in campus wide health and wellness (including mental wellness) initiatives
- ◆ Work to optimize the experience of its members during any academic employment appointment and to ensure the rights of graduate student workers are protected
- ◆ Continue work to ensure campus-wide compliance with the provisions of the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement and also advocate more broadly for campus-wide supportive learning and work environments based on respectful and professional relationships
- ◆ Continue to provide financial supports to graduate students through the Graduate Student Support Fund
- ◆ Continue to support workshops and services that assist graduate students with their academic progress

Did you know?

The GSA offers:

- ◆ GSA Emergency Bursaries
- ◆ GSA Child Care Grants
- ◆ GSA Academic Travel Grants
- ◆ GSA Graduate Student Group Grants
- ◆ GSA Recognition Awards
- ◆ GSA Health and Dental Plan
- ◆ Graduate Student Assistance Program
- ◆ Collective Agreement Advice

The GSA will:

- ◆ Support and collaborate with partners and stakeholders with respect to the establishment of a variety of high-quality professional development and internship opportunities in recognition of the diverse future career paths ahead of graduate students
- ◆ Support the services offered by the Campus Food Bank
- ◆ Push for the ongoing review and improvement of safety and security on campus
- ◆ Support initiatives and programs aimed at environmental stewardship and sustainability



Advocate

A lack of stable funding and unpredictable increases in educational and other costs can cause significant strain on graduate students' health and wellness and can inhibit academic progress.

The GSA believes that graduate students should be provided with professional development opportunities that are essential for future career success.

The GSA will:

- ◆ Work with campus partners to advocate for, develop, and implement a Charter of Student Rights
- ◆ Collaborate with and advocate to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and senior University administrators to make quality graduate student supervision an institutional priority (including creating appropriate supervisory training opportunities, an accountability structure for supervisory evaluation, and establishing a means of safe disclosure and reporting of concerning supervisory behaviour)
- ◆ Continue its advocacy work with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the Office of the Provost on the implementation of guaranteed minimum funding packages for PhD students
- ◆ Advocate for increased financial supports for all graduate students, including merit based and non-merit based financial support (as well as greater accessibility to these supports) and the Graduate Student Support Fund
- ◆ Campaign for new initiatives and programs (and support existing ones) that specifically support Indigenous graduate students

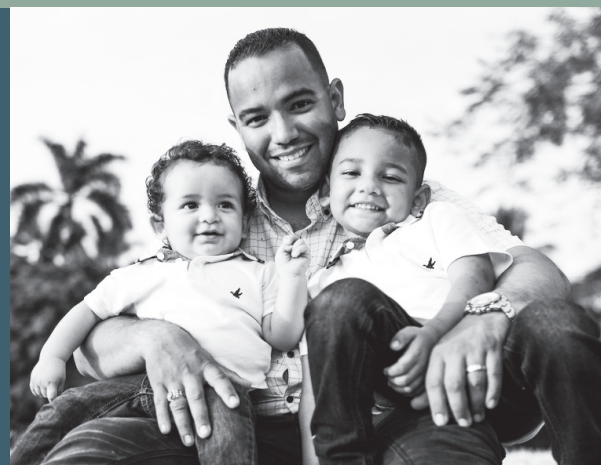
Did you know?

The GSA:

- ◆ meets regularly with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the Dean of Students
- ◆ is a member of the provincial advocacy group the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council
- ◆ has seats on the Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council, and their sub-committees
- ◆ works individually with students to help them

The GSA will:

- ◆ Advocate for sustainable, cost-effective, and well-maintained housing for graduate students, and support and assist graduate students living in residences
- ◆ Campaign for enhanced supports and community building opportunities for graduate students who parent, and their families
- ◆ Advocate for new initiatives and programs (and support existing ones) that specifically support international graduate students.
- ◆ Encourage the development and implementation of initiatives to prevent homelessness
- ◆ Advocate for high-quality graduate-level programs and courses and opportunities to provide graduate students with international research and study opportunities



Events:

GSA Fall Orientation	Late August
GSA Fall Event	Early October
GSA Winter Orientation	Early January
GSA Winter Event	Mid February
GSA General Election	Late February
GSA Volunteer Appreciation	Early March
GSA Awards Night	Late March
GSA Coffee Breaks	One Friday Monthly



Come visit us at
The Graduate Students' Association
1-49 Triffo Hall
University of Alberta
T6G 2E1



780-492-2175
gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca
www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
GSA COUNCILLOR-AT-LARGE (GSA CAL) (SEVEN (7) POSITION FOR GSA COUNCILLOR): SIX (6) NOMINEES

Information regarding the position for seven (7) Councillor-at-Large positions was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 3 April 2020 and 9 April 2020 with a nomination deadline of 15 April 2020. Six (6) nominations were received.

GSA Council is the highest governing body of the GSA and is composed of the GSA President and Vice-Presidents, other elected officials of the GSA, one representative for each unit with a graduate program, and ten (10) GSA Councillors-at-Large. As noted in GSA Bylaw and Policy, "the mandate of the GSA Council is to fulfill all responsibilities listed in Section 95 of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*" (Section C: GSA Council, GSA Bylaw, GSA Council, Section C.BYL.1.1).

There will be an electronic vote held at the 20 April 2020 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 20 April 2020 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Elections Coordinator (gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 20 April 2020 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

Nominees for this position are listed in alphabetical order by last name and will be presented in *reverse alphabetical* order on the ballot. 'None of the Candidates' will also be considered a nominee.

- 1. Paramita Chaudhuri Basu (Business - MBA)**
- 2. Nadia Daniel (Medicine)**
- 3. Rakshith Reddy Gopu (Electrical and Computer Engineering)**
- 4. Tejasai Kommanapalli (Mechanical Engineering)**
- 5. Yashita Singh (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)**
- 6. Muhammad Zubair (Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science)**

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I: Elections, GSA Policy, Elections, Section I.POL.15.3

"In the event that any CAL positions are not filled by the end of the GSA General Election, or a CAL position is vacated, GSA Council will be responsible for electing any remaining CALs prior to 1 December (or the next working day). When electing any remaining CALs, GSA Council will aim to elect GSA members from as broad a range of disciplines as possible. The GSA NoC will decide on procedures and then provide one (1) or more names to GSA Council for consideration, except that the GSA NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process specifies that all vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement."

The name and biography received for the six (6) nominees is BELOW on pages 9.1-9.6.

The biographies and resumes are presented as received (ie not edited). Please note that nominee Nadia Daniel currently serves on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB); as per GSA Bylaw and Policy, CALs are not ineligible to serve on the GSA ACB and, accordingly, N Daniel has indicated that she will resign from the GSA ACB if elected as a CAL.

Nominations for GSA COUNCILLOR-AT-LARGE (GSA CAL)

(SEVEN (7) VACANCIES FOR GSA MEMBERS)

Six (6) Nominees

1. **Paramita Chaudhuri Basu**

<p>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</p>	<p>Dean of Student’s Advisory Committee (October 2019-March 2020)</p>
<p>Statement of Interest: I have past experience of serving as a strategic planner on governance committees as an Assistant Professor in Presidency University, India. As an academic staff, I was also the Departmental Outreach Coordinator for the Department of Life Sciences, and in that role, assisted the Departmental Chair with student affairs. I have also served as faculty member for coordinating general student elections in the university. This past year, I was also a student member of the Dean of Student’s Advisory Committee. With my diverse leadership experience, I can assist the GSA Council to manage the student affairs of the university. Through these experiences, I have also developed vital transferable skills like critical thinking, problem solving, strategizing and building action plans. Besides, I’m extremely collaborative and curious, and raise important questions during committee meetings. These skills will be an asset which I can employ as a member of the GSA Council. Furthermore, I am passionate about improving students’ experiences on campus, which aligns with the mandate of the GSA Board’s Strategic Work Plan.</p>	
<p>Bio: I was born in India and completed my Ph.D. in biochemistry from Jadavpur University (2008). I am fluent in three languages- English, Bengali, and Hindi. I moved to Edmonton for my postdoctoral studies at the U of A in 2008. I worked at the Department of Biological Sciences and subsequently at the Department of Biochemistry till 2013. While at the U of A, I was the Cultural Secretary for the Edmonton Bengali Association, a registered organization aimed at Indo-Canadian cultural exchange. I completed my postdoc and moved back to India with a faculty position in the Department of Life Sciences, Presidency University (2013). I visited the U of A for a short sabbatical in 2015, when I also taught as a guest lecturer at the Department of Biochemistry. Around the same time, I completed the Graduate Teaching and Learning program from the FGSR, U of A. I worked as an academic staff for six years and moved back to Canada in 2019. I am currently enrolled in the Full-time MBA program at the School of Business, U of A and expect to graduate in spring 2021.</p>	
<p>Summary Resume: Throughout my student and professional life, I have served in different leadership roles. As a Full-time MBA student in the last year, I volunteered with the Net Impact Edmonton Chapter as a pro-bono consultant and assisted a student-led not-for-profit organization develop their strategic plan (November 2019- April 2020). I helped them with a mental health awareness campaign. I also volunteered with the Dean of Student’s Advisory Committee, where I assisted to enhance the overall student experience at the U of A by discussing on topics related to tuition and budget cuts, student’s mental health, affordable</p>	

and nutritious food sources, and many other issues (October 2019- March 2020). As a faculty, I was the departmental student coordinator and was the first point of contact for managing student outreach programs (2017- 2019). As a Ph.D. student, I was a founding member of the Graduate Student’s Association of the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology and advocated for different student issues related to funding, institute housing and safety (2004- 2005). I do not have any registered classes for Monday when the GSA Council meets and so, should be free to attend meetings.

2. Nadia Daniel

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	GSA - ACB
<p>Statement of Interest: The skills I have gained from my volunteer work at the Trent's student unions during my undergrad and the national Food Bank, will benefit the advocacy work the FGSR Council does. I'm exceptionally experienced at conflict resolution, which would serve as an asset as member of this committee. Furthermore, I'm passionate about the quality of graduate student supervision something that aligns with the mandate of this committee.</p>	
<p>Bio: I was born in the Netherlands and raised in Aruba. My mother is from Aruba and my dad from Curacao, so I am also fluent in Papiamento and Spanish besides Dutch and English. After a BSc degree in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at Trent University (2009), I studied at the University of Leiden and attained a MSc (2015) in Biomedical Sciences. While I studied at Trent, I was part of multiple student unions and was part of the varsity team Trent Excalibur. While in Leiden I did not engage in any extra-curricular activities, but I worked part-time a several pharmaceutical companies to gain work experience. Here at the UofA, I am the event coordinator of the Science to Business Network and I organize al social events for the Alberta Respiratory Centre (ARC lab). I also volunteered with Santa Anonymous last year</p>	
<p>Summary Resume: I am now a second-year PhD student in the Departmetn of Medicine studying the efect of barrier funtion on airway epithelial cells. I work in Dr. Vliagoftis's lab as part of ARC lab, whi is a mutidisciplinary team. Between my MSc and my PhD, I worked as a research asissitant at Queens University at the departme of Biomedical Science. I started my PhD in the Fall of 2018. I am currently completing my last cours to fullfill my PhD requirmetns and my schedule is flexible enough to accommodate sitting on a busy committee and addtend both the FGSR Council and Caucus Meetings.</p>	

3. Gopu Rakshith Reddy

<p>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Statement of Interest: By giving people the power to share, we're making the world more transparent" a quote by Mark Zuckerberg inspires me and uplift my confidence to give my best. During my undergrad, I have served as the "President of the Center for Digital Innovation cell" and "Secretary of Skills Club". In these roles, I acted as a facilitator between the College administration and students and played a significant role in implementing various student benefit programs. This opportunity provided me valuable insights of Leadership especially in terms of mentoring students based on their area of interest .It provided me a real time experience and paved the way in developing my skills and abilities required for my career choice . In a nutshell, I have gained Leadership skills, Team-Building, Project Management, and communication skills. Furthermore, my will to build a better graduate community combined with my skills and experience would be an asset to the committee. I am aware of GSA motive to spread awareness, fill the gap between students and administration . I believe that GSA's values align perfectly with my career goals.</p>	
<p>Bio: I am Rakshith from Warangal, India. I have moved to hyderabad for my undergraduate studies . As an undergrad i have developed a sense of "work to make an impact on people's life". The ability of Technology to change people's life made me to develop a passion for Technology. During my undergraduate studies in Electronics and Communication Engineering i had a great exposure to technological and industrial advancements which inspired me to come up with new projects to solve real-time problems. As a result, combining my creative as well as technical skills I have developed projects like"VAEA"(Virtual Agri Environmental Analyzer) and "E-Vruksh" an intelligent device to tackle pollution in metropolitan cities. Later i started participating in inter-college and national level technical events and has been awarded the winner of national level hackathon conducted at IIT Hyderabad. Turning imagination to innovation was the best part in my college days. Remembering the day i was awarded as one of the innovative student in college brings in me, the zeal to learn endlessly creating a positive impact on society.</p>	
<p>Summary Resume: I am presently pursuing masters in Software Engineering and Intelligent systems at the University Of Alberta. I have completed my Undergraduate course specialized in Electronics and Communication Engineering(2015-2019). I have been the President of Center for Digital Innovation Cell for about 1 year during my undergraduate study. It was a platform for students to innovate new products and build startup's. My contribution improved the coding literacy by 42%, improved Innovation of Prototypes by 26%. I have also introduced Investor pitch theme which motivated students to build their own products and startup's. I won in a National Level Technical Hackathon conducted by IIT Hyderabad. Also been the champions in IDEATION FEST conducted by Wadhvani Foundation.I have worked as an event organizer for AAGAMA - a national level fest and as a volunteer for alumini meet. Accepting challenges and working towards the mission of</p>	

the student committee proved my skills as an organizer and volunteer. Platforms like GSA require commitment towards work and contribution, and I assure you this commitment. By being an active member of GSA council, I will strive to build a better community for graduate students.

4. Tejasai Kommanapalli

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
<p>The skills I've gained from my work/volunteer experience at National Service Scheme as a department coordinator for all the students in my department & I served as a Board member for the Institution of Engineers India on behalf of my Mechanical Engineering Department during my Bachelors in India will benefit the work this committee does. I'm exceptionally experienced at managing the tasks as well as work schedules assigned to me & communicate with all fellow committee/teammates for the growth and benefit of the organization which would serve as an asset as a member of this committee. Furthermore, I'm passionate about achieving goals, something that aligns with the mandate of this committee.</p>	
Bio	
<p>I was born in India, Visakhapatnam City. I had done my bachelor's in mechanical engineering at GITAM (2018) & I am here at University of Alberta for my master's in engineering management as it has most of the courses related to Industrial Engineering. I was passionate & crazy about aircrafts and their production which led me to Canada for my masters at UofA. During my bachelor's & Higher secondary studies I was into various committees for the overall achievement of my department. I was into many extra-curricular activities like Badminton tournaments, arranging inter-departmental fests etc. I have travelled almost every part of India & I am a Wanderlust.</p>	
Summary Resume	
<p>I am now a first-year master's student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering studying the in-depth knowledge on Industrial & Production Engineering. Between my undergraduate degree and my MEng, I worked as a Graduate engineer Trainee in India for the Hindustan Petroleum, returning to Alberta in 2019 to begin my Masters. I would be free apart from my class schedules for meetings.</p>	

5. Yashita Singh

<p>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Statement of Interest: I've always wanted to be a part of a governing body that represents student and helps them during their academic journey. I want the student voice to be heard. The skills I learnt from my undergrad back in my country (India) has helped me establish and flourish so far. I've learnt to manage my time to be given to the tasks given to me, to organize events for student welfare, setup camps and have volunteering not just for myself but for the other people who wish to contribute to the society alongside the art of public speaking. I believe these skills that I got from my experience will help me be a progressive part of the GSA. Being a grad student myself, I can understand the challenges and situations that come across a grad student's way and I'd like to work on that for the collective progress of everyone affiliated with this institution.</p>	
<p>Bio: I was born and raised in Chandigarh, India. My mother is a home-maker while my father is a civil engineer. My sister lives in Toronto, who is an electrical engineer and is working with a bank. After my high school, I decided to pursue a healthcare related field and hence I started my Bachelor's in Pharmacy from Panjab University in 2015. I've always had the dream of studying in Canada and likewise, after the completion of my Bachelor's, I started my Master's in Science with the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Fall 2019. My undergrad journey was fun as I was exposed to different kinds of situations and opportunities which not only helped me build my CV but also gave me a sense of responsibility. I got chance to volunteer for the students and the public as a whole.</p>	
<p>Summary Resume: I am a grad student in the first year of the program with the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. I'm currently working on my thesis project that is to work on the therapeutic drug monitoring of a drug called Mycophenolic acid which is used by the renal transplant patients. I will be monitoring its level in plasma as well as clinical samples and then analyze them with various approaches and one of them includes the use of dried blood spots which can prove to be an asset for biological screening of transplant patients in the coming future. I have some volunteering experience as explained above, which will surely help me hold my responsibilities and carry out my duties as a representative of GSA. I assure that I will always be present in the meetings conducted by the GSA. I hope to be a part of GSA one day and be successful in performing my duties.</p>	

6. Muhammad Zubair

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
<p>Statement of Interest: The skills I have gained from my volunteer experience at ALES/GSA president 2015-2016 will make a good fit to work as a GSA Councilor at Large. I am exceptionally experienced as a Graduate Student Representative for Department Council for the year of 2015- 2016 which would serve as an asset for this position.</p>	
<p>Bio: I was born in small village of central Punjab and raised in a city of Vehari which is one of the districts of southern Punjab, Pakistan. I joined Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, for my Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) in 2002. After completing my undergraduate studies in 2007, I have started my Master of Philosophy in Organic Chemistry at Department of Chemistry, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. I won Junior Research Fellowship at HEJ research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi in 2nd year of my Master. During my university life, I was student presentative at various levels. I was also skipper of cricket team from my department side and participated in various quiz competitions. I have completed 18 years of education (Organic Chemistry) in 2009. In 2010, I selected as an Assistant Director (Research) through provincial competition in Environment Protection Department. I worked there for the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of the environment for the prevention and control of the pollution and promotion of sustainable development. Furthermore, I promoted public education and awareness of environmental issues through seminars and workshops. I joined university of Alberta for my Master in Bio-resource Technology at AFNS in May 2014. I worked as an ALES- GSA President and Department Council Representative for the year of 2015-2016. I also worked as a volunteer in green team (joint venture of city of Edmonton and CARY Edmonton) to develop community awareness about environment and sustainability during 2014- 2015.</p>	
<p>Summary Resume: Currently, I am a 3rd year Ph.D. (Bio-resource Technology) student in AFNS. My research focus is to develop the keratin derived adsorbent for water purification. I am looking for the position of GSA Councillor at Large. I do not claim about my perfection, but I think my work experience will surely help me to understand and manage the responsibilities that will be assigned to me, if selected for this position.</p>	

**GSA President
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Fahed Elian
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

Let me start my report by respectfully acknowledging that we are on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

We live in unprecedented times. The COVID19 pandemic has introduced to all of us a new reality, and a new routine. I hope you're healthy and safe, practicing physical distancing, and staying home. I also hope you're connecting with friends and family by any virtual means. Do not hesitate to reach out to loved ones for support. Make sure you check on your friends and peers. Always remember, we don't know when things will be completely back to normal, and it's fine to feel anxious, uncertain, worried, and unproductive. The GSA is here for you. Triffo Hall is indeed shut down, but we're working remotely and tirelessly to make sure all your concerns are addressed, and support services are available for you. Find the GSA COVID19 link roundup [here](#).

This is my last council report to address to you as the GSA president, I would like to take this chance and share some of my thoughts and reflections on our term that I've also shared with the incoming GSA President:

- This last year was full of challenges. We had to face unforeseen circumstances and unprecedented times. We lost 1 of our members just a week before we started our term. On Jan 8th, 2020, again we lost 5 of our members on the Ukrainian PS752 flight that was shot down by the Iranian regime. We had a provincial election followed by federal elections. The new provincial government was elected on a mandate to balance the budget. As a result, the University operating budget is facing 17% cuts. Finally, Canada and every other country is facing the COVID-19 crisis. The province declared a state of health emergency. The University is shut down, and all classes, meetings, and research are done remotely. The GSA office is closed and my team, the GSA office, and I are working remotely. We had to cancel GSA Awards Night, the biggest social event the GSA runs for our members.
- As the official spokesperson of the GSA, I exercised due diligence to be mindful, thoughtful, respectful, and insightful before I speak on behalf of the association and graduate students. I kept in mind always that none of my actions should negatively impact the reputation of our association. The GSA came first (of course with a fair balance between my GSA work and my personal life, mental health, and well-being). I knew that my grad studies will be on hold, and progress in that regard will be slow. I accepted it and tried my best not to shame myself for it.
- My team and I were elected to represent the diverse graduate students' population at the University of Alberta. The GSA is a non-partisan association, and we were non-partisan. Any relationships we developed with stakeholders were meant only to serve the GSA members. We didn't indulge in political fights or a student leaders' division that would steer our advocacy away from serving our members. It's my great honour to serve all of you, and it's a great pleasure to work with an amazing and supportive team.
- Dylan, Marc, Chantal, and Mo, thank you for all the work you did for our members. I enjoyed working alongside you. Thank you for your support and being there for me. Thank you for holding me accountable.

Thank you for correcting me when I was wrong and supporting me when I was correct. Thank you for making me believe that sometimes enjoying the process is more important than the outcome. We did great things. We advocated on our members' behalf internally and externally. Most importantly, we developed so many memories, laughter, and a friendship. Your President is very proud of all of you. I know your term was a transformative one. I hope you take it with an open heart and open mind. Take the bad and the good. You did your part. You made memories, good ones, remember them. And reflect on the bad ones and learn from them. I'll miss working with you, and I wish you the best in whatever life brings to you. It's a bittersweet feeling to write this report

- To the GSA support staff, thank you for all of your help, guidance, support, and advice. I couldn't ask for a better team to work with.

Find below some highlights of my work over the last month:

Charter of Student Rights

- As one of my platform goals for my term as GSA President, I'm pleased to share with you that the Charter will be presented at the GFC Council meeting on 20 April for final endorsement. I am thankful for Akanksha, the SU President, who worked collegially with us on this project. I want also to thank, Dylan, the GSA VP Academic, and the GSA support staff for their help advice on this project.

COVID-19 Updates

- Tuition fees: the GSA has successfully advocated to waive the U-Pass, Athletics & Recreation, and PAW Center fees for the Spring 2020 term.
- As one means of keeping you informed, Dylan and I met virtually with Dr. Brooke Milne, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, to discuss some of your most frequently asked questions. We recorded the conversation and titled it: What U of A Graduate Students Need to Know About Their Studies in Light of COVID-19. You can access it [here](#).
- Case Update (as of 16 April): Confirmed cases: 2,158 in Alberta (an increase of 162 in the last 24 hours), 402 in the Edmonton Zone, with no deaths in the last 24 hours (48 total; 8 in Edmonton). A total of 85,428 tests have been completed across Alberta, up 2,779 in the last 24 hours. There are currently 44 hospitalizations with 10 ICU cases. Across Canada, there are now 28,884 confirmed cases and 1,048 deaths (<https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>).

Fall Semester Planning

Scenarios, principles, and assumptions were approved by the Policy Group on April 16 and General Faculties Council will be briefed on April 20. The two fundamental uncertainties at this time are the degree to which the coronavirus has been brought under control in Canada and around the world, and the specific government restrictions that might be in place at the times the University must make key decisions. The confirmed (most likely) scenarios are:

- **Scenario 1: Limited in-person instruction permitted, non-essential research allowed, international students here, campuses are open.** The spread of the coronavirus is substantially under control in Canada. The federal and provincial governments have relaxed some of the original measures to contain the virus, while others remain. The University is permitted to offer in-class instruction, but controls related to class size and physical distancing remain in place. "Non-essential" research is permitted to resume, but only in those areas that can adhere to clear hygiene and physical distancing requirements. International borders with the University's primary sources of international students are open, permitting most international students to come to Edmonton for the start of the term.

- **Scenario 2: Limited in-person instruction, non-essential research allowed, international students NOT here, campuses are open.** The same as Scenario 1 except: International borders with the University's primary sources of international students remain closed.
- **Scenario 3: No in-person instruction, essential research only, international students not here, campuses are closed.** The spread of the coronavirus is still not under control in Canada and all emergency restrictions remain in place. The University is not permitted to offer in-class instruction. Only essential research is permitted. International borders remain closed. Campuses are closed.

In view of the current realities, a scenario imagining a full return to all normal University operations by September will receive only limited consideration by sub-committees that only focuses on key planning deadlines.

University Budget

- The University 2020-2021 budget was approved at the special Board of Governors meeting on March 26.
- Graduate student tuition fees will increase by 2.67%, 4%, and 7% for current thesis-based students, international course-based students and domestic course-based students, respectively. It is important to note that the University could have pursued an across-the-board 7% tuition increase on all graduate students (as most other Alberta institutions have done, with only the University of Calgary setting tuition increases at 5%, 2% lower than the allowable increase specified by government), as the Alberta government recently empowered them to do. I want to stress that **thesis-based graduate students at the U of A will see the lowest increase to their tuition of any institution in the province.** My team and I have worked hard to navigate the precarious budgetary situations facing Alberta's post-secondary institutions to ensure that graduate students don't unduly bear the burden of the massive cuts that the University has received from government. We will continue this work in future years, when the institution may put forward new proposals to increase tuition.

GSA Awards Night 2020

- As you are aware, we had to cancel GSA Awards Night to ensure public health and safety. Normally, at GSA Awards Night, we honour (alongside other award recipients) members of the University community who have gone above and beyond in assisting the GSA with its initiatives. These individuals receive GSA President's Citations and, as we were unable to distribute these in-person, I would like to share with you the 2020 GSA President's Citations recipients that were selected by the GSA Board:

Recipient	Contribution to the GSA
Brooke Milne	Improving the quality of graduate student-supervisor relationships and working cooperatively with the University to make this an institutional priority has been a long-standing goal of the GSA. When Dr Milne was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, she shared that goal and has worked diligently and with great enthusiasm to realize it. Her efforts, and those of her team, will help improve the graduate student experience of countless GSA members and advance the University's reputation for excellence.
Florence Glanfield	Since assuming her position as Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research), Dr Glanfield (a former GSA President) has worked closely with the GSA to both help support the work of the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association and to establish the Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) program at the University. Thanks to her efforts, in partnership with other stakeholder (including the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research), a pilot project has been initiated. This program supports and encourages Indigenous graduate students to make significant social change through their research, Indigenous knowledges, and community-oriented approaches and will enhance the graduate school experience of many.

Wade King	Wade served as the director of the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, he has provided exceptional support to the GSA and several of its initiatives to improve the graduate student experience by working to end harassment and discrimination. His commitment to fairness, spreading awareness, and working to ensure safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces for graduate students exist across all campuses is greatly appreciated by the GSA.
Andre Costopoulos	In his role as Dean of Students, Dr Costopoulos (alongside all the members of his team) has consistently displayed a high degree of compassion for students and has tirelessly supported them. This dedication to students was particularly evident when he and his team coordinated to generously provide much needed support to the family and community of a graduate student who passed away this past year. The GSA is grateful for his work on behalf of students and his support for them.
Akanksha Bhatnagar	As President of the Students' Union, Ms Bhatnagar worked closely and cooperatively with the GSA on the development of a Charter of Students' Rights that was inclusive of graduate students and their unique positions on campus. Predicated on the belief that clearly communicated expectations and knowledge of students' rights and responsibilities can aid students in avoiding mistakes, misunderstandings, and serious problems during their time at the University, thereby helping to improve the overall student experience, the Charter is intended to serve as a guide the resources that explain their rights and responsibilities to students. While the project started off with a focus on undergraduates, Ms Bhatnagar saw the benefits of extending its scope to include rights and responsibilities specific to graduate students and worked with the GSA to add these, as well as sharing them with the various University governance bodies (including the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research) that the Charter was presented to.
Radim Barta	As a doctoral student in Oncology, Radim Barta has always been strongly invested in the GSA and volunteered countless hours in the form of service to the organization. He has served as a GSA Councillor, long-time chair of GSA Nominating Committee, a member of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Decanal Search Committee, and as a delegate for successive GSA Vice-Presidents Academic on the GFC Academic Standards Committee, GFC Academic Standards Committee Subcommittee on Standards, and the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment. The GSA's success and effectiveness as an organization is dependent on dedicated and engaged graduate students volunteering their time and the GSA is grateful to Mr Barta for his longstanding engagement.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns, ideas, suggestions, or just to grab a coffee and chat.

Warmly,

Fahed Elian, President 2019-2020

GSA President's Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 March 2020 and 20 April 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

17 March	Meeting re Athletics and Recreation Fees
18 March	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
20 March	Presidential Transition Committee Meeting
23 March	GSA Directly Elected Officers Transition
25 March	Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)
25 March	University Residence Update

26 March	Special Board of Governors (BoG) Meeting
27 March	Meeting re Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Podcast
30 March	General Faculties Council (GFC)
30 March	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Governance Committee
31 March	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) COVID-19 Call
1 April	Meeting with A Dambrowitz, Office of the Registrar
1 April	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Board Meeting
6-8 April	National Conference on Trusteeship (Remote)
6 April	Meeting with the Office of the Registrar re: Spring/Summer 2020 Tuition
8 April	President's Installation Committee Meeting
9 April	Meeting with a Member of IGSA
9 April	University Associations' Presidents Meeting
9 April	Meeting with S Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
9 April	Meeting with Studentcare re GSA/Studentcare Agreement
14 April	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
15 April	University Residence Update
17 April	Provost Review Committee Meeting
18 April	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Transition
20 April	General Faculties Council (GFC)
17 March – 20 April	COVID-19 Update Phone Call (daily since 17 Mar)

**GSA Board
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Fahed Elian, President
Date: 17 April 2020

The GSA Board (GSAB) reports regularly to GSA Council by listing its agenda items, Motions/agreements, and main items of discussion (meeting reports are also offered at each meeting). Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there were amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. GSA Council members are always able to ask questions about items that were discussed in closed session. Open session Minutes are available upon request. The President, Vice-Presidents, and the administrative team will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the GSA Council meeting. Also see the weekly Management Reports to the GSAB in Item 20 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 20.1-20.5.

18 March 2020 GSA Board Meeting:

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Academic Travel Grants and Child Care Grants, and Emergency Bursaries: Reallocation of Graduate Student Support Fund Rolling Opening Balances; Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section P: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information; Actual Expenses for Attendance at the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Advocacy Week and AGM, 17-22 February 2020 in Ottawa, ON; COVID-19 update; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the reallocation of the amounts remaining in the budgets and contingency budgets for GSA Academic Travel Grants, Child Care Grants, and Emergency Bursaries in 2019-2020 as follows: ~\$13,957 to the 2020-2021 budget line for GSA Academic Travel Grants, ~\$55,828 to the 2020-2021 budget line for GSA Child Care Grants, and whatever amount remains after 31 March 2020 in the budget line for GSA Emergency Bursaries to the 2020-2021 budget line for GSA Emergency Bursaries. FE **MOVED**. CL Seconded. **CARRIED**.

That the GSA Board **RECOMMEND TO GSA COUNCIL** the recommended changes to GSA Policy, Section P: GSA Grant and Bursary Application Policy and Information, as shown in the attached document in track changes and effective upon approval by GSA Council. FE **MOVED**. MW Seconded. **CARRIED**.

The GSA Board is asked to **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached summary of actual expenses incurred through attendance at the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Advocacy Week and AGM, 17-22 February 2020 in Ottawa, ON. FE **MOVED**. DA Seconded. **CARRIED**.

25 March 2020 GSA Board Meeting:

Main Agenda Items:

COVID-19 update; Letter from the Minister of the Advanced; PIA Taskforce Media Campaign; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None to report.

1 April 2020 GSA Board Meeting:

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Board Strategic Work Plan Update to GSA Council; COVID-19 update; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to move into **CLOSED SESSION**.

Members discussed **GFC Meeting**.

Members **AGREED** to move out of **CLOSED SESSION**.

8 April 2020 GSA Board Meeting:

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Board Strategic Work Plan Update to GSA Council; COVID-19 update; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to move into **CLOSED SESSION**.

Members discussed the **GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC)**.

Members **AGREED** to move out of **CLOSED SESSION**.

15 April 2020 GSA Board Meeting:

Main Agenda Items:

COVID-19 update and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

Board Members **AGREED** to move into **CLOSED SESSION**.

Board Members discussed the **Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Review**.

Board Members **AGREED** to move out of **CLOSED SESSION**.

Board Members **AGREED** to move into **CLOSED SESSION**.

Board Members discussed a **Board Member's Resignation**.

Members **AGREED** to move out of **CLOSED SESSION**.

Members **AGREED** to move into **CLOSED SESSION**.

Board Members discussed the **Minister of Advanced Education's social media platforms**.

Board Members **AGREED** to move out of **CLOSED SESSION**.

**GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Fahed Elian
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) reviewed and voted on recommended editorial changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, via email, on 13 March 2020. As per the GSA GC's terms of reference, the GSA GC can "make any editorial changes (such as factual inaccuracies and other editorial issues) to the GSA governing documents as deemed necessary by the GSA GC" (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, Section F.POL.4.2.b).

These editorial changes, which standardized wording in the terms of reference of two (2) GSA Standing Committees in GSA Bylaw and Policy in order to enhance clarity but not did involve substantive changes, were made to Section F: GSA Board, F.POL.3.2.c and Section Q: Labour Relations Committee, Q.POL.7.d.

Sincerely,
Fahed Elian, President and Chair of the GSA GC

**GSA Vice-President Academic
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Dylan Ashley
Date: 17 April 2020

Hi Fellow Grads,

A lot has happened in the past month while I've been working diligently in my role as your VP Academic, but here are a few highlights to give you a snapshot of what I've been up to:

- As the GSA representative on GFC EXEC, I've been your voice on many of the emergency academic measures recently adopted by the University. You should have been receiving email communications about these for the past few weeks. While it is unfortunate that these measures had to happen, we believe that the University's actions have so far been reasonable given the current circumstances. Of these measures, the most controversial is the change to a credit/no-credit grading scheme for the winter 2020 semester. We believe this change is the most equitable for the graduate student population, given the circumstances. We have heard a few concerns. Most center around the implications of this on scholarships and Ph.D. applications. These concerns are undoubtedly valid, and we're continuing to work with the University to try to mitigate these impacts.
- Fahed Elian and I collaborated with the Dean of FGSR on composing a COVID-19 FAQ video. I want to thank FGSR for working with us to support graduate students in this critical time.
- While COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the University, it has thankfully only had a small effect on the ongoing supervisory reforms. Several instances of the pilot program for the annual reports have been pushed back to the summer semester. No other impact on the supervisory reforms is expected.
- The University has put forward its proposals for spring/summer MNIFs. They will not be charging students any MNIFs they are unable to make use of. Any services provided through MNIFs that could move online have and, while this may represent a different level of service, the full absence of an MNIF will result in severe service disruptions in later semesters.
- By the time I present this report in GSA Council, it is expected that the University will have formally endorsed the Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities. I want to thank the Students' Union for championing this initiative and ensuring that the GSA was a part of it. This charter represents a major step forward for us all.

As this is my last report, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support you've given me in the past year. We've had a lot of success on many significant initiatives this year. This would not have been possible without the work done by, and engagement of, all the graduate student representatives on Council and beyond. The positive impact of your actions this year will echo through generations of students.

As always if you have any questions or concerns feel free to email me at gsa.vpacademic@ualberta.ca.

Sincerely,

Dylan Ashley

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 March 2020 and 20 April 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

19 March	General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC) – Special Meeting
23 March	GSA Directly Elected Officers Transition
25 March	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
25 March	General Faculties Council Nominating Committee (GFC NC)
26 March	GSA General Faculties Council (GFC) Caucus
29 March	FGSR Covid-19 FAQ Podcast Recording Session
30 March	General Faculties Council (GFC)
31 March	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
2 April	Task Force on Non-Credit Credential Framework
6 April	Meeting with the Office of the Registrar re: Spring/Summer 2020 Tuition
6 April	General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC)
14 April	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
16 April	GSA General Faculties Council (GFC) Caucus
20 April	GSA Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus
20 April	General Faculties Council (GFC)

**GSA Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Marc Waddingham
Date: 17 April 2020

To my colleagues in Council,

My hope is that this final update to you all finds you safe and in good spirits; the last thirty-odd days have been not been easy for any of us, but it is my hope that the end of the most severe measures is on the horizon and that we will soon return to some sense of normalcy. While at home, I have personally felt the pressure to maintain or even boost my productivity, which is a common response while stuck at home; but I would like to remind everyone that you are not “working from home,” but that “you are working through a crisis.” What you do throughout this time is more than enough, and every forward step is still progress; be it through your thesis work, physical activity, hobbies, non-academic reading, or a number of any other activities. Speaking for myself, the opportunity to regain some balance in my life has been much appreciated.

This update comes bittersweet, as this is the last Council meeting I will be leading with my fellow executives whom I am unable to join in person. As per our final strategic work plan update, we have secured major accomplishments for graduate students at the University of Alberta in extraordinarily difficult times, and I am incredibly proud of the work my fellow elected officers have completed. Fahed, Chantal, Dylan, and Shanawaz - thank you for your service, advice, assistance, and presence throughout the last year. It was an exceptional time that I will be drawing from for strength on the road ahead as President of this association.

As for updates, my attention has been divided between a few priorities, the first being the transition of our various boards in preparation for the next year. I have had the opportunity to touch base with various senior officials, to discuss future plans and priorities for the year ahead, and develop a sense of the state of the University in the midst of compounding issues. The incoming DEOs have also been shadowing the outgoing team, complicated through our new online operations; however, the office staff have been hugely supportive in the process and insofar, the necessary training has been going according to schedule.

The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) has been highly active in the last month; first, we submitted a joint letter with the Council of Alberta University Students and the Alberta Student Executive Council, calling for the provincial government to step up and assist the post-secondary sector on a number of fronts. These asks included a rebate program for students needing to extend their fields of study, to coordinate with the federal government to address gaps in the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit, and to coordinate with our post-secondary institutions to best mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, especially as they relate to our institutions' financial security.

This letter represented the interests of over 250 000 students across the province, and I consider it to be a major milestone in our external advocacy work. Furthermore, ab-GPAC Chair Marcela Lopez directly asked the Minister of Advanced Education to consider delaying the rollout of the Performance-Based Funding system and recommended a couple of alternative routes in recognition of the hardship our sector is currently facing. It turns out that they are considering altering the weighting of metrics to compensate, however it is unclear to what extent the Ministry is willing to dial back the implementation. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as we go forward.

Closer to home, I have been meeting regularly with Katherine Husing, the Associate VP of Ancillary Services, to ensure that graduate students in residence are receiving the necessary supports and financial considerations

throughout the crisis. Insofar the majority of graduate students in residence have opted to remain, as expected, with no significant issues noted at this time. Michener Park remains a complex case; insofar, Ancillary Services has communicated that they are still moving forward with a July 31 closure date, but this may be subject to change depending on consequences of the current pandemic.

My final update is specific to you, our Councillors; after speaking with members of our Council, I am interested in beginning a GSA Council outreach program with you all. In short, it would be a series of small group meetings whereby we can discuss current initiatives, onboarding strategies, strengthen lines of communication, or any number of other issues that pertain to graduate student representation and organization at the University of Alberta. We will be finalizing some details, but keep an eye on your emails for future opportunities.

In any case, I am looking forward to another year at Council; we have some tremendous work ahead of us.

Cheers,
Marc Waddingham

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 March 2020 and 20 April 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

17 March	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
17 March	Meeting re Athletics and Recreation Fees
20 March	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) COVID-19 Call
23 March	GSA Directly Elected Officers Transition
24 March	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) COVID-19 Call
24 March	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Scoping Group Committee Meeting
24 March	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
25 March	University Residence Update
25 March	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Meeting with Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS)
25 March	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
27 March	Alberta Student Leaders Call re: COVID-19
30 March	General Faculties Council (GFC)
30 March	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Communications Committee
31 March	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) COVID-19 Call
31 March	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
1 April	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Board Meeting
3 April	Alberta Student Leaders Meeting re: COVID-19
7 April	GSA 101 Transition Training Session
7 April	GSA/ab-GPAC Government Realties Training
7 April	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
8 April	Meeting with Ancillary Services re Residence Move-Out Update
8 April	Public Interest Alberta (PIA) Post-Secondary Education Taskforce
9 April	GSA Governing Documents 101 Transition Training Session
9 April	Athletics and Recreation Fee Policy Advisory Committee (ARFPAC)
14 April	GSA Health and Dental Plan 101 Transition Training Session

14 April	Alberta Student Leaders Meeting re: COVID-19
14 April	Meeting with C Bell, Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director
15 April	University Residence Update
15 April	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
16 April	Governance 101 Transition Training Session
17 April	Alberta Student Leaders Call re: COVID-19
17-18 April	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Transition

**GSA Vice-President Labour
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Shanawaz Mohammad
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you all are doing well and staying safe during these difficult times. While it's been a great experience for me working with GSA and university administration, today is my last Council meeting and I want to introduce the incoming VP Labour Umesh Nimmathi, who begins his term May 1. Moreover, I want to thank GSA President Fahed Elian for supporting me throughout my term; I don't think I would have completed my term without his love, support, and encouragement. I also want to thank my fellow DEOs who always helped me during difficult times, and I am going to miss working with them and President Fahed Elian. I have learned and improved my skills while working with the GSA staff, who have been very kind and helpful. I also want to thank the Executive Director, Courtney Thomas, and former Associate Director, Julie Tanguay, for providing direction and advice during my term. Thank you so much for all the support you all have provided me.

Collective Bargaining and Future Negotiations:

I want to thank all Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs) for providing feedback for the upcoming negotiations and GSA LRC members for working to develop the bargaining mandate and priorities. We are in the process of sending out a ratification vote to all AEGSs on this bargaining mandate, which we will then submit to the University as the starting point for the upcoming negotiations. I encourage all AEGSs to vote so that we can begin negotiations with the University. Any updates on negotiations and labour matters will be circulated via the AEGS newsletter.

As always, I kindly request that every Councillor ensures that graduate students who are under the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement (CA) are aware of this agreement and communicate that the VP Labour is available to provide information sessions on the CA to their department. Moreover, if any graduate student comes to you regarding CA issues, harassment, or safety and security issues, please have them email me, and I would be very happy to meet with them.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the CA, please reach me at gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca.

GSA VP Labour's Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 March 2020 and 20 April 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

17 March	Meeting with Lawyer re: Collective Bargaining
19 March	GSA Labour Town Hall
23 March	GSA Directly Elected Officers Transition
24 March	GSA Labour 101
26 March	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
31 March	Meeting with a Graduate Student
2 April	GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC)
17 April	Virtual Graduate Collective Tea Time
20 April	GSA Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus

**GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC)
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Shanawaz Mohammad
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

I would like to thank all academically-employed graduate students who attended the Labour Town Hall on 19 March 2020, and to all who filled out our Google Feedback form regarding the GSA Collective Agreement bargaining priorities that was available 12-30 March 2020. The GSA LRC met on 2 April 2020 to review the feedback we received and to set the bargaining mandate for the next round of collective bargaining with the University that will start this spring for the new collective agreement will take effect September 2020. The bargaining mandate has been sent to all current academically-employed graduate students to vote upon for approval. If the majority of those who vote are in favour of our bargaining mandate, the GSA Negotiating Team (GSA NT) will build the opening position based on this mandate. The next step will be to send the opening position to the University to commence negotiations.

In closing, there are still some vacancies on the GSA LRC that will be advertised shortly to academically-employed graduate students. I ask you all to encourage your academically-employed graduate student colleagues to consider applying to serve on the GSA LRC.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Shanawaz Mohammad, Vice-President Labour and Chair of the GSA LRC

**GSA Vice-President Student Services
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Chantal Labonté
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

As my term nears its end, I want to thank you all for your contributions and service to graduate students over the past year. Serving graduate students as Vice-President Student Services has been a privilege and a highlight of my academic career. As GSA councillors, you have been instrumental to the success of the GSA over the past year. Thank you for your engagement, support, and thoughtful questions that have allowed me and my fellow DEOs to think in new and creative ways in order to support graduate students. I wish you tremendous success in your future endeavours.

I am pleased to provide you with highlights and updates on some of the areas and initiatives focused on over the past month. Please find a full list of the meetings I have attended attached to this report.

COVID-19

Our world has changed considerably since my last report to you. I, along with my fellow DEOs and the GSA staff, have been working hard to ensure that your needs are being met during the COVID-19 crisis.

- We have made \$100,000 available for emergency bursaries intended to fill gaps in finances during this challenging time. These funds are accessible through Student Financial Services in the same way the GSA Emergency Bursary is typically accessed. All appointments are being done virtually.
- We have confirmed that virtual healthcare appointments under the GSA Health and Dental Plan will be covered by our insurance company. We are beginning to have conversations with Studentcare regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the GSA Health and Dental Plan.
- We continue to work closely with the Campus Food Bank to ensure that they are able to continue to serve the campus community in the ways that are most needed during this crisis.
- Working with the Dean of Students' office, we have received confirmation that all services are being offered remotely, and the Graduate Student Assistantship Program is also available virtually.
- The Dean of Students' office has increased funding for their Safe House program, which offers temporary housing for those faced with housing insecurity.
- We have also been able to offer our first virtual Graduate Collective Tea Time on Friday, 17 April in order to offer connection and social support for those who need it.

During these unprecedented times, I hope that you and your colleagues will reach out to the support services available. Should any concerns be encountered, please do not hesitate to reach out to the GSA directly for assistance.

Spring/Summer Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

I, along with Fahed and Dylan, were involved in conversations with the University Registrar and other key University leaders regarding Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees for Spring/Summer 2020. Here, the University has taken an approach to not charge fees for services that cannot be used due to COVID-19. This is an approach we support and, as a result, graduate students will not be charged an Athletics and Recreation fee, a PAW Centre fee, or a U-Pass fee (realizing that not all graduate students are assessed the first two noted fees in the spring/summer).

GSA Health and Dental Plan

Following previous reports to you, I am pleased to announce that Fahed and I, on behalf of the GSA, recently signed a new agreement with Studentcare to serve as the provider of the GSA Health and Dental Plan to 2025. As

you may member, the negotiated Plan cost for 2020-2021 is lower than the amount of the fee for the Plan approved by GSA Council in March. This allows the GSA Board to consider increasing coverage in several areas, such as vision, dental, and access to registered clinical social workers under psychology/counselling coverage. I'm very excited to see these improvements to our Plan moving forward and a proposal will come before you at the next GSA Council meeting.

I welcome any questions or concerns regarding this report. Please do not hesitate to share your suggestions and comments regarding any student service-related issue you or anyone from your department may be experiencing.

Thank you,

Chantal Labonté
VP Student Services

GSA VP Student Services' Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 March 2020 and 20 April 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

17 March	Meeting re Athletics and Recreation Fees
18 March	Suicide Prevention Framework (SPF) Communications Toolkit Working Group
20 March	Meeting with a Graduate Student
23 March	GSA Directly Elected Officers Transition
24 March	E-Scooters on Campus Meeting
25 March	Meeting with K Friese, Associate Dean of Students
25 March	Dean of Students' Advisory Council (DAC)
26 March	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
30 March	Virtual Graduate Collective Tea Time
2 April	3-Minute Thesis
6 April	Meeting with the Office of the Registrar re: Spring/Summer 2020 Tuition
6 April	PAW Strategic Operating Committee (PAWSOC)
7 April	E-Scooters on Campus Meeting
9 April	Athletics and Recreation Fee Policy Advisory Committee (ARFPAC)
9 April	Meeting with Students' Union (SU) re Sustainability
9 April	Meeting with the Campus Food Bank
9 April	Meeting with Studentcare re GSA/Studentcare Agreement
9 April	Campus Food Bank Board Meeting
14 April	GSA Health and Dental Plan 101 Transition Training Session
15 April	Suicide Prevention Framework (SPF) Communications Toolkit Working Group
16 April	U-Pass Administrative Committee
16 April	Research Data Management (RDM) Institutional Group Meeting
17 April	Virtual Graduate Collective Tea Time

**GSA Nominating Committee
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Radim Barta
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) this month is a summary of discussions/decisions the committee has made since its last report, together with a list of all vacancies filled and those which will be filled shortly.

GSA Policy governing the GSA NoC is located in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E: Nominating. As provided for in its Terms of Reference, the GSA NoC has been conducting business via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Radim Barta, Chair of the GSA NoC

Memorandum to GSA Councillors

There are a number of vacancies, both currently being advertised and which will be advertised in the coming weeks, on GSA Standing Committees for GSA Councillors (Departmental Councillors and Councillors-at-Large). These positions play a pivotal role in the GSA's ongoing efforts to keep its processes transparent and itself accountable, since GSA Councillors on these committees help maintain clear and consistent connection between GSA Council and GSA Standing Committees. Long-term vacancies adversely impact these efforts and so GSA Council members are encouraged to consider serving on these committees when vacancies are advertised to you.

It is important to note that the time commitment for each of these committees varies greatly. While some meet regularly throughout the year (usually every two (2) to three (3) months), others meet less frequently and some do most of their work over email. New members are provided with as much training as they require in addition to the ongoing support provided by GSA management and staff to the GSA Standing Committees and their members. **These commitments are also a great opportunity to add to your CV/resume.**

On behalf of the GSA NoC, GSA NoC Chair Radim Barta strongly encourages GSA Councillors to consider the next round of vacancies, which will be circulated to GSA Council electronically. Questions can be directed to GSA NoC Chair Radim Barta at radim@ualberta.ca or GSA Elections Coordinator Monica Brzak at gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca.

GSA Standing Committees

1) GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 3 April 2020 and 9 April 2020 with a nomination deadline of 15 April 2020. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

GSA Officers

1) GSA Councillors-at-Large (CALs) (Seven (7) Positions)

Information regarding the positions for seven (7) GSA members was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 3 April 2020 and 9 April 2020 with a nomination deadline of 15 April 2020. **Six (6) nominations were received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 9 – Nominees for GSA CALs) and the remaining vacancy will be advertised again.**

External Committees

1) General Faculties Council (GFC) (Nine (9) Graduate Student Positions)

Information regarding the positions for fourteen (14) graduate students was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 13 and 20 March 2020 with a nomination deadline of 25 March 2020. **Five (5) nominations were received and the GSA NoC voted on the nominees on 26 March 2020.** Information regarding the remaining positions for nine (9) graduate students was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 27 March 2020, 3 April, and 9 April with a nomination deadline of 15 April 2020. **Ten (10) nominations were received and the GSA NoC voted on the nominees on 17 April 2020.**

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Jennifer Bertrand
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The GSA ERC met on 14 April 2020 to debrief following the 2020 GSA General Election. There were no issues or concerns that came forward during this meeting but members did note that, moving forward, they will engage with the GSA Nominating Committee (which leads the annual Early Call for Talent and Training to encourage individuals to run) concerning possible strategies to increase election engagement and voter turnout levels.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bertrand, Chair of the GSA ERC

**GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for the 20 April 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Courtney Thomas
Date: 17 April 2020

Dear GSA Council Members,

The office staff's main focus since the last meeting of GSA Council has been providing support for the Directly-Elected Officers as they work with the University to navigate the significant and far-reaching impacts of the measures being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19. The GSA office has been closed since 17 March and all staff are working from home. With the exception of social/engagement events, all GSA services continue to be provided and the office is heavily engaged in offering information and assistance to graduate students at this challenging time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about adjustments that have been to the GSA's operations to permit remote delivery of services and working from home, as well as any other questions you may have about the potential long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the organization.

As this is the final meeting before a team of Directly-Elected Officers takes office, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the current team. This is eighth team of Directly-Elected Officer that I have had the pleasure of supporting and I can say, without exaggeration, that they have been an incredibly driven, insightful, creative, and conscientious team who have worked tirelessly to support graduate students at the U of A. Along with all the members of the office team, I wish them all the best in their future endeavours – I know they will all enjoy great success.

My weekly reports to the GSA Board are attached (pages 20.1-20.5) and, as always, I am happy to answer any questions. I hope that each of you are managing in this difficult time.

Best,

Courtney Thomas, Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, 18 March 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 11 March 2020:

Strategic

- Moving all meetings and all GSA operations online in response to COVID-19 prevention measures (setting up all staff to work remotely, cancellation of GSA Awards Night, etc).
- Planning for transition (setting the transition event date, reviewing material for distribution, scheduling 101s for incoming DEOs, etc).
- Work associated with the recent GSA Council meeting.
- Renegotiation of the NASA collective agreement governing the GSA's staff.
- Reviewing meeting materials associated with various governance bodies.
- Follow up from an email vote for the GSA Governance Committee.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (planning a town hall and a labour 101, arranging for the GSA Negotiating Team to meet with legal counsel from Chivers Carpenter, etc) and contacting a consultant concerning best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses so will reassess how best to move forward, ab-GPAC is currently doing some research so this could serve as a possible jumping off point).

Grants and Office Operations

- Cancelling all GSA events.
- Working out how to disburse GSA Emergency Bursaries remotely.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies for on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor), and Councillors-at-Large (7 vacancies), and filling 14 positions as part of the annual General Faculties Council replenishment process).
- Facebook = 1,430 likes (up 1 from 11 March) and 1,520 followers (up 1 from 11 March); Facebook posts reached 474 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 309. Twitter = 1,012 followers (up 3 from 11 March); our tweets earned "1,500 impressions" over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January (not accepting applications for travel outside Alberta); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = applications closed, \$10,891 disbursed and 14 applications funded. New granting periods open 1 April 2020.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 25 March 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 18 March 2020:

Strategic

- Moving all meetings and all GSA operations online in response to COVID-19 prevention measures (setting up all staff to work remotely, cancellation of GSA Awards Night, establishing new work flow protocols, etc).
- Transition for Directly-Elected Officers (held online).
- Ongoing monitoring of the GSA budget in light of investment vicissitudes and decreased revenue associated with the GSA's arrangement with the SU concerning Chopped Leaf.
- Support for the online hosting of a Labour 101 session.
- Reviewing meeting materials associated with various governance bodies.
- Drafting GSA reports to external bodies.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (generating notes from the town hall and circulating them to members of the bargaining unit) and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward; ab-GPAC is currently doing some research so this could serve as a possible jumping off point).

Grants and Office Operations

- Preparing for the beginning of the new fiscal year (GSA Child Care Grants are expected to be busy).
- Updating the template constitution for GSA Graduate Student Groups.
- Working out how to disburse GSA Emergency Bursaries remotely and how to distribute GSA Council-approved funding to the Campus Food Bank for 2020-2021.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies for on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor), and Councillors-at-Large (7 vacancies), and filling 14 positions as part of the annual General Faculties Council replenishment process).
- Facebook = 1,430 likes (up 0 from 18 March) and 1,521 followers (up 1 from 18 March); Facebook posts reached 621 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 107. Twitter = 1,015 followers (up 3 from 18 March); our tweets earned "2,800 impressions" over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January (not accepting applications for travel anymore, online costs still accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = applications closed, \$10,891 disbursed and 14 applications funded. New granting periods open 1 April 2020.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 1 April 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 25 March 2020:

Strategic

- Moving all meetings and all GSA operations online in response to COVID-19 prevention measures (continued work to set up all staff to work remotely and establish new work flow protocols).
- Setting up training sessions for incoming Directly-Elected Officers by portfolio (will be held online).
- Ongoing monitoring of the GSA budget in light of investment vicissitudes and decreased revenue associated with the GSA's arrangement with the SU concerning Chopped Leaf.
- Preparing for an upcoming meeting of the GSA Labour Relations Committee.
- Forward planning for the April meeting of GSA Council.
- Reviewing meeting materials associated with various University governance bodies.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (working with the GSA Labour Relations Committee to develop the GSA's bargaining mandate (based on feedback supplied by academically-employed graduate students) and preparing for it to be endorsed by academically-employed graduate students) and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward; ab-GPAC is currently doing some research so this could serve as a possible jumping off point).

Grants and Office Operations

- Preparing for the beginning of the new fiscal year for grants (GSA Child Care Grants are expected to be busy).
- Work associated with the end of the GSA's fiscal year.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (preparing for an upcoming meeting) and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor – to be advertised in April), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor – to be advertised in May), and Councillors-at-Large (7 vacancies), filling 14 positions as part of the annual General Faculties Council replenishment process, and preparing for the replenishment of the Senator, Speaker, Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chief Returning Officer).
- Facebook = 1,430 likes (up 0 from 18 March) and 1,521 followers (up 1 from 18 March); Facebook posts reached 621 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 107. Twitter = 1,015 followers (up 3 from 18 March); our tweets earned "2,800 impressions" over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January (not accepting applications for travel anymore, online costs still accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = applications closed, \$10,891 disbursed and 14 applications funded. New granting periods open 1 April 2020.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 8 April 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 1 April 2020:

Strategic

- Moving all meetings and all GSA operations online in response to COVID-19 prevention measures (continued work to set up all staff to work remotely and establish new work flow protocols).
- Hosting various online training sessions for incoming Directly-Elected Officers by portfolio.
- Working on the first GSA annual report.
- Preparing for an upcoming meeting of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee.
- Planning for the April meeting of GSA Council and preparing meeting materials.
- Drafting responses to student inquiries at the direction of the President.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (working with the GSA Labour Relations Committee to develop the GSA's bargaining mandate (based on feedback supplied by academically-employed graduate students and a recent meeting of the committee) and preparing for it to be endorsed by academically-employed graduate students) and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward; ab-GPAC is currently doing some research so this could serve as a possible jumping off point – project temporarily on hold as the upcoming cycle of bargaining is being prepared for).

Grants and Office Operations

- Assessing alternate means to deliver fall orientation.
- Assessing potential new platforms for the GSA newsletter.
- Work associated with the end of the GSA's fiscal year.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (preparing for an upcoming meeting) and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor and possibly 1 graduate student – to be advertised in May), and Councillors-at-Large (7 vacancies for graduate students), filling 14 positions as part of the annual General Faculties Council replenishment process and 1 position on the Vargo Cup adjudication committee, and preparing for the replenishment of the Senator, Speaker, Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chief Returning Officer).
- Facebook = 1,435 likes (up 5 from 1 April) and 1,526 followers (up 5 from 1 April); Facebook posts reached 404 users last week and our “post engagement” count was 93. Twitter = 1,023 followers (up 8 from 1 April); our tweets earned “721 impressions” over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 April (not accepting applications for travel, online costs still accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 April and closed 6 April (\$151,000 disbursed); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 April. Next funding periods opens 1 July 2020.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 15 April 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 8 April 2020:

Strategic

- Moving all meetings and all GSA operations online in response to COVID-19 prevention measures (continued work to set up all staff to work remotely and establish new work flow protocols).
- Working on the first GSA annual report.
- Reviewing GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections to support a meeting of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee to brief following the 2020 GSA General Election.
- Planning for the April meeting of GSA Council (discussing processes for hosting remotely, etc with the Speaker) and preparing meeting materials for the second mailing.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (working with the GSA Labour Relations Committee to develop the GSA's bargaining mandate (based on feedback supplied by academically-employed graduate students and a recent meeting of the committee) and preparing for it to be endorsed by academically-employed graduate students in an electronic vote that will be circulated this week) and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward – project temporarily on hold as the upcoming cycle of bargaining is being prepared for).

Operations

- Assessing alternate means to deliver fall orientation.
- Hosting various online training sessions for incoming Directly-Elected Officers by portfolio.
- Reviewing various process guides being developed to aid in support for the GSA Nominating Committee.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (preparing for an upcoming meeting) and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor and possibly 1 graduate student – to be advertised in May), and Councillors-at-Large (7 vacancies for graduate students), filling 14 positions as part of the annual General Faculties Council replenishment process and 1 position on the Vargo Cup adjudication committee, and preparing for the replenishment of the Senator (currently being advertised), Speaker, Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chief Returning Officer).
- Facebook = 1,436 likes (up 1 from 8 April) and 1,530 followers (up 4 from 8 April); Facebook posts reached 262 users last week and our “post engagement” count was 23. Twitter = 1,023 followers (up 5 from 8 April); our tweets earned “705 impressions” over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 April (not accepting applications for travel, online costs still accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 April and closed 6 April (\$151,000 disbursed); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 April. Next funding periods opens 1 July 2020.