

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, 21 March 2022 at 6:00 pm
Held online via Zoom

The GSA and the University of Alberta reside on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. In acknowledging this traditional territory and its significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon it, we recognize its longer history that reaches beyond colonization and the establishment of European colonies and recognize the GSA's ongoing collective responsibility in working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples and what that means for the work of the GSA as it aims to practice the principles of being Good Relations with FNMI peoples, Nations, communities, and lands.

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 Management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

Speaker Lauren Hill in the Chair

OPEN SESSION

**Attached
Numbered Pages**

1. Approval of the 21 March 2022 Agenda (*suggested time: 1 min*)
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 28 February 2022 GSA Council Meeting (*suggested time: 1 min*)
Attachment:
 - i. Minutes from the 28 February 2022 GSA Council Meeting
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*)

2.0 - 2.6

GSA Council Member Announcements

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

Presentations

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

Guests: Brandon Simmons (Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Director)

Attachment:

- i. ab-GPAC 2022 Member Relations Presentation

5.0 - 5.9

Action Items

6. Drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund and GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee for 2022-2023 (*suggested time: 20 min*)
Anas Fassih (President) will present the item and introduce the guest.

Guest: Robyn Paches (Program Manager, Studentcare)

Attachments:

- i. Outline of Issue 6.0 - 6.1
- ii. Projected Premiums for 2022-2023 as of February 2022 6.2 - 6.4

Reminder: A Health and Dental 101 session is scheduled for 16 March 2022 from 11 AM-12 PM via Zoom.

7. 2022 GSA General Election Results: To Receive for Information for the Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority (*suggested time: 5 min*)
Muneeb Mohiuddin (Chief Returning Officer) will present the item.

Attachment:

- i. Outline of Issue 7.0

Reports (*suggested time: 15 min*)

8. President (**Anas Fassih, President**)

- i. President's Report 8.0 - 8.1
- ii. GSA Board Report 8.2
- iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report 8.3 - 8.8
- iv. GSA Governance Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)
- v. GSA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)

9. Vice-President Academic (**Kathy Haddadkar, Vice-President Academic**)

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report 9.0 - 9.1

10. Vice-President External (**Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa, Vice-President External**)

- i. Vice-President External's Report 10.0 - 10.1
- ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)

11. Vice-President Labour (**Jessica Grenke, Vice-President Labour**)

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report 11.0 - 11.1
- ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report 11.2

12. Vice-President Student Services (**Pareesh Kumar, Vice-President Student Services**)

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report 12.0 - 12.1

13. Senator (**Peter Isesele, Senator**)

- i. Senator's Report (**no written report at this time**)

14. Speaker (**Lauren Hill, Speaker**)

- i. Speaker's Report (**no written report at this time**)

15. Chief Returning Officer (**Muneeb Mohiuddin, Chief Returning Officer**)

- i. Chief Returning Officer's Report 15.0

16. GSA Nominating Committee (**Violet Sun, GSA Nominating Committee Member**)

- i. GSA Nominating Committee Report 16.0 - 16.1

17. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (**Jennifer Bertrand, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair**)

- i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report 17.0

18. GSA Management (**Courtney Thomas, Executive Director**)

- i. Executive Director's Report 18.0 - 18.3

Question Period

19. Written Questions (**none received**)

20. Oral Questions

Adjournment

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, 28 February 2022 at 6:00 pm
Held online via Zoom

IN ATTENDANCE:

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Anas Fassih (President) | Madeleine Fleming (Biochemistry) | Yina Liu (Elementary Education) | Shubham Soni (Paediatrics) |
| Kathy Haddadkar (VP Academic) | Andrew Cook, Ish Jain (Biological Science) | Kirsten Mason (History, Classics, & Religious Studies) | Alexia Maheux (Pharmacology) |
| Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa (VP External) | Kodi Cheng (Biomedical Engineering) | Anita Amir Labonno (Human Ecology) | Avontay Williams (Philosophy) |
| Jessica Grenke (VP Labour) | Juan Alcantara (Business MBA) | Jesse Alook (Indigenous GSA) | Bryanna Chan (Physical Therapy) |
| Paresh Kumar (VP Student Services) | Jennifer Sloan (Business PhD) | Janet Zhou (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology) | Isha Ralhan (Physiology) |
| Lauren Hill (Speaker) | Brenna Hourigan (Cell Biology) | Kim Jones; Maia Trotter (Library & Information Studies) | Telisa Courtney (Political Science) |
| Sana Amjad (Deputy Speaker) | Omnath Ekambaram (Chemical & Materials Engineering) | Hannah Lam (Linguistics) | Emilie Desnoyers (Psychiatry) |
| Muneeb Mohiuddin (CRO) | Karen Hoy (Chemistry) | Alain Gervais (Mathematical & Statistical Sciences) | Angela Ma (Psychology) |
| Sophie Shi (DRO) | Sana Homsy (Communication Sciences & Disorders) | Luthfia Friskie (Media and Technology Studies) | Nazif Mahub (Public Health) |
| Hope Eze (Councillor-at-Large) | Ifaz Kabir (Computing Science) | Kara Goodkey (Medical Genetics) | Kathryn Lambert (Rehabilitation Science) |
| Laura Manerus (Councillor-at-Large) | Nathalia Fernandes Fagundes (Dentistry) | Asna Latif (Medical Microbiology & Immunology) | Elena Schaefer (Renewable Resources) |
| Sanhita Pal (Councillor-at-Large) | Xavia Publius (Drama) | Billy Wang (Medicine) | Hotaka Kobori (REES) |
| Varshini Prakash (Councillor-at-Large) | Avni Patel; Kasia Staniszewska (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences) | Noam Steinberg (Neuroscience) | Robert Piazza (Secondary Education) |
| Abigail Ameley Quaye (Councillor-at-Large) | Priscilla Luu (Educational Policy Studies) | Lily Lu (Nursing) | Kasra Shayeganpour (Surgery) |
| Janmejy Rao (Councillor-at-Large) | Devon Heath (Educational Psychology) | Alicia Chichak (Occupational Therapy) | |
| Saeed Siddik (Councillor-at-Large) | Kapil Gangwar (Electrical & Computer Engineering) | Yan Shu Kong (Oncology) | |

Guests: Dr. Brooke Milne (Vice-Provost and Dean of FGSR); Medha Samarasinghe (FGSR, Human Resources and Operations Coordinator); Cheryl Harwardt (Director, Campus and Community Recreation); Katie Spriggs (Associate Director, Student Services – Athletics Central Admin); Vang Ioannides (Associate Director, Student Services – Athletics).

Speaker Lauren Hill in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Speaker acknowledged the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

Approval of Agenda**1. Approval of the 28 February 2022 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 28 February 2022 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 25 January 2022.

Prepared by M Toghrai and F Robertson for GSA Council 28 February 2022

No Mover and Secunder were sought; the Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes from the 17 January 2022 GSA Council Meeting

Members had before them the 17 January 2022 GSA Council meeting minutes, which had been previously distributed on 17 February 2022. E Desnoyers **MOVED**; A Ma **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**.

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. Update on Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Initiatives

A Fassih (President) presented the item and introduced the guests (Dr. B Milne, Vice-Provost and Dean of FGSR, and M Samarasinghe, FGSR Human Resources and Operations Coordinator).

B Milne and M Samarasinghe presented on FGSR's purpose to provide support to graduate students as well as support graduate programs offered by the University. M Samarasinghe explained the structure of FGSR in terms of academic supports, including Associate Deans and Professional Development, and the administrative structure that covered admissions and awards selection and distribution. FGSR housed about 8,200 graduate students, which represented about 20% of the University's student population. Approximately 20% of graduate students were parents; 2.5% self-identified as Indigenous and 5.3% self-identified as living with a disability or impairment. 40% of graduate students were international students; 52% were women. These demographics differed significantly from the undergraduate population. FGSR provided institution-wide initiatives that address the specific needs of graduate students. They were a pan-institutional academic faculty providing administrative support for graduate students. FGSR dispersed \$28 million in scholarships, reviewing over 5,000 applications per year.

A graduate faculty at a large, research-intensive university, was legislative in purpose – FGSR was delegated authority by the Board of Governors (BoG) and General Faculties Council (GFC) to help students move through their program from admission to completion. They were the home faculty where every graduate student was registered. With about 8,200 students, FGSR was actually the largest faculty at the University.

The Academic Restructuring conversation over the past two years has highlighted the need to educate all members of the University community about the different services available. As a graduate student, you would work with FGSR for a suite of issues. FGSR could support you with central academic services and advice on things that were the same for every student, no matter the program, degree type, or year. Work more closely tied to your discipline would happen at the faculty/department/college level. FGSR could be seen as leaders in advocating for graduate education at the University; they work in partnership with the GSA to create positive experiences.

B Milne provided an update on supervisory initiatives. The Student/Supervisor Guidelines passed with strong support at GFC last September; the UAPPOL policies that embody the Academic Adjunct Appointment and the new graduate supervisor training procedure were approved by GFC in September to move forward for approval by the BoG in October. As of January, all of those things were in effect. The new cohort of faculty members starting in July of this year would see the new training initiatives, which were also available for existing supervisors. Work with IST continued on electronic platforms for students and supervisors and should be available in March 2022.

B Milne concluded with minimum funding packages, a discussion FGSR would continue to revisit. Minimum funding packages have real-life impacts on student success and completion rates that would make a difference. We would need to maintain the University of Alberta's competitiveness among other institutions. The timing was appropriate to start these conversations – the University was now shifting its focus toward growth and enrollment and to be competitive in the recruitment process, B Milne felt strongly that this initiative was important and needed time and consideration.

Members raised a series of questions including, but not limited to: if graduate students should go to FGSR with supervisor conflict issues or start those discussions in their department (B Milne explained that FGSR was always an available resource for resolving supervisor conflicts; it's always good for students to come forward. The guidelines should help students and

supervisors work through issues, that might otherwise become contentious, within a more structured and timelier framework. The first preferred step was always to work within the department but FGSR was available to advocate and facilitate. There was a confidential portal for students to input information that would go directly to FGSR as a point of inquiry; if there were accountability mechanisms in place to make sure supervisors who were not following the guidelines were made to do so (B Milne explained that this was now part of University policy, embedded in UAPPOL, in which the requirement to complete the Student/Supervisory Guidelines and the Provost Report were tied to the Academic Staff's Collective Agreement. These were now part of a Supervisor's assigned duties that they must satisfactorily meet, there was no opt-out. There was a clear expectation that these standards would help set up a positive working relationship between graduate students and supervisors from the outset of their programs. Supervisor training was a requirement for new faculty hired after January 2022; this training was not onerous and provided a suite of onboarding resources and skills unrelated to discipline, including resolving conflict, Indigenization and decolonization, and inter-cultural communication); if there was any opportunity for students to provide supervisor evaluations (if guidelines were not completed due to supervisory compliance, that would become a different discussion. If a supervisor was resisting an institutional requirement their disciplinary dean could assign the training; this also would be folded into the Faculty Evaluation Committee annual process, which determined performance, salary, and promotions. These would not be easily dismissed); if the awards process of receiving internal nominations from departments for major awards could be re-evaluated so that more students applications had the opportunity to be adjudicated (B Milne clarified that FGSR was working toward operationalizing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles and had developed, and approved at FGSR Council, a guide for equitable adjudication practices embodying EDI principles. It could be challenging to adhere to non-institutional policies (such as those for Tri-Council) as well as ensuring compatibility and not unintentionally create barriers. M Samarasinghe also explained that there were often limits in terms of how many award applications could be accepted and criteria from the Terms of Reference that limited acceptance based on a number of factors); if course-based Masters would be restricted from applying for SSHRC funding (B Milne stressed that this information was inaccurate and was not an FGSR policy. Applications from those programs were eligible based on SSHRC criteria and had a very high success rate. Nothing would change going forward in terms of eligibility for those applications); if an update can be provided regarding FGSR Council composition with respect to the Faculty of Education's shift to a non-departmentalized structure (B Milne explained that since reorganization was still ongoing, no changes had happened yet. Changes were likely, as they would be with other University governance structures, but FGSR could not speculate at this point); and about the uptake for Research Integrity and Academic Citizenship training offered by FGSR (Uptake had been very good – upwards of 2,000 registrants since launch – and feedback was extremely positive).

6. Campus and Community Recreation (CCR) Fees

P Kumar (Vice-President Student Services) presented the item and introduced the guests (C Harwardt, Director of Campus and Community Recreation, K Spriggs, Associate Director, Student Services – Athletics Central Admin, and V Ioannides, Associate Director, Student Services – Athletics).

C Harwardt, K Spriggs and V Ioannides presented on the structure of Athletics and Recreation revenues and expenses and how the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee (MNIF) paid by students in support of the unit was utilized. C Harwardt outlined the commitment Campus and Community Recreation (CCR) made several years ago to maintain a strong relationship between staff, faculty, students, and the wider community. Students remained their target audience and number one priority.

The Athletics and Recreation Fee was one source of revenue (in addition to significant fundraising) that supported facilities and programs – the management and operations of facilities, management and operations of activities, administration, and coaching the Golden Bears and Pandas Athletics programs. The fee was managed with five principles in mind: transparency, accountability, partnership, collaboration, and consultation.

C Harwardt noted that students collectively paid \$5.8 million in Athletics and Recreation Fees annually in the form of a MNIF; this revenue was split evenly between Athletics and CCR. These fees were overseen by the MNIF Oversight Committee, which met at least four times per year and required annual reporting. Allocation and the oversight of provision of services fell to the Office of the Dean of Students the Office of the Vice-President, Facilities and Operations. They also provided an annual report to both the GSA and the Students' Union; questions were welcome at any time throughout the year. Student representatives served on the Recreation Action Committee and the Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) Centre Strategic Operating Committee as well, which was responsible for the operation of the PAW Centre itself.

CCR oversaw 37 sport and recreation facilities and almost 1000 different programs annually for students and community members and offered sports clubs and employment opportunities for students. Their primary focus was the student community; physical activity was a critical part of overall individual health. C Harwardt provided a more detailed overview of funding and revenue, major expenses, and expenditures over the past several years. Currently, they were seeing about 2/3 of pre-pandemic usage in their primary facilities. They saw the same trends in intramurals, sport clubs, and programs.

As graduate student demographics were very different than those of undergraduates, CCR was interested in finding out whether graduate student needs were being met.

K Spriggs then provided an overview of the Golden Bears and Pandas Athletics programs, and their context within the University community. The past two years had highlighted the importance of community building and outreach. Programming could be expensive to run but also generated significant revenue. In April, the University would host the Men's National Basketball Championships.

Members raised a series of questions including, but not limited to: possible changes in the fee structure in terms of 'off campus' student classification (C Harwardt explained that the definition of 'off campus' had changed over the years and was in need of review. Classification as 'off campus' did not automatically indicate not in Edmonton or not able to access services. The Athletics and Recreation fee paid for more than buildings; online and virtual services had expanded exponentially in the past two years. K Spriggs clarified that the current classification was problematic and did not capture the wide range of situations); if there were plans to increase clubs or recreation to provide more opportunities to bring students together (C Harwardt agreed this had been very challenging for the past two years but they intended to increase activities and events; CCR was open to working with groups to support them or put something together for them. There were many avenues for opportunity); and if they had a sense of how many of their users were graduate students (C Harwardt explained that their data was not broken down to that degree. Overall, North Campus facilities saw very little general community use, especially in comparison to facilities at South Campus, where community use was significant. The programming and facilities available at different locations varied depending on the demographics using them).

Action Items

7. Operating and Capital Budget (2022-2023), Labour Union Dues (2022-2023), and Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2022-2023) AND Operating and Capital Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025), Labour Union Dues Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025), and Restricted and Other Funding Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025)

A Fassih (President) presented the items, noting that members had before them the GSA budget for the next year for approval as well as the forecasted budget for the next three years for information. Overall, the GSA was in a very strong financial position. The budget had been developed with consideration for the fact that we would be seeing a return to campus and a return to in-person operations, which would impact the sorts of events we could offer. The budget also projected a 1% increase in enrolment and the associated fees collected from students. Thanks to conservative budget planning, the GSA would see a small surplus in future years. This year, as reflected in materials related to the next item on the agenda, as a continuing effect of the pandemic, this amount was anticipated to be larger. As a result of the opportunity this afforded, the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) had opted to dedicate a one-time grant equal to 30% of the surplus to the Campus Food Bank, pending discussions and advisement from the GSA's auditor and final financial reconciliations after the fiscal year end. The majority of Campus Food Bank clients were graduate students, and a significant portion of these were international graduate students, and the GSA was happy to enhance its support for this essential service. Lastly, A Fassih expressed his gratitude to the GSA management and finance team, and the GSA BFC.

Members raised a number of questions including, but not limited to: whether the University was mindful of the deeper problem that was revealed by a significant uptick in applications for bursary funding and in the demographic breakdown of the Campus Food Bank clientele (the GSA was in regular conversation with the University and part of those ongoing discussions and advocacy was reflected through the University's commitment of just shy of \$1 million to the Graduate Student Support Fund, which was then disbursed by the GSA in the form of GSA Emergency Bursaries, Child Care Grants, and other such funding opportunities. But obviously there was a growing need and GSA advocacy work would continue in this vein) and how the GSA reconciled the large rise in inflation this year without an increase in GSA fees (growing enrolment numbers helped mitigate this issue, as did relatively conservative budgeting over several years).

MOTION: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, having also been unanimously recommended by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the Operating and Capital Budget (2022-2023) (found on pages 7.6 to 7.14 in the attached material in the "2022-2023 Budget for Approval" column bordered in red on each page), the Labour Union Dues Budget (2022-2023) (found on pages 7.26 in the attached material in the "2022-2023 Budget for Approval" column bordered in red on each page), and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2022-2025) (found on page 7.28 to 7.29 in the attached material in the "2022-2023 Budget for Approval" column bordered in red). A Cook **MOVED**; J Sloan **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**.

MOTION: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION**, having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and reviewed and recommended to GSA Council by the GSA Board, the Operating and Capital Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025), the Labour Union Dues Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025), and the Restricted and Other Funding Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2022-2025) (pages 7.6-7.14, 7.26, and 7.28-7.29 in the attached material). A Cook **MOVED**; I Kabir **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

8. GSA 2021-2022 Winter Term Budget and Expenditure Report

A Fassih (President) presented the item and noted that the material was fairly straightforward but that he welcomed any questions relating to the expenditures of this term. There were no questions or comments from members.

MOTION: That the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2021-2022 Winter Term Budget and Expenditure Report. A Ma **MOVED**; A Cook **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

9. Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board

A Fassih (President) presented the item and noted this was a minor change. Currently the GSA Councillors-at-Large (GSA CALs) were among the GSA elected officers who fell under the purview of the GSA ACB. This was deemed impractical and unnecessary, and so the recommendation was to remove reported complaints and misconduct on the part of the GSA CAL from the jurisdiction of the GSA ACB. This change would have the additional effect of allowing GSA CALs to serve on the GSA ACB as members. There were no questions or comments from members.

MOTION: That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** recommended changes to GSA Policy, Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, as shown in the attached document and effective upon approval by GSA Council. J Sloan **MOVED**; L Friskie **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**.

Elections

10. GSA Council Elections

Violet Sun (GSA Nominating Committee Member) presented the item

GSA Standing Committees

- a. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (Renewal of one (1) GSA Member Position)
Christina Saed (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)
- b. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (Two (2) vacancies for GSA Member Positions)
Janyne Johnson (Pharmacology)
Juliana Lasso Mendez (Pediatrics)

The nominees were not present to address GSA Council.

Reports

11. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Fassih highlighted ongoing work to advocate for technology access bursaries by working with the Office of University Development, who expressed a commitment to fundraising (the Office of the Registrar was committing to a seed fund for the initiative for a graduate-specific technology access bursary). The GSA also recently participated in a joint effort to organize and participate in a march and rally to protest post-secondary education cuts. There was a great turnout at this event.

ii. GSA Board Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

iv. GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

v. GSA Governance Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

12. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, K Haddadkar highlighted the General Faculties Council *Ad Hoc* Review Committee Interview, the work for which was culminating in a detailed report forthcoming in March 2022.

13. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M T Bin Mostafa highlighted municipal advocacy work through the Edmonton Students' Alliance, which focused among others on safe and comprehensive transit services. On another note, the University was once again ready to offer family housing after the closing of Michener Park. This would be available for both undergraduate and graduate students, at HUB.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

iii. Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Update to Member Organizations

No written report at this time.

14. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, J Grenke emphasized that there were resources available to graduate students who were seeking to know more about the potential strike action from the Academic Staff Association University of Alberta (AASUA) (this could be found on the GSA website). In addition, there was an ongoing outreach effort led by J Grenke herself, to increase knowledge of the GSA Collective Agreement and labour rights across departments. In the ensuing discussion, members raised a number of questions regarding, among others: access to lab space, given the fairly limited response AASUA had provided in the resources to which J Grenke referred (the reason for the vagueness was that there was little known in this vein, and ultimately the decision would come down to the Board of Governors after a hypothetical situation where AASUA would go on strike); whether graduate student stipends would be impacted (there was a legal obligation on the part of the University to continue honouring the graduate student contracts made in accord with the GSA Collective Agreement, as long as there was a good faith effort to carry out the associated work, even if AASUA went on strike); and whether graduate students who were teaching would be impacted by an AASUA strike (depended on whether they were employed as a Principal Instructor under the GSA Collective Agreement, in which case they would be entirely unaffected, or as its equivalent under the AASUA agreement).

ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

15. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, P Kumar highlighted that in recognition of the delayed start to in-class activity on campus, he was in contact with Edmonton Transit Services regarding a partial refund of the Winter 2022 U-Pass. Updates on usage of the GSA Health and Dental Plan would soon be brought to the GSA by Studentcare, and details would be brought to GSA Council in March.

16. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No written report at this time.

17. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No written report at this time.

18. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, the M Mohiuddin urged Council members to encourage their eligible friends and colleagues to vote in the 2022 GSA General Election, the Voting Period for which was set to open on 1 March 2022.

19. GSA Nominating Committee

i. GSA Nominating Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted. In addition, V Sun

20. 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 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

21. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 February 2022. The report stood as submitted.

Question Period

22. Written Questions: None.

23. Oral Questions: None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.

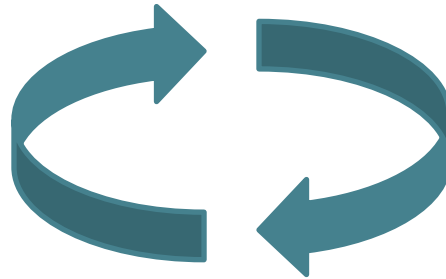
Community Outreach and Member Relations
Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council

ab ● GPAC - Who we are?

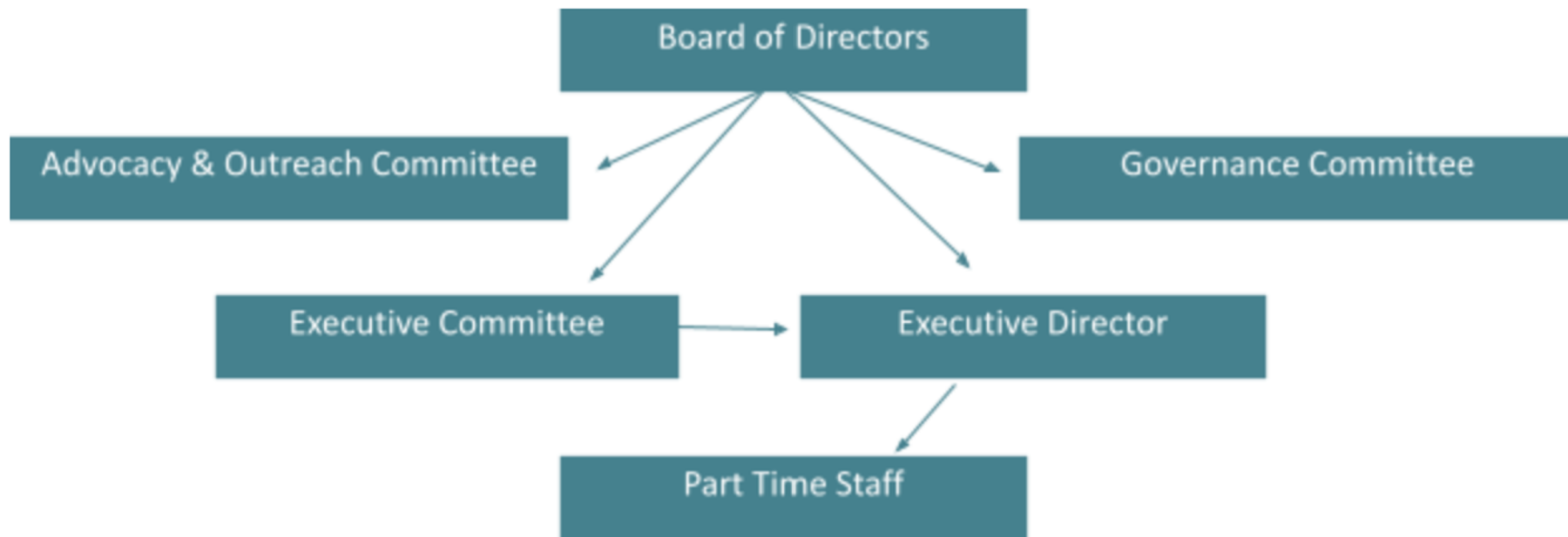
- The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council
- A non-partisan, provincial organization representing the graduate students of Alberta's post-secondary institutions
- Primary work:
 - Government of Alberta advocacy
 - Policy research and communications
 - Facilitating information-sharing among member GSAs



ab-GPAC Membership



ab-GPAC Structure



Vision

ab-GPAC's vision to be the strongest, collective voice for graduate students in Alberta.

Mission

ab-GPAC will deliver on its vision by advocating for graduate student needs, promoting top-tier programs for graduate students, working with decision-makers to create the strongest graduate student ecosystem in Canada, and delivering a quality service to our member students.

Values

To be impactful

To be approachable

To be thoughtful

To be credible

To be student centric

To be purpose-driven

Political Landscape

The UCP is currently in charge

The government is currently dealing with:

- COVID-19 impacts (economy, health system, tourism, etc)
- Need for economic recovery
- Oil prices amid the energy transition
- Fair Deal Panel Report (western alienation)
- Large-scale federal support

Priority Areas

- Tuition and funding
- ChildCare and Caregiving
- Mental Health
- Alleviating Barriers to PSE for Indigenous Students
- International Students' Immigration in Alberta



Updates and Progress

- ab-GPAC submitted a joint 2022-2023 budget submission to the provincial government to highlight graduate students' priorities.
- Had meetings with over 17 MLA's from both the UCP and NDP caucus during advocacy week in November 2021.
- Submitted letters to the Minister of Advanced Education regarding graduate student priorities (e.g., funding, mental health funding, covid-19 safety measures (i.e., PPE etc).
- Building strategic plan and networking with stakeholders.

Thank you!

Questions?



chair@abgpac.ca



www.abgpac.net



abGPAC



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Outline of Issue

Drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund

AND

GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee for 2022-2023

Suggested Motions:

MOTION 1: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund be drawn down by approximately \$39.03 per Plan member for 2022-2023 to partially offset an increase in the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee.

MOTION 2: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee be set at \$525.38/annum, effective 1 September 2022, with collection from graduate students to begin 1 September 2022.

Background:

The key driver for cost increases to the Plan is usage. As a result of the GSA's agreement renegotiation with Studentcare in 2020, premiums were locked in for a two-year period (ending in 2022) but usage, and hence costs, have been growing "behind the scenes." Likewise, while the fee paid by graduate students for the Plan has remained at \$500.36/year for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022, coverage has been increased during this period (occupational therapy services added in 2018, dental, vision, and counselling coverage increased in 2020, travel coverage enhancements also made in 2020, and counselling coverage in 2021), which also translated into rising costs. Studentcare has thus projected that the Plan premium will need to increase to \$564.41 for 2022-2023. However, the GSA Board has decided, with advice from Studentcare, that this cost increase should be offset by a drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (GSA HDPRF). Doing so would enable the Plan fee for 2022-2023 to be set at the lower rate of \$525.38, an increase of \$25.02 (5%) over the current fee.

The GSA HDPRF, as of July 2021, sits at \$837,670 and is thus very healthy. Accordingly, at the 1 March 2022 GSA Board meeting, members agreed to propose to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) that the GSA HDPRF be drawn down by approximately \$39.03 per Plan member for 2022-2023 to partially offset the increase in the Plan fee. The GSA BFC considered this proposal via email and voted on 2 March 2022 to make a recommendation to GSA Council concerning the drawdown. When that to-be-approved drawdown is factored into the overall cost of the Plan for 2022-2023, the fee to be assessed to Plan members is \$525.38 (as reflected in the above motion).

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.6.1:

"The amount of the Plan fee includes both Plan premiums and administrative overhead. The Plan fee may include an amount for the replenishment of the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.9.1:

"The GSA Board (GSAB) is mandated to oversee the implementation, administration, and performance of the GSA Health and Dental Plan, reporting regularly to GSA Council regarding the Plan, and to make recommendations to GSA Council concerning the coverage and fees associated with the Plan."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.10.1:

"GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSAB, approves the annual Plan fee. Any increase in the Plan fee exceeding 15% of the previous year's Plan fee must also be put to a referendum."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.10.2:

"GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSAB, approves modification of Plan coverage."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.11.2.a

"A draw down of the GSA HDPRF may be proposed for the purposes noted in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.BYL.3.1."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.11.2.c

"To draw down the GSA HDPRF, the GSAB must provide a proposal to the GSA BFC regarding the proposed use of the GSA HDPRF."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.11.2.c.i

"If the GSA BFC finds that the proposal is financially sound, it will present the proposal and the financial implications to GSA Council for approval."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.11.2.c.ii

"If the GSA BFC finds that the proposal is financially unsound, it will report its findings to the GSAB for reconsideration."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section M.POL.11.2.d

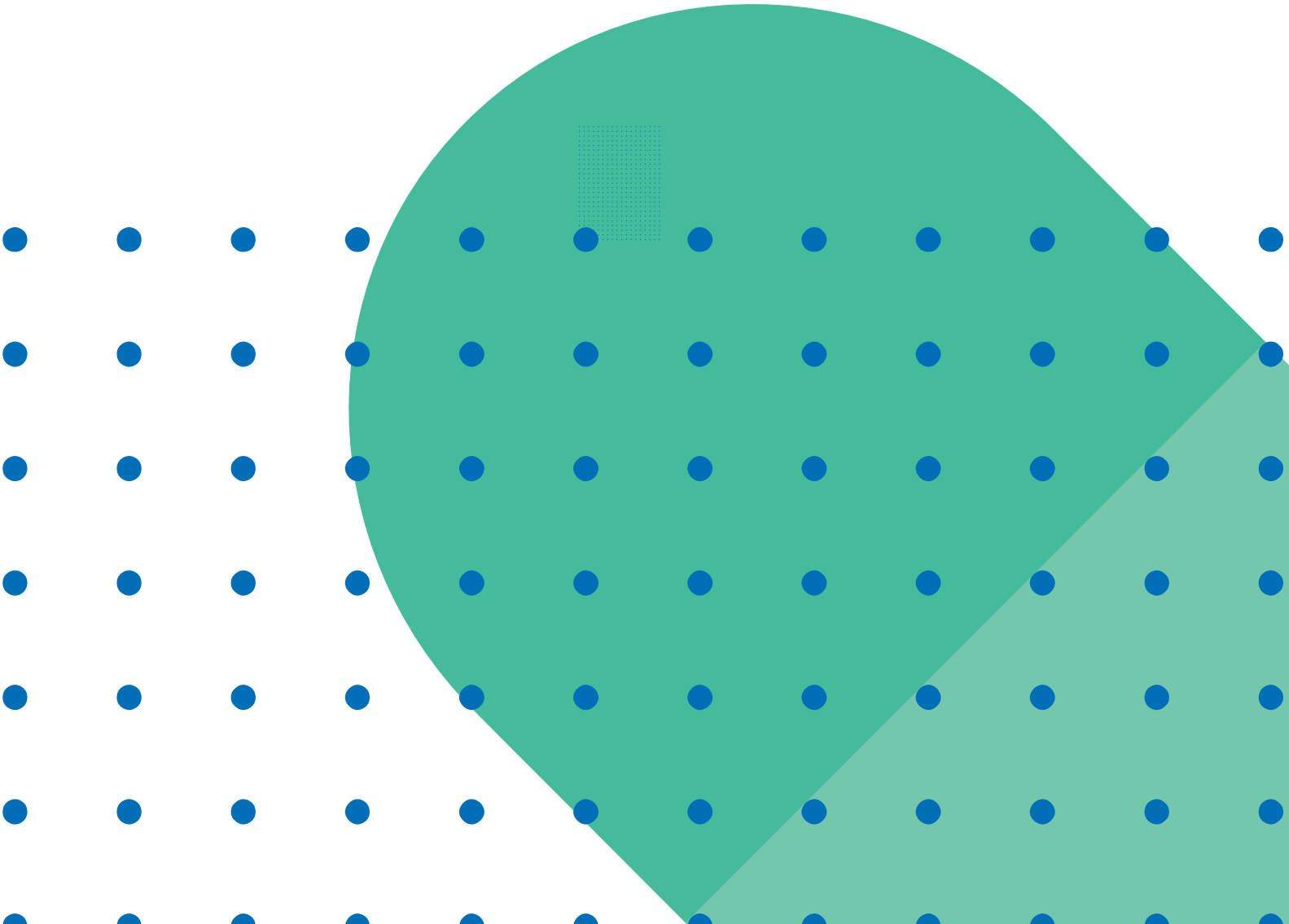
"GSA Council must approve any proposals prior to use of GSA HDPRF funds."



UAGSA HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN

Preliminary Internal Analysis with January Claims Data

February 28, 2022



Introduction

The insurance policies that underlie the UAGSA Benefit Plan are (normally) one-year contracts that must be renewed with the Plan insurer each policy year. This renewal process generally begins in February and is concluded by mid-April to set the Plan fee, as well as the premiums and benefits for the following school year.

This year, the UAGSA is coming out of a two-year rate guarantee secured from Desjardins as part of a competitive Request for Proposals process conducted in 2019. This report provides an overview of the projected Plan cost structure for the upcoming 2022-2023 policy year on a fully-insured basis. This report is **preliminary, using Studentcare’s internal projection methodology**, based on an analysis of the Plan’s historical claims experience and claims from the **first five months of the current policy year**. As we progress in the policy year, and obtain more data from the insurer, our estimates will become more accurate.

Determining the Plan Cost

Our projections are based on an analysis of the Plan’s claims experience. We project forward the current year’s claims, adjust for inflation, and add the insurer expenses, our provider fee, and the Plan’s fixed costs. It is important to note that the current year’s claims are the largest factor in setting the Plan cost for the following year.

Renewal Rate Formula



Inflation Trend

Claims generally tend to increase over time, leading to increases in Plan premiums. Various factors contribute to this inflation trend, including the following:

- Increases in the cost of health services (e.g. increase in dental fees)
- Introduction of new services (e.g. new or previously unavailable medications)
- Changing patterns of use (e.g. increase in dental visits because of increased access and convenience)

While the typical inflation trend for an employee benefit plan is in the double-digits, the demographics and usage patterns of a student health and dental plan enable the use of a much lower inflation trend. Desjardins, the Plan insurer, uses customized inflation trend assumptions derived from its large block of student business. However, this year we are seeing higher-than-normal inflation due to the recovery from the COVID-19 recession.

| <i>Type of Health Plan</i> | <i>Typical Inflation Trend</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Employee Health & Dental Plan | 15-20% |
| Typical Student Health & Dental Plan | 5-8% |
| COVID-19 Inflation | 8-12% |

Monthly Claims Experience

HEALTH

| | <u>ENROLMENT</u> | <u>PREMIUMS</u> | <u>CLAIMS</u> | <u>LOSS RATIO</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| SEPTEMBER | 6,075 | \$125,175 | \$140,468 | 112% |
| OCTOBER | 6,075 | \$125,175 | \$114,142 | 91% |
| NOVEMBER | 6,075 | \$125,175 | \$134,956 | 108% |
| DECEMBER | 6,075 | \$125,175 | \$126,982 | 101% |
| JANUARY | 6,302 | \$129,853 | \$142,443 | 110% |
| PAID HEALTH CLAIMS TOTAL | | \$630,554 | \$658,991 | 105% |

DENTAL

| | <u>ENROLMENT</u> | <u>PREMIUMS</u> | <u>CLAIMS</u> | <u>LOSS RATIO</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| SEPTEMBER | 6,024 | \$91,054 | \$101,582 | 112% |
| OCTOBER | 6,024 | \$91,054 | \$97,872 | 107% |
| NOVEMBER | 6,024 | \$91,054 | \$114,201 | 125% |
| DECEMBER | 6,024 | \$91,054 | \$94,202 | 103% |
| JANUARY | 6,251 | \$94,485 | \$85,511 | 91% |
| PAID DENTAL CLAIMS TOTAL | | \$458,700 | \$493,367 | 108% |
| PAID CLAIMS GRAND TOTAL | | \$1,089,253 | \$1,152,358 | 106% |

*Insurer premiums are non-reconciled and net of fixed costs, Studentcare fees, and premium tax.

Projected Plan Cost for 2022-2023

2021-2022 CLAIMS ANALYSIS

| | Health | Dental | Total |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Paid Claims - Current year (September 2021 through January 2022) | \$658,991 | \$493,367 | \$1,152,358 |
| «Rolled» Claims (February 2021 through August 2021) | \$813,947 | \$632,390 | \$1,446,337 |
| Total Rolled Claims | \$1,472,938 | \$1,125,757 | \$2,598,695 |

2022-2023 PLAN COST ANALYSIS

| | Health | Dental | Total |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Rolled Claims (February 2021 - January 2022) | \$1,472,938 | \$1,125,757 | \$2,598,695 |
| Enrolled Students | 6,150 | 6,099 | |
| Ajdusted Claims per Enrolled Unit (February 2021 - January 2022) | \$239.52 | \$184.58 | \$424.10 |
| Inflation Trend 2022-2023 | 12% | 10% | |
| Projected Claims per Enrolled Unit (2022-2023) | \$268.26 | \$203.04 | \$471.30 |
| Insurer Claims Administration (4% of claims) | \$10.73 | \$8.12 | \$18.85 |
| Insurer General Admin, Risk Charge & Premium Tax | \$21.81 | \$16.51 | \$38.31 |
| Plan Administration (% of base premiums) | \$12.25 | \$12.25 | \$24.51 |
| Accidental Death & Dismemberment (Pooled Benefit) | \$1.72 | - | \$1.72 |
| Travel (Pooled Benefit) | \$9.72 | - | \$9.72 |
| Projected Annual Premium | \$324.49 | \$239.92 | \$564.41 |
| Current Plan Premium | \$278.20 | \$198.82 | \$477.02 |
| Difference between Current & Projected Plan Premium | \$46.29 | \$41.10 | \$87.39 |
| Projected Change in Premium | 17% | 21% | 18% |

Plan Fee Analysis

PLAN FEE ANALYSIS

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Projected Plan Premium (2022-2023) | \$324.49 | \$239.92 | \$564.41 |
| New Plan Fee (2022-2023) | \$299.89 | \$225.49 | \$525.38 |
| Difference between New Plan Fee & Projected Plan Premium | \$24.60 | \$14.43 | \$39.03 |
| Projected Difference in % | 8% | 6% | 7% |

Reserve Fund Analysis

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Difference between Projected Plan Premium and new Plan Fee | \$39.03 |
| Estimated 2022/23 Plan enrollment | 6,200 |
| Estimated amount required from Reserve Fund | \$241,986 |

Outline of Issue

2022 GSA General Election Results: To Receive for Information for Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

Suggested Motion:

That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2022 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 | Anas Fassih |
| Vice-President Academic | Bishoi Hany G Aziz |
| Vice-President External | Janmejay Rao |
| Vice-President Labour | Hiren Rameshbhai Kaklotar |
| Vice-President Student Services | Monisha Vinod |

Background:

The 2022 GSA General Election official results were announced to all graduate students by the Chief Returning Officer on Friday, 3 March 2022.

GSA Council is now asked to receive these results for information as the GSA's bank requires that the names of the newly Directly-Elected Officers appear in the minutes of GSA Council in order to transfer signing authority on 1 May 2022.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.POL.10.1.e.iii:

"The CRO reports to GSA Council, in writing, the names of all elected GSA DEOs, following the release of the official results for a GSA General Election or by-election, for the purposes of transferring bank signing authority."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.3.7.a:

"Financial documents requiring signature, including but not limited to cheques and investment instructions, require two (2) signatures: either any two (2) Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs), or any one (1) DEO and one (1) Director."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.3.7.b:

"The President, at least two (2) Vice-Presidents, and at least two (2) Directors, renewed annually, will each as individuals have authority as signing officers for the GSA."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.3.7.c:

"Wherever possible, it is preferable for the signatories to be the President and the ED (or delegate)."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.13.1:

"Upon completion of the ballot count, the CRO will announce provisional results. Results will be made official only after the deadline to lodge a complaint with the CRO about an alleged breach of GSA Bylaw or Policy has expired and none have been received or when the GSA's process of dealing with alleged breaches of GSA Bylaw or Policy on elections and any appeals within that process are exhausted."

**GSA President
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Anas Fassih
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope this report finds you in good shape. The last month has been busy with elections and attending meetings as we labour on the remaining priorities in our GSA Board Strategic Work Plan. As most of you know, I have been elected as the GSA President for the second term; I am honoured to serve and advocate for you for another successful year. With COVID-19 measures being lifted and academic restructuring coming to its conclusion, I am thrilled to reassure our members that the GSA will depart from a survival approach to a 'get-done' approach where I anticipate to progressively move the needle on some long overdue priorities for the association, chief of which for me is the centralisation of funding.

The big highlight of the last month is the progress we have made in our advocacy for a graduate technology bursary in collaboration with the Registrar's Office. I met with Kelly Spencer, Associate Vice-President (Development) and [Melissa Padfield](#) (Vice-Provost and Registrar) to discuss the last phases of the program. We agreed to focus on storytelling as a powerful fundraising tool to entice donors to contribute money to the cause. This would, of course, feature a number of graduate students who previously benefited from bursaries to document the extent to which these funds have helped them succeed in their study programs. I'll provide more details in the Council meeting, and I hope you'll assist with spreading the call among students in your departments to help garner participation. Drawing on years of expertise in fundraising, the Office of Development has generously offered to cater to the logistics of the program, and recommended that we launch the program with two pitches in 12 months. Nonetheless, I fear this won't be successful without stories from graduate students to support the cause. Thus, I strongly recommend that Council members help us collect these stories so we can increase the funding pool for fellow graduate students.

Another highlight this month is the GSA Investment Policy review that I facilitated alongside members of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC), the GSA financial team, and our Investment Manager from ATB Wealth. The bulk of the review included the addition of an ethical investment statement, maintaining a risk-averse investment policy, and to ensure that the authority of the GSA BFC, as delegated to it by Council is maintained, while the GSA itself continues to succeed financially. I would like to thank everyone who helped with the update of the policy after 6 years.

I also attended meetings with the Graduate Students' of Canada Alliance, an informal group that I chair to bring national graduate student issues to the forefront with other Federal lobbying student groups. We have had four major graduate student associations from various institutions across Canada formally sign our Memorandum of Understanding, and I anticipate others will join in the next month pending the decision being ratified by the Councils of the respective associations. We have also agreed to send a letter to the federal government to advocate for an increase in Tri-Council funding, international immigration programs for graduate students, increased student aid funding, and support for caregiving students.

Finally, as I approach the conclusion of my current term, I wish to re-emphasise how pleased I am with the phenomenal progress the current executive team has made in a number of priorities for graduate students this academic year. I am also privileged to have the opportunity to carry the torch with the next executive team who I look forward to welcoming aboard in May.

8.1

This concludes my report. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask in the Council meeting or send me an email at gsa.president@ualberta.ca.

Thank you,
Anas Fassih, President 2021-2022

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 28 February and 21 March 2022 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note I was on vacation from 14 March to 18 March. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| | |
|----------|---|
| 1 March | Meeting with R Ley, Students' Union (SU) President |
| 2 March | Meeting with the Post-Doctoral Fellows Association (PDFA) |
| 2 March | Meeting re Graduate Student Bursaries with M Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar, and K Spencer, Associate Vice-President (Development) |
| 2 March | Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) |
| 3 March | Meeting with B Flanagan, President |
| 4 March | Conflict of Interest Disclosures with K Chisholm, Board of Governors (BoG) Chair, B Hamdon, University Secretary and Legal Counsel, and G Bridgeman, BoG Member |
| 4 March | Meeting with R Ley, Students' Union (SU) President |
| 7 March | Campus Associations' Meeting |
| 8 March | Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) |
| 14 March | GSA Board and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) |
| 21 March | General Faculties Council (GFC) |

**GSA Board
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Anas Fassih, President and Chair of the GSA Board

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 18 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 18.1-18.3.

1 March 2022 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund; GSA President's Citations: 2022 Proposed Recipients; COVID-19 Update; GSA Council Debrief; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

MOTION: That the GSA Board **PROPOSE TO THE GSA BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** (for recommendation to GSA Council) that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund be drawn down by approximately \$39.03 per Plan member for 2022-2023 to partially offset a projected increase in the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee. AF **MOVED**. MM Seconded. **CARRIED**.

MOTION: That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the awarding of GSA President's Citations to the individuals noted in the attached list of 2022 proposed recipients. AF **MOVED**. PK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

8 March 2022 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Campus and Community Recreation on Spontaneous Active Spaces; February 2022 Back to Campus Survey Summary Report Feedback Received; GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee for 2022-2023; COVID-19 Update; and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

MOTION: That the GSA Board **Recommend to GSA Council** that the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee be set at a \$525.38/annum, effective 1 September 2022 (with collection from graduate students to begin 1 September 2022), pending approval of a recommendation to GSA Council from GSA Budget and Finance Committee to drawdown the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund to enable the fee to be set at this level. AF **MOVED**. JG Seconded. **CARRIED**.

15 March 2022 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

COVID-19 Update and meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None to report.

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Anas Fassih
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

On 2 March, the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) voted via email to recommend to GSA Council a drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (as reflected in the material that will be before you at Monday's meeting).

Additionally, the GSA BFC met on 14 March to continue its review of the GSA's investment policy. As I have reported previously, the GSA's investment policy has not been updated since it was first developed in 2016. This is a matter that the committee has discussed, with advice from our ATB investment manager, since the fall term and we have reviewed and provided feedback on several drafts of an updated policy that reflects current best practices for investment management, the GSA's commitment to the principles of ethical investing, and that our organizational structure. The final draft of the policy is attached, for your information. I've very thankful to the committee members for their diligent work on this and happy that an updated policy is now in place.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Anas Fassih, President and Chair of the GSA BFC

Investment Policy

Approval Date:

Revised / Reaffirmed Date: March 15, 2022

Next Review Date: October 2024 – with annual high-level review

1.0 Background

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is established under Alberta's *Post-Secondary Learning Act* as the representative body for graduate students at the University of Alberta. The GSA is a student-led, not-for-profit corporation, with a mission to advocate for all graduate students to the University of Alberta and the Alberta Government for a safe, supportive, respectful, accessible, and inclusive community that fosters the multi-faceted roles played by graduate students. All graduate students at the U of A are automatically members of the GSA, with the right to vote in elections (and run for office), serve on committees, and access GSA benefits.

The purpose of this Investment Policy (“policy”) is:

- To provide a framework for and guidance in managing the investment portfolio;
- To provide an accountability structure for the management of investments; and
- To define the investment goals, strategies and constraints pertaining to the GSA.

Funds for day-to-day operations of the organization are held in bank accounts and short-term investments and are not subject to this policy.

2.0 Investment Beliefs

- Our members care about ethical, environmental, social, and governance issues and this should be reflected in this investment policy;
- As our primary responsibility is to ensure enduring long-term investment returns, ethical, environmental, social, and governance matters are addressed when these factors present material risk to an investment in our portfolio;
- As significant Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) risks vary between asset classes, regions, sectors and companies and there is no standard approach to incorporating ethical factors into a portfolio, we expect our investment manager to take appropriate actions that are in the best interests of our members;
- We prefer to work with an Investment Manager who is a member of the Responsible Investment Association of Canada (RIA); and
- As responsible investing continues to evolve, integrating ESG considerations into our investment approach is constantly under review and our policy is expected to evolve over time.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Authority to provide direction to the external Investment Manager with respect to the GSA’s investment plan is derived from the following:

- After consultation with the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC), the President as the chair of the GSA BFC and the Executive Director as the Financial Team lead; and
- Applicable GSA Bylaws and GSA Policies.

GSA Board and GSA Council

- Receive regular reports from the GSA Budget and Finance Committee concerning the GSA's investments
- Be consulted with respect to reviews of the Investment Policy, and decisions made concerning Investment Managers; and
- Adhere to this and all related policies.

GSA Budget and Finance Committee

- Approve the Investment Policy and provide oversight into its implementation, following consultation with the GSA Board and GSA Council;
 - Changes to this policy can be made only by affirmation of a majority of members and written confirmation of any changes must be provided to the GSA Board and GSA Council and any external Investment Managers as soon as practical;
- Hire and terminate Investment Managers, following consultation with the GSA Board and GSA Council;
- Authority to provide direction to the external Investment Manager with respect to the GSA's investment plan is derived from the following:
 - After consultation with the GSA BFC, the President as chair of the GSA BFC and the Executive Director as the Financial Team Lead;
 - Applicable GSA Bylaws and Policies.
- Review this Investment Policy at least once every two years and make recommendations for changes, as needed and following consultation with the GSA Board and GSA Council;
- Meet with and evaluate external Investment Manager(s) at least annually;
- Monitor the performance of the investment program;
- Approve significant changes to the investment strategy of any portfolio;
- Report regularly to the GSA Board and GSA Council with respect to the GSA's investment portfolio and its management; and
- Adhere to this and all related policies.

Executive Director

- Implement the policy and reporting requirements;
- Transfer monies securely to the approved investment manager, as approved by signing authorities;
- Notify the Investment Manager of any material changes in risk tolerance, time horizon, or spending plans;
- Ensure the Investment Manager provides timely reporting; and
- Adhere to this and all related policies.

An external professional investment manager shall be appointed by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee when satisfied to their suitability and competence to act as an agent for the organization. The investment manager should be registered by the provincial Securities Commission, or such regulatory body with applicable jurisdiction. In addition, said manager should hold a Chartered Financial Analyst Institute (CFA Institute) Designation and be bound by the CFA Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

Investment Manager

- Accept discretionary day to day management of the portfolio;
- Reporting directly to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee as needed;
- Notify the Executive Director and the GSA Budget and Finance Committee of material changes impacting the portfolio;
- Provide quarterly reports including performance, fees, and material changes;
- Meet in person with the GSA Budget and Finance Committee at least annually to review the portfolio and provide an update on economic and market conditions;
- Notify the Executive Director of any material changes in investment staff involved in the management of the portfolio;
- Provide support and consultation regarding maintenance and ongoing suitability of this investment policy;
- Work with the Executive Director and the organization's Auditor to ensure that information is complete and that the Auditor's inquiries are responded to in a timely manner; and
- Adhere to this and all related policies.

4.0 Type of FundsLong Term Funds:

The following funds are categorized as long term funds:

- Legal Defense Fund
- Financial Stabilization Fund
- Labour Union Fund

Return Objective: The primary return objective is preservation of capital (in real terms after inflation). The secondary objective is to earn a competitive rate of return that corresponds with the level of risk.

Risk Objective: These funds are considered to have an average risk tolerance and will accept a moderate amount of volatility in market value as a trade off for an increased probability of long-term growth.

Time Horizon: These funds are considered long term with an anticipated time horizon of 10 years or greater.

Liquidity: Cash requirements from the portfolio are unlikely in the short and medium term. Any liquidity requirements will be discussed with the Investment Manager on a timely basis. The portfolio will be invested with an appropriate liquidity profile to accommodate unanticipated withdrawals.

Reserve Funds

The following funds are restricted for specific uses and as such, more conservative in nature. They are categorized as reserve funds:

- Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund
- Parental/Other Discretionary Leave Fund

Return Objective: The primary goals are to preserve the capital (in real terms after inflation) and to maintain liquidity sufficient to cover off potential spending requirements. A secondary goal is to maximize yield within a lower risk portfolio structure.

Risk Objective: These funds are considered to have a very low risk tolerance and will accept a minimal amount of volatility as a trade off for increased yield.

Time Horizon: These funds are considered short term due to the uncertain spending requirements.

Liquidity: These funds have an insurance-like quality that comes with uncertain cash requirements from the portfolios. Any liquidity requirements will be discussed with the Investment Manager on a timely basis. The portfolio will be invested with an appropriate liquidity profile to accommodate potential withdrawal needs.

5.0 Asset Mix

The funds shall be invested with the following target asset mixes:

Long Term Funds:

| Asset Class | Minimum | Target | Maximum |
|--------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Fixed Income | 70% | 80% | 90% |
| Equity | 10% | 20% | 30% |
| Total | | 100% | |

Reserve Funds:

| Asset Class | Minimum | Target | Maximum |
|-------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Cash & Equivalent | 0% | 10% | 100% |
| Fixed Income | 0% | 90% | 100% |
| Total | | 100% | |

Restrictions

Investments in the following are prohibited unless approved by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee:

- Private placements, limited partnerships or other non-marketable equity or debt instruments;
- Short positions;

- Leveraged positions;
- Derivatives other than for hedging purposes;
- Cryptocurrencies; and
- Any investment activity that would be considered speculative in nature

No investment shall be made in a non-arm's-length transaction with any member of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, or any employee of, or consultant to, the GSA.

6.0 Monitoring

- Quarterly performance and comparison to benchmarks will be evaluated to test progress toward the attainment of longer-term targets (with particular emphasis on 3- & 5- year rolling time periods);
- The GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the Investment Manager will meet at the request of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (at least annually) to review the investment performance, determine appropriate benchmarks for the portfolio mix and determine the continued feasibility of achieving the GSA's investment objectives and the appropriateness of this policy for achieving those objectives; and
- Annually the GSA Budget and Finance Committee will formally review the portfolio to assess the Investment Manager's performance (evaluation questionnaire in Appendix 1).

7.0 Other Considerations

- Should an actual or perceived conflict of interest arise, the party to the conflict, or any person who becomes aware of an actual or perceived conflict of interest situation, shall immediately disclose the conflict to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee. Any such party shall thereafter act in accordance with any decision from the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, including abstaining from decision-making with respect to the area of conflict;
 - The GSA Budget and Finance Committee is the sole arbiter in determining whether a conflict of interest exists and shall take necessary measures to remedy the situation; and
 - All users of this policy shall be given access to and adhere to the GSA's bylaws and policies.
-

**Vice-President Academic
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Kathy Haddadkar
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

The month of March has come and gone in the blink of an eye! It's times like these that I'm especially mindful of the fatigue that many graduate students are feeling as we approach the final two and a half weeks of the semester. Another thing pulling at my heart and mind are the graduate students, friends and family who are impacted by the difficult and dangerous events taking place in Ukraine. Please know that there are monetary supports for current and incoming students who have been impacted by emergency life-altering events.

On another note – as I feel the weather warming up and watch the ice melt, a bittersweet thought crosses my mind – my time at the GSA has flown by faster than I could have imagined... and while it's not over just yet, I want to take a moment to gratefully acknowledge the incredible joy it is to serve you, our treasured graduate students.

In the spirit of serving, please find a few important highlights from my meetings this month:

3 March – General Faculties Council Council on Student Affairs (GFC COSA)

- In the final GFC COSA meeting for this academic year, the discussion focused on the undergraduate-based Exploration Credits Policy, the Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan (IISP) – a central, in-progress document for the University that supports key priorities for the Public Good and Indigenous programming alongside the Research Office, and a warm introduction to the U of A's new Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, Deborah Eerkes

7 March – Session Facilitator Centre for Teaching and Learning Open-ED Workshop

- I had a wonderful time facilitating a networking session on open education and seeing the work of the Open-ED steering committee come to life in our three-day symposium
- This involved having participants enter breakout rooms and a fruitful discussion about Open-ED resources for students and teachers across the world (US, Canada, Tanzania, Africa etc) – such an empowering time to reflect on the many barriers and unique circumstances that students and educators face when striving for academic success

8 March – Special Meeting of the General Faculties Council Executive (GFC EXEC)

- This was a special closed meeting for GFC EXEC which dealt with the Terms of Agreement and the committee's recommendation prior to the ratification of the U of A and AASUA Collective Agreement on 9 March

9 March – Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Policy Review Committee (FGSR PRC)

- This committee session included approval for the deletion of written comprehensive examinations for the Nursing PhD to move forward to FGSR Council
 - This change is proposed considering student-related failures to meet program timelines, the added stress and delay of candidacy examinations due to the inclusion of a written portion
 - With 86% of PhD Nursing students in favour of this shift, there was mutual understanding that this proposed deletion would increase individualized focus and progress in other parts of the candidacy (ie, oral components etc)
- Additional items that were brought forward for discussion include potential revisions to exam policy
 - The revisions aim to address several issues for graduate students pertaining to thesis defence and candidacy, such as the representation of FGSR within the exam committee to protect students and remove inside pressures as a non-voting member of the committee

- Alterations to current examiner categories led to confusion for graduate students and departments alike (ie, what is the purpose of an arms-length examiner and how do we distinguish between internal/external examiners)
- Setting a cap for the number of examiners present for Master's defences, Doctoral candidacy exams, and final Doctoral examinations
- Adding calendar language for post-examination timelines (ie, length of time for failure and necessary adjustments, revisions with a pass and time limit for final submission of thesis/candidacy revisions/dissertation), and the length of time which graduate students are questioned during examinations

I warmly welcome further discussion and correspondence on this report, as well as any other academic-related matters and can be reached at gsa.vpacademic@ualberta.ca.

Respectfully,
Kathy Haddadkar, Vice-President Academic 2021-2022

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 28 February and 21 March 2022 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing. Please note I was on academic leave from 7 February to 15 February and on vacation from 17 February to 25 February.

| | |
|----------|--|
| 2 March | Health Day Meeting |
| 3 March | Meeting with D Vethanayagam, General Faculties Council (GFC) Member |
| 3 March | General Faculties Council Council on Student Affairs (GFC COSA) |
| 4 March | Meeting with a Graduate Student |
| 7 March | Session Facilitator Centre for Teaching and Learning Open-ED Workshop |
| 8 March | Special Meeting of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC) |
| 8 March | Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) |
| 8 March | Meeting with a Graduate Student |
| 9 March | Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Policy Review Committee (FGSR PRC) |
| 10 March | Campus Food Bank (CFB) Board |
| 14 March | Festival of Teaching and Learning (FoTL) Steering Committee |
| 17 March | Meeting with K Mundel, Associate Dean of Students (Acting) |
| 17 March | General Faculties Council Programs Committee (GFC PC) |
| 18 March | Virtual Games Night |
| 21 March | General Faculties Council (GFC) |

**Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

The past month was comparatively less eventful than the one before but there have been some important changes that are worth mentioning. First of all, I would like to congratulate the newly elected Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) and Councillors-at-Large (CALs) and welcome them to the team. Hopefully, I will be leaving the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) in a much more organized and stronger position than the beginning of my term and I look forward to working with the new Vice-President External to facilitate a smooth transition for our external provincial advocacy.

I recently met with the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Mandi Johnson, and advocated for more collaboration between the Ministry and ab-GPAC. She also hinted that the Government is working on increasing student loan limits, which was one of our advocacy-week asks. We also managed to get a direct contact line with her office, and I see much possibility of more inclusion during crucial Government decisions for ab-GPAC in the coming days.

During my meetings with University of Alberta Alumni Career Services, we discussed the UAlberta Switchboard and how effective it is for communication between alumni to alumni and alumni to students. I pointed out the fact that many graduate students do ask a lot of career-related questions there and that more resources (such as mentors) could be assigned to help with the queries. I also learned that the number of mentors is greater than the number of mentees and so I urge graduate students to apply for mentorship via the [Alumni Council webpage](#) and utilize this important service, which can help your career in the long run.

I expressed my interest to learn more about an incoming Communities of Interest project during a University Research Policy Committee (URPC) meeting and Dean Schieve reached out to me to discuss more on this project. The gist of our conversation was that there has been some allocation of funding for a new program to help students being mentored by experienced students on programming languages, engineering software and other tech-based knowledge. Although the mentors might be from Computer Science or Engineering, any graduate student can apply for this free mentorship opportunity if they can relate their research or coursework needs with the technical skill that they would like to learn about. I am excited by the opportunity to support this exciting new project however I can.

That is all for today, please let me know if you have any questions or recommendations for me.

Thank you,

Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa, Vice-President External 2021-2022

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 1 March to 18 March 2022 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1 March | Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Committee |
| 2 March | Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) Board |
| 2 March | Alumni Career Services |
| 2 March | Alberta Student Post-Secondary Council |

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|----------|---|
| 3 March | Meeting with D Schieve, Communities of Interest Coordinator |
| 7 March | Meeting with M Johnson, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Advanced Education |
| 7 March | Joint Residence Oversight Committee (JROC) |
| 9 March | Post-Secondary Education Task Force |
| 12 March | Alumni Council Retreat |
| 15 March | Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Committee |
| 16 March | Meeting with K Husing, Associate Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) |
| 16 March | Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) Board |
| 16 March | Residence Advisory Committee (RAC) |
| 17 March | Alberta Student Post-Secondary Council |
| 18 March | Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Board Meeting |
| 18 March | Virtual Games Night |

**Vice-President Labour
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Jessica Grenke
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

Spring is on the way everyone! The forecast is staying in the single digits for the next few weeks, the days are getting longer, and there's even some new growth in the River Valley. It has been an exceptionally challenging term for many of us, and I encourage you to take a break and enjoy the gentler weather outside.

Relief from the cold was paralleled by announcement that the Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta (AASUA) and the University of Alberta Board of Governors ratified a Collective Agreement. We congratulate both parties on their successful negotiation and welcome the return of a more stable working environment. My sincere thanks to all the graduate students who reached out with their thoughts and concerns regarding this process, and to the Labour Relations team who ensured we addressed this situation proactively.

This last month I have focussed my attention on advocating for our members' labour concerns and building our capacity for engagement. The former concerns confidential matters, but I expand on the latter below:

- As I've previously reported, I am asking to present at every graduate student group across campus I'm aware of and had the privileged of talking to six more groups this month. Thank you to the groups who have made time for my presentation on our Labour Rights and thank you for sharing such insightful feedback on how we can better serve you. Over the last year this feedback has spurred my development of better infographics for communicating union rights, assisted in developing the steward's program, and informed my advocacy (especially in our current round of Collective Bargaining). Our member feedback makes the union work.
- In collaboration with our partners at the Public Service Alliance of Canada, we have begun offering a comprehensive Union Stewards training program. I'm very proud of the quality of this training, and it is open to all our members! Registration information is found in my weekly newsletters and registrants are eligible to claim a per diem for attending.

Please do not hesitate to contact me. I'm here to serve you!

In solidarity,
Jessica, Vice-President Labour 2021-2022
gsavplab@ualberta.ca

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 28 February and 21 March 2022 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1 March | Alberta MBA Association Labour Session |
| 1 March | Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology (REES) Labour Session |
| 3 March | Chemistry Graduate Students' Society (CGSS) Labour Session |
| 4 March | Meeting with the Public Service Alliance Canada (PSAC) |
| 4 March | Meeting with Faculty Relations |

| | |
|----------|---|
| 7 March | Public Service Alliance Canada (PSAC) Steward Training |
| 7 March | Computing Science Graduate Students' Association (CSGSA) Labour Session |
| 9 March | Meeting with a Graduate Student |
| 10 March | Meeting with Graduate Students |
| 10 March | Graduate Physics Students' Association (GPSA) Labour Session |
| 11 March | Meeting with the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) |
| 14 March | University of Alberta Safety and Security Committee (UASSC) |
| 14 March | GSA Board and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) |
| 17 March | Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Steward Training |
| 18 March | Virtual Games Night |
| 21 March | Computing Science Graduate Students Labour Session |

**GSA Labour Relations Committee
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Jessica Grenke
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC), with assistance from the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), is working educate members on their labour rights and responsibilities at the U of A as an academically-employed graduate student (AEGS). We were able to host two Labour Training sessions this month on 7 March and 17 March open to all AEGSs to attend, as well as GSA LRC members and our Faculty Stewards. We look forward to being able to offer more training in the coming months.

I am working closely with members of the committee to develop some new communications to better advertise our union and to help spread awareness of my role and the role of the GSA LRC. I'm happy to report we have recently completed building a labour eClass and will be posting this up on our website as a resource for members.

On 28 March and 8 April, you will find us in the Quad as we plan to host a "Meet your GSA LRC – Open Table" for members to come and meet who is behind the scenes on the GSA labour front. We will be there with swag and door prizes, so I encourage you all to come out to learn more about your union. More details to come in the GSA Labour Newsletter.

The GSA continues to recruit Faculty Stewards, and the GSA LRC has been reviewing applications and appointing individuals to these roles. We are still looking for individuals to fill this role from: Business, Campus St. Jean, Education, Kinesiology and Recreation, Law, Public Health, and Rehabilitation Medicine. If you know of an AEGS that could be a good fit in any of these faculties, please encourage them to reach out to me.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Grenke, Vice-President Labour and Chair of the GSA LRC

**Vice-President Student Services
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Paresh Kumar
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you all are doing well and enjoying the campus life in person. Here are the main takeaways from the meetings I attended last month:

- Masking: Masks are no longer required on University of Alberta campuses but it is encouraged that everyone still wear a mask in high traffic and high occupancy areas.
- Health Screening: The message of staying home if you feel any COVID or flu-like symptoms is still continued. If you have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive and have been on campus in the last 10 days, follow the Rapid Response Plan described on the University's [Case or Outbreak of COVID-19 on U of A Campus page](#).
- Events and gatherings: Public Health Response Team (PHRT) approval is no longer required to host events. Indoor gatherings are permitted with recommended masking. Participants at indoor gatherings must do a [daily personal health check](#) prior to attending the event.
- U-Pass: The U-Pass rebate is confirmed now and students will receive a refund of \$45. The discussion is going around the administrative pieces but the expectation is that it will be done by the end of winter term. Another update is regarding the tap on/off, students were facing issues because after the bus doors were closed, they were not able to tap their ARC cards. Now, ETS has updated the software and validators will accept tap even if the doors are closed.
- World Health Day: As the transition from online to in person is happening right now, it is very important for us to remind our community to take care of their health during this transition. World Health Day will be held on 7 April with a series of workshops to help people understand how to build healthy habits. The theme for the day is "Take what you need", which means design your own rule according to your preferences and take part in what you think can benefit you.

I am not able to join this month's Council meeting as I will be on leave at that time. I would like to wish you all the best for final exams. Feel free to reach out to me with any comments/concerns regarding this report or any other specific issue you want to discuss regarding student services at gsa.vpstudentservices@ualberta.ca.

Thank you,
Paresh Kumar, Vice-President Student Services 2021-2022

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 28 February and 21 March 2022 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| | |
|----------|---|
| 1 March | Student Mental Health Network |
| 9 March | Meeting with K Friese, Assistant Dean (Health and Wellness) |
| 10 March | Return to Campus (RTC) Safety and Logistics Meeting |
| 11 March | Coalition for Action on High Risk Drinking (CAHRD) Meeting |
| 14 March | Meeting with a Student |
| 15 March | U-Pass Working Committee |
| 15 March | Virtual Student Leader Learn and Share Dinner |
| 16 March | Health Day Meeting |
| 17 March | U-Pass Administration |
| 18 March | Virtual Games Night |

**GSA Chief Returning Officer
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Mohiuddin
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report below serves as the written report that GSA Policy (Section D.POL.10.1.e.ii) stipulates the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will provide following the GSA General Election. This report also serves as my procedural report, as required by GSA Policy (Section I.POL.14.1).

I am pleased to report that the 2022 GSA General Election ran relatively smoothly. As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, there was extensive consultation with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) whenever issues with breaches of GSA Bylaw and Policy were brought forward, and in some situations, these were resolved using informal resolution. There was one formal complaint received and the resulting decision can be found [here](#). I have kept a thorough record of all aspects of the election and the GSA ERC will be meeting in the coming weeks to debrief and engage in its annual review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections.

The total voter turnout for the 2022 GSA General Election was 7.36%, which represents a decrease from voter turnout in both 2019 (12.7%) and 2021 (9.7%). This is interesting as, typically, when races are contested voter turnout tends to be higher and this year we had nine candidates running for the five Directly-Elected Officer positions. The GSA ERC will also discuss voter turnout when it meets.

You can learn more about the results and elected candidates [here](#).

I would like to thank all of the members of the GSA ERC, as well as the Deputy Returning Officer, for their contributions and efforts.

Best,
Muneeb Mohiuddin, Chief Returning Officer 2021-2022

**GSA Nominating Committee
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Kenzie Gordon
Date: 18 March 2022

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,
Kenzie Gordon, Chair of the GSA NoC

Memorandum to GSA Councillors

As reported previously on multiple occasions, there are a number of vacancies on GSA Standing Committees for GSA Council Members (Departmental Councillors, Alternates, and Councillors-at-Large). These positions play a pivotal role in the GSA's ongoing efforts to keep its processes transparent and itself accountable and long-term vacancies adversely impact these efforts. **GSA Councillors (including Alternates) are strongly encouraged to consider serving on these committees.**

It is important to note that the time commitment for 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 almost all of their work over email. Additionally, **there is an appreciation of people's schedules and other commitments and accommodations are routinely made for those who cannot attend all meetings.**

Service on these bodies is an excellent way to make sure your voice is heard and a great opportunity to add to your CV/resume!

On behalf of the GSA NoC, I strongly encourage GSA Councillors (and Alternates) and Councillors-at-Large to consider the next round of vacancies, which will be circulated to GSA Council electronically and which are listed below. Questions can be directed to me at mlgordon@ualberta.ca or GSA Elections Coordinator Monica Brzak at gsanomco@ualberta.ca.

GSA Standing Committees**1) GSA Appeals and Complaints Committee (GSA ACB) (Two (2) GSA Councillor Positions)**

Information regarding the position for two (2) GSA Councillors was circulated via email to GSA Council 4 and 11 March 2022 with a nomination deadline of 15 March 2022. **No nominations were received; these vacancies will be advertised again.**

2) GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillors was circulated via email to GSA Council 4 and 11 March 2022 with a nomination deadline of 15 March 2022. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

3) GSA Board (GSAB) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council 4 and 11 March 2022 with a nomination deadline of 11 March 2022. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

4) GSA Board and GSA Nominating Committee (GSAB/NoC) (Two (2) Joint GSA Councillor Positions)

Information regarding the position for two (2) GSA Councillors was circulated via email to GSA Council 4 and 11 March 2022 with a nomination deadline of 15 March 2022. **No nominations were received; these vacancies will be advertised again.**

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)
Report to GSA Council for the 21 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Jennifer Bertrand
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear GSA Council Members,

Since the last GSA Council meeting, the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) has been supporting the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and the Deputy Returning Officer in all matters pertaining to the 2022 GSA General Election (as per GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.18.1, “the GSA ERC will advise the CRO on all matters pertaining to GSA General Elections, by-elections and referenda”). You can find more information about the 2022 GSA General Election in the CRO’s report.

The GSA ERC will meet to debrief the 2022 GSA General Election in the coming weeks. As the CRO notes, we saw a decrease in voter turnout this year, despite the best efforts of the GSA ERC to spread awareness about the election and encourage voting. The committee will continue to discuss possible future strategies to increase voter turnout.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bertrand, Chair of the GSA ERC

**GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for the 22 March 2022 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Courtney Thomas
Date: 18 March 2022

Dear GSA Council Members,

The office staff's main focus since the last meeting of GSA Council has been providing support for the Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, and the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee with respect to the administration of the 2022 GSA General Election.

We have also begun planning for the beginning of the terms of the new team of Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) that will happen at the start of May. In order to facilitate this transition, the office prepares a transition manual for incoming DEOs, hosts a series of information sessions concerning various aspects of the GSA and its services and governance, arranges for job shadowing among DEOs, and a session with current and incoming DEOs to facilitate information sharing and strategic planning. This year's transition program will begin on later this month and continue into April. The office team also continues to provide ongoing support to the DEOs as they engage with their portfolios, and providing support to the various GSA standing committees.

Finally, We have also been working to plan several events – including an online games night, an online end of term event with Rapid Fire Theatre, and a small in-person event to honour the recipients of the 2022 GSA Recognition Awards.

I am happy to answer any questions and, as always, the weekly reports from myself to the GSA Board are attached (pages 18.1-18.3).

Best,

Courtney Thomas, Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, 1 March 2022

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 15 February 2022:

Strategic

- Supporting the Chief Returning Officer and the Deputy Returning Officer in the 2022 GSA General Election.
- Preparing for transition to a new executive team.
- Preparing an email vote for the GSA Budget and Finance Committee concerning a drawdown of the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund.
- Soliciting a legal opinion on the recently released regulations for Bill 32 and how they may impact the GSA, including potential changes to the structure of the GSA to make the Vice-President Labour an Associate Vice-President; currently waiting to hear from the GSA's legal team.
- Preparing for the renewal of the GSA's fee disbursement agreement with Financial Services (working to arrange a meeting to review and drafting a revised agreement).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement (posting updates from the GSA Negotiating Team on the GSA website, soliciting expressions of interest for the steward network, advising individual graduate student workers, and preparing for bargaining sessions with the University) and supporting the work of the GSA Labour Relations Committee and GSA Negotiating Team.

Operations

- Reviewing the feedback collected via the return to campus survey and drafting a summary report for the GSA Board's review.
- Assisting with the 2022 GSA General Election forum (hosted by the Speaker).
- Forward planning for events (both online (Rapid Fire Theatre has been booked for an April event) and a small in-person ceremony to distribute GSA Recognition Awards).
- Supporting the work of the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), and the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council).
- Facebook = 1,738 likes (up 1 from 15 February); Facebook posts reached 146 users since 15 February. Twitter = 1,286 followers (up 21 from 15 February; our tweets earned 355 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 801 followers (up 7 from 15 February); Instagram posts reached 494 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January (travel applications remain open, with links to Travel Directive and Field Research Office; uptake on travel option remains very low); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 January. All funding continues to be closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is and funds not projected to be spent are being transferred to the University to dispense in the form of COVID-related supplementary bursaries for graduate students.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 8 March 2022

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 1 March 2022:

Strategic

- Supporting the Chief Returning Officer and the Deputy Returning Officer in the 2022 GSA General Election.
- Preparing for transition to a new executive team.
- Drafting several GSA reports to University governance bodies.
- Soliciting a legal opinion on the recently released regulations for Bill 32 and how they may impact the GSA, including potential changes to the structure of the GSA to make the Vice-President Labour an Associate Vice-President. We're hoping to hear back from the lawyers in the next 1-2 weeks and can then begin the process of reviewing their advice.
- Preparing for the renewal of the GSA's fee disbursement agreement with Financial Services (working to arrange a meeting to review and drafting a revised agreement).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement (posting updates from the GSA Negotiating Team on the GSA website, soliciting expressions of interest for the steward network and hosting training sessions, advising individual graduate student workers, and preparing for bargaining sessions with the University) and supporting the work of the GSA Labour Relations Committee and GSA Negotiating Team.

Operations

- Drafting materials for the first mailing of GSA Council.
- Clean up following the 2022 General Election (organizing files, reviewing GSA Bylaw and Policy to for any needed updates, preparing for a meeting of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, etc).
- Forward planning for events (both online (an upcoming games night and Rapid Fire Theatre has been booked for an April event) and a small in-person ceremony to distribute GSA Recognition Awards).
- Supporting the work of the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), and General Faculties Council (advertised via the GSA newsletter).
- Facebook = 1,740 likes (up 2 from 1 March); Facebook posts reached 203 users since 1 March. Twitter = 1,289 followers (up 3 from 1 March; our tweets earned 355 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 803 followers (up 2 from 1 March); Instagram posts reached 663 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 January. All funding continues to be closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is and funds not projected to be spent are being transferred to the University to dispense in the form of supplementary bursaries for graduate students from the GSA.

Management Report to the GSA Board, 15 March 2022

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 8 March 2022:

Strategic

- Supporting a meeting of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee as it completes its review of the GSA's investment policy.
- Planning for transition at the end of the month.
- Reviewing meeting material for various University governance bodies.
- Human resources work.
- Soliciting a legal opinion on the recently released regulations for Bill 32 and how they may impact the GSA, including potential changes to the structure of the GSA to make the Vice-President Labour an Associate Vice-President. We're hoping to hear back from the lawyers in the next 1-2 weeks and can then begin the process of reviewing their advice and planning next steps.
- Renewal of the GSA's fee disbursement agreement with Financial Services (working to arrange a meeting to review and drafting a revised agreement but there have been some staff changes within that unit so it's taking a bit of time to sort out).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement (supporting the GSA Negotiating Team, the GSA Labour Relations Committee, meeting with graduate students, and soliciting expressions of interest for the steward network and hosting training sessions).

Operations

- Drafting materials for the second mailing of GSA Council.
- Forward planning for events (both online (an upcoming games night and Rapid Fire Theatre has been booked for an April event) and a small in-person ceremony to distribute GSA Recognition Awards).
- Supporting the work of the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), and General Faculties Council (advertised via the GSA newsletter).
- Facebook = 1,742 likes (up 2 from 8 March); Facebook posts reached 154 users since 8 March. Twitter = 1,291 followers (up 2 from 8 March; our tweets earned 478 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 803 followers (up 0 from 8 March); Instagram posts reached 402 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 January. All funding continues to be closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is and funds not projected to be spent are being transferred to the University to dispense in the form of supplementary bursaries for graduate students from the GSA. We are also preparing for the end of the fiscal year with respect to grants, and developing a proposal concerning the rollover of any unspent funds in the current fiscal year and discussing the distribution of the Graduate Student Support Fund in the coming year.