

**GSA Council Meeting AGENDA**  
Monday, 18 January 2021 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 GSA Management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

**Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair**

**OPEN SESSION**

**Attached  
Numbered Pages**

1. Approval of the 18 January 2021 Agenda (*suggested time: 1 min*)
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 16 November 2020 GSA Council Meeting (*suggested time: 1 min*)  
*Attachment:*
  - i. Minutes from the 16 November 2020 GSA Council Meeting **2.0 - 2.6**
3. Changes in GSA Council Membership (*suggested time: 1 min*)
  - i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members (*If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
  - ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members (*If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last GSA Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

**GSA Council Member Announcements**

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

**Action Items**

5. Establishment of a GSA Labour Fund (*suggested time: 15 mins*)  
**Umesh Nimmathi (Vice-President Labour) will present the item.**

*Attachment:*

- i. Outline of Issue **5.0 - 5.1**

**Discussion Items**

6. GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP): Update to GSA Council (*suggested time: 30 mins*)  
**Marc Waddingham (President) will present the item.**

*Attachment:*

- i. GSA Board Strategic Work Plan 2020-2021: Update to GSA Council **6.0 - 6.4**

7. Academic Restructuring Update  
**Marc Waddingham (President) will present the item.**

Prepared by C Thomas and E Heiberg for GSA Council 18 January 2021

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## Elections

### 8. GSA Council Elections (20 mins)

**Nadia Daniel (GSA Nominating Committee Member) will present the item.**

GSA Standing Committees

#### a. GSA Board (GSAB) (1 vacancy for a GSA Councillor)

*Attachment:*

- i. Nominees for the GSAB (1 vacancy)

**8.0 - 8.1**

#### b. GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC) (11 vacancies for GSA Members)

*Attachment:*

- i. Nominees for the GSA EDIC (11 vacancies)

**8.2 - 8.9**

#### c. GSA Board (GSAB) and GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) (1 vacancy for a GSA Councillor)

**Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker) will present this portion of the item.**

*Attachment:*

- i. Nominees for the GSAB/GSA NoC (1 vacancy)

**8.10 - 8.11**

## Reports (suggested time: 15 mins)

### 9. President (**Marc Waddingham, President**)

- i. President's Report
- ii. GSA Board Report
- iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report (**no written report at this time; next meeting scheduled for 25 January 2021**)
- iv. GSA Governance Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)

**9.0 - 9.1**  
**9.2**

### 10. Vice-President Academic (**Sachiketha Reddy, Vice-President Academic**)

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report

**10.0**

### 11. Vice-President External (**Anas Fassih, Vice-President External**)

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

**11.0**

### 12. Vice-President Labour (**Umesh Nimmathi, Vice-President Labour**)

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report
- ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)

**12.0**

### 13. Vice-President Student Services (**Sridhar Parasharamatham, Vice-President Student Services**)

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

**13.0**

### 14. Senator (**Marla Palakkamanil, Senator**)

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

### 15. Speaker (**Pranidhi Baddam, Speaker**)

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

### 16. Chief Returning Officer (**Michael Huang, Chief Returning Officer**)

- i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

**16.0**

### 17. GSA Nominating Committee (**Kenzie Gordon, GSA Nominating Committee Chair**)

- i. GSA Nominating Committee Report

**17.0 - 17.1**

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

Prepared by C Thomas and E Heiberg for GSA Council 18 January 2021

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- i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report **18.0**
- 19. GSA Management (Courtney Thomas, Executive Director)**
  - i. Executive Director's Report **19.0 - 19.3**

**Question Period**

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

**21. Oral Questions**

**Adjournment**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Marc Waddingham (President)	Muhammad Zubair (Councillor-at-Large)	Yina Liu (Elementary Education)	Erika Poitras (Pharmacology)
Sachiketha Reddy (VP Academic)	Zhiying Wang (AFNS)	Samantha Blais (History, Classics, & Religious Studies)	Hamdah Al Nebaihi (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Anas Fassih (VP External)	Kyla Cangiano (Anthropology)	Jessica Kennedy (Human Ecology)	Spencer Hayden (Philosophy)
Umesh Nimmathi (VP Labour)	Allan Yarahmady (Biochemistry)	M Idrees Afzal (Internetworking)	Zoe Frank (Physical Therapy)
Sridhar Parasharamatham (VP Student Services)	Jessica Grenke (Biological Science)	Janet Zhou (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology)	Pramodh Senarath Yapa (Physics)
Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)	Kevin Solar (Biomedical Engineering)	Tim Nessim (Law)	Robert Reklow (Physiology)
Priyanka Maripuri (Deputy Speaker)	Maggie Cascadden (Business PhD)	Jenn Laskosky; Kim Jones (Library & Information Studies)	Maura Roberts (Political Science)
Michael Huang (Chief Returning Officer)	Kazuki Ueda (Cell Biology)	David Gordon (Mechanical Engineering)	Precious Amusan (Psychiatry)
Sophie Shi (Deputy Returning Officer)	Omnath Ekambaram (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Jennifer McDevitt; Erin O'Neil (Media and Technology Studies)	Connor Lambert (Psychology)
Marla Palakkamanil (Senator)	Arsh Hazrah (Chemistry)	Adrienne Watson (Medical Genetics)	McKenzie Tilstra (Public Health)
Neslihan Akpinar (Councillor-at-Large)	Kalvin Eng (Computing Science)	Quinten Kieser (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)	Kathryn Lambert (Rehabilitation Science)
Dylan Ashley (Councillor-at-Large)	Harsimrat Kaur (Dentistry)	Treesa Friesen (MLCS)	Beckett Stark (Renewable Resources)
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu (Councillor-at-Large)	Collette Slevinsky (Drama)	Leah Hrycun (Native Studies)	Michael Huang (REES)
Nadia Daniel (Councillor-at-Large)	Avni Patel (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Charbel Baaklini; Noam Steinberg (Neuroscience)	Robert Piazza (Secondary Education)
Tejasai Kommanpalli (Councillor-at-Large)	Jasen Aussant (Economics)	Laura Reifferscheid (Nursing)	Manzah Yankey (Sociology)
Zeenat Ladak (Councillor-at-Large)	Carrie Karsgaard (Educational Policy Studies)	Shayla Mosley (Oncology)	Lindy Schaffrick (Surgery)
Yashita Singh (Councillor-at-Large)	Lauren Trafford (Educational Psychology)	Matthew Benson (Ophthalmology)	
Md Solimul Chowdhury (Councillor-at-Large)	Nida-e-Falak (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Shubham Soni (Paediatrics)	

**Guests:** Tom Gee (GSA Auditor, RSM Canada); Leon Pfeiffer (GSA Auditor, RSM Canada); Christina Saed (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science; GSA Appeals and Complaints Board nominee).

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam 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 16 November 2020 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 16 November 2020 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. R Piazza **MOVED**; L Trafford **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes****2. Minutes from the 19 October 2020 GSA Council Meeting**

Members had before them the 19 October 2020 GSA Council meeting minutes, which had been previously distributed on 6 November 2020. C Slevinsky **MOVED**; A Patel **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. J McDevitt Abstained.

**Changes in GSA Council Membership****3. Changes in GSA Council Membership**

- i. **Introduction of New GSA Council Members:** it was the first meeting for K Lambert (Rehabilitation Science), K Jones (Library and Information Studies), and N-e-Falak (Electrical & Computer Engineering).
- ii. **Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members:** None.

**GSA Council Member Announcements****4. GSA Council Member Announcements**

M Waddingham, President, invited members to attend upcoming town halls and panels being hosted across campus regarding the University of Alberta Tomorrow Initiative:

- Reclaiming the University – [University Restructuring and Students: Consequences and Risks – 19 November 3-4:30PM](#)
- Reclaiming the University – [University Restructuring and Students: Getting Heard, Pushing Back – 20 November 3-4:30PM](#)
- [Dissecting U of A for Tomorrow: Student Perspectives on Academic Restructuring – 23 November 12-1PM](#)

Councillor A Watson (Medical Genetics) invited members to attend the Medical Genetics Research Day on Wednesday, 18 November. This was a virtual event and all were welcome. Members were invited to email A Watson for more details ([aw1@ualberta.ca](mailto:aw1@ualberta.ca)).

Councillor P Basu (Councillor-at-Large) invited members to [Enhancing Career Launches: The Power of Experiential Learning](#) on Wednesday, 18 November - a panel discussion where panelists from the University of Alberta, BioTalent Canada and Mitacs would discuss work-integrated learning opportunities and wage subsidy programs available to students.

Councillor E O'Neil (Media and Technology Studies) invited members to the [Faculty of Arts Restructuring – Graduate Students Open Forum](#) on 19 November at 2:00PM.

**Action Item****5. 2019-2020 GSA Audited Financial Statements**

M Waddingham (President) presented the item and introduced the guests, T Gee (GSA Auditor; MBA, FCA, RSM Canada) and L Pfeiffer (CA, RSM Canada).

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2019-2020 GSA audited financial statements.

T Gee introduced L Pfeiffer as the RSM partner consulting on the audit, and began by noting that, in past years, audits were conducted on-site at the GSA office but with the challenges this year presented, the audit was conducted virtually. He also reminded members that GSA management and GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) had already reviewed the attached document very closely and then highlighted a number of pertinent points, including but not limited to:

- The Statement of Financial Position outlined that in 2019, assets totaled approximately \$1.58 million, and liabilities totaled approximately \$587,000, leaving approximately \$1 million for the Financial Stabilization Fund. In 2020, with assets totaling approximately \$1.78 million and liabilities totaling approximately \$665,000, the Financial Stabilization Fund had grown to approximately \$1.1 million, and this was the amount (equal to approximately one year's operating expenses) that the GSA had been striving for several years to grow the fund  
*and*
- The notes associated with the audit addressed the uncertainty of the GSA's future financial situation given the impact of the global pandemic.

T Gee noted that in contrast to the state of the organization about 10 years ago, today the GSA continued to be in an excellent financial position and as the GSA Auditor, he had no concerns about the financial situation of the organization.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2019-2020 GSA audited financial statements. J Kennedy **MOVED**; L Hrycun **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

#### 6. 2020-2021 GSA Fall Term Budget and Expenditure Report

M Waddingham (President) presented the item and referenced the attached cover letter which provided more detail. He went on to note that a drop in enrolment was anticipated in Fall 2020 and a significant drop was of potential concern for the GSA. In anticipation, the last budget update was drafted conservatively with an expectation of a 9% decrease in enrolment, while the actual enrolment decrease was 1%. In addition, the GSA initially suffered some losses from investments, as well as ongoing losses from suspended commercial activities. While the Winter 2021 enrolment figures would provide more certainty, at this stage there were no major concerns given that enrolment decreases were not as severe as anticipated.

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2020-2021 Fall Term Budget and Expenditure Report. P Chaudhury Basu **MOVED**; R Piazza **SECONDED**.

In the ensuing discussion, members raised a number of points, including but not limited to whether the decrease in enrolment was a result of a decrease in international student enrolment (it appeared that was the major factor).

At the request of members, the Speaker allowed a brief discussion regarding the feasibility of a GSA strike fund to support Academically-Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs) during a hypothetical future strike. In the ensuing discussion, M Waddingham noted that U Nimmathi, as the Vice-President Labour, could address questions pertaining to graduate student labour rights and conditions. Members raised a number of questions, including but not limited to what conditions were required before AEGSs could strike and which body was authorized to make the decision to create a strike fund. In response, U Nimmathi noted that there were currently a number of unknowns concerning how Bill 32 impacted the collection and use of union dues but the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) was currently researching student association strike funds, and the GSA would be supplementing this with its own research. This research was expected to be completed by March 2021, at which point the GSA could determine the next steps it wished to take. It was also noted that AEGSs made up approximately 3,000 members of the entire graduate student body, which totaled approximately 8,000, that union dues could only be collected from AEGSs with their explicit consent, and that such a fund would have to be managed separately from the GSA operating budget. Members also discussed whether the GSA could utilize a portion of its operating budget to begin such a fund, in advance of asking AEGSs to vote on the collection of a union due and it was noted that this would be assessed.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2020-2021 Fall Term Budget and Expenditure Report. P Chaudhury Basu **MOVED**; R Piazza **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

#### 7. 2021 Graduate Student Assistance Program Referendum Question

M Huang (Chief Returning Officer) presented the item. M Huang noted that the GSA would hold two referenda in 2021. The first, on the Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP) would require graduate students to indicate if they wish to continue the program given an increase in cost associated with an increase in inflation since the inception of the program, and an uptick in the usage of the program.

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the Graduate Student Assistance Program, to run concurrently with the 2021 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached.

There was no further discussion.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the Graduate Student Assistance Program, to run concurrently with the 2021 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached. J Kennedy **MOVED**; P Chaudhury Basu **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

#### 8. 2021 U-Pass Referendum Question

M Huang (Chief Returning Officer) presented the item and noted that, in the second of two referenda slated for 2021, graduate students would be asked to vote on the continuation of the U-Pass program, offered by Edmonton Transit Service (ETS).

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass, to run concurrently with the 2021 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached.

Members raised a number of questions, including, among others:

- What would happen if the referendum did not pass (in the short term, the U-Pass program would no longer be offered to University of Alberta graduate students as of Fall 2021. While negotiations with ETS could continue, there was little leverage given that there were other Edmonton student associations who were currently paying \$180 per student and would likely pass their respective referenda – which was what the cost for U of A students would be once the subsidy provided by University administration was removed, as was the University’s intention);
- Whether the Ride Transit program, which currently cost \$34/month for qualifying low-income graduate students, was expected to undergo any changes (unknown at this point, that was a City of Edmonton decision, but graduate program eligibility had been extended until August 2021 and would then end when the U-Pass program took effect again in September 2021); and
- Whether graduate students could campaign in support of or in opposition to the U-Pass referenda (graduate students could register “yes” or “no” campaigns for either of the GSA Referenda to be held in 2021).

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass, to run concurrently with the 2021 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached. J McDevitt **MOVED**; S Hayden **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

#### 9. Recommended Addition to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees

M Waddingham (President) presented the item and provided background on the creation of the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC), noting that he had received feedback on the formation of this committee, particularly from the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) and the Black Graduate Students’ Association (BGSA). He also noted that, as with all GSA Standing Committees, this body would be empowered to revisit its own policies so it could evolve over time and could make recommendations to GSA Council and GSA Board. Members discussed the danger of token improvements and it was noted that bodies such as the GSA EDIC could be critical in ensuring the organization would be as successful as possible.

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** recommended addition to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committee, as shown in the attached track changes document and effective immediately.

Members raised a number of questions, including, among others: why a committee for diversity was discriminating in its membership (M Waddingham explained that the intent was to ensure a broad range of representation and a diversity of voices, especially from those not currently heard within the GSA) and whether, once formed, this committee could recommend training for GSA Council members as to the necessity of this type of representation (M Waddingham agreed that this type of training would be very valuable and the committee could certainly be involved in that, especially with training for GSA executives).

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **APPROVE** recommended addition to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committee, as shown in the attached track changes document and effective immediately. J McDevitt **MOVED**; L Trafford **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

### Elections

#### 10. GSA Council Elections

Nadia Daniel (GSA Nominating Committee Member) presented the item.

### Standing Committees

- a. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 vacancy)  
Christina Saed (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science)

N Daniel asked the nominee the following: “please tell us why you'd like to serve on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board.” The nominee was present and given the opportunity to respond. GSA Council members then posed questions and the nominee was given the opportunity to respond.

### Reports

#### 11. President

Prepared by F Robertson and M Toghrai for GSA Council 16 November 2020

**i. President's Report:**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Waddingham referred back to follow-up questions related to Item 9, including how the GSA EDIC would be empowered to impact the organization (as with all GSA Standing Committees, the GSA EDIC would have the power to make recommendations to GSA Council and it would be the role of GSA Council to assess and act on these).

M Waddingham then noted that the University of Alberta for Tomorrow was nearing its final stages and would go to review at General Faculties Council (GFC) on 23 November and expressed his opinion that this was the beginning of a journey, not the end of a process. He also noted, as he had the previous month that he was pleased to work with members to facilitate smaller round tables with student groups who wished to discuss these issues; these meetings were very informative, and the feedback was incredibly helpful in representing a variety of voices.

He next noted that the GSA received input from external contacts looking for graduate students to fulfill internship opportunities and that such requests would flow through the Vice-President Academic's portfolio. He noted the GSA would continue to monitor such opportunities through the University of Alberta Innovation Network, of which the GSA was now an official member. Members were encouraged to reach out if they represented a group with interests in these opportunities and graduate students interested in internship opportunities were encouraged to engage through the Graduate Student Internship Program offered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR).

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

**Members** discussed the Alberta 2030 Roundtable, as mentioned in M Waddingham's report.

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

**ii. GSA Board**

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

**iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee**

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

**iv. GSA Governance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. 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 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S Reddy provided an outline of meetings attended, including GFC Council on Student Affairs (COSA), GFC Student Conduct Policy Committee (SCPC), and the GFC Executive Committee (EXEC). FGSR was now granting Essential Travel letters provided certain conditions were met. M Waddingham added that the U of A had received the federal exception to allow international students to travel here; FGSR would work with students on a case-by-case basis to ensure they met the requirements.

**13. Vice-President External**

**i. Vice-President External's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Fassih provided an outline of meetings attended, including Advocacy Week hosted by ab-GPAC (during which many issues were discussed, including professional development and funding, partnership with Mitacs, internet availability for rural students, and increasing mental health funding), the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA), meeting with Katherine Husing (Associate VP (Ancillary Services)) to discuss residence issues, and the conclusion of the hiring search for the Vice-President (External Relations).

GSA Council members asked if there was support available for paternal caretakers, or if support could be awarded regardless of gender. A Fassih explained that the data under discussion demonstrated particular challenges for female graduate students so the discussion was in relation to that. More funding would be available for caretakers, regardless of gender.

**ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. 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 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, U Nimmathi highlighted the upcoming Discover Governance sessions, for those interested in student advocacy or leadership, and the Labour 101 session, for those interested in learning more about the Collective Agreement.

**ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. 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 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S Parasharamatham highlighted the Dean of Students Advisory Committee meeting, involvement in the Academic Restructuring process, and continued efforts at streamlining their services, efforts which have been ongoing for the past couple of years.

**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 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Huang stated that the report was a review of meetings held with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) and GSA Board, before bringing referendum questions forward to GSA Council.

M Huang also provided GSA Council with information regarding previous voter turnout for GSA General Elections (8% in 2020, previous years saw a range from 9.6% - 13%). Simple statistics showed that the GSA got a better turnout when there were multiple candidates. As such, M Huang encouraged everyone to consider running. With two important referendum questions, it would be important that we have a good turnout.

**19. GSA Nominating Committee**

**i. GSA Nominating Committee Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, N Daniel stated that the current vacancies might seem like large time commitments but at most the committees meet every few months. Members were encouraged to consider committing as much as they could. It was important for the functioning of the GSA to have these positions filled so these committees could continue to bring business forward to GSA Council. Vacancies would be posted in the next newsletter.

**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 13 November 2020. 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 13 November 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Thomas reminded GSA Council members of the upcoming Discover Governance session. Details would be available in the GSA newsletter; this session was for those interested in getting more involved. The numerous vacancies on GSA Standing Committees were also noted.

Additionally, C Thomas noted that the GSA Recognition Awards would be open for nominations on 1 December 2020, with a deadline of 15 January 2021. All student awards have a monetary component and recognized work in an array of areas.

### **Question Period**

**22. Written Questions:** No written questions were submitted.

### **23. Oral Questions**

No oral questions were raised and, in closing, D Ashley expressed his thanks to the GSA for their work on behalf of graduate students, as this would be his final meeting as a Councillor-at-Large. D Ashley received thanks from several GSA Council members.

Additionally, the Speaker informed GSA Council members that as there were no pressing issues for December Council, that meeting would be cancelled. GSA Council would re-convene in January.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

## Outline of Issue

### Establishment of a GSA Labour Union Fund

#### Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, the establishment of a restricted fund (GSA Labour Union Fund) to be used to support the GSA's work as a labour union (with the utilization and reporting of such funds to be done in compliance with the provisions of the *Labour Relations Code*).

#### Background:

After the GSA staff consulted with the GSA's auditor and legal counsel regarding the steps necessary to establish a restricted fund to be used to support the GSA's work as a labour union (including potential strike actions), the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) made the above recommendation to GSA Council at its meeting of 30 November 2020. The recommendation was also reviewed by the GSA Board at its meeting of 16 December 2020.

As the GSA is currently anticipating a surplus at the end of the fiscal year on 31 March 2021, it is proposed that, should GSA Council vote to establish this fund (which would be invested alongside the GSA's other restricted funds in order to generate interest revenue and other investment income and be regularly reviewed by the GSA BFC, GSA Board, and GSA Council), a second motion will come forward to transfer some of these funds from the GSA operating budget to this restricted fund. This second motion will likely come forward in May, after the GSA has received its final fees disbursement and all invoices for the 2020-2021 fiscal year and the exact amount of the projected surplus is determined.

It is hoped that the fund will be grown thereafter through the collection of a union due on the salary portion of stipends of academically-employed graduate students, established following a vote on the matter by members of the bargaining unit. Said vote will likely occur in March or April (with collection to commence either over the summer or in the fall), although this matter needs to be further discussed by the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC).

Relevant provincial legislation governing such a fund (including establishment, growth, reporting, and utilization) is contained within the [Labour Relations Code](#), which was modified in July 2020 as a result of the passage of Bill 32. Information about the changes introduced by Bill 32 can be found [here](#). In order to ensure full compliance with provincial legislation, amendments to GSA Bylaw and Policy Section Q: Collective Bargaining concerning this fund for labour activities may also be deemed necessary in the coming months; following review by the GSA LRC these proposed amendments would come before GSA Council for approval.

#### Jurisdiction:

Post-Secondary Learning Act, Section 95(1)

*"The business and affairs of a student organization of a public post-secondary institution must be managed by a council."*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K: Finances, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, Section K.POL.5.1:

*"The overall mandate of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) is to advise on the financial affairs of the GSA (including the long-term planning and priorities of the GSA in light of its strategic goals) and on the*

Prepared by E Heiberg for GSA Council 18 January 2021

*provision of the long-term financial health of the organization.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K: Finances, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, Section K.POL.5.3:

*“The GSA BFC will make recommendations to GSA Council on the annual operating and capital budgets.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K: Finances, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, Section K.POL.5.5:

*“The GSA BFC will advise the President and ED (or delegate) with respect to any surpluses at the fiscal year end, in accordance with other relevant sections of GSA Bylaw and Policy.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section Q: Collective Bargaining, GSA Bylaw, Collective Bargaining, Section Q.BYL.4.1:

*“The GSA may collect union dues from academically-employed graduate students (distinct from the GSA membership fee) in an amount approved via electronic vote of academically-employed graduate students. The vote will be decided by a simple majority of those who voted.”*



## 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP) 18 January 2021 Update to GSA Council

Each spring the GSA Directly-Elected Officers (hereafter referred to, informally, as the student executive team) work with the GSA Board to produce a Strategic Work Plan (SWP). The SWP is the document that steers and prioritizes the work and initiatives of the GSA, and is subject to revision as opportunities arise, shifting directions as needed. The SWP reflects the GSA's vision and 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.

This year, in order to develop a set of strategic priorities that reflect the changing needs of graduate students, the student executive team invited graduate students to participate in a town hall event on 22 May 2020 and circulated a feedback survey to graduate students during the period of 14-29 May 2020. These consultation initiatives yielded a significant amount of feedback and helped shape the [2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan](#).

The priorities for this year have been grouped into three categories: connect, support, and advocate. The student executive team will continue to engage in ongoing conversation with the GSA Board and GSA Council, and other GSA standing committees, concerning the pursuit of the goals outlined in the SWP. The first update on the work relating to the 2020-2021 SWP was brought to GSA Council in October and, as such, GSA Council members may benefit from reviewing the [October 2020 update](#) prior to reading the January 2021 update. The next and final update will be provided to GSA Council in April 2021.

A selection of ongoing work and new initiatives pursued and undertaken by the 2020-2021 student executive team (GSA President, Marc Waddingham, GSA VP Academic, Sachiketha Reddy, GSA VP External, Anas Fassih, GSA VP Labour, Umesh Nimmathi, and GSA VP Student Services, Sridhar Parasharamatham), in accordance with the 2020-2021 SWP, have been organized thematically and can be found below.

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### Theme: Connect

- Following consultation and discussion with a number of graduate students in addition to prominent University stakeholders, the GSA has—with the leadership of the President—established a **new GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC)**. The work of the GSA EDIC is expected to commence by March 2021;
- Academically-Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs), for whom the GSA serves as a union under the leadership of the VP Labour, are recipients of the “AEGS Newsletter” which provides, among others, updates on the currently-ongoing **negotiation process for the next Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement**, its upcoming series of town halls on this topic in February 2021, as well as vacancy postings on the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC). Since May 2020, nine editions of this newsletter have been circulated;
- The GSA website, with guidance from the President, has been undergoing a review and update process, with an upcoming complete redesign to launch in the Winter 2021 term. These efforts seek to improve

communication and provide clarity and accessibility for graduate students and all other visitors of the GSA website;

- The student executive team has also placed significant value on the cultivation of existing relationships with an array of University stakeholders and associations, in particular the Students' Union (SU), among others;
- In order to continue developing relationships with other Canadian student associations and to discuss issues facing graduate students across the country, the President, VP Academic, VP External, and VP Student Services attended a number of sessions as part of the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) Virtual Symposia in November 2020. The student executive team have also been participating in informal gatherings of students' associations under the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities, and hope to shift these gatherings into a more formal medium for the purpose of leveraging federal advocacy; and
- The VP Student Services continues building relationships with University units, in particular the Community Social Work Team (CSWT) and is a member of the Days of Action (DOA) Committee which seeks to increase awareness on a number of fronts related to mental wellbeing. These initiatives, which include the significant addition of Graduate-Specific Collective Tea Times, are supported by the GSA in terms of programming and communication.

#### Theme: Support

- Further to the October 2020 update provided to GSA Council, the GSA—under the leadership of the student executive team—continues to respond to the unique and turbulent circumstances brought on by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Recent work includes:
  - The issuing of an open letter, in partnership with the International Students' Association and the SU, penned by the President to University President Bill Flanagan, urging him to consider making mandatory the provision of asynchronous learning for all courses, among other asks,
  - The President and VP Student Services have pursued discussions with Studentcare, the provider of the GSA Health and Dental Plan, to clarify the limits of coverage for graduate students residing in other Canadian provinces/territories, and to offer special exemptions for international students to allow students residing outside of Canada to opt out with more ease, as well as opt out retroactively in July 2021,
  - As of December 2020, continued budgetary considerations for financial support for graduate student, through the GSA Emergency Bursary and the University's Supplementary Bursary, to the amount of \$200,000 (in addition to the approximately \$100,000 additional funds for the former, and \$250,000 for the latter which were committed earlier in the 2020-2021 fiscal year),
  - Fully remote operations on the part of the GSA office, including all meetings and governing processes, and (most recently) the 2021 GSA Recognition Awards nominations and upcoming adjudications,



- Advocacy for alternatives to the U-Pass during this program's temporary suspension over the Winter 2021 term, and
- Continued prudent management of the GSA's finances, under the supervision of the President, to ensure financial health and organizational longevity even in the case of low enrolment in Winter 2021.
- The VP Student Services has continued to participate in the **negotiations process for the next U-Pass agreement**, to ensure graduate students' access to affordable transit. This process will culminate in a 2021 GSA Referendum on the continuation of the U-Pass program.
- With the guidance of the student executive team, a slate of virtual events replaced the calendar of in-person events originally planned for Fall 2020. These include, among others, now-virtual Info Sessions, a number of virtual game nights, and a brunch and learn series, all of which are expected to continue in Winter 2021. The Winter 2021 Orientation (as with the Fall 2020 Orientation) was rebranded as the Graduate Student Orientation, an eClass course that offered new and returning graduate students the chance to win a \$100 gift card;
- Under the supervision of the VP Student Services grants and bursaries have been disbursed to GSA members in the following amounts: [*\$ amount finalized in January 2021*] in the form of Child Care Grants (CCGs), [*\$ amount finalized in January 2021*] in the form of Academic Travel Grants (ATGs), [*\$ amount finalized in January 2021*] in the form of Emergency Bursaries (EBs), and [*\$ amount finalized in January 2021*] in the form of Graduate Student Group Grants (GSGGs), totalling [*\$ amount finalized in January 2021*];
- In accordance with the portfolio of the VP Student Services and VP Academic, support continues for campus units such as the Campus Food Bank, the Career Centre, and the Academic Success Centre;
- In developing new supports for graduate students who parent, the GSA is currently working alongside the Students' Union (SU) on a pilot daycare program for the children of students who parent, facilitated through Kids & Company child care. Details on this pilot are forthcoming, and program launch is expected to take place in Fall 2021;
- Advocacy for additional internship opportunities for graduate students, which has included relationship-building and collaboration with the Graduate Student Internship Program (GSIP). In this vein, and following conversations with the office of the Vice-President (Research and Innovation), the GSA now holds a seat on the University of Alberta Innovation Network (UAIN), which coordinates a number of internships for graduate students. The President serves in this capacity;
- The VP Student Services has been involved in discussions regarding **the future Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)**, which has seen a continued increase in usage since 2008 and will see a marginal increase in cost as a result. In 2021, the question of the continuation of the GSAP will be brought to GSA members for a vote during the associated 2021 GSA Referendum;
- The VP Labour has continued to meet one-on-one with graduate students to offer individualized support and guidance regarding the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement. The

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President and the VP Academic have also met with a number of graduate students one-on-one, to advise them on topics relevant to their respective portfolios. Meetings with graduate students are expected to continue through the Winter term;

- The GSA expressed its support of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) healthcare workers' wildcat strike in October 2020, through a letter penned by the VP Labour; and
- In fulfilling the GSA's mandate to serve as the union for AEGSs, and in addition to leading the negotiation process for the next Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement, the VP Labour has cultivated province-wide relationships as part of a series of labour roundtables facilitated by the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC). The VP Labour and the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) are also currently involved in the process of researching and setting up a fund to support the GSA's work as a labour union with respect to potential job actions, etc.

#### Theme: Advocate

- The President served as the sole graduate student representative on the **Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG)**, the primary body tasked with developing models reflective of the vision of the "University of Alberta for Tomorrow". Mindful of the concerns of portions of the graduate student community in relation to this work, the President:
  - Extended an invitation to Steve Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), to connect with graduate students by giving a presentation before GSA Council in August 2020, and again to Dr. Dew as well as Bill Flanagan, University President, to attend the October 2020 meeting of GSA Council and participate in a highly involved conversation on the topic of academic restructuring and service excellence,
  - Hosted two town halls for graduate students on this topic, in September and November 2020, as well as co-hosted a town hall alongside the Students' Union (SU),
  - Participated in a number of departmental town halls throughout November,
  - Worked to disseminate information from the UAlberta Student Collective, a group of graduate students advocating in opposition to provincial defunding of post-secondary education and restructuring initiatives, and
  - While having reservations over the shared service hub model for the new colleges and concerns that a decentralized leadership model might make it difficult to advance initiatives aimed at improving the student experience, particularly student-supervisory accountability and the creation of minimum funding packages, amongst others, voted at the Board of Governors (BoG), against a motion to amend a recommendation put forth by General Faculties Council (GFC) with respect to the leadership of the restructured institution (employing a college model) and spoke against the BoG's rejection of GFC's recommendation as not in alignment with the principles of collegial governance.



In this same vein, the VP Academic has engaged in a number of discussions with the fourteen graduate students members of GSA General Faculties Council (GFC) Caucus, as Chair of this body;

- Having identified adequate and affordable housing as cause for concern for many graduate students, the VP External has dedicated significant time to building relationships with the Associate Vice-President (Ancillary Services) to ensure graduate student consultation remains a major priority in future residence projects;
- The President and VP External both serve on the **Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)** Board of Directors and have contributed extensively to its ongoing work, which includes, but is not limited to, graduate student labour relations (both status quo and strategic priorities) as well as consultation with the Government of Alberta as part of the latter's "Alberta 2030" initiative. They also participated in the ab-GPAC Advocacy Week in November 2020, which consisted of meetings with a number of Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as Edmonton City Councillors to discuss graduate student priorities. While the President and VP External provide regular updates on this work, some additional updates issued by ab-GPAC can be found in the form of media releases. They also meet regularly with other Edmonton-based student associations through the Edmonton Student Alliance; and
- The President and VP Academic continue to work with Dean Brooke Milne of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) to further and support the Graduate Supervisory Excellence Initiative, which is on schedule to complete its Phase 1 rollout for Winter 2021. The current program implements mandatory reporting structures for supervisors of graduate students at the beginning of their studies, in addition to an annual report to monitor the progress of graduate students in their programs. We applaud FGSR for their efforts and successful start to the project, and plan to continue offering our support and input as it matures towards its second stage.

The student executive team will continue to move these initiatives forward, as well as pursue other, new initiatives for the fulfilment of the goals outlined in the 2020-2021 SWP. The next and final update on the SWP will be brought forward to GSA Council in April 2021.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
**POSITION ON THE GSA BOARD (GSAB) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA COUNCILLOR): ONE (1) NOMINEE**

Information regarding this position for a GSA Councillor was circulated on three (3) instances via email to GSA Council with a deadline of 13 January 2021. One (1) nomination was received.

The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA. As set out in GSA Board Policy (GSA Board Policy, GSA Councillor Positions on the GSA Board: Mandate F.POL.3.2), the responsibilities of the non-voting GSA Councillor positions on the GSAB are:

1. Regular attendance at GSAB meetings, with regrets and reasons submitted to the GSA President.
2. Providing a link between the elected GSA Officers and the floor of GSA Council.
3. Participating and speaking up at GSA Council when GSAB business is discussed, from the member's own unique views.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the 18 January 2021 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the 18 January meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday, 18 January 2021 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

- 1. Erin O'Neil (Media and Technology Studies)**

**Jurisdiction:**

Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Board, Section F.POL.3.1.e

The composition of the GSAB includes "up to three (3) members of GSA Council elected by GSA Council as non-voting members."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, Nominating, Section E.POL.3.1.a

"The GSA NoC provides GSA Council with the names of nominees to fill vacancies on GSA Standing Committees, ad hoc committees, and subcommittees, unless otherwise noted. All vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement."

**The name and biography received for the one (1) nominee is BELOW on page 8.1. The biography and resume is presented as received (ie not edited).**

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE GSA BOARD (GSAB)  
ONE (1) VACANY FOR A GSA COUNCILLOR  
One (1) Nominee**

**1. Erin O’Neil**

<b>Statement of Interest:</b>
I have extensive board experience and have mentored younger women through non-profit board experiences, and I founded and ran my own nonprofit in Hamilton for two years before moving to Edmonton for school. I have been a part of several community groups and nonprofit boards where I had to understand complex financial and staffing information to make decisions, as ethically and equitably as possible. My board experience includes non-profits in education and arts sectors and social justice organizations. I have ten years of professional experience, and have been engaged in governance issues at workplaces throughout my career. I am keen to use my skills and experience to benefit my fellow grad students. Over the last year, I have become more engaged in GSA operations and am keen to step up to support the work of the GSA as we enter a period of upheaval and major government policy change.
<b>Bio:</b>
I was born in Edmonton and moved to Ontario at 14 with my family. I did my undergraduate studies in the Arts & Science Program at McMaster and then completed a post-grad certificate in public relations. I worked in nonprofit communications, at McMaster and then Wilfrid Laurier University, for 10 years. I completed a master’s in philanthropy and nonprofit leadership at Carleton University in 2016. Last year, I decided to leave my career and return to school, because I am interested in studying how ignorance about and apathy to social justice work is manifested in our online spaces, especially among white settlers. I feel strongly that good citizenship includes stepping up to do necessary work for the good of the whole, and a GSA council role is one way I hope to serve my community.
<b>Summary Resume:</b>
I have ten years of experience as a unionized worker and two as a manager, so I understand consensus building and working with multiple parties with competing priorities. I have a master’s in nonprofit management as well, which has given me skills in assessing and working with financial limitations, such as what we’re facing at UAlberta currently. My studies and volunteer work in social justice work also help me to keep equity and institutional violence top of mind and to consider the many ramifications of institutional decision making on multiple, diverse constituencies. I am currently a TA (6h/wk) and RA (6h/wk), and have worked at the library as a grad student, so I have a sense of the range of work experiences for grad students on campus. As a member of the Digital Humanities Student Association, a board member at APIRG, and communications officer for the Canadian Society of Digital Humanities, I have worked with students, staff, and faculty across campus and gained a better understanding of the University of Alberta ecosystem. For more details of my background, my LinkedIn is here: <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/erinlauraoneil/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/erinlauraoneil/</a>

## GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)

**GSA EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (GSA EDIC) (ELEVEN (11) POSITIONS FOR GSA MEMBERS): ELEVEN (11) NOMINEES**

Information regarding the initial positions for seven (7) and up to nine (9) GSA members was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. As eleven (11) nominations were received (and in accordance with GSA Policy for this standing committee), the GSA EDIC Chair, GSA EDIC Vice-Chair, and the Chair of the GSA NoC agreed that the GSA EDIC's membership could be increased to eleven (11).

The GSA EDIC "works to ensure that the GSA reflects the principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) for all its members in the interests of enhancing the graduate student experience and ensuring the existence of a welcoming environment and cohesive community for graduate students on campus" (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, Section F.POL.5.1).

**There will be an electronic vote held at the 18 January 2021 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday, 18 January 2021 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday, 18 January 2021 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

1. **Claudia Althoen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)**
2. **Mashal (Nursing)**
3. **Kallum McDonald (Agriculture, Food, and Nutritional Science)**
4. **Shalea Nichols (Political Science)**
5. **Ana Perdomo (Business - MBA)**
6. **Andrea Petryk (Business Administration - MBA)**
7. **Simran Pherwani (Medical Science)**
8. **Varshini Prakash (Computing Science)**
9. **Nicole Rodriguez (Pediatrics)**
10. **Danni Xu (Nursing)**
11. **Lisa Zhu (Business - MBA)**

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, Section F.POL.5.1.c

*"The GSA EDIC is composed of "a minimum of seven (7) and up to nine (9) GSA members elected by GSA Council as voting members. The GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC) Chair, in consultation with the GSA EDIC Vice-Chair and the Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee, can decide to increase the number of GSA members on the GSA EDIC."*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, Nominating, Section E.POL.3.1.a

*"The GSA NoC provides GSA Council with the names of nominees to fill vacancies on GSA Standing Committees, ad hoc committees, and subcommittees, unless otherwise noted. All vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement."*

**The names and biographies received for the eleven (11) nominees is BELOW on pages 8.3-8.9. The biographies and resumes are presented as received (ie not edited).**

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE GSA EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (GSA EDIC)  
(ELEVEN (11) VACANCIES FOR GSA MEMBERS)  
Eleven (11) Nominees**

**1. Claudia Althoen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)**

<p><b>Statement of Interest:</b> The skills I've gained from being a project lead in the Minnesota Student Association during my undergrad will benefit the work that this committee does. I'm experienced at working with people of different backgrounds and experiences due to working in a variety of jobs and student groups (back in undergrad), and I believe that this would be an asset to the committee. I'm passionate about black lives matter, LGBTQ+, women's rights, and climate change, to name a few.</p>
<p><b>Bio:</b> I grew up in Bemidji, Minnesota in the U.S. and I moved to Minneapolis, MN to do my BSc in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. I'm LGBTQ+. I enjoy snowboarding and playing squash. I'm looking to find ways to involve myself on campus more, and since diversity and inclusion, as well as equity for people is an important issue that I care deeply about, I thought that this would be a perfect committee to apply to. I want to help make people feel safe and included on campus.</p>
<p><b>Summary Resume:</b> I am currently a 1st year Master's student in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences studying glacial melt in the Upper Athabasca watershed. Between my undergraduate degree and my MSc, I worked as a substitute teacher in Minneapolis for grades K-12. I am free at the times the committee would meet and/or my schedule is flexible enough to accommodate sitting on this committee.</p>

**2. Mashal (Nursing)**

<p><b>Statement of Interest:</b> The skills that I acquired from my volunteer experience at Women Deliver is highly compatible with this organization's mandate. As a Women Deliver Young Leader, I am an enthusiastic and committed advocate aspiring to promote gender-equity and inclusive culture for adolescent girls and women in Pakistan. Additionally, Considering my background as an international student from Pakistan, I can serve as a beacon for the international graduate community (particularly the Asians) for articulating their unexpressed needs and elevating their voices to the organization.</p>
<p><b>Bio:</b> I was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. I belong to a closely knitted Gujrati family. I can fluently speak English and Urdu and can understand the Gujrati language (Indo-Pak dialect only). I completed my undergraduate degree in Nursing in the year 2016 from Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan.</p>
<p><b>Summary Resume:</b> Currently, I am a full-time first year Master's in Nursing student (leadership stream) at Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta. Professionally, I worked for four years as a Registered Nurse/ Charge Nurse in Oncology and palliative care inpatient unit, few month ago I resigned from my job considering full-time distance education commitments and challenges. Apparently, my professional journey as a nurse was highly focused on the principle of providing holistic and equity-oriented care to patients and their families. As a volunteer, I am working at Women Deliver as a Young leader since 2018. Three years back, Out of numerous applications, I was selected in a diverse class of 300 young leaders representing different regions of world to raise their voices on gender equality for girls and women around the world. On the completion of mandatory one year fellowship with Women Deliver, I was selected to attend a fully funded Women Deliver Young leader Conference held in 2019 at Vancouver, Canada. Still to-date and amid pandemic crisis, I voluntarily develop and conduct capacity building workshops for young girls on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive health and Rights (ASRHR). These workshops coach the youth with right knowledge, appropriate attitudes, and expertise on SRHR, so they can carve out gender equity driven communities for tomorrow. Besides my academic commitment, I can fairly dedicate quality time for this organization activities and meetings.</p>

### 3. Kallum McDonald (Agricultural, Food, and Nutritional Science)

**Statement of Interest:**

I strongly support the existence of labour organizations such as the GSA and want to support it in the best way I can - as a queer person, I believe that is through EDI. I have a decent understanding of the issues that queer people face and strongly value the principles of EDI. Through lab reports, essay writing, and lab/conference presentations, I have grown to be a fairly strong writer and presenter; being organized and meeting deadlines is likely my strongest suit; and I can work well with others in a professional and constructive fashion.

**Bio:**

I come from a grain and buffalo farm near Grande Prairie. My life experience, work, and academic background all involve biological science. I also have a strong political streak and over the past few years I have had frequent but low-level involvement in activism and election campaigns.

I am also a queer person but I come from a rigidly Christian background and came face-to-face with conversion therapy - these experiences have led to many challenges which have shaped who I am. I came out at the age of 16 to very supportive friends and teachers but homophobic parents and church family. I consider myself pansexual and I do technically identify as non-binary, though (for complicated reasons) I accept both they/them and he/him pronouns.

**Summary Resume:**

**Education:**

- BSc with Distinction, Biology major, Politics minor - U of A (2015-2020)
- MSc in Plant Biosystems - U of A (since September 2020)

**Volunteer:**

- Several election campaigns (Gil McGowan 2015, Charmaine St. Germain 2019, Aaron Paquette 2021).
- Electoral District Association member for Alberta MLA Heather Sweet.

### 4. Shalea Nichols (Political Science)

**Statement of Interest:**

My experiences by and large have informed why I believe I would be an asset to the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC) and also why I would like to serve on the committee. Many of these experiences come from the unique social location I occupy. I am a mixed person who is in between being a third generation Canadian whose grandparents are Chinese immigrants and a decendent of German Mennonite settlers who still live on Treaty 8 territory in Northern Alberta. I also have a permanent disability as well as learning disabilities. As a racialized person with a disability I have the lived experiences of being a diverse person as a graduate student and thus my perspective would be an asset to GSA EDIC. Beyond my social position, I have gained applicable skills and experience from my involvements at my prior institution as well as at the University of Alberta. For example, I was a student consultant for the Sexual Violence Policy at my prior institution as well as a student representative and voice on the Policy's committee and the education and implementation subcommittees. As I was familiar with the new policy, I also helped facilitate information sessions for students, staff and faculty. This has helped me develop many skills such as interpersonal skills and communication skills as well as gain experience collaborating with others. I am currently serving on the Arts Faculty Council and am a member of the Circumpolar Student's Association. Overall, through my personal experience and my volunteer and service commitments I have come to value diversity, equity and inclusion and am seeking to support and engage with others who are also invested in these values to work towards bettering the graduate student experience at U of A.

**Bio:**

I lived in Lacombe for a large part of my life and attended Red Deer College (RDC) where I attained a Diploma in Sports Management (2016). After my diploma, I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (2019) through the University of Calgary collaborative program at RDC. During my time at RDC, I was involved in governance and was an active member of many committees and groups. Most notably, I was a student councillor on the Students' Association Council, co-chair of the Student Recognition Awards Committee, a leader on the Mental Health Committee and president/founder of a student group for sexual assault awareness and education. I have always been active in my community as well and have spent over 6000 hours volunteering on a 24/7 sexual assault crisis line since 2016. My experiences in many of these roles have influenced my decision to research sexual assault law and policy. I recently finished my Masters in Gender and Social Justice Studies (2020) at the University of Alberta where I was an organizer

for our Graduate Student Association conference before its cancellation for COVID-19. I am currently a first year PhD student in Political Science at the U of A. I hope to be more involved at the U of A during these coming five years, making connections, and contributing to the University community. Outside of school, I stay active and healthy by regularly practicing yoga and weightlifting. I also enjoy spending time with my family and my two dogs.

**Summary Resume:**

My final MA research project was titled "Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse Accessing their Information under Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act". During my MA I was a teaching and researching assistant for Dr. Lise Gotell. I was also a teaching assistant this past fall term in the Department of Political Science. My current doctoral research concerns the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women related to resource extraction in Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. I am using an intersectional lens in my work as the issue I am researching is complex and has many overlapping factors. More professionally, I have worked for a sexual assault support centre as a community educator and planner who facilitated educational programs and organized awareness events. I was also part of a sexual assault response team where I immediately responded to callouts at the local hospital to support survivors who arrived at the emergency room for a sexual assault. Many of the survivors I have worked with also have diverse backgrounds and I have seen how their social positioning can effect the way they are treated. My professional experience thus grounds much of my work on sexual assault law and policy as it has made me aware that there is a need for improvement in the way survivors are respected and treated especially in our legal system. Seeing these impacts has led me to want to be a part of GSA EDIC as I care deeply about the inclusion and consideration of diverse peoples in these processes and environments including the post-secondary environment.

**5. Ana Perdomo (Business - MBA)**

**Statement of Interest:**

I am confident that my background would bring unique qualities to the committee, I have ample experience on leadership and management and taken so many courses related to inclusion and diversity that could be a great asset to the team. I am passionate about what the Committee stands for, I would be very glad to join the organization.

**Bio:**

I was born and raised in Mexico in a small town across the border with the USA, my first language is Spanish, however I can communicate in another 7 languages. I was very fortunate to have parents who believed education was a key component to anyone's life and development. I lived in Mexico for most of my life, however, I have been able to travel to more than 40+ countries around the world as I think it is a truly enriching experience being able to learn about other cultures, their history and their way of thinking.

I have been living in Canada for two years, and one of the aspects I like the most is the diversity of their people and the ability that people have to progress in life.

**Summary Resume:**

I am a first-year student of the part time MBA program. My undergraduate studies were on International Business, I have already 3 other master's Degree: Industrial Engineering, Logistics and Taxes, all of them have helped me advance on my career. Also, I graduated summa cum laude from Law School. I am currently studying to become a licensed customs broker and another logistics certification.

I have 10+ years of supply chain experience working for multinational companies and in charge of the logistics, purchasing and inventory management. Currently I work as the National Logistics Manager for one of the biggest importers in Canada. I have also work experience in Mexico and the USA, and briefly in Argentina and China.

I am currently volunteering as a Big Sister on their Graduation Bigs program, which is a program dedicated to help high school students graduate and pursue post- secondary education.

While living in Vancouver, I volunteered at a retirement house for a year and I was part of their wellness program, and gave assistance to their regular activities such as chair yoga, froyo socials, and as a companion for their residents.

Also, for two years, I volunteered in Minneapolis, MN, USA at The Advocates for Human Rights, a NPO dedicated to help people who are seeking for asylum and refugees' programs. My role there was to give assistance on their legal proceedings, and, as a translator and interpreter for Spanish/English services. This was probably so far, the most gratifying volunteer job I had ever done.

## 6. Andrea Petryk (Business Administration - MBA)

**Statement of Interest:**

I've learned from my clients with disabilities about the experience of marginalization over the past 20+ years as Occupational Therapist. Following a social model of disability, I work on taking down barriers to participation for students with disabilities in the education system. I also bring governance experience to the position as I am currently the President of my regulatory college (ACOT). As a woman in her 40's, I've experienced a lack of representation within the School of Business and would like to use my collaborative skills to be an agent of change at UAlberta.

**Bio:**

I was born in Quebec City to anglophone parents with a Ukrainian background. Growing up in the 80's, and living through the Quebec referendum, introduced me to discrimination based on language and culture. Consequently, I am drawn to people who, by necessity, engage in acts of courage in their everyday life. I have seen first hand how people with bodies that are considered "disabled" are regularly dismissed by an able-bodied majority. My mother's dementia and death as well as my ex-husband's residual neurological changes from a stroke have brought the experience of disability into my personal life. I am now a single mother to two teenaged daughters who are awakening to the sexism that, although quiet, can limit their participation education system and the family.

**Summary Resume:**

I am a francophone occupational therapist, working in Edmonton and surrounding area in schools of the Greater North Central School Board. As a consultant, I collaborate within teams to solve problems related to educational inclusion. The barriers I work on with my clients can be social, cognitive, physical or cultural. Originally from Quebec City, I studied at McGill University and UBC and worked in Saskatchewan, Quebec, British Columbia before settling in Alberta in 2006. I have two Bachelors of Science, one in Occupational Therapy and a Master's of Science in Rehabilitation Sciences. Ready for a career change, I volunteered for the Alberta College of Occupational Therapists and became president in 2019. I began the part time Master of Business Administration Program in fall 2020 to persue a management career in the non-profit or government sector.

## 7. Simran Pherwani (Medical Science)

**Statement of Interest:**

Through serving in volunteering and leadership roles on campus and in the community during my undergraduate and graduate degrees, I strengthened critical thinking, organization, and public speaking/communication skills necessary for this role. As Co-President of the Pediatric Graduate Student Association, I aim to be a voice for Pediatric Grad students, and provide them a welcoming environment where they can create strong networks/friendships, while developing integral skills. As a Girl Guides of Canada Unit Leader for the past 5 years, I provide an inclusive and safe environment for young girls to empower them in developing self-confidence and identity. As a TA in Women and Gender Studies, I aim to help others explore social and gender issues and take a stance for what they believe in. These skills will be advantageous in my role on the GSA EDIC to represent graduate students of diverse backgrounds. My past experiences allow me to effectively build rapport with others in a culturally competent manner and in a collaborative environment, which I will bring. As a female from an East-Indian background, I wish to empower other women in their journey to pursue higher education, especially in STEM fields.

**Bio:**

Born and raised in Edmonton and being from an East-Indian heritage, I have been and am involved in multiple cultural initiatives/activities, including Indian Classical dance and volunteering with my Spiritual Centre, where I work with immigrant families to navigate community resources and teach younger students about spirituality. I graduated with a BSc in General Sciences in June/19 (Biological Science major, Sociology minor), where I was involved in multiple advocacy and wellness student groups. My strong passion for healthy living enabled me to start my own food blog where I create healthy recipes from wholesome ingredients and share them with the community. It has led me to collaborate with local non-profits, where I produce recipe videos for English language learners, teach cooking classes, and am creating a recipe ebook. Outside of the UofA, I enjoy travelling, baking, and reading.

**Summary Resume:**

I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year MSc student in the Department of Pediatrics in Dr. Lopaschuk's Lab, studying energy metabolism in heart failure. I worked in this lab for 3 summers prior to my MSc, where I completed multiple collaborative projects and

mentored a European exchange student. I also did a full year research course in another wet lab during 4<sup>th</sup> year in my undergraduate degree, further expanding my research skillset. I currently am supervising a Honors Physiology student over the year (continuation from summer). I have been involved with the Girl Guides of Canada for 12 years as a girl and 6 years as a Unit Leader; I lead a group of 25 girls 7-8 years old to earn badges in community service and educational activities while strengthening their teamwork. I am the 2020/21 Pediatric GSA Co-President where I coordinate a peer mentorship program, and organize academic skills workshops and socials. I am also a TA in the Food and Feminism course in the Department of Women and Gender Studies, where we explore food and social justice and politics from an intersectional lens.

## 8. Varshini Prakash (Computing Science)

### Statement of Interest:

Drawing inspiration from Grace Hopper, the technology pioneer, I have been an active member of Women Techmakers (WTM). We conducted events and hackathons to encourage and empower women in technology. I also worked with an NGO at India on 'Project Kinder', tutoring underprivileged children to read and speak English. Both during my Masters at UoA and after its successful completion, I intend to encourage more women into the STEM field through programs that develop female leaders by partnering with schools. I believe the skills I gained during my volunteering experience shaped me as a person and I hope this will be valuable to serve as a part of the GSA EDIC committee. As a brown woman myself, I strongly respect everyone regardless of their orientation/race/colour and I will strive to increase the representation of minorities at various levels in our society.

### Bio:

My unique experience of studying in four schools in three cities across India exposed me to adapt to diverse cultures and dynamic environments. I am first in my extended family to move out and independently pursue my undergraduate studies. I was also the first in my generation to travel abroad for an internship in Germany.

Though these may not account as achievements, considering my conservative background, being a girl, and first to initiate, I regard these as minor triumphs. My ultimate objective is to make meaningful technical and social contributions to society. My interest in Deep Learning & Artificial Intelligence and my love for research is the reason I applied for MS CS at UoA.

### Summary Resume:

I participated and was involved in diverse clubs and chapters during my undergraduation at India. We, SEDS-Projects team, created an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) capable of autonomous flight, navigation, and remote sensing for SUAS'18 held in Maryland. Operating as a multidisciplinary team helped us appreciate and complement our diverse skills.

I gained diverse research experience during my undergraduate studies. Prof. BK Tripathy and I collaborated on a chapter, "Recent Advancements in Sign Language Recognition (SLR)". My significant research experience was at Cognitive Systems Lab (CSL), a research team supervised by Prof. Tanja Schultz at the University of Bremen, Germany. At CSL, I actively worked on training an EMG-Speech system to operate on silent speech through phone-level alignments obtained using Lip Reading. Her approach in managing administrative challenges with ease inspired me to envision a future with strong female leaders.

Receiving an award for presenting a paper on 'Data Security of IoT based Healthcare System' with my team at an international conference (ICWRS & ICAFE) boosted my self-confidence. These activities helped me develop a well-rounded personality.

## 9. Nicole Rodriguez (Pediatrics)

### Statement of Interest:

I have extensive training and background in Psychology and mental health interventions as a health and wellness researcher for over six years. For example, I have worked as student group President of World University Service of Canada (WUSC) which assisted newcomers in their transition to the university campus by providing academic, financial, and social support. Additionally, I have acquired various mental health certifications as a volunteer of the UofA Social

Work Team and as a former researcher within the Department of Psychology. I have interacted with a diverse set of patients and community members as a former researcher of the Canadian Obesity Network (wherein I collaborated with community members to design a workshop on the psychosocial effects of obesity) and of the Department of Gastroenterology (where I dedicated my research to improving the health-related quality of life of patients). Furthermore, I have mentored and advised students as a former TA of Writing Studies and I founded the first-ever research peer mentoring program by partnering with Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI).

I strongly believe that my years of training in mental health interventions and mental health and wellness research will be of great addition to the GSA EDIC Committee. I hope to use my knowledge and skills to further strengthen the mandate of the GSA EDIC, which is to foster a welcoming environment and cohesive community for graduate students on campus.

**Bio:**

Hello everyone! My name is Nicole and I am a first-generation immigrant from the beautiful tropical country of the Philippines! I completed my undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences and Psychology at the University of Alberta in 2018. During my time as an undergrad, I was heavily involved in mental health advocacies and international student transition support groups (the Social Work Team, URI, WUSC, International Students Association among others). My advocacy allowed me to travel both within Canada and internationally (during pre-COVID). At the same time, I worked as a researcher in the Department of Medicine wherein I studied patient mental health extensively. Moreover, I worked at Safeway as a cashier to support myself financially as a student. Outside of school, I like to bake and spoil my puppy (a baby Corgi!).

Currently, I am pursuing an MSc in Pediatrics, studying allergies and neurodevelopment in children.

**Summary Resume:**

I am in my first year of MSc in Pediatrics. Prior to starting in the Fall, I worked with my supervisor to study the effect of postpartum depression to the gut bacteria of babies! I am still a very active mental health advocate, continuing my work with the Social Work Team in providing peer support to students on campus (I recently led a collective support group for final exams). I am an online mentor for kids at Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada.

I am so excited to be a part of the GSA EDIC committee! As a clinical and mental health researcher, I strongly believe advocating for diversity and inclusion within our campus is crucial for a thriving and healthy campus! I sincerely hope for the opportunity to collaborate with the GSA EDIC committee. Lastly, I would like to say thank you for considering my application!

## 10. Danni Xu (Nursing)

**Statement of Interest:**

The skills I have acquired through four years of working experience as a registered nurse have enabled me to look at our community with love and caring. I am very sensitive about the current pandemic situation in Alberta and how it affects different populations. I am also passionate about the health status among different ethnic groups which aligns with the mandate of GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

**Bio:**

I was born and raised in China. I came to Canada as an international student in 2011. I am fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese. I graduated from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the UofA in 2016 and started working as a registered nurse since then.

**Summary Resume:**

I am a first year master of nursing student entering into my second semester. My research focus is the experience of spinal cord injury patients within the Canadian health system. I have been working at the University of Alberta Hospital for the last four years as bedside registered nurse.

I have 10+ years of supply chain experience working for multinational companies and in charge of the logistics, purchasing and inventory management. Currently I work as the National Logistics Manager for one of the biggest importers in Canada. I have also work experience in Mexico and the USA, and briefly in Argentina and China.

I am currently volunteering as a Big Sister on their Graduation Bigs program, which is a program dedicated to help high school students graduate and pursue post-secondary education.

While living in Vancouver, I volunteered at a retirement house for a year and I was part of their wellness program, and gave assistance to their regular activities such as chair yoga, froyo socials, and as a companion for their residents.

Also, for two years, I volunteered in Minneapolis, MN, USA at The Advocates for Human Rights, a NPO dedicated to help people who are seeking for asylum and refugees' programs. My role there was to give assistance on their legal proceedings, and, as a translator and interpreter for Spanish/English services. This was probably so far, the most gratifying volunteer job I had ever done.

### 11. Lisa Zhu (Business - MBA)

**Statement of Interest:**

I have skills in active listening and collaboration, which I believe will be helpful in the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. It is important to listen to the voices of the students to ensure students feel welcomed, feel heard and feel a part of an inclusive community.

**Bio:**

My family is from Shanghai, China and I live in Edmonton with my family. I hold a degree from University of Alberta in Education and diploma in Digital Media and IT from NAIT. I enjoy art and dancing while I'm not working or studying. I volunteer for various organizations such as Fair Trade Edmonton, U of A, Apathy is Boring and Net Impact (U of A chapter). I have good time management skills and will be able to make the committee meetings.

**Summary Resume:**

I'm currently a first year MBA student who would like to specialize in social innovation. I'm a strong believer in social equity and taking an active role in social issues. I currently work in Immigration & Settlement in the Language Assessment, Referral and counselling centre. I volunteer with University of Alberta's ASSET Team and have been trained in mental health support and helping hands. I also volunteered for the Shift Lab as a Core team member, working towards anti-racism / inclusion work.

SPEAKER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**JOINT POSITION ON THE GSA BOARD (GSAB)/GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA COUNCILLOR): ONE (1) NOMINEE**

Information regarding this joint position for a GSA Councillor was circulated on three instances via email to GSA Council with a deadline of 13 January 2021. One (1) nomination was received.

The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA. As set out in GSA Board Policy (GSA Board Policy, GSA Councillor Positions on the GSA Board: Mandate F.POL.3.2), the responsibilities of the non-voting GSA Councillor positions on the GSAB are:

1. Regular attendance at GSAB meetings, with regrets and reasons submitted to the GSA President.
2. Providing a link between the elected GSA Officers and the floor of GSA Council.
3. Participating and speaking up at GSA Council when GSAB business is discussed, from the member's own unique views.

The GSA NoC is charged with selecting graduate student representatives to serve on councils, committees, and other bodies requiring such representation. The GSA NoC also leads an annual initiative in October during which graduate students interested in running for elected office are invited to attend a series of events and training sessions (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Nominating Committee, Sections E.POL.8.2 and E.POL.8.7).

**There will be an electronic vote held at the 18 January 2021 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the 18 January 2021 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday, 18 January 2021 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

- 1. Maura Roberts (Political Science)**

**Jurisdiction:**

Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Board, Section F.POL.3.1.e

The composition of the GSAB includes *"up to three (3) members of GSA Council elected by GSA Council as non-voting members."*

Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, Nominating, Section E.POL.4

*"Vacancies on the GSA NoC will be advertised by the ED or delegate and GSA Speaker. The ED or delegate and GSA Speaker will provide GSA Council with the names of nominees for the GSA NoC who meet the criteria set out in Section E.POL.5, below. These vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement."*

Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Nominating Committee, Section E.POL.5.1

The GSA NoC is composed of *"a total of five (5) graduate student members, including at least two (2) voting members of GSA Council (who may be alternates) elected by GSA Council, and three (3) additional graduate student members elected by GSA Council, as voting members."*

**The name and biography received for the one (1) nominee is BELOW on page 8.11. The biography and resume is presented as received (ie not edited).**

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE GSA BOARD AND GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSAB/GSA NoC)  
(ONE (1) VACANY FOR A GSA COUNCILLOR)  
One (1) Nominee**

**1. Maura Roberts**

<b>Statement of Interest:</b>
My work as a Communications and Projects Coordinator for the Centre for Race and Culture have equipped me with the knowledge and skills to successfully liaise between the Board and greater GSA Council membership. I am both the Vice-President External of the Political Science Graduate Student's Association, as well as one of two grad reps at Department Council. Ensuring communication between different groups is clear, frequent, and accessible are some of the goals I have in running for this position.
<b>Bio:</b>
I'm a white, queer, non-binary settler currently residing in amiskwaciwaskahikan in Treaty 6 territory. I'm a second year PhD student in the department of political science currently completing my comprehensive exams. I have spent a lot of time at the U of A - doing both my undergrad and after-degree here, so I'm fairly familiar with the university's overall structure and community (though of course these things change). I was born in Northern Ontario (Timmins to be exact) and have moved a lot throughout so-called Canada to find myself living here for the past 20 years.
<b>Summary Resume:</b>
As a grad student, I've had the ability to work both as a Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant for faculty members in my department. This experience has taught me a lot about the need for communicating between groups to ensure folks have the information they need to make good decisions. I have also worked in various non-profit positions supporting anti-racist, gender inclusive, and disability justice movements from 2012-the present. A lot of this work has focused on the question of knowledge empowerment - how do people receive the information they need to make the best decisions for themselves? As such, my professional and academic work are both a result of my personal commitments to knowledge translation in the interest of racial, gender, and disability justice.

**President  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Marc Waddingham  
Date: 15 January 2021

To my colleagues in Council,

Prior to my report, I would like to solemnly acknowledge the 8 January anniversary of the Flight PS752 tragedy, an incident that claimed the lives of ten University of Alberta community members, as well as those from the broader Edmonton community. For those who continue to be impacted by this loss, there are supports available, albeit online at this time; the GSA Executive can help point you towards services you can access if needed. The GSA has commissioned and will install a memorial plaque in Triffo Hall with the names of our members who were on PS752, an initiative spearheaded by former GSA President Fahed Elian, who invested a significant amount of energy and effort towards ensuring the victims were honoured.

Onto our usual items, we have addressed the latest strategic workplan update, including an overview of completed and ongoing initiatives by the executive team. With four short months remaining, our attention turns to wrapping up a selection of projects, initiating new opportunities for next year's executive team, and seizing final opportunities should they arise. From my portfolio, some key items include tuition and fee negotiations and the Alberta 2030 sector wide review, as well as preparations to onboard the newly elected officers.

For tuition and fees, the news is mixed. While the rebate system for thesis-based students will be in effect for students admitted prior to 2020, matching their tuition increases to the Academic Price Index, students admitted in 2020 and onwards will see the exceptional 7% tuition increases levied annually until 2023. For academically-employed graduate students, the impact will be mitigated due to a commensurate increase to the award component of their stipends, however those students not subject to the protections of the GSA collective agreement will see the full brunt of these increases.

Last term, I asked if University administrators would consider including new thesis-based graduate students into the rebate program after factoring in a 7% tuition increase over the previous year's tuition, a reasonable ask given that the administration has previously acknowledged that thesis-based students are not a major source of tuition revenue for the University. This request was denied, and we were presented with a contradictory account of the rationale for this system. While we will continue to advocate for newly admitted students to be included in the rebate program up to 2023, net a 7% increase applied to their first year, it appears that we have little negotiating advantage at this time to make this a reality. Otherwise, other aspects of the tuition negotiations from last year will remain consistent.

In addition, the Students' Union put forward a proposal in December to hire a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator, with funds being provided via a modest increase to the Health and Wellness Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee (MNIF), at a maximum of five dollars per year. We feel that this is an

important area for the GSA to support on campus and a way to help grow the University's response to these issues. If you have concerns with a modest increase to this MNIF for these purposes, please let me know.

Finally, AB2030 appears to be approaching its conclusion, with a number of townhalls taking place this month to close out the "consultation" prior to the summit announcement. Current indications of the policy directives on offer are concerning: tuition deregulation, re-imposition of contractual performance-based funding, and sector-level boards are but a few of the potential negative outcomes. While the Ministry of Advanced Education has made much to-do about research commercialization and work-integrated learning, there are precious few details on how the government intends to address these issues, save for the modest investment made into the MITACS internship program. Thankfully, we have seen unprecedented levels of student pushback on the ministry from all sectors, and we hope to capitalize on that momentum going into the AB2030 Summit Announcement.

I am glad to take any questions or comments related to my recent activity.

Kind regards,  
Marc Waddingham, President 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 December 2020 and 18 January 2021 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note that the GSA office was closed for the holiday season from 21 December 2020 until 1 January 2021. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

14 December	Meeting re Dentistry/Pharmacy Building Project
15 December	Meeting with UAlberta Associations
16 December	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
16 December	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)
18 December	Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG)
18 December	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Advocacy and Outreach Committee
28 December	International Students' Association (ISA)
6 January	Meeting with E Macdonald, Vice-President (External Relations)
7 January	Meeting with F Glanfield, Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research)
13 January	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC)
13 January	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
13 January	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
15 January	Monthly Meeting with Graduate Student Collective
15 January	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)

**GSA Board  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Marc Waddingham, President  
Date: 15 January

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 12 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council).

**16 December 2020 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan Change of Coverage Report Fall 2020 and Annual Claims Report 2019-2020; COVID-19 Update; and Meeting Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached Change of Coverage Report Fall 2020, as prepared by Studentcare. MW **MOVED**. SR Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached Annual Claims Report 2019-2020, as prepared by Studentcare. MW **MOVED**. SR Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**6 January 2021 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

COVID-19 Update; Establishment of a GSA Labour Union Fund; GSA Board Strategic Work Plan: Update to GSA Council; and Meeting Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None to report.

**13 January 2021 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

Health Science Inquiry: Request for an External Grant; COVID-19 Update; GSA Board Strategic Work Plan: Update to GSA Council; and Meeting Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **APPROVE** an external grant of \$350 to support Health Science Inquiry, as requested in the attached letter from B Lake (Health Science Inquiry Editor-in-Chief) and associated sponsorship package. UN **MOVED**. SP Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**Vice-President Academic  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sachiketha Reddy Paspula  
Date: 15 January 2021

Dear Council Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed the winter break and I wish you all the best in the upcoming 11 months of 2021. In the past month, I have attended several meetings, and I am going to highlight some important ones in this report:

- I attended the General Faculties' Council Executive (GFC EXEC) Committee, at which Tammy Hopper spoke about updates to the GFC Programs Committee. Provost Steven Dew made a proposal to add a discussion item regarding asynchronous class formats and teachings to the GFC meeting agenda for 25 January. A motion to GFC regarding the development of an institutional Clean Air Strategy (which would also go to the Board of Governors) was also proposed. It was noted that although 95 Canadian universities are smoke free, the U of A is not and the implementation of a smoke free policy needs to be treated as an ongoing process of enforcement. A survey was circulated and collected around 3518 responses in which 40.2% of respondents indicated that secondhand smoke or vapor bothers them "very much" and the community strongly favors some form of additional restrictions with 49% favoring permitting smoking and vaping only in designated locations.
- President Marc Waddingham and I had a couple of meetings with Dr. Brooke Milne, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR). We discussed course auditing and tuition. In the upcoming months, we would like to work on the availability of synchronous and asynchronous course material for graduate students.
- I attended the Graduate Program Support Team (GPST) meeting, which is a standing advisory committee acting under the authority of the GFC Programs Committee. The GPST informally endorses and/or recommends changes to move forward for formal consideration by GFC and other governance bodies.
- I attended the FGSR Policy Review Committee (FGSR PRC) meeting, in which the committee discussed the inclusion of language regarding program deferrals in offer letters. If a student defers their program, a new offer letter will be issued to the student with all the updated information including the new program start date. Information about funding as it relates to program deferrals will also be included.

If you have any concerns about this report/concerns regarding any academic related issue, feel free to reach me at [gsavpaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpaca@ualberta.ca) and I will be more than happy to answer your questions.

Regards,  
Sachiketha Reddy Paspula, Vice-President Academic 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 December 2020 and 18 January 2021 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note that the GSA office was closed for the holiday season from 21 December 2020 until 1 January 2021. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

16 December	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
17 December	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Graduate Program Support Team (FGSR GPST)
6 January	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Policy Review Committee (FGSR PRC)
11 January	General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC)
13 January	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC)
13 January	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
13 January	Faculty Excellence Awards Adjudication Committee
14 January	General Faculties Council Programs Committee GFC PC
14 January	Council on Student Affairs (COSA)
15 January	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)
18 January	GSA Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus

**Vice-President External  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Anas Fassih  
Date: 15 January 2021

Colleagues,

Happy New Year and I hope you are all in good shape. The last month was a little quiet because of the Winter break, but here are some of the important updates in the VP External portfolio:

- On 16 December and 7 January I met with Public Interest Alberta (PIA) regarding their Post-Secondary Education Campaign that the GSA contributed to financially and which I have been helping to plan with PIA. The campaign was launched on 11 January 2021. Posts are available on social media via their hashtag: #stopPSEcuts. The campaign website is <https://www.stoppsecuts.ca/>. The main asks of the campaign center around the following: a) to stop further cuts to post-secondary budgets; b) to stop soaring tuition increases; c) to remove performance-based funding metrics; and d) to immediately freeze staff lay-offs, return to the hiring of tenure-track professors, and to regulate employment among sessional instructors. Other messages of the campaign focus on seeing learning conditions as working conditions and foregrounding the economic impact of cuts to institutional budgets and a performance-based funding model. I attended all of the meetings relating to the campaign and participated in drafting its messages to ascertain that the interests of graduate students were reflected in the campaign messaging and advertising.
- On 16 December I attended Advocacy and Outreach Committee Chair Training with the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC). The discussion focused on how to improve our outreach and increase our presence on social media as an effective tool in our external advocacy during the pandemic. I also recommended to Brandon Simmons, ab-GPAC Executive Director, to continue our submissions to the provincial government to re-evaluate its decisions regarding post-secondary education.
- On 5 January I attended an Executive Committee Meeting with ab-GPAC. We continued our discussion regarding the renewal of the ab-GPAC website. We also brainstormed how to respond to the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs report, which we anticipate will be released in February. I will keep you posted on the release and ab-GPAC's efforts to respond.

Feel free to reach out via email ([gsa.vpexternal@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.vpexternal@ualberta.ca)) or ask in the GSA Council meeting should you have any questions.

Thank you!

Anas Fassih, Vice-President External 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 December 2020 and 18 January 2021 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note that the GSA office was closed for the holiday season from 21 December 2020 until 1 January 2021. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

16 December	Public Interest Alberta (PIA) Post-Secondary Education Campaign Meeting
16 December	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Advocacy and Outreach Committee Chair Training
17 December	Infrastructure and Operations Planning Team
18 December	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Advocacy and Outreach Committee
5 January	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Executive Committee
7 January	Public Interest Alberta (PIA) Post-Secondary Education Campaign Meeting
15 January	Monthly Meeting with Graduate Student Collective
15 January	Meeting re Isolation Accommodation Program (IAP)
15 January	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)

**Vice-President Labour  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Umesh Nimmathi  
Date: 15 January 2021

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope that everyone had a great break and I want to wish you a happy new year ahead. I have attended a couple of meetings and here are some of the highlights:

**GSA Collective Bargaining:** Just after the winter break, we met with the University team and we are in discussions to conclude negotiations. All the updates regarding negotiations will be shared with current Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs) in the AEGS Newsletter. We have circulated nine editions of this newsletter since May 2020. We are also planning to host couple of Town Halls later in February to discuss the changes in the new collective agreement before sending it forward for a ratification vote to all current AEGSs.

**Bill 47:** I attended a seminar on Bill 47 and Psychological Health and Safety hosted by Field Law. The host explained about how Bill 47 will affect Occupational Health and Safety legislation. The new bill does not come into effect until proclamation (1 September 2021). Work refusals will continue to be a worker right, but must be based on undue hazard (which are hazards that pose a serious and immediate threat) instead of the broader 'dangerous conditions,' which is the current legislation. Another key change proposed change is that there will no longer be a requirement for a Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee (JWSHSC) to be involved in the process. More information on these changes can be found [here](#).

Finally, if any graduate student comes to you regarding CA issues, harassment, or safety and security issues, please email me at [gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca).

Best wishes,  
Umesh Nimmathi, Vice-President Labour 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 December 2020 and 18 January 2021 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note that the GSA office was closed for the holiday season from 21 December 2020 until 1 January 2021. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

16 December	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
17 December	Bill 47 and Psychological Health and Safety Webinar
7 January	GSA Negotiating Team Meeting
8 January	GSA Collective Agreement Bargaining Meeting
11 January	Meeting with a Graduate Student
15 January	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)
18 January	GSA Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus

**Vice-President Student Services  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sridhar Parasharamatham  
Date: 15 January 2021

Dear Council Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you all had some time off and got away from school and work stress. I hope this year is full of positive energy and you accomplish all the personal and career goals you set for this year. I am happy to share my activities and to give you a brief update of the meetings I attended in the last month.

Firstly, I attended the Suicide Prevention Framework Steering Committee where a review of progress on each of the five themes addressed in the framework was discussed. In terms of Education, Awareness, and Communication, there was discussion around evaluation of suicide prevention training and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training, consultation with stakeholders, and importance of communications in the sub-committee's recommendations. In terms of policy review, the intent is to provide feedback to policyholders on campus and then follow-up over time for progress on policy recommendation implementation.

Secondly, I attended a couple of Student Equity Survey meetings where a number of question blocks that can be included were developed, such as country of birth, ethnicity, living arrangements, and parental educational attainment, and there was a broad discussion around these topics before including them in the final survey.

Thirdly, I attended the Graduate Collective's Winter Semester Discussion to decide on the January topic for the Graduate Collective Tea Time. We finalized the topic to be 'Creating a "Hygge" Winter'. It involves talking with others about incorporating the concept of "Hygge" (pronounced "hoo-ga") into your life to combat the oncoming cold and dark of the winter season.

Lastly, I attended a meeting regarding e-scooters on campus. It is recommended that the pilot program be extended for another year, until Fall 2021 when there are more people on campus. It was also suggested to add two more nesting sites on campus for the pilot. There was also discussion around what seasons to operate in. For winter use, there would be more issues such as safety and snow clearing that would be an added expense. As the City of Edmonton does have winter use, it might be best to align with them. For the City, if there is a snowfall, scooters are taken off the road until the city gives the okay that the roads are cleared.

Feel free to reach out to me for any comments/concerns regarding this report or any other specific issue you want to discuss regarding services to students at [gsavpsse@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpsse@ualberta.ca).

Sridhar Parasharamatham, Vice-President Student Services 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 December 2020 and 18 January 2021 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). Please note that the GSA office was closed for the holiday season from 21 December 2020 until 1 January 2021. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

15 December	Student Equity Survey Meeting
16 December	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
16 December	Suicide Prevention Framework Steering Committee
18 December	Graduate Collectives Winter Semester Discussion
7 January	Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-Committee on Academic Issues
8 January	Student Equity Survey
11 January	Meeting re e-Scooters on Campus
14 January	Edmonton Regional Post-Secondary Mental Health Committee (ERPSMHC)
14 January	Campus Food Bank Board Meeting
15 January	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)

**Chief Returning Officer  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Michael Huang  
Date: 15 January 2021

Election time is almost upon us! I have been working with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) since October 2020, as noted by Jennifer Bertrand (Chair of the GSA ERC), to ensure we are ready for the 2021 GSA General Election and 2021 GSA Referenda.

The timeline for the 2021 General Election and the 2021 GSA referenda was approved by myself on the recommendation of the GSA ERC. The full timeline is available on the GSA website [here](#). Below are some highlights:

**Monday, 25 January 2021:** The nomination period for the General Election opens and the campaign registration period for Referenda opens

**Tuesday, 9 February 2021 at 12 PM MST:** Nominations close for the General Election and Referenda

**Monday, 22 February 2021 at 12 PM MST:** GSA General Election Candidates Forum – Via Zoom

**Tuesday, 23 February 2021 at 10 AM MST to Thursday, 25 February 2021 at 10 AM MST:** Voting period for the General Election and Referenda

I would like to ask all GSA Council members to invite their colleagues to participate in the GSA General Election by attending the GSA General Election Candidates Forum on 22 February at noon (the Forum will also be livestreamed, and a recording will be made available on the GSA website for those unable to attend) and by voting on 23 February through 25 February. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at [gsacroff@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsacroff@ualberta.ca).

Thank you,

Michael Huang, Chief Returning Officer 2020-2021

**GSA Nominating Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Kenzie Gordon  
Date: 15 January 2021

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](mailto:mlgordon@ualberta.ca) or GSA Elections Coordinator Monica Brzak at [gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca).

### GSA Standing Committees

**1) GSA Appeals and Complaints Committee (GSA ACB) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 12 January 2021. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

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

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

**3) GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) (One (1) GSA Member Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

**4) GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC) (Seven (7) and Up to Nine (9) GSA Member Positions)**

Information regarding the positions for seven (7) and up to nine (9) GSA members was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **Eleven (11) nominations were received (in accordance with GSA Policy, the GSA EDIC Chair, GSA EDIC Vice-Chair, and the Chair of the GSA NoC agreed that the GSA EDIC's membership could be increased to eleven (11)); there will be an electronic vote (see Item 8 – Nominee for the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee).**

**5) GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) (Three (3) GSA Councillor Positions)**

Information regarding the position for three (3) GSA Councillors was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **No nominations were received; these vacancies will be advertised again.**

**6) GSA Board (GSAB) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **One (1) nomination was received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 8 – Nominee for the GSA Board).**

**7) GSA Board (GSAB) and GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) (One (1) Joint GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **One (1) nomination was received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 8 – Nominee for the GSA Board and GSA Nominating Committee).**

### External

**8) Student Library Advisory Committee (SLAC) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **No nominations were received. This vacancy will not be advertised again.**

**9) Graduate Student Support Team (GSPT) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 11 and 18 December 2020 and 8 January 2021 with a nomination deadline of 13 January 2021. **No nominations were received. This vacancy will not be advertised again.**

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2021 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Jennifer Bertrand  
Date: 15 January 2021

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) met on 8 January 2021 to continue planning the 2021 GSA General Election and 2021 GSA Referenda.

At this meeting, members reviewed and recommended to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) the 2021 GSA General Election All-Candidates Meeting and Meeting of the Campaign Representatives Meeting agenda and also discussed additional restrictions around campaigning owing to provincial health directives related to COVID-19 (the CRO will be issuing a directive that no on-campus or in-person campaigning is to be done this year). The GSA ERC also discussed various issues related to the 2021 GSA General Election Forum.

The GSA ERC will next meet on 22 January 2021 to continue the process of planning the 2021 GSA General Election and associated GSAP and U-Pass referenda.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Bertrand, Chair of the GSA ERC

**Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 January 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Courtney Thomas  
Date: 15 January 2021

Dear GSA Council Members,

As reported last month, the office, following a meeting of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) and with another scheduled for next week, is beginning to prepare the 2021-2022 GSA operating budget. The budget will come before GSA Council in February. We remain in a good financial position but the GSA BFC has advised that it will be prudent for the GSA to continue to proceed with caution in the current fiscal year as we continue to grapple with the ripple effects associated with COVID-19 prevention measures. This will be reflected in the budget, which also increases funding for a variety of student services and supports. When the operating budget comes forward, it will be accompanied by the most recent term financial reports so that GSA Council members can be updated on where the organization's finances currently sit. A Budget 101 session will also be offered in advance of the February meeting.

We are also continuing work with the Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, and members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee to prepare for the 2021 GSA General Election and associated referenda which will happen in February. In advance of the General Election nomination period opening, the office will be hosting additional Discover Governance sessions in January for those interested in running for elected office. Some of those have already occurred but if you were unable to attend, please let me know and we can arrange for a separate session to be held.

With the start of a new term, we have recirculated the online GSA orientation and are also coordinating a hard copy mailout of GSA Planners for those graduate students who have expressed interest. Finally, the office has been accepting applications for the GSA Recognition Awards (the deadline to receive applications is today). We will then commence with supporting the GSA Awards Selection Committee as it adjudicates applications.

As always, the detailed weekly reports from the management team to the GSA Board are attached for your review and I hope everyone had a restful holiday break.

Best,  
Courtney Thomas, Executive Director

## Management Report to the GSA Board, 16 December 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 9 December 2020:

### Strategic

- Preparing various items for GSA Board and GSA Council set to feature on agendas after the holiday break.
- Developing a liability waiver for registered GSA Graduate Student Groups at the request of Student Group Services.
- Drafting communications about the GSA's work with the academic restructuring initiative.
- Preparing draft 2021-2022 operating budget scenarios for review by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.
- Analyzing changes to the *Labour Relations Code* and the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* enacted by Bill 32, and how they will impact the GSA's work as a labour union for academically-employed graduate students – awaiting a legal opinion (likely to arrive before the holiday break and to possibly be followed by a lot of intensive work if elements of the GSA's operations need to be restructured).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including the development of a restricted fund to support the GSA's activities as a labour union, including strike actions (the fund is proposed to be started with an initial contribution from the GSA's operating budget, followed by a vote to academically-employed graduate students concerning the payment of a union due (a percentage of the salary component of stipends)) and a briefing note to academically-employed graduate students will be circulated shortly. Also assessing strategies to build engagement through a steward network (conversations with the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) are ongoing; the committee met last week).

### Operations

- Making preparations for the January meeting of GSA Council and circulation of meeting reports for the cancelled 14 December meeting.
- Opening of the application period for GSA Recognition Awards, associated training of GSA Awards Selection Committee members, and hosting a 101 session for interested applicants.
- Updating orientation material for the start of the winter term.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (advertised via the newsletter and directly to GSA Council), the GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (advertised the newsletter), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the Student Library Advisory Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), and the Graduate Program Support Team (advertised directly to GSA Council).
- Facebook = 1,587 likes (up 4 from 9 December) and 1,728 followers (up 31 from 9 December); Facebook posts reached 329 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 14. Twitter = 1,121 followers (up 3 from 9 December); our tweets earned 3,900 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 557 followers (up 2 from 9 December); Instagram posts reached 279 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 October (not accepting applications for travel outside the province; online costs accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 October; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 October. Next funding periods opens 1 January 2021. All funding is being 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 (a transfer of an additional \$200,000 will be made before the end of the year).

### Management Report to the GSA Board, 6 January 2021

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 16 December 2020:

#### Strategic

- Working on a more thorough land acknowledgement statement with feedback from the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association and Florence Glanfield (Vice-Provost, Indigenous Programming and Research), who helped to draft the University's land acknowledgement.
- Developing a liability waiver for registered GSA Graduate Student Groups at the request of Student Group Services (working on a second draft after receiving feedback from the Office of the Dean of Students).
- Drafting and reviewing the most recent Board SWP update to GSA Council.
- Preparing the draft 2021-2022 operating budget following a review of various scenarios by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including the development of a restricted fund to support the GSA's activities as a labour union, including strike actions (the fund is proposed to be started with an initial contribution from the GSA's operating budget, followed by a vote to academically-employed graduate students concerning the payment of a union due (a percentage of the salary component of stipends)). Also assessing strategies to build engagement through a steward network (conversations with the GSA Labour Relations Committee are ongoing).

#### Operations

- Organizing the first mailing of meeting materials for the January meeting of GSA Council.
- Receipt of applications for GSA Recognition Awards.
- Processing requests for GSA Planners to be mailed to individual graduate students.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (advertised via the newsletter and directly to GSA Council), the GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (advertised the newsletter), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the Student Library Advisory Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), and the Graduate Program Support Team (advertised directly to GSA Council).
- Facebook = 1,595 likes (up 8 from 16 December) and 1,736 followers (up 8 from 16 December); Facebook posts reached 186 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 3. Twitter = 1,123 followers (up 2 from 16 December); our tweets earned 3,900 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 561 followers (up 4 from 16 December); Instagram posts reached 306 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 January (not accepting applications for travel outside the province; online costs accepted) (59 applications funded and \$12,386 disbursed in the previous period); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 January (51 applications funded and \$81,000 disbursed in the previous period); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs (137 applications funded and \$325,548 since 1 April 2020; includes funds transferred to the University for COVID-related supplementary bursaries); GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 January (4 applications funded and \$2,050 disbursed in the previous period). Next funding periods opens 1 April 2021. All funding is being 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, 13 January 2021

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 6 January 2021:

#### Strategic

- Preparing for the opening of the nomination period and campaign registration periods for the GSA General Election and associated referenda (the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee met on Friday and will meet again next week to continue the planning process).
- Hosting Discover Governance sessions for those interested in running for elected positions.
- Finalizing a liability waiver for registered GSA Graduate Student Groups at the request of Student Group Services.
- Amending the most recent Board SWP update to GSA Council in advance of Friday's mailing of meeting material.
- Preparing the draft 2021-2022 operating budget following a review of various scenarios by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and drafting associated materials.
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement (negotiations remain ongoing) and assessing strategies to build engagement through a steward network (conversations with the GSA Labour Relations Committee are ongoing).

#### Operations

- Organizing the second mailing of meeting materials for the January meeting of GSA Council.
- Receipt of applications for GSA Recognition Awards (deadline is on Friday and the adjudication process will begin shortly thereafter).
- Planning upcoming Brunch and Learn sessions.
- Processing requests for GSA Planners to be mailed to individual graduate students (will be mailing out around 50 copies).
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee: vacancies on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (advertised via the newsletter and directly to GSA Council), the GSA Governance Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (advertised via the newsletter), the GSA Board (advertised directly to GSA Council), the Images of Research Selection Committee (advertised via the newsletter), the Student Library Advisory Committee (advertised directly to GSA Council), and the Graduate Program Support Team (advertised directly to GSA Council).
- Facebook = 1,603 likes (up 8 from 6 January) and 1,745 followers (up 9 from 6 January); Facebook posts reached 132 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 16. Twitter = 1,124 followers (up 1 from 6 January); our tweets earned 382 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 571 followers (up 10 from 6 January); Instagram posts reached 222 users last week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period starts 1 April (not accepting applications for travel outside the province; online costs accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period starts 1 April; GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period starts 1 April. 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.