

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

[Item 1: Monday, November 18, 2024 MINUTES](#)

[Item 2: GSA President Report](#)

[Item 2a: GSA Board Report](#)

[Item 2b: GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report](#)

[Item 2c: GSA Governance Committee Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 3: Vice-President Academic Report](#)

[Item 4: Vice-President Student Life Report](#)

[Item 4a: GSA EDI Committee Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 5: Vice-President Student Services Report](#)

[Item 6: Vice-President External Report](#)

[Item 7: Associate Vice-President Labour Report](#)

[Item 7a: GSA Labour Relations Committee Report](#)

[Item 8: GSA Senator Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 9: GSA Speaker Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 10: Chief Returning Officer Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 11: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report](#)

[Item 12: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report - None at this time](#)

[Item 13: GSA Management Report](#)

Item 1: Monday, November 18, 2024 MINUTES

**Held in-person in 2-100 Council Chambers**

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

*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, Anishinaabe, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux, 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.*

*The GSA's confidentiality practices are outlined below and can be summarized as follows: information arising in a closed session of GSA Council or a committee, information about identifiable individuals, or information otherwise marked or indicated as confidential, needs to stay that way. Discussions that are off the record or confidential often involve personal information, information on negotiations, business information, or other information of a similar nature.*

**GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:**  
Amirah Nazir in the Chair  
**GSA Deputy Speaker:**  
None at this time

**CLOSED SESSION:**  
Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Council-Elected Officials:**

- GSA Deputy Speaker: Amirah Nazir
- Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi
- Senator: Ola Mabrouk

**Departmental Councillors:**

1. Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences
2. Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology

<p><b>GSA Executives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSA President: Haseeb Arshad</li> <li>● VP Academic: Rija Kamran</li> <li>● VP Student Life: Benjamin Kucher</li> <li>● VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal</li> <li>● VP External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</li> <li>● AVP Labour: Muneeb Raja</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors-At-Large:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair</li> <li>2. Georga Boffen Yordanov</li> <li>3. Andres Dorado Solarte</li> <li>4. Christine Hymanyk</li> <li>5. Ibrahim Khodabocus</li> </ol> <p><b>Standing Committee Chairs &amp; Vice-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair</li> <li>● Tianxu Wang, NoC Vice-Chair</li> </ul> <p><b>Guests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Winson Co &amp; Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors</li> <li>● Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost, Students &amp; Enrollment</li> <li>● Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, Provost &amp; VP Academic</li> <li>● Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost &amp; Dean FGPS</li> <li>● Darrell Dancause, AVP Finance, Procurement and Planning</li> <li>● Norma Rodenburg, Vice-Provost &amp; Registrar, Office of the Registrar</li> <li>● Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI</li> <li>● Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI</li> <li>● Michael Janz, City Councillor</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Kiera Greenaway, Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</li> <li>4. Cassandra Baragar, Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders</li> <li>5. Michelle Bey, Dentistry</li> <li>6. Alissa Watson, Drama</li> <li>7. Nathaniel Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences</li> <li>8. Devinder Pal Singh, Economics</li> <li>9. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics &amp; Religion</li> <li>10. Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology</li> <li>11. Dalia Cristerna, Linguistics</li> <li>12. Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology &amp; Immunology</li> <li>13. Mohamadali Tofigh, Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>14. Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience</li> <li>15. Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics &amp; Gynecology</li> <li>16. Raj Somasundaram, Pediatrics</li> <li>17. Fulin Wang, Pharmacology</li> <li>18. Indiresch Akil Mangra-Bala, Pharmacy &amp; Pharmaceutical Sciences</li> <li>19. Daniel Carleton, Physics</li> <li>20. Grace Essuman, Physiology</li> <li>21. Savannah Ribeiro, Political Science</li> <li>22. Emilie Desnoyers, Psychiatry</li> <li>23. Cheryl Pan, Psychology</li> <li>24. Samantha Knapp, Sociology</li> </ol> <p><b>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chirag Thakur, Business MBA</li> <li>2. Nancy Wang, Business PhD</li> <li>3. Caley Campkin, Chemistry</li> <li>4. Zeynep Oyku Ozturk, Educational Policy Studies</li> </ol>
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	<p>5. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics &amp; Religion</p> <p>6. Jerzy Beaumont, Library &amp; Information Studies</p>
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:02	-	Land Acknowledgement	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	1	<p>Approval of the Agenda for November 18, 2024 GSA Council</p> <p>Arseniy Belosokhov brought forward an amendment motion: the GSA Nominating Committee moves to add a Candidate Q&amp;A session as a discussion item during the GSA Speaker election segment.</p> <p>AB MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Agenda PASSED unanimously.</p>	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	2.0-2.10	<p>Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of October 21, 2024 GSA Council</p> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED. One abstained.</p>	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
2 min	3	<p>Changes in GSA Council Membership</p> <p>Incoming Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jerzy Beaumont, Library &amp; Information Studies Alternate</li> <li>● Nancy Wong, Business PhD</li> <li>● Mohamadali Tofigh, Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>● Daniel Carleton, Physics</li> <li>● Colin Hamnett, History, Classics &amp; Religion</li> </ul>	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
	4	Announcements	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None at this time</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b>PRESENTATION ITEMS</b></p> <p>A. RSM Audit Report Presented by Winson Co &amp; Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The audit for the year ended March 31, 2024, went smoothly, and a clean audit opinion was issued. The focus of this presentation was on the financial statements, with no detailed discussion of the audit itself, which was reviewed by the GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee. L. Pfeiffer made a point of thanking the GSA Office for their work on the budget.</li> <li>Balance Sheet Overview:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total assets decreased from \$7.7 million in 2023 to \$5.8 million in 2024, mainly due to a reduction in cash, which dropped by \$1.9 million. This decrease was primarily driven by the settlement of a significant health and dental plan payable balance from the previous year.</li> <li>Current assets were down to \$2.5 million (from \$4.4 million), while restricted investments remained stable at approximately \$3.3 million.</li> <li>Liabilities, including accounts payable and deferred contributions, were in line with the previous year, with a notable decrease in health and dental plan payable, which was settled during the year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The organization's current ratio improved to 2:1 (from 1.3:1), indicating stronger liquidity. Net assets increased slightly, from \$4.4 million to \$4.6 million.</li> <li>Statement of Operations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenues for the year were slightly lower at \$2.3 million (down from \$2.4 million), with a decrease in the Graduate Student Support Fund. However, overall revenues remained consistent year-over-year.</li> <li>Expenses dropped to \$2.16 million from \$2.3 million, reflecting effective cost management in line with revenue changes.</li> <li>The organization ended the year with a surplus of \$179,000, an improvement from the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	W. Co & L. Pfeiffer	

		<p>\$119,000 surplus in the prior year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investment income increased significantly to \$360,000 (from \$208,000), and unrealized gains on restricted investments were \$82,000, marking a positive \$140,000 swing from the previous year.</li> <li>● However, the health and dental plan continued to incur losses, totaling \$445,000 (up from \$257,000 in 2023), as the organization continued to subsidize these costs for students.</li> <li>● Net Assets and Cash Flow:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total net assets were \$4.6 million, with \$1.7 million in unrestricted funds and \$2.9 million in internally restricted funds.</li> <li>● Cash flow from operations was negative at \$2.05 million, primarily due to the payment of two years' worth of health and dental plan costs. However, this is expected to normalize in the coming year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Short-term investments are primarily in GICs, while restricted investments are a mix of mutual funds and GICs.</li> <li>● Deferred contributions increased to \$1 million, reflecting additional grants received and spent during the year.</li> <li>● The internally restricted net assets are earmarked for specific purposes, with detailed notes outlining the funds' uses and changes.</li> <li>● Detailed schedules provide further insight into revenue and expense breakdowns, with a focus on salaries and benefits, which increased to \$611,000 (from \$598,000).</li> <li>● Overall, the organization managed its finances prudently, achieving a surplus and maintaining healthy liquidity despite some challenges with health and dental plan costs.</li> <li>● I. Khodabocus, CAL, asked a question regarding GSA investments being actively managed as mutual funds and certificates instead of load indexes. L. Pfeiffer suggested forwarding the question to the GSA BFC for investment questions; L. Moodley, GSA ED, stated he will bring forward this question to the BFC.</li> </ul>	
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		<p style="text-align: center;">B. Tuition Discussion</p> <p>Presented by Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost Students &amp; Enrollment; Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, Provost &amp; VP Academic; Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost &amp; Dean FGPS; Darrell Dancause, AVP Finance, Procurement and Planning; Norma Rodenburg, Vice-Provost &amp; Registrar, Office of the Registrar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● M. Padfield detailed the previous Tuition Town Halls held: the GSA held a town hall on November 7. M. Padfield detailed an additional town hall for November 26, which is being rescheduled to the second week of January to allow for a combination town hall event with the Students' Union. M. Padfield detailed the consultation procedure as part of the university's formal consultation mechanism via the Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC), which meets several times, is mandated by government, and is conducted with both the Students Union, the Graduate Students' Association, and the Council on Student Affairs. They will also be attending the International Students' Association at the invitation of the SU. Any additional questions can and will be answered at the next GSA/SU Tuition Town Hall in January or via email.</li> <li>● M. Padfield explained that tuition fees support various aspects of the university's operations, including salaries and benefits (comprising about 57% of total costs), maintenance, utilities, research support, and library services. Additionally, approximately 5.5% of tuition revenue (\$23.2 million) goes toward student financial aid, which benefits both undergraduate and graduate students.</li> <li>● The university is facing financial pressures due to stagnant government funding, which has not received any inflationary increases. The domestic tuition cap of 2% creates a \$3 million revenue gap, and rising costs (such as salary and benefit increases, inflation, and an increase in student numbers) are adding additional financial strain.</li> <li>● The university's revenue sources include a declining operating grant from the Alberta government (down by</li> </ul>	<p>M. Padfield, T. Raivio, K. Brough, D. Dancause, N. Rodenburg</p>
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		<p>\$222 million over the last three years), which is not anticipated to receive any inflationary increases. Additionally, the university receives some revenue from investment income and other restricted sources, such as Tri-Council funding, though these funds are not available for general operations. The unrestricted investment income is projected to be around \$30 million in the coming year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tuition Proposals for 2025/26: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Domestic Students: The proposal includes a 2% increase in tuition for all programs, while the need-based financial aid offset will remain at \$8.5 million, without any increase.</li> <li>● International Students: For undergraduate programs, the proposal is a 10% tuition increase, with 8.55% of the revenue being directed toward scholarships, awards, and bursaries. For graduate course-based programs, the tuition increase is also 10%, with the same 8.55% offset for financial aid. The university is also exploring a tuition deposit system for these programs to allow for refunds if student visas are denied or other reasons outside of control prevent their attendance.</li> <li>● International Thesis-Based Programs: There are ongoing discussions about the appropriate tuition rates for international thesis-based programs. A working group is reviewing funding models to ensure fairness, especially considering the contributions that international students make to research and teaching and the guaranteed minimum funding program. The advisory working group will submit recommendations in December, which will inform future proposals for these programs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● A. Belosokhov, Councillor-At-Large and GSA Nominating Committee Chair, asked after projections of graduate students regarding tuition increases compared to income, particularly within the context of the growing use of the Campus Food Bank. M. Padfield stated that</li> </ul>	
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		<p>the purpose of the working group will be to look into sustainability of and balance between tuition and graduate student livelihood. She stated that this is the importance of working on a minimum funding level for programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● T. Raivio committed to continuing work on minimum funding as a priority in the face of rising living, inflation and tuition costs.</li> <li>● S. Ribeiro, Political Science Councillor, asked to what extent the university has looked at adjusting the investment portfolio to realize more gains on investment to match rising costs. D. Dancause explained that they have to hold a reserve in case of a market drop. The portfolio is examined every three to five years; they are examining the portfolio makeup and performance this year via an external party to make recommendations to the Board Investment Committee, which then is forwarded to the Board of Governors.</li> <li>● S. Ribeiro also asked after the data regarding currently enrolled students experiencing homelessness, food insecurity or seeking mental health services due to increasing financial burden, and how this data will change with the proposed tuition increases. M. Padfield explained that the university captures utilization data for counselling and clinical services, they track applications for financial aid, and the CFB shares utilization data and demographics with them. She argued that a straight cause-effect conclusion of financial pressures as a consequence of tuition cannot be assumed. A moderate increase in the utilization of bursaries has been noted through their tracking. She highlighted that bursaries are not competitive, so any qualified applicant receives a bursary. This is the importance of having T. Raivio leading the review to consider alternate viewpoints to ensure the affordability of tuition and graduate programs in general. M. Padfield stated that the university monitors the factors impacting students' ability to afford their education, in the context of total enrollment. Some programs have pressure points, while others don't, so it's important to track usage rates and</li> </ul>	
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		<p>program demographics to connect services to students in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, asked after the procedure for international admissions in relation to the tuition deposit program, and whether the university has consulted with the IRCC to ensure balance between offer letters and attendance rates. M. Padfield stated that the university is in regular communication with the IRCC via many departments to ensure they understand the reality for students. The IRCC has controlled access to student study permits through the provincial attestation letter requirement process. The university validates the application and then supports the student with the visa application to maximize chances of success. She stated that the university has been strongly advocating against the rejection criteria and rates for international study permits, as they have been higher than usual and for unpredictable reasons. She hopes that the IRCC will take their recommendations and going forward, the criteria and results will improve.</li> <li>● M. Padfield encouraged further questions to be forwarded to <a href="mailto:Melissa.padfield@ualberta.ca">Melissa.padfield@ualberta.ca</a></li> </ul> <p>C. EDI Action Plan Presentation Presented by Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI, and Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● B. Kucher, VP Student Life, introduced the guests</li> <li>● C. Smith presented the draft of a new action plan aimed at creating a vibrant, interconnected university community focused on EDI. The plan is the result of consultations that began in winter 2023 following the closure of the university's strategic EDI plan. The consultations involved community partners, governance bodies, and student organizations, and culminated in the release of "Continuing Our Stories" and ongoing conversations over the summer.</li> <li>● The core of the action plan focuses on addressing shared barriers and moving away from identity-specific actions. The plan encourages cross-unit collaborations alongside unit-specific goals. It highlights that while the work itself</li> </ul>	<p>C. Smith, T. Ira</p>
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		<p>is important, the emphasis is on how the work is done, not who is responsible for it. A key element of the plan is the introduction of “values and active practices,” which are seven practices designed to guide action on EDI. These practices will also be featured in a second training module for staff and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To ensure the plan has broad institutional impact, it incorporates a multi-dimensional model that sees equity, diversity, and inclusion as a collective responsibility. This model includes institutional decision-makers, everyday contributors such as students and staff, and coordinating bodies like councils and departments. The action plan is structured around four main trajectories: supporting uncomfortable encounters (building capacity for cross-difference interaction), enhancing expansive excellence (broadening definitions of excellence), ensuring access (removing barriers to academic and community life), and nurturing transformative collaborations (fostering cross-portfolio cooperation). These trajectories are supported by three types of actions: structural shifts (in policies and procedures), cultural shifts (in supports and resources), and knowledge-sharing shifts (in communication and celebrating successes).</li> <li>● Finally, the plan outlines commitments for sustaining the work, including the creation of an evaluative framework, a community-facing dashboard, and mechanisms for reporting and feedback. Individual work plans will be developed for everyone within the institution, encouraging personal responsibility for implementing actions. The presentation concluded with open-ended questions, inviting feedback on the language, actions, and alignment of the plan with the work of various university associations and individuals.</li> <li>● C. Smith encouraged feedback on this plan</li> <li>● A. Belosokhov asked after action items for the plan. C. Smith explained that the plan details broad, high-level actions for the entire institution. Over the next few weeks and months, her office will be working on building the implementation plan and would like</li> </ul>	
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		<p>feedback from students, department and program chairs, and the Dean of Students' office to support them in identifying their key actions (for example, increased wraparound supports for international students to support and retain those students).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● T. Ira stated the importance of hearing the graduate student perspective as they move into the implementation phase and begin mapping out accountabilities and connection points across different organizations. He will be in contact with the GSA Executives to discuss the best avenues of feedback collection.</li> <li>● They encouraged students to reach out to Carrie at <a href="mailto:carrie.smith@ualberta.ca">carrie.smith@ualberta.ca</a> or <a href="mailto:vpedi@ualberta.ca">vpedi@ualberta.ca</a></li> </ul> <p>D. M. Janz Presentation Presented by Michael Janz, City Councillor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Michael Janz, the city councilor for Ward Papastew (which includes the University of Alberta area), began his presentation by introducing himself and providing attendees with his contact information. Janz, who previously served as president of the Students' Union at the University of Alberta and has a background in education policy and nonprofit work, emphasized his commitment to social justice in his role as a city councilor. He highlighted the importance of addressing affordability, focusing on increasing housing choices and improving transportation in Edmonton, as solutions that can alleviate financial pressures for students and residents.</li> <li>● Janz pointed out the city's sprawling size and challenges stemming from limited revenue sources, particularly with the province's reduced funding for municipalities. Despite these financial constraints, he noted significant improvements in urban planning, such as the addition of more per capita funding to transit to cope with the increasing population and the legalization of more housing options via zoning bylaw changes (8 units/lot and 12 storey buildings allowed in certain areas), including duplexes, triplexes, and multi-story buildings</li> </ul>	M. Janz
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		<p>near the university. He stressed the need for increased housing density around campus to reduce traffic and make the area more sustainable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation was another key focus, with Janz advocating for more frequent bus services, safer streets for pedestrians (structural interventions to protect pedestrians from vehicular accidents), and expanded bike and bus lanes. He acknowledged that car infrastructure is costly for the city and emphasized that prioritizing transit and alternative modes of transport is essential for a sustainable future. Additionally, Janz discussed the role of transit as a social justice issue, as it is crucial for providing equitable access to the city's services and opportunities, particularly for lower-income individuals and students.</li> <li>• While acknowledging the challenges Edmonton faces, including rising austerity and a struggling social safety net, Janz expressed his commitment to improving the city's infrastructure and fostering a more inclusive community. He concluded by encouraging students to stay engaged in Edmonton's future, participate in local initiatives, and reach out for support or collaboration on projects.</li> <li>• H. Arshad asked after the lack of plans for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in the city's zoning bylaws. He expressed concerns about the absence of provisions for EV chargers, especially fast chargers, and suggested this could be an important consideration moving forward. Additionally, he raised the idea of exploring partnerships with car-sharing companies, such as Communauto, to potentially offer student discounts. Lastly, the GSA President asked about transit safety, specifically in relation to fare gates, wondering if this idea was still being considered or if it had been dismissed due to practicality concerns.</li> <li>• M. Janz noted that recent zoning changes have introduced requirements for EV charging stations, though challenges remain due to provincial opposition to climate-related actions, such as energy efficiency requirements for new homes. On the topic of</li> </ul>	
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		<p>car-sharing, Michael acknowledged the GSA President’s suggestion about discounts for students and expressed a desire to expand car-share options in the city, especially given that there is currently only one company offering services. Regarding transit safety, Michael highlighted that improvements have been made in recent years, such as the addition of transit safety officers, security enhancements, and outreach teams. However, he acknowledged that transit safety is a complex issue, and the city is continuously working on it. He also explained that while transit fare gates have been considered, their high cost and practicality in Edmonton’s open transit system made them less feasible. Instead, the city has focused on increasing security presence and social work teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● G. Boffen Yordanov, Councillor-At-Large, also raised the issue of the lack of Communauto service to South Campus, a concern for students. Michael explained that Communauto is a private company, and while the city can facilitate parking arrangements, the company is responsible for its own service expansion. He added that Communauto is considering expanding its coverage area.</li> <li>● B. Kucher, VP Student Life, asked about the capacity of Edmonton's buses and the double-decker buses that had been suggested, especially given concerns about overcrowding. Michael mentioned the use of articulated buses on certain routes but noted that streetcars were unlikely due to infrastructure constraints and high costs. He also touched on the limitations of the city’s budget and provincial priorities, noting that the provincial government is focusing on projects like a high-speed rail between Edmonton and Calgary, while local transit improvements struggle for funding.</li> <li>● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, raised the potential for affordability initiatives for students, especially given the high cost of living and rents, and if Janz’s office could work in conjunction with the VP External. Michael agreed and acknowledged the challenge of addressing affordability in Edmonton, especially since the city has</li> </ul>	
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		<p>limited control over factors like internet pricing and rental markets. However, he agreed that creative solutions should be explored, especially in partnership with local housing providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● P. Mojir Shaibani, VP External, raised concerns about Communauto’s customer service and reliability, which Michael clarified, explaining that the city only facilitates the company’s parking rights and does not directly oversee its operations. He suggested that future discussions could include exploring publicly operated car-share options.</li> <li>● Janz encouraged students to reach out to him at <a href="mailto:michael.janz@edmonton.ca">michael.janz@edmonton.ca</a></li> </ul>	
6		<p><b><u>INFORMATION ONLY</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GSA Council to receive for information the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> </ol> <p>HA MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● H. Arshad, GSA President, gave some background on the audit report draft; the finalized report shall be shared soon. The GSA BFC is working on bylaw and policy revisions to legislate how the GSA financial team will operate to solidify institutional memory, and savings are expected next year upon changing Health and Dental providers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. GSA Tuition Town Hall Online Feedback</li> </ol> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ahead of the town hall, a survey was distributed to gather feedback from students regarding a proposed tuition fee increase and potential financial aid changes.</li> <li>● Key concerns raised included opposition to any further tuition hikes due to existing financial stress and a perceived lack of transparency about how tuition dollars</li> </ul>	H. Arshad, President

		<p>are being allocated. Students expressed particular interest in a more detailed breakdown of where their fees go, such as salaries and utilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The impact on international students was also a major concern, in light of the 10% tuition increase proposal for international students, even though it currently does not affect graduate students. In terms of financial support, students advocated for increased funding, particularly hybrid awards, which currently exclude international graduate students.</li> <li>● Additionally, they called for more job opportunities (highlighted as a main reason for student dropout rates), with many fearing post-graduation employment challenges.</li> <li>● Another common complaint was the increasing tuition without corresponding improvements in services, with students questioning why tuition is rising while service standards appear to be stagnant or declining.</li> <li>● There was also a noted discrepancy between the proposed fee increases and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as well as a reduction in financial aid for domestic students.</li> <li>● The proposal for the upcoming year includes a 2% cap for domestic students (consistent with the previous year), but a 10% increase for international students, while financial aid for domestic students has decreased from 15% to 8.5%. These figures highlight the growing financial pressures on students, and the need for continued advocacy and transparency from the university.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 Second Reading             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> <li>a. Recommended Bylaw Changes</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>H. Arshad, President</p>



		<p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED unanimously.</p> <p>2. U-Pass Referendum Question</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> <li>b. Background &amp; Question</li> </ol> <p>SI MOVED. PS SECONDED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Background presented by S. Iqbal, VP Student Services</li> <li>● There will be no change for 2025-2026 (\$180/year)</li> <li>● \$2.50 increase 2026-2027 (182.50/year), and again for 2027-2028 (\$185.00/year)</li> <li>● Every institution was firm on improvements on transit safety as a demand</li> <li>● Opt-in/out 100km radius to be increased</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>3. Motion to adjourn due to lack of quorum was raised.</p> <p>SI MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p>H. Arshad clarified that informal discussion can continue, university bylaw only states that quorum is required to start the meeting.</p> <p>26 voted for adjourning, 2 voted against and 3 abstained.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	<p>C. Roose, GSA AD, &amp; S. Iqbal, VP Student Services</p>
		<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <p>A. GSA Speaker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Member Position             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Two nominations received and NoC-approved</li> <li>ii. Successful candidate: Zain Patel</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>B. GSA Appeals &amp; Complaints Board</p>	<p>A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Councillor Position: No nominations received</li> <li>b. One GSA Member Position: One nomination received, NoC approval pending</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b></p> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President’s Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. Course-based scholarship will open next week</li> <li>iii. UA Sexual Assault Centre has returned to normal operations with in-person and online bookings offered between 8:00am-4:30pm</li> <li>iv. H. Arshad will meet with Carrie Smith and Ravina Sanghera soon to finalize the Graduate Peer Support Program with their funding</li> <li>v. At the GFC, the GSA raised the motion to ask the university to uphold its commitment to EDI, which passed with an overwhelming majority (93 in favour, 2 against)</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. GSA Board Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. GSA Governance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Vice-President Student Life: Benjamin Kucher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. B. Kucher summarized his ongoing work with the UA Sexual Assault Centre: he has been working closely with the new Assistant Dean for Community Wellness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

		<p>and Sexual Violence Supports to bring about stability and bring the centre back to full operations in alignment with the centre’s ongoing community engagement and action plan for 2024-2025. This has led to the creation of a community advisory group and steering committee - any interested students are encouraged to reach out to Benjamin, who can forward the application form, which is due by November 25th.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The Dean of Students Office is in the early stages of exploring and rebranding its name to distance itself from disciplinary connotations and create a perception of inclusivity and support that they provide, including its resources and services. B. Kucher encouraged students to reach out to him with any name suggestions to bring forward to the Dean’s Advisory Council and to R. Sanghera. The current names include Student Experience, Success, Student Affairs, among others.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. GSA Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. None at this time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>4. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. S. Iqbal read a personal note to Council: During the DEO training session held on October 22, one key takeaway was the importance of celebrating both individual and collective achievements, particularly in the context of the demanding graduate student experience. As graduate students, we balance numerous responsibilities, including academic progress, </li></ul>	
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		<p>research, family commitments, and often jobs or volunteer work. It is easy to focus on what remains undone, but it's essential to pause and recognize our successes. The first half of the fiscal year has seen significant progress in advocacy, expanding support networks, and enhancing services for our graduate community. These accomplishments are a testament to the collaborative efforts of the GSA Board, staff, and Council members. The dedication of our staff, the diversity of perspectives within the council, and our shared commitment to improving the graduate experience are key to these successes. Moving forward, it is vital that we continue to support each other's well-being, collaborate effectively, and ensure that the GSA's work aligns with the best interests of our graduate students. This reflection serves as a reminder of the value of the work we do, both individually and collectively, and the importance of uplifting one another as we continue our advocacy efforts.</p>	
		<p>5. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. P. Mojir Shaibani and H. Arshad met with provincial stakeholders, MLAs, the NDP and UCP caucuses, including the Minister of Advanced Education, in order to advocate for graduate students with some main asks. One of them was a 10% targeted funding for graduate students through scholarships and bursaries. They discussed improvements to the graduate student experience, making transparent guidelines for mandatory non-instructional fees, Bill 18 implications for post secondary institutions and the subject of student loan forgiveness in order to retain</li> </ul>	

		<p>students within Alberta. Finally, they discussed amendments to the labor relations code in order to allow academically employed graduate students to choose their own bargaining agents (removing the specific wording of 'GSA' to any bargaining organization). They are optimistic regarding the targeted funding and they seemed open to the LRC amendments mentioned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Post Secondary Education Task Force is running a campaign in order to raise awareness and to make student life more affordable by sustaining quality post-secondary education in Alberta and increasing accessibility. They are running a survey through a new website, where students are encouraged to participate and can directly send messages to their MLAs. The link will be shared through the GSA newsletter.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>6. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. M. Raja, VP Labour, provided an update on the ongoing situation with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), with whom the GSA has a service agreement for professional support in bargaining and union-related matters. Recently, the GSA's primary contact at PSAC was let go, and while a new representative has been assigned, there are concerns about the level of support PSAC will provide moving forward. M. Raja expressed some skepticism regarding the future of the service agreement, particularly in</li> </ul>	
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		<p>light of Bill 17, which restricts other unions from representing graduate students in bargaining. Despite these uncertainties, PSAC has assured the GSA that no major changes to the service agreement will occur until the collective agreements are renegotiated. M. Raja also noted some challenges in interpreting the language of the service agreement and highlighted efforts to clarify these issues. Additional updates will be provided as the situation unfolds, and M. Raja is available to meet for further discussions if needed.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. GSA Labour Relations Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">i. As submitted</p> <p>7. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. As submitted</p> <p>8. GSA Speaker: None at this time</p> <p>9. Chief &amp; Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi &amp; Zain Patel</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. As submitted</p> <p>10. GSA Nominating Committee Chair &amp; Vice-Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov &amp; Tianxu Wang</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. As submitted</p> <p>11. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. As submitted</p> <p>12. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. As submitted</p>	
5 min		<p><b><u>DISCUSSION ITEMS</u></b></p> <p>A. Election Candidate Q&amp;A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The process for questioning candidates for a speaker position was discussed. The Q&amp;A session was structured to last five minutes overall, during which each council member could ask one question to the candidates, with a time limit of 10 to 15 seconds per question. The session was moderated to ensure the focus remained on</li> </ul>	A Belosokhov, NoC Chair

		<p>the candidates' qualifications, avoiding personal matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The candidates were not asked to present bios, as their qualifications had already been reviewed and shared with the council.</li> <li>● The first question, by H. Arshad, asked both candidates how they would create a fair and inclusive environment for all council members. In response, S. Sulemana emphasized the importance of ensuring that all council members' voices are heard, while Z. Patel proposed creating a platform that would encourage participation, especially for those who may feel hesitant to speak up.</li> <li>● Another question asked was how will the candidates ensure quorum throughout the meeting? S. Sulemana responded that they would kindly remind Councillors of their duties. Z. Patel stated that he would ensure engagement by condensing Council sessions and integrating discussion questions into the time schedule of the meeting.</li> <li>● Additional questions included how to keep voting members engaged during action items, with suggestions for time management and reminders to help maintain focus.</li> <li>● After the Q&amp;A, the candidates were asked to leave the room so that the council could discuss their candidacies. In closed session, Councillors clarified the duration of the Speaker position as a one-year term, and were given the opportunity to share their objective experiences with the candidates.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">B. In-Camera Item: Closed Session Council-Elected Officers, GSA Councillors and DEOs may remain for this discussion. Guests and staff will step out.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H. Arshad, GSA President</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to adjourn due to a lack of quorum means this discussion item will be postponed until the next Council session</li> </ul>	
		<p>Question Period</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Deputy Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, November 14, 2024)</li> <li>2. Oral Questions</li> </ol>	
		<p>Adjournment 8:51 PM</p> <p>A motion to adjourn due to a lack of quorum was raised. H. Arshad clarified that informal discussion can continue and wished to discuss the Tuition Fee Proposal.</p> <p>It was put to a vote: 26 voted for adjourning, 2 voted against and 3 abstained.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	



Item 2: GSA President Report

**2024-2025 President  
Report to GSA Council for the 9 December 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2024/12/5

**2024-2025 GSA President Meetings Attended (Muhammad Haseeb Arshad)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between Nov 13 to Dec 5, 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
Nov 13	TBAC Meeting
Nov 13	Meeting with L. Glock, SU President
Nov 14	BoG Special Meeting
Nov 14	Built for Purpose Working Group Meeting
Nov 14	Campus Walk & Talk
Nov 15	GFC Council Caucus
Nov 15	GAC Meeting
Nov 15	Teaching and Learning AI Subcommittee Meeting
Nov 18	Monthly Meeting with President Flanagan
Nov 18	GFC Council
Nov 19	Regular Meeting with M. Padfield, Deputy Provost Students & Enrollment
Nov 20	UofA Board Finance and Property Committee
Nov 21	CBC Interview re Tuition Town Hall
Nov 22	Monthly Meeting with J. Smith, Chief of Staff
Nov 25-30	CASA Advocacy Week Conference
Nov 25	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting

Nov 26	UofA Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee
Nov 27	Virtual FGPS Council
Nov 29	UofA Board Learning, Research and Student Experience Committee
Dec 3	Regular Meeting with M. Padfield, Deputy Provost Students & Enrollment
Dec 5	DoS Meeting
Dec 5	Stakeholder Proposal Meeting

Dear Council Members,

I hope you're doing well and getting ready for the end of the Fall semester. This past month has been incredibly busy for me as I've been working hard to push forward the remaining initiatives in the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan. It's been a busy but rewarding time, attending meetings and advocating for our members to make sure we're doing everything we can to improve the graduate student experience at our university.

During the Tuition and Budget Advisory Committee meeting on November 13th, we saw the university's proposal for a 10% tuition fee increase for international undergraduate and course-based master's students which is available to the public now. The specifics for thesis-based Master's and PhD students are yet to be determined. I voiced my concerns about this increase, arguing that a 10% hike is too steep, especially considering the feedback we've gathered from our surveys. If you all remember, 40% of respondents of our financial realities survey indicated that financial pressures might force them to drop out, and a similar proportion in our mental health survey said that they were diagnosed with mental health issues after starting the graduate degree, linking financial stress to mental health issues.

To further highlight students' concerns, we have organized a Tuition Town Hall on January 8th, from 12:15 to 1:45 PM, in the University Council Chambers. While I have already raised these issues, I urge all councillors to attend and amplify these concerns during the town hall. Your voice is crucial in advocating for our community.

Moving on to the built-for-purpose working group meeting, we reviewed the Build for Purpose strategic plan, and my focus was its implications on the graduate student office spaces. I raised concerns about space optimization conditions, questioning whether graduate students with both office and lab spaces would be compelled to work solely in the lab, potentially losing their office space.

Additionally, I expressed concerns about a new partner the university is considering, which utilizes an AI model to predict space capacity and management. I questioned how this company, having worked outside Alberta, would integrate our local parameters and the unique infrastructure of our university.

During my monthly meeting with President Flanagan on November 18th, we had a constructive discussion about the university's financial situation. I voiced our community's concerns regarding the proposed tuition fee increase, emphasizing the critical need for bolstered financial support for graduate students. I asked President Flanagan to consider increasing the Graduate Student Support Fund so that we have secure funding to sustain the Graduate Course-based Master's Community Engagement Award. His response was encouraging, and I look forward to working closely with his office to ensure our students' voices are heard and their needs met.

Additionally, I advocated for resolving the Google storage space issue for graduate research students, and proposed creating a dedicated budget line from the university to support the Campus Food Bank. President Flanagan's response was very positive, giving me hope that we can make meaningful progress in these areas. I am pleased to report that the university has listened to our advocacy efforts and temporarily increased the Google storage space for graduate students from 30GB to 80GB. I will be meeting with Shari Baraniuk, AVP of IST, along with our VP Academic, to discuss how we can ensure that fair feedback is incorporated into any new regulations affecting Google storage space moving forward.

During the General Faculties Council meeting on November 18th, I introduced a motion urging the university administration to honor their commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion as outlined in key strategic plans, including the University Strategic Plan SHAPE, SEAP Action Plan, and Forward with Purpose, A Strategic Research Plan. I'm pleased to report that the motion passed with an overwhelming majority, receiving 92 votes in favor, with only two abstentions and one vote against. It was encouraging to see such strong support for upholding our values.

During my regular meeting with Melissa Padfield, the Deputy Provost for Students and Enrolment, we discussed the 10% tuition fee hike and how student feedback would be incorporated into the final proposal to the Board of Governors. We also finalized the logistics for the January 8th town hall.

Additionally, we briefly discussed the financial aid report and explored how the university could provide a more detailed distribution of financial aid, particularly for graduate students. We also touched on the development of the UofA app, and she assured me that our proposed framework will serve as the guiding foundation for the new app, which is very exciting.

During the University of Alberta Board Finance and Property Committee meeting, I raised concerns about the proposed 10% tuition fee increase again, emphasizing its potential negative impact on international student enrollment growth. This growth is a key component of our strategic plan to increase international enrollment by 35%. I highlighted that such a steep increase might deter prospective international students, impacting our revenue.

We also touched on maintenance costs associated with the pending overhaul of several facilities.

To further highlight the impacts of the 10% tuition fee proposal, on November 21st, I took an interview with CBC to discuss the international tuition fee proposal. I voiced concerns about the proposed 10% increase, highlighting its potential impact on international student enrollment, mental health, and affordability amid inflationary pressures. I sympathized with the university's financial challenges, urging the provincial government to establish a better funding model.

I emphasized that international students contribute \$31.7B to the Canadian economy and called attention to recent IRCC policy changes that have left universities grappling with revenue losses. I argued that increasing tuition fees for international students as a solution is inequitable and places an undue financial burden on them.

Instead, I advocated for a more sustainable funding model for public post-secondary education, ensuring affordability for all students, regardless of nationality. My key message was that public education should remain accessible and inclusive, fostering a supportive environment for both domestic and international students.

As for our federal advocacy, during CASA Advocacy Week from November 25 to 30, our VP External, VP Academic, and our VP Student Life (NIAC delegate) had the opportunity to meet with several MPs, senators, and other important stakeholders, to advocate for graduate students and post-secondary education. The discussions centered on six key priorities for CASA this year, including expanding work-integrated learning programs, promoting apprenticeship opportunities, indexing tri-council grants to inflation, supporting international students by doubling points in Part D of comprehensive scoring system, maintaining Canada Student Grants at \$4,200 for the next three years, and increased funding for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

While I received positive responses from MPs and senators on some of the regulatory asks, the budgetary proposals faced significant pushback due to Canada's current \$48 billion budget deficit and

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over \$50 billion in interest payments. This fiscal reality makes it clear that we need to refine our approach to advocacy, particularly when asking for significant taxpayer investment in post-secondary education.

My conversation with Diana Palmerín Velasco, the Director of Future Work at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce was particularly insightful. She provided a clear picture of where the political narrative currently stands and emphasized the importance of strengthening our case by highlighting the economic benefits of post-secondary education. She pointed out that immigration has been a cornerstone of Canada's economy, with first-generation Canadians building 60% of the hospitality sector and international students contributing over \$30 billion annually. Diana also underscored that PSE is the only industrial sector in Canada with a return of \$3.50 for every dollar spent.

Her advice was a wake-up call to educate stakeholders more effectively about these critical points. This experience reaffirmed the need to not only advocate for students but also frame our asks within the broader economic and social benefits they bring to Canada. I left the conference more determined to ensure our advocacy reflects this strategic approach.

Though I was on an official work trip during the CASA conference, I made it a priority to balance my schedule to ensure I could participate in key university stakeholder meetings. One of the most critical meetings I attended was the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) meeting on November 25. At this meeting, I presented the Graduate Students' Service Utilization Report to the committee members. The report highlighted a significant discrepancy in how graduate students and undergraduates use MNIF-supported services.

Based on the findings, with over 70% of graduate student survey respondents indicating they haven't accessed these services, I advocated for a differentiated fee structure for graduate students. While I support the idea of maintaining accessible services for all students, I believe it is only fair that graduate students contribute at a reduced rate, given their lower utilization. Our graduate student membership represents over a third of the undergraduate population, and a more equitable fee structure would reflect the reality of service usage.

I will continue collaborating with the MNIFs committee to push for this change and ensure our graduate student voices are heard in these discussions.

Lastly, I would like to report on the Dean of Students meeting that was held on December 5.

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During the meeting, I experienced one of the most productive discussions since starting my term as GSA president. I am thrilled to report significant progress on several key initiatives. Ravina Sanghera (Dean of Students) will be establishing a working group to move forward with our proposed food strategy, a critical step in addressing student food security.

Our mobile app proposal has also gained traction, with Melissa Shop adopting it—a development that underscores the strength of our advocacy efforts. I am incredibly proud of this achievement.

Furthermore, Ravina and I will be working closely with EDI Strategic Initiatives Advisor Lula Adam to advance the Peer-Connect Conference. I have high hopes for this event, envisioning it as not only a space for graduate students to showcase their research and skills but also as a financially sustainable initiative for the GSA, potentially growing into an international conference platform.

On a personal note, I am particularly excited about the collaborative work being done on the Graduate Peer Support Program, which has been a passion project of mine since my tenure as VP Student Services. For over a year, I have advocated for a program tailored to the unique needs of graduate students, recognizing that they might not feel comfortable discussing mental health challenges with undergraduate volunteers in the SU Peer Support Centre. This pilot program, set to launch next year, is being developed in collaboration with Ravina, Tracy, and Melissa. I will ensure the council remains updated as we take these initiatives forward with the GPS and DoS teams.

Sincerely,  
Haseeb Arshad  
President, GSA

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Item 2a: GSA Board Report

**GSA Board**  
**Report to GSA Council for the 9 December 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA Board
Date: 2024/12/5

Dear Council Members,

The GSA Board (GSAB) reports regularly to GSA Council by listing its agenda items, motions/agreements, and main items of discussion. 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.

**4 December 2024 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

StudentCare Annual Utilization Report, UAI Discussion re Updates on IRCC and Implications for International Graduate Students, DEO's Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Haseeb Arshad,  
President and Chair of the GSA Board

Item 2b: GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee**  
**Report to GSA Council for the 9 December 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA BFC
Date: 2024/12/5

Dear Council Members,

I hope this report finds you well. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the various initiatives and activities currently underway within the Graduate Students' Association.

The Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) met on December 3 to review the Fall quarterly financial statements, discuss budget lines, and assess spending to date. Key topics included the impact of decreased student numbers on membership fees and revenue, strategies for utilizing interest earned on accounts, and transitioning from cheques for small payments to more efficient methods (EFTs). The BFC also evaluated current interest rates and their influence on the operating budget, aiming to optimize financial policies and sustainability moving forward. The quarterly reports will come to the council at the January council.

Budget planning for the 2025-2026 fiscal year began in November, and the leadership now has a draft prepared for the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) meeting on January 9. This process reflects a collaborative effort between the BFC and GSA leadership to prioritize funding, project expenditures, and align the budget with strategic goals. Starting early has allowed for a thorough review of financial needs, risks, and opportunities, ensuring a comprehensive approach to financial stability and growth for the Graduate Students' Association.

If you have any questions, please send me an email or I will look forward to answering your questions during the January meeting.

Sincerely,



Haseeb Arshad, President and Chair of the GSA BFC

Item 2c: GSA Governance Committee Report - None at this time

Item 3: Vice-President Academic Report

**2024-2025 Vice-President Academic  
Report to GSA Council for the December 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Rija Kamran
Date: December 14, 2024

**2024-2025 GSA VP Academic's Meetings Attended (Rija)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between November 13 to December 9 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

GSA & DoS - Bi-Monthly (Nov 12)
Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (Nov 13)
CHS Roundtable Discussion (Nov 15)
GAC Meeting (Nov 15)
GFC Council (Nov 18)
Minimum Funding Implementation Group (Nov 20)
Training: Intro to Health and Safety (Nov 20)
CASA Tabling (Nov 21)

Experiential Learning Council (Nov 21)
ISA Council (Nov 21)
CASA Advocacy Week Conference (Nov. 25-30)
Advocacy Meeting NSERC (Nov. 26)
GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and Student Affairs (Nov. 27)
Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Strategy (Dec. 4)
GFC Programs Committee (Dec. 5)
Graduate Program Support Team (Dec. 9)
GFC Executive Committee (Dec. 9)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are well. As this year comes to an end, I wanted to express my gratitude for your engagement and support. This year has been incredibly turbulent for a lot of us on several fronts, but we have continued to be resilient, and I have high hopes for next year. I have provided some highlights of the meetings from the past month.

**(Nov 20 Minimum Funding Implementation Group)**

I continue to participate in the Minimum funding Implementation Group for PhD minimum funding as we prepare for full implementation of PhD minimum funding in Fall 2025. This group is looking at the key considerations for the implementation, including the various sources of funding that would contribute to the minimum guarantee, admission and offer letters and consideration of how tuition fee plays into reduction in the amount of funding available for students.

**(Nov. 21) CASA Campaign Tabling Session**

Along with the GSA VP External P. Shaibani, we held a tabling session to further the advocacy efforts for CASA’s campaign, *Secure Student Grants*. The goal of the campaign is to engage with students on the affordability of post-secondary education and advocating to the Federal Government to permanently increase Canada Student Grants from \$3,000 to \$4,200. We will invite all graduate students to participate in this campaign and share their stories of how they have been impacted by the Canada

Student Grants, furthering the case for investment in this initiative. This was the second tabling session we held at ECHA. We were able to meet with some graduate students and learn about the impact of these grants on their life as a graduate student.

#### **(Nov. 25-30) CASA Advocacy Week**

Along with GSA President H. Arshad, GSA VP External P. Shaibani and GSA VP Student Life S. Iqbal I attended the CASA Advocacy week in Ottawa. On the Day 1, alongside trainings for federal advocacy, I had the opportunity to present my research at the Graduate Forum. This event was organized to highlight what being a graduate student is like, including their contributions to research and scholarship, primarily to inform the advocacy efforts for graduate students during the remainder of the Advocacy week. In addition to that I was able to meet representatives from NSERC and SSHRC, to talk about the graduate ask around indexation of Tri council grants to CPI. We also talked about open access publishing, practices in support of undergraduate research, and considerations on the new capstone organization. I was also privileged to attend the Standing Committee on Science and Research for the House of Commons. We heard from the three tri-council presidents on the new capstone organization, the purposes it will serve and concerns around sustaining SSHRC funding, which has historically been lower than NSERC and CIHR. I was also able to meet some Senators and MPs to further the graduate student concerns around research funding, housing, immigration amongst others.

#### **(Dec. 4) Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Strategy**

For the past three months, I have been working with the Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Strategy. This group has provided the following preliminary recommendations.

- Freeze international thesis-based tuition at current amounts for 2026-27
- Extend the terms of reference for the Advisory Working
- Group on International Thesis Based Tuition: 2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years
- Measure the impact of minimum guaranteed funding on operating and restricted supports paid to international thesis based graduate students in 2025/26 year and on-going
- Research waiver practice and recommend changes to policy and procedure as necessary
- Employ data informed approach to identify mechanisms for increased student support as early as 2026 and to update recommendations for 2027-28 international thesis-based tuition amounts

I would welcome any input for these recommendations. This group will continue to meet and take in further recommendations on this front.

Thank you for your support and engagement. Please feel free to reach out to me at [gsavpaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpaca@ualberta.ca) if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions. Thank you

Rija Kamran, Vice-President Academic (2024-25)

Item 4: Vice-President Student Life Report

**2024-2025 VP Student Life  
Report to GSA Council for the December 2024 Meeting**

Date	Meeting
Nov. 13th	National Indigenous Advocacy Committee Retreat
Nov. 19th	Student Meeting
Nov. 19th	Meeting with K. Huising, AVP Campus Services
Nov. 19th	UASSC Meeting
Nov. 20th	UASU NIAC Delegate Meeting
Nov. 20th	Meeting with CASA ED
Nov. 20th	DAC Meeting
Nov. 22nd	CASA Board Meeting
Nov. 22nd	WDSJ Working Group Meeting: Sub Group Touch Base
November 24-30	CASA Advocacy Week Conference

No. 29th	Meeting with R. Sanghera, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
Dec. 2nd	Meeting with D. Strohschein, Assistant Dean Community Wellness Support
Dec. 3rd	Co-Sponsor Updates SEAP
Dec. 3rd	EDI Plan Steering Committee
Dec. 5th	DoS Meeting
Dec. 5th	Meeting with Student
Dec. 2nd	Meeting with K. Huising, AVP Campus Services
Dec. 9th	Meeting with D. Strohschein, Assistant Dean Community Wellness Support

GSA Council Report

Date: Dec. 4th, 2024

From: Benjamin J. Kucher, Vice President (Student Life)

Dear Council Colleagues,

As we near the end of the fall semester, I hope this report finds you well and preparing for a well-deserved holiday break. November has been a particularly active month for the Student Life portfolio, with several key updates to share.

One highlight was participating in *Advoweeek*, where I engaged in high-level meetings with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Members of Parliament, Senators, and post-secondary education stakeholders. These discussions focused on priorities outlined in the CASA Advocacy Document 2024, addressing the needs of graduate students and Indigenous learners across Canada. With Prime Minister Trudeau, I emphasized the importance of increasing funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Fund and equivalent Métis and Inuit education programs to address systemic barriers and advance reconciliation through education. I also advocated for sustained investments in work-integrated learning programs like the Student Work Placement Program and emphasized the necessity of expanding apprenticeship opportunities for

equity-deserving groups to address skilled labor shortages. Additionally, I pushed for inflation-tied adjustments to Tri-Council Agency funding to address the rising cost of living for graduate students and advocated for permanent expansion of Canada Student Grants to reduce financial barriers to education. Discussions also touched on enhancing pathways to permanent residency for international students, emphasizing their significant contributions to Canadian society and the importance of increasing immigration points for Canadian educational credentials. These productive meetings highlighted the critical role of advocacy in ensuring an equitable and inclusive post-secondary education system.

Another update involves the Dean of Students' Office (DoS), which has initiated a rebranding effort to adopt a name that better reflects its mission to support student success and well-being. The current name, often associated with disciplinary actions, does not fully encompass the office's role in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. Themes for the new name focus on student experience, success, and community-building, and the GSA is committed to ensuring graduate student perspectives are central to this process.

The GSA has also been actively contributing to the implementation of the University of Alberta's Integrated EDI Action Plan, "Changing the Story: An Integrated Action Plan for Transforming Our Vibrant and Interconnected University Community." Our efforts focus on embedding EDI principles into institutional frameworks and addressing barriers such as structural inequities and systemic inertia. We are advocating for tangible actions like expanding sensory-safe spaces, improving international student supports, and promoting transparency in accommodation processes. Additionally, we are supporting interdisciplinary and community-driven research collaborations, which align with our goals of fostering mutuality, reciprocity, and belonging for graduate students. The consultation process has revealed ongoing challenges, but we are optimistic about the potential of initiatives like non-disciplinary accountability measures, including restorative practices, to create a safer and more inclusive university community. Moving forward, the GSA will assist in developing resources for faculty and staff to adopt inclusive teaching practices and collaborate on tools to track progress on EDI goals.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to enhancing the graduate student experience and advancing equity and inclusion across all aspects of university life. I look forward to continuing these efforts and welcome any feedback or questions on how we can better represent the interests of graduate students.

Wishing you all a restful and joyful holiday season,

Benjamin Kucher, VP Student Life

Item 4a: GSA EDI Committee Report - None at this time

Item 5: Vice-President Student Services Report

**2024-2025 VP Student Services  
Report to GSA Council for the December 2024 Meeting**

<b>To:</b> GSA Council
<b>From:</b> Saad A. Iqbal
<b>Date:</b> Dec. 4, 2024

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
November 19	U-Pass Meeting
November 22	Campus Wellness Network
November 22	UAISA Council (proxy for Parman, VP External)
November 23	Alumni Council Retreat
November 25	Students Who Parent Working Group
November 25	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting #3
November 25	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
November 26	Fall Convocation Ceremony
November 27	FGPS Council (proxy for Rija, VP Academic)
November 27	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
December 2	PAWSOC Meeting

December 2	Student Group Mental Health Network
December 3	CFB Policy Committee Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you're all doing well, in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between November 14 and December 4, 2024:

**U-Pass Meeting**

Since the contracts have been prepared and forwarded to the U-Pass participating institutions, in this meeting we discussed the next steps moving forward. We were informed about the expected dates for getting the contracts reviewed and asked for any amendments or clarifications before we prepare to sign the contracts formally. However, formal signing will not be done until a referendum has taken place where graduate students will get an opportunity to say yes or no to the newly agreed upon (in theory) U-Pass fees for the years 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28.

**Campus Wellness Network Meeting**

In the Campus Wellness Network Meeting, we discuss key ideas and issues related to wellness overall in the Campus. Different groups share details about events and activities organized to support campus wellbeing. On the UAGSA end, I shared that we have seen a remarkable increase in the attendance of graduate students during our social hours which is one of the ways students find connections and opportunities to interact, socialize, and share ideas. I also updated about the upcoming photo contest on mental health and some potential projects we are planning with the UAI. I also updated the group about the fall social where close to 320 graduate students showed up and enjoyed games, food, connections, cotton candy, and an on-spot DJ. In the campus trends, the GSA's report on mental health "Under Pressure" was also discussed.

**UAISA Council Meeting**

In this council, I proxied for Parman, our VP External where council members discussed amending the UAISA's current bylaws and policies. These amendments are not finalized yet and members shared concerns and made suggestions to improve the UAISA's overall operations. For the next council, Parman will continue to represent the UAGSA.

**Alumni Council Retreat**



I also proxied Parman, our VP external at the Alumni Council Retreat at the Lister Centre. This was a great opportunity to learn about the life experiences of U of A's Chancellor, Nizar Somji who was invited as a guest. I also had a chance to interact with many passionate council members in sharing thoughts and insights. Our formal tour included visiting the Nursing Simulation Centre at the ECHA building.

#### Students Who Parent Working Group

In this meeting, members discussed various efforts being put in to support students who parent on campus. From the UAGSA's side, I discussed the idea of the Second Chances Store (this is the name used by Bow Valley College – from where the idea came from, and we will decide a different name), and we brainstormed issues of space utilization, health and hygiene, store display, possible partnerships, piloting the program for a short term, and other details. I also shared the current arrangements with Bredin Early Bird and the Kids and Company in providing discounts to our graduate student parents.

#### MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting

In this meeting, attendees discussed the MNIF 2023-24 Annual Report and shared feedback on the report. The preliminary MNIF Proposal 2025-26 was also put up for discussion. More details about the proposal will be discussed in a meeting in January. Some points have already been shared by the UAGSA previously through the Executive Director, the President, and me.

#### FGPS Council

I proxied for Rija, our VP Academic and presented a routine report on behalf of Haseeb, our President. Haseeb's report highlighted key concerns for the UAGSA including updates and advocacy efforts. The updates included the breadth of work covered in the areas of advocacy for the tuition proposals and planned town halls, provincial advocacy, GSA's new health and dental plan, campus food bank, minimum guaranteed funding for masters students, and the all-encompassing app. for UAlberta students, CAGS Conference, hybrid award for course-based masters students, and campus wide food strategy.

#### PAWSOC Meeting

The PAW Centre Strategic Operating Committee (PAWSOC) meets to discuss matters related to the strategic operations of the PAW Centre at the Van Vliet Complex. Members discussed the PAW Centre agreement, the Strategic Operating Agreement Summary, and a detailed overview of the usage of the PAW Centre for the academic year 2023-24 including the trends, challenges, and priorities for the various services. Members asked some clarification questions such as the potential for renting skates and other equipment, whether student satisfaction surveys exist, and if there are any plans for a future community kitchen. I also suggested to see if there could be a potential family day for students who parent and their children for activities like swimming or climbing.

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#### Student Group Mental Health Network

In this meeting, we discussed some updates and event details that student groups have or are going to organize to support students' mental health and well-being in various ways. A key discussion was around how to facilitate those who need mental health support. However, a larger part of the conversation also relied on how to take care of one's own mental health and ask for help for ourselves when working in different capacities to provide supports to others around us. As a routine segment, I also shared the updates on the GSA's social hours and the mental health photo contest.

#### **CFB Policy Committee Meeting**

The CFB Policy Committee has been working to make some effective amendments to the policy documents to ensure sustainable and improved operations. This meeting was in continuation of these efforts to discuss ideas around the draft Board Policy Manual. A lot of improvements have been made, and the work is ongoing.

#### **Important Note:**

The Campus Food Bank is organizing a Joy Drive Donation Campaign to support clients during the holiday season. Please see the details below (as received) and consider helping in any way you can:

*We will be closed for two weeks over the holidays, so we are collecting **gift cards** and **special holiday treats** to distribute to clients in the last two weeks of 2024 to help client families access food over the break. (We've received about 30 gift cards so far for the Joy Drive, but we served 900 unique families last month.)*

*We have surveyed our clients for gift card and special holiday item requests and distilled them into two simple lists for your shopping trip. You can find them lower down in this email or [online here](#).*

***Please drop off Joy Drive donations at the CFB Office (SUB 1-81) front desk by 4pm on Friday, December 6, if possible, although we will continue to accept donations until we close on December 20.***

*If you'd prefer to make a direct donation, you can [donate online via our website](#) and receive a tax receipt; just write 'Joy Drive' under your reason for donating today. Please help us spread the word by sharing [this information](#) with your colleagues, departments, families, and friends! Questions? Get in touch with Caitlin at [events@campusfoodbank.com](mailto:events@campusfoodbank.com).*

Best Regards,

**Saad Arslan Iqbal**

**GSA VP Student Services (2024-25)**

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Item 6: Vice-President External Report

**2024-2025 Vice-President External  
Report to GSA Council for the November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Parman Mojir Shaibani
Date: December 03, 2024

**2024-2025 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Parman)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 9th to 8 November 12th (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
Nov 18	ESA Meeting
Nov 25-30	CASA Advocacy Week Conference
Dec 3	UAI Meeting
Dec 4	Engagement with Purpose Steering Committee

**1) ESA Meeting**

The meeting included guests from “The Edmonton Transit Riders,” which is a non-profit organization that advocates for a better, safer, and more accessible public transit system in Edmonton. This group aims to collaborate with post-secondary student organizations to bring student voices to the table regarding public transit advocacy, focusing on issues like equity, affordability, and accessibility. The group seeks to work with student associations on individual topics or more structural matters, and they are open to any collaboration opportunities.

As discussed, the city has been informed that it is prioritizing increasing funding for public transit to meet minimum standards and improve service. They are also working on expanding the Canadian Public

Transit Fund to include operating funds and collaborating with other organizations to advocate for affordable transit options. Despite challenges in obtaining funding, the city is optimistic about achieving short-term goals such as ordering new buses and maintaining fare prices.

The need for a housing survey was also discussed to understand secondary students' issues in acquiring housing. We emphasized the need for questions that align with previous surveys and address accessibility and safety concerns.

We also discussed the importance of data collection in understanding housing issues in Edmonton and its potential impact on communities. Additionally, we shared updates on our respective organizations' activities, including advocacy efforts and upcoming events.

## **2) CASA Advocacy Week Conference (Nov. 25-30)**

During the CASA advocacy week, some significant asks were discussed. The main asks related to graduate students are as follows:

**Graduate students ask:** Incorporate adjustments for CPI to the Tri-Council Agency graduate student funding programs to maintain competitiveness for quality Canadian talent.

**International students ask:** Double the Express Entry Program immigration points in Part D of the Comprehensive Ranking System allocating 60 points for a three or more year Canadian post-secondary credential, or 30 points for a one or two year Canadian post-secondary credential to retain those most likely to economically succeed in Canada.

**Securing Canada Student Grants ask:** 4,200 grant per year/\$300 loan per week maximums for student financial aid, and proportionately increase the separate limits for students with disabilities and students with dependants to ensure that academic ability, not financial ability, is the standard for admission.

**Indigenous students ask:** Increase Post-Secondary Student Support Program and equivalent Métis and Inuit programs to \$1.14 billion annually to ensure every qualified Indigenous student can attend post-secondary education. The most important meetings I had and their outcomes are as follows: (1) Meeting with Iqbal Ravalia (Canadian senator from Newfoundland and Labrador): Personally, I have been a part of a few important meetings, and I shall highlight the more important ones.

**(1) Meeting With Senator Iqbal Ravali**

Upon commencement of the meeting, Senator Iqbal expressed his interest in CASA and emphasized that the work and initiatives we undertake are significant.

**Regarding the International Students Ask:**

The senator said he would provide a letter of support for this request. He highlighted Newfoundland and Labrador's friendly PR program and acknowledged the importance of immigration and its economic impacts. He assured the group that this request was noted and supported.

**Regarding the Graduate Students Ask:**

Senator Iqbal shared that he has had discussions with Senator Stan Kutcher about Tri-Council Funding and Programs, specifically concerning remuneration. He noted that this issue aligns with ongoing conversations and expressed his support for this ask.

**Regarding the Indigenous Students Ask:**

Senator Iqbal recognized the challenges faced by Indigenous students, stating that he frequently hears about these struggles in conversations. He offered condolences for the passing of Justice Sinclair and praised his contributions, particularly through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The senator acknowledged long-standing concerns about accountability and agreed that they need to be addressed appropriately.

**(2) Meeting With Lindsay Mathysen (London-Fanshawe, NDP)**

**Regarding the International Students Ask:**

Lindsay Mathysen discussed the underfunding of educational institutions by the government, which has led universities to operate more like businesses than academic institutions. She criticized how international students are often used as scapegoats, resulting in a loss of future potential. She further mentioned that the federal government has weaponized immigration in recent times.

**Regarding the Graduate Students Ask:**

Similar to her comments on international students, Mathysen highlighted the underfunding of educational institutions. She reiterated that universities have shifted focus away from education and placed undue burdens on international students. She also expressed concern about the federal government's handling of immigration.

**Regarding the Indigenous Students Ask:**

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Mathysen supported this ask, acknowledging the rising costs of post-secondary education. She reflected on her own university experience and compared it to current statistics. She directed the conversation towards the importance of open educational resources and demonstrated enthusiasm for this ask.

**Regarding the Securing Canada Student Grants Ask:**

Mathysen expressed support for this ask, reiterating her concerns about the rising education costs. She compared her time in university and advocated for open educational resources. Overall, she showed enthusiasm for this initiative.

**(3) Meeting With the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)**

The primary focus of this meeting was to advocate for the graduate student ask. Unfortunately, NSERC indicated that due to insufficient federal funding for grants, they are unable to increase the size of the grants independently. The only potential solution they proposed was to reduce the number of awards to increase their individual values.

**(4) Meeting With the National Research Council (NRC)**

The NRC committee expressed overall support for the graduate student ask.

**3) UAI Meeting (Dec 3):**

Kumari and Diana provided an overview of the services they offer. I observed that the demand for French courses on campus is unsurprising, as many students seek them to enhance their PR eligibility. We also discussed the importance of improving communication to increase outreach for UAI events.

**4) Engagement with the Purpose Steering Committee (Dec 4):**

The University of Alberta's Connectors and Superconnectors Initiative aims to showcase the university's role as a key partner in advancing Edmonton and beyond. The initiative seeks to strengthen ties and amplify the university's impact by fostering problem-solving partnerships between academics and the community.

The program will identify 40-50 interdisciplinary connectors and narrow them to 10-15 superconnectors, who will receive support and strategic messaging to highlight their contributions. Efforts will include engaging diverse voices, such as Indigenous students and alumni, and exploring creating a website to enhance accessibility and provide updates.

The timeline involves selecting superconnectors before the December break, with a finalized list expected by mid-January following community feedback and steering committee review. The initiative

will align with existing research and strategic plans, validate themes through consultations, and showcase the connectors' contributions via events and partnerships with university leadership and alumni.

The goal is to foster pride in the university's societal contributions and strengthen its connection with the community.

Item 7: Associate Vice-President Labour Report

**2024-2025 Associate Vice-President Labour  
Report to GSA Council for the Dec 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 2 Dec 2024

**2024-2025 GSA Associate VP Labour Meetings Attended**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 20 Nov to 5 Dec 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
20 Nov	CA 101 Session
21 Nov	Monthly Check-in with LRC Chief Steward and Outreach Coordinator
21 Nov	Culture of Care: GSA Ambassador Program
22 Nov	Meeting with a PSAC Representative

22 Nov	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
26 Nov	UofA Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee Meeting
27 Nov	Bargaining Team Meeting
3-4 Dec	GSA Bargaining
3 Dec	Budget and Finance Committee Meeting
5 Dec	GSA DoS Meeting
5 Dec	Stakeholder Proposal Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,  
I hope you're all doing well and staying warm. Here are the details of some of the meetings that I have attended over the past month:

**(Nov 21) Culture of Care: GSA Ambassador Program**

In the meeting the Graduate Student Ambassador Program. The focus of this meeting was development and goals of the pilot initiative under the University of Alberta's Culture of Care Action Plan (2023-2025). The program is designed to address the unique challenges faced by graduate students, particularly the power dynamics between students and Principal Investigators (PIs). A key component of the program is the creation of a network of trained graduate student ambassadors who will serve as safety champions, promoting physical, psychological, and cultural safety within the graduate student community. Ambassadors will provide peer-to-peer support, guide students to relevant university resources, foster a sense of community, and offer insights into potential barriers within university policies. This initiative aims to create a more inclusive, supportive, and empathetic environment for graduate students.

**(Nov 26) UofA Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee Meeting**

In my presentation to the University of Alberta Board of Governors, I highlighted several key challenges faced by academically employed graduate students. These challenges include issues related to pay equity, job security, and the low cap on Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) hours (12 hours per week), which limit students' ability to earn a livable wage. The funding guarantees provided through GTAs also restrict students' financial flexibility, contributing to financial strain.

Additionally, concerns were raised regarding Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowships, including significant pay disparities across the university, lack of protection against retaliation, potential misuse of appointments, and the power imbalance between supervisors and students. The absence of sufficient



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avenues for student feedback further exacerbates these issues. These factors create an environment of fear and stress, increasing the likelihood that graduate students will leave their programs, while also reducing their productivity and well-being.

**(Nov 27) Bargaining Team Meeting**

In the meeting, the GSA bargaining team reviewed the non-financial proposal that will be presented to the University of Alberta during upcoming negotiations. The proposal outlines key issues and asks aimed at improving the graduate student experience. The GSA team discussed the proposal in detail, which will be formally tabled during bargaining sessions scheduled for December 3-4. A more detailed update will be shared following the negotiation sessions with the university.

I would really appreciate any feedback from the respected council members related to any labour related matters.

In Solidarity,  
Muneeb Masood Raja, Associate Vice-President Labour 2024-2025

Item 7a: GSA Labour Relations Committee Report

**GSA Labour Relations Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the Dec 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 2 Dec 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council:

We have been finalizing the bargaining proposal, which will be officially tabled on December 3. A detailed update on the proposal will be shared after the bargaining sessions conclude on December 4.

In addition, academically employed graduate students recently voted for four new members to join the Labour Relations Committee (LRC). These newly elected members will be onboarded shortly, and we are planning to hold an LRC meeting later this month to discuss ongoing matters.

In Solidarity,  
Muneeb Masood Raja, Associate Vice-President Labour 2024-2025

Item 8: GSA Senator Report - None at this time

Item 9: GSA Speaker Report - None at this time

Item 10: Chief Returning Officer Report - None at this time

Item 11: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

**2024-2025 Nominating Committee Chair  
Report to GSA Council for the December 2024**

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: September 18,  
2024

Dear members of the GSA Council,

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Since the last Council meeting, the Nominating Committee welcomed, met, interviewed and considered two candidacies for the Appeals and Complaints Board, the results of which are to be reflected in the voting item of the agenda.

Currently, we are advertising vacant positions for GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC), GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC), and GSA Budget & Finance Committee (BFC). Relevant nominations are available for review on the GSA website.

Sincerely,  
Arseniy Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair

Item 12: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report - None at this time

Item 13: GSA Management Report

GSA Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for December 9 2024 Meeting

To: GSA Council  
From: Lewie Moodley  
Date: December 9, 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope this report finds you well. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the various initiatives and activities currently underway within the Graduate Students' Association.

The staff have been working behind the scenes to organize the tuition townhalls. We have one last townhall planned for January 2025 for graduate students to provide their feedback on the tuition proposals. We encourage students to attend these and provide feedback on the proposed tuition changes.

The GSA office is gearing up for an exciting start to the new year with preparations underway for our upcoming election season in January and February. Additionally, we are organizing our winter orientation, designed to welcome and support incoming new graduate students. These initiatives reflect our commitment to fostering engagement and ensuring that our members have the resources and representation they need for a successful academic journey.

Budget planning for the 2025-2026 fiscal year began in November, marking the start of a comprehensive process to ensure financial stability and strategic resource allocation for the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). During this period, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) will collaborate closely with the GSA's leadership team to assess funding priorities, project expenditures, and align the budget with the strategic goals. This early planning phase allows for a thorough review of financial needs, potential risks, and opportunities for growth, ensuring that the GSA remains fiscally responsible and well-prepared for the upcoming year. We plan to present our first budget draft to the BFC later in January.

Finally, the staff have been actively supporting students across a range of important committees, including the Awards Selection Committee (ASC), Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC), Tuition and Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC), Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Committee, and Governance Committee (GC). Their involvement in these committees has included assisting with meeting preparation, providing guidance on policy and procedure, and ensuring that student representatives are well-equipped to contribute effectively. In 2024, we spent \$704,926.39, approved 828 grants, and reached over 10% of graduate students.

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to wish you all a happy holiday. I hope you have time to rest and recharge. Reflecting on this past year, I'm proud of what we've accomplished together in representing and supporting our graduate community. Your dedication and collaboration have made a real difference, and I look forward to continuing this work in the new year.

We are confident that these efforts will significantly enhance our ability to serve the graduate student community and advance the mission of the GSA. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Lewie Moodley

Executive Director

## **Management Report to the GSA Board, December 4 2024**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **November 13 2024**.

### **Executive Director update:**

- Grants are now closed for 2024. Good Grants was successfully launched: we have approved over 80 applications and have had no issues from students. Grants are closed Dec 2 - Jan 3 2025. This year we have spent \$704,926.39, approved 828 grants, and reached over 10% of grad students.
  
- We are currently preparing our 2025-2026 budget, which will be delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC.
  
- We have received many nominees for the EDIC vacancy, some for the ACB, and no nominations as of yet for DRO.
  
- The organizing of the General Election has started, along with advertisements and Discover Governance series tabling.
  
- Social Media updates:
  - **Facebook** Reach: -36% (Nov 12-Dec 2); Followers: +4 followers (current: 2069)
  - **Instagram** Reach: -18.7% (Nov 12-Dec 2); Followers: -4 followers (current: 1460)
  - **Twitter/X** Followers: -22 followers (1321)