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Item 1: Agenda

Monday, November 18, 2024

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

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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*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 SPEAKER:**  
None at this time

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

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	1	2-5	Approval of the Agenda for November 18, 2024 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	2	5-14	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of October 21, 2024 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker

2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
10 min	4		Announcements	
15 min	5		<b><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></b> A. RSM Audit Report Presented by Winson Co & Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors	W. Co & L. Pfeiffer
30 min	5.0-5.37		B. Tuition Discussion Presented by Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost: Students & Enrollment, Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, & Chantal Delfs, Strategic Communications	M. Padfield, K. Brough, C. Delfs
15 min			C. EDI Action Plan Presentation Presented by Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI, and Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI	C. Smith, T. Ira
30 min			D. M. Janz Presentation Presented by Michael Janz, City Councillor	M. Janz
1 min	6	15-16	<b><u>INFORMATION ONLY</u></b> 1. GSA Council to receive for information the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements a. Outline of Issue	H. Arshad, President
	6.0-6.4		2. GSA Tuition Town Hall Online Feedback	
5 min	7	17-18	<b><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></b> 1. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 Second Reading a. Outline of Issue a. Recommended Bylaw Changes	H. Arshad, President
30 min		19-20 21-23	3. U-Pass Referendum Question a. Outline of Issue b. Background & Question	C. Roose, GSA AD, & S. Iqbal, VP Student Services

10 min	8	24-26	<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <p>A. GSA Speaker:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. One GSA Member Position</p> <p>B. GSA Appeals &amp; Complaints Board</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. One GSA Councillor Position</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. One GSA Member Position</p>	<p>A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair</p> <p>Two nominations received and NoC-approved</p> <p>No nominations received One nomination received, NoC approval pending</p>
30 min	9	<p>27-30</p> <p>31-32</p> <p>33</p> <p>34-37</p> <p>37-40</p> <p>41-45</p> <p>46-50</p> <p>51</p> <p>52-54</p> <p>55</p> <p>56</p> <p>57</p> <p>58-59</p> <p>59-60</p> <p>61-64</p>	<p><b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b></p> <p>Reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President’s Report</li> <li>b. GSA Board Report</li> <li>c. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee Report</li> <li>d. GSA Governance Committee Report</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran</li> <li>3. Vice-President Student Life: Benjamin Kucher           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. GSA Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee Report</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</li> <li>5. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. GSA Labour Relations Committee</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</li> <li>8. GSA Speaker: None at this time</li> <li>9. Chief &amp; Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi &amp; Zain Patel</li> <li>10. GSA Nominating Committee Chair &amp; Vice-Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov &amp; Tianxu Wang</li> <li>11. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</li> <li>12. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley</li> </ol>	<p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>No meetings have been held as of this date</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>No meetings have been held as of this date</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p> <p>Submitted</p>
20 min	10		<p><b><u>DISCUSSION ITEMS</u></b></p> <p>A. In-Camera Item: Closed Session</p> <p>Council-Elected Officers, GSA Councillors and DEOs may remain for this discussion. Guests and staff will step out.</p>	<p>H. Arshad, GSA President</p>

15 min	11		<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>	
			Adjournment	

Item 2: Minutes

Monday, October 21, 2024

**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.*

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<p><i>confidential often involve personal information, information on negotiations, business information, or other information of a similar nature.</i></p>	
<p><b>GSA SPEAKER:</b> Farhan Khalid in the Chair</p> <p><b>DEPUTY SPEAKER:</b> None at this time</p>	
<p><b>CLOSED SESSION:</b> Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session</p>	
<p><b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b></p>	
<p><b>Council-Elected Officials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSA Speaker: Farhan Khalid</li> <li>● Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi</li> <li>● Deputy Returning Officer: Zain Patel</li> <li>● Senator: Ola Mabrouk</li> </ul> <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. Georga Boffen Yordanov</li> <li>2. Margaret DeCoste</li> <li>3. Christine Hymanyk</li> <li>4. Abdul Hadi Syed</li> <li>5. Allyson Lynch</li> <li>6. Destiny Otoadese</li> <li>7. Mohamed Sabek</li> <li>8. Ibrahim Khodabocus</li> </ol> <p><b>Guests:</b></p>	<p><b>Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prithviraj Vellamunda, AFNS</li> <li>2. Ning Dai, Biochemistry</li> <li>3. Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences</li> <li>4. Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering</li> <li>5. Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology</li> <li>6. Yusef Haidar, Chemistry</li> <li>7. Kiera Greenaway, Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</li> <li>8. Cassandra Baragar, Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders</li> <li>9. Iain Smith, Computing Science</li> <li>10. Michelle Bey, Dentistry</li> <li>11. Andy Zhang, Digital Humanities</li> <li>12. Alissa Watson, Drama</li> <li>13. Nathaniel Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences</li> <li>14. Ajibola (Jibs) Adigun, Educational Policy Studies</li> <li>15. Scott Taylor, Educational Psychology</li> <li>16. Jennie Burton, Elementary Education</li> <li>17. Nathan Lamarche, English &amp; Film Studies</li> <li>18. Amber Smith, IGSA</li> <li>19. Eileen Ai-Lin Tang, Laboratory Medicine &amp; Pathology</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wasiimah Joomun, CASA Executive Director</li> <li>● Temi David</li> <li>● Akhil Mohandas</li> <li>● Amirah Nazir</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. Dalia Cristerna, Linguistics</li> <li>21. Pouneh Mohammadi Nejad, Mathematical &amp; Statistical Sciences</li> <li>22. Connor Oborn, Medical Genetics</li> <li>23. Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology &amp; Immunology</li> <li>24. Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience</li> <li>25. Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics &amp; Gynecology</li> <li>26. Raj Somasundaram, Pediatrics</li> <li>27. Fulin Wang, Pharmacology</li> <li>28. Joshua Barden, Philosophy</li> <li>29. Savannah Ribeiro, Political Science</li> <li>30. Emilie Desnoyers, Psychiatry</li> <li>31. Cheryl Pan, Psychology</li> <li>32. Kathryn Short, Public Health</li> <li>33. Matt Ball, Renewable Resources</li> <li>34. Ivan Ma, Surgery</li> </ol> <p><b>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amirmahdi Mohamadi, Chemical &amp; Materials Engineering</li> <li>2. Reyna Alvarez, Drama</li> <li>3. Zeynep Oyku Ozturk, Educational Policy Studies</li> <li>4. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics &amp; Religion</li> <li>5. Yimiao Zhao, Oncology</li> </ol>
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:00	-	Land Acknowledgement	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	Approval of the Agenda for October 21, 2024 GSA Council BK MOVED. HA SECONDED.  Motion PASSED.	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
1 min	2.0-2.10	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of September 23, 2024 GSA	F. Khalid,

		Council SI MOVED. BK SECONDED.  Motion PASSED.	GSA Speaker
2 min	3	Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eileen Ai-Lin Tang, Laboratory Medicine &amp; Pathology</li> <li>• Colin Hamnett, History, Classics &amp; Religion Alternate</li> <li>• Nathaniel Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Science</li> <li>• Joshua Barden, Philosophy</li> </ul>	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
	4	Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sophie Shi has reached her fourth year of service to the GSA</li> </ul>	
	5	<b><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS:</u></b> CASA Presentation H. Arshad, GSA President, introduced the guest.  W. Joomun, CASA ED, introduced the organization's mission, values, and structure during her presentation. CASA advocates for approximately 365,000 students across Canada, focusing on making post-secondary education accessible, affordable, and high-quality. Operating on a "one school, one vote" principle, CASA consists of 26 member schools and emphasizes a non-partisan, research-based approach to advocacy. Delegates from member institutions, such as the GSA, represent student voices at the national level, and CASA encourages active participation and accountability from these delegates.  Wasiimah highlighted the importance of collaboration and communication between CASA and its members, inviting questions and encouraging engagement to enhance advocacy efforts. She explained that CASA's advocacy efforts focus on securing funding from the federal government, which is then distributed to provinces, impacting tuition and accessibility at the institutional level. CASA engages in advocacy through policy research, releasing papers on critical issues such as Indigenous education and student housing. Direct student involvement in meetings with parliamentarians adds a personal touch to the advocacy process, as stories from students illustrate the challenges they face.  Key achievements from CASA's advocacy include the elimination of interest on student loans and increased funding for mental health resources. CASA's annual cycle involves setting priorities in May, advocating in November, and reviewing successes in April, ensuring	Wasiimah Joomun, CASA Executive Director



		<p>that student perspectives are consistently represented at the federal level. Finally, she encouraged participation and engagement among delegates to maximize the impact of CASA’s work.</p> <p>A concern was raised by H. Arshad about a new policy affecting English language testing for Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) applicants. He referenced a federal report that posited that international students lack verbal communication skills, and requested access to this report. Wasiimah stated she would reach out to the minister's office to obtain it. The discussion then turned to CASA's advocacy priorities, noting that recent changes in policies from IRCC occurred after these priorities were finalized. H. Arshad suggested that CASA’s board should proactively address emerging issues raised by international members. Wasiimah explained that while CASA's primary focus is federal advocacy, they actively respond to urgent issues by submitting briefs to the government. She acknowledged the need for better communication with members about these efforts and highlighted that CASA has submitted several briefs to ISCC in recent months to ensure student voices are represented.</p> <p>Another participant inquired about CASA's provincial advocacy efforts, emphasizing that funding cuts from the Alberta government have a significant impact on students. Wasiimah responded that CASA operates at a federal level but is developing partnerships with provincial groups to collaborate on issues affecting students nationwide. While CASA cannot directly advocate at the provincial level, they provide resources, data, and support to empower local advocacy efforts.</p> <p><b>GSA's Proposal for the Utilization of Tuition Fee Offset</b></p> <p>As part of the Tuition Budgetary and Advisory Committee (TPAC), the GSA proposed the utilization of the tuition fee offset to support various financial aid initiatives. While a tuition fee proposal is standard, the university allocates a portion of revenue for emergency bursaries and student financial support. Our proposal emphasized the need for increased investment in the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF) and the course-based student scholarship. Although funding exists for this year, sustainability requires an increase in the GSSF. We also highlighted the Campus Food Bank's critical role, noting a 550% increase in utilization over four years, alongside a 4,000% rise in food purchases, yet no direct university budget allocation for it. Additionally, we conducted two surveys on the financial and mental health realities of</p>	<p>H. Arshad, President</p>
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		<p>graduate students, revealing that 66% diagnosed with mental health issues did so after starting their degrees, linking financial stress to mental health challenges.</p> <p>Our recommendations included further support for the GSSF, course-based Master’s students, and the CFB, as well as lifting the restriction preventing first-year international students from applying for emergency bursaries. The university's current policy requires first-year students to demonstrate sufficient financial resources, but we argued that emergencies can arise regardless of financial preparedness. Our surveys showed that 27% of respondents were first-year master’s students, indicating significant need. We await the university's response to our recommendations, while other discussions on tuition fees remain confidential.</p>	
15 min	<p>6</p> <p>6.0 6.1-6.3</p> <p>6.4 6.5</p>	<p><b><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></b></p> <p>A. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - September 23 Second Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> <li>b. Recommended Bylaw Changes</li> </ul> <p>HA MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>B. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 First Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> <li>b. Recommended Bylaw Changes</li> </ul> <p>SI MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	<p>H. Arshad, President</p> <p>H. Arshad, President</p>
15 min	7	<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <p><b>A. GSA Deputy Speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Member Position: Amirah Nazir</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Appeals &amp; Complaints Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Two Councillor Positions: Zeynep Oyku Ozturk</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Governance Committee:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One Councillor Position: Ajibola (Jibs) Adigun</li> </ul>	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker

30 min	8	<p><b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b></p> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. H. Arshad highlights that as part of the GSA's accountability measures, all committee Chairs are required to submit written reports.</li> <li>ii. Following discussions with President Flanagan, a revised proposal for a new UofA app will be submitted, focusing on essential features due to a reduced budget.</li> <li>iii. The IRCC has made recent policy changes and the GSA Board is drafting a statement regarding this.</li> <li>iv. Additionally, the GSA's mental health survey revealed that 30% of graduate students are facing mental health challenges, with 79% postponing their degrees due to job market concerns. The GSA is advocating for a graduate Co-op program, inspired by a successful initiative in the Computing Science department, to help students gain work experience.</li> <li>v. Lastly, H. Arshad discussed the potential for a graduate peer support program, which is being explored in collaboration with university representatives.</li> <li>vi. In response to a question about the new dental and healthcare provider, H. Arshad explained that negotiations are still ongoing, and details on coverage will be finalized once a contract is signed.</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> <li>e. Third-Party Investigation Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Following discussing the university's response to the removal of the Palestinian Protest encampment with the third-party investigator, the university has created an</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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		<p>advisory board to discuss how we can support Palestinian scholars with the same level of commitment as the university previously announced for Ukrainian students.</p> <p>B. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. R. Kamran encouraged students to reach out with any feedback regarding the Canvas transition as she can take any suggestions to the Learning Management System Advisory Committee that is working on improvements.</li> <li>b. Tuition Relief Working Group has begun, but currently only for international thesis-based PhD and Masters students. This group will be providing recommendations on how to provide tuition relief and then extend it to domestic students as well.</li> <li>c. PhD Minimum Funding implementation work is ongoing; funding starts in Fall 2025, so in Winter 2025 students will begin receiving letters. R. Kamran encouraged any students concerned with the language in these contracts to reach out to her.</li> </ul> <p>C. Vice-President Student Life: Benjamin Kucher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. B. Kucher detailed his meeting with the Dean of Students, Vice-Provost EDI where they discussed the development and implementation of non-disciplinary accountability options that can be taken in the event of interpersonal harm and academic misconduct that don't have to escalate to the formal complaint process - a process that does not give students adequate opportunities to respond throughout the case compared to faculty</li> <li>b. Recent marked increase in student group engagement; B. Kucher encouraged students and student groups to reach out to him re partnering on initiatives</li> <li>c. GSA Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. None at this time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. U-Pass negotiation deal has been agreed upon, securing savings for students in the millions of dollars, but details cannot be shared currently.</li> <li>b. Hydroponics farm update: S. Iqbal and Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean Health &amp; Wellness, met with students from Engineers for a Sustainable World (ESW</li> </ul>	
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		<p>UAlberta) who are running their own hydroponics experiment to discuss challenges and opportunities. Any further suggestions are encouraged to reach out to Saad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. CFB AGM detailed the increasing need for funding and donations to match the increasing demand</li> <li>d. The CFB is looking for volunteers for Trick or Treat Fundraiser on October 26th via Instagram</li> <li>e. Questions centered around CFB referendum re tuition payments: funding has not yet been released by the university to the CFB. There was a jump from 2000 to 12,000 visits a year over the last three years, leaving a deficit of \$83,000. No data is collected on students who use the CFB donations. Participation in CFB efforts is highly encouraged.</li> <li>f. B. Kucher, VP Student Life, highlighted the late September snack and school supply drive put on by the Dean of Students, GSA, SU and CFB</li> </ul> <p>E. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> </ul> <p>F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> <li>b. University HR upgrading policies re discrimination, harassment and duty to accommodate. New policies regarding discrimination and harassment policies for students, which previously was not specific to students.</li> <li>c. Collective Agreement Bargaining updates: the lead negotiator for the GSA was off sick before the negotiations, leading to a delay to December 3rd for sharing our proposal</li> <li>d. PSAC did not renew the contract for the GSA support contact at PSAC without notifying us, so our concerns have been noted. M. Raja will have a meeting with the Regional Executive Vice-President on Wednesday to ensure compliance with our service agreement.</li> </ul> <p>G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <p>H. GSA Speaker: Farhan Khalid</p> <p>I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi and Zain Patel</p> <p>J. GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair: Tianxu Wang</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> </ul> <p>K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair</p> <p>L. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> </ul>	
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9		<p>Question Period</p> <p>A. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, October 17, 2024)</p> <p>B. Oral Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Zain Patel, DRO, raised concerns about a presentation from Bright Learning Lab regarding the Saver AI app, suggesting a potential conflict of interest involving L. Moodley, GSA ED, who was associated with H10 AI, the parent company. Lewie clarified that he had declared this conflict in March and was not a paid employee, but rather providing strategic advice on an educational project to the parent company while completing his PhD. He emphasized that participation in the app's pilot program was voluntary and that there would be safeguards to protect student data, ensuring it would not be used for AI training.</li> <li>b. Another council member expressed concerns about data privacy and how the app would improve without using student data. L. Moodley responded that a contract would define how the app collected feedback and emphasized that the app's purpose was to gauge interest among students. He assured that the board would maintain control over any contracts, ensuring no financial benefits for GSA members. H. Arshad encouraged any councillors with further concerns to reach out to him.</li> <li>c. Further questions arose about potential costs for students after the pilot ended. Lewie stated that the free pilot was temporary and would assess whether the app met student needs. He acknowledged that if the university decided to adopt the app, there might be discussions about student fees, but this remained uncertain.</li> <li>d. The need for clearer definitions of conflicts of interest in GSA bylaws was discussed, with an emphasis on transparency and responsibility among council members. It was suggested that if the council wanted to vote on the app's adoption, it should be raised as an actionable item at the next meeting.</li> <li>e. Finally, B. Kucher, VP Student Life, provided an update on efforts to restore the sexual assault center, noting that new leadership was working on hiring counselors and revitalizing volunteer programs.</li> </ol>	
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		Adjournment 7:58 PM	
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Item 6.1a: 2023-2024 Draft GSA Audited Financial Statements - Outline of Issue

**Outline of Issue**

**2023-2024 Draft GSA Audited Financial Statements**

**Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements.

**Background:**

The GSA is required by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (Section 97(1)) to have its financial statements audited annually. Our auditor, Leon Pfeiffer, is with the firm RSM Canada.

**Note from the Executive Director:** The audit process begins with a Letter of Engagement, which sets out the parameters of the audit. Members of our audit firm, RSM Canada, then review relevant financial information and other files prepared by the Financial Team. The audit representative(s) have access to any info they wish to see, and pose questions to the President, Accountant, Financial Manager, and Executive Director (and to other members of the organization, as required). The audited financial statements then proceed to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC), GSA Board, GSA Council, and, ultimately, the Board of Governors for information. They are also posted on the GSA website.

The GSA BFC originally received, for information, the 2023 -2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements at their meeting of October 17 2024. The GSA Board approved them at their meeting of October 23 2024. Members of the GSA BFC have been invited to attend the discussion of the audited financial statements at the November 18 2024 GSA Council meeting.

**According to our Auditor, the GSA’s financial position continues to be strong at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.**

**Jurisdiction:**

Post-Secondary Learning Act, Section 97(1):

*“Each student organization of a public post-secondary institution shall provide audited financial statements annually to the board of the public post-secondary institution and shall make the audited financial statements available to students of the public post-secondary institution on request.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.3.5.a:

*“Following the GSA fiscal year end, the Accountant and the Financial Manager, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), will arrange for an audit of the GSA’s financial records by an accredited auditor as required by the Post-Secondary Learning Act. Audited financial statements are normally due ninety (90) days after the GSA’s fiscal year-end. Audited financial statements will be submitted by the Auditor to the President and ED (or delegate); then to the GSA BFC for information; then to the GSAB for approval; then to GSA Council for information and onward transmission to the University of Alberta Board of Governors. The Accountant and the Financial Manager will prepare draft financial statements and the year-end working papers.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.5.4:

*“The GSA BFC will receive information and advice from the GSA Auditor with respect to any information and recommendations the Auditor wishes to present.”*



Item 7.1a: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes - Outline of Issue (October 21  
Second Reading)

### **Outline of Issue**

**GSA CEO Restrictions on: Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D, E related Nominating committee policy and by law update around restrictions on paid members.**

#### **Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council, for approval, recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, **GSA Restrictions on Multiple Positions: Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D, E.**

**Note:** This is the second reading of changes to GSA Bylaw. The first reading occurred on October 21, 2024 and the second reading will be on November 18 2024. Bylaws require two readings and policy only one reading. Policies are effective and in place from October 22 2024.

#### **Background:**

We conducted this review to identify potential conflicts of interest in holding multiple positions within the GSA that report to the Council. Understanding these conflicts helps ensure transparency, fairness, and impartiality, particularly in roles like the CRO and DEO during elections. By addressing these issues, we aim to improve the governance structure and maintain the integrity of decision-making processes within the GSA.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

##### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

*"These Bylaws ... may be amended by two two-thirds majority votes of Council held on seven calendar days' notice of motion and no less than one week apart."*

##### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

*"GSA Policy is under the jurisdiction of GSA Council and may be amended by a simple majority vote of GSA Council at any meeting of GSA Council."*

##### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

*"GSA Standing Committees advise GSA Council and the GSA Board (GSAB) on policy relevant to their mandates, and have full authority to take actions set out within those mandates."*

##### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.POL.4.2.a

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

Item 7.1b: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes (October 21 Second Reading)

<b>Current Bylaws</b> (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	<b>Rationale</b>
<p><b>Restricting Members on External Awards from Applying to Paid Positions</b></p> <p>D.BYL.1.1c GSA Members who are recipients of external awards that explicitly prohibit paid employment are ineligible to apply for DEO and Council-Elected Officer positions that provide a stipend or an honorarium. However, such members are encouraged and permitted to run for volunteer-only positions within the GSA, where no financial compensation is provided.</p>	<p>This ensures compliance with external award conditions while promoting fairness and transparency by allowing only eligible members to apply for paid roles</p>

<b>Current Policy</b> (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	<b>Rationale</b>
<p><b>Policy for Nominating Committee</b></p> <p>E.POL.2.8a All nominees are encouraged to attend the GSA Council meeting where election will be held for their contested position. During the meeting, each nominee will be allocated a maximum of 30 seconds to present their qualifications and reasons for seeking the position. This brief introduction will allow Council members to assess the suitability of the nominees.</p>	<p>Encouraging candidates to attend council meetings and present themselves ensures informed decision-making and increases transparency in the election process. Plus, this policy statement also streamlines the process.</p>

Item 7.2a: U-Pass Referendum Question - Outline of Issue

### **Outline of Issue**

#### **2025 U-Pass Referendum Question**

##### **Suggested Motion for the GSA Council:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass program, to run concurrently with the 2025 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached.

##### **Background:**

Over the past several months, students and staff from Edmonton post-secondary institutions have been in negotiations with ETS about renewal of the U-Pass program. In October of 2024, an Agreement-In-Principle was reached with participating institutions for a 3-year contract, ending August 31, 2028. While 2025 - 2026 will see no fee increase (remains at \$180.00/term), fees will go up by \$2.50 in 2026 - 2027 (\$182.50/term) and another \$2.50 in 2027 - 2028 (\$185.00/term).

A pilot program was established in 2021 that defined additional exceptions for students. These exceptions have now been made permanent. The Agreement-In-Principle will be signed upon a successful referendum vote during the 2025 GSA General Election.

Additional information concerning the history of the U-Pass and the proposed fee structure can be found in the attached background to the referendum question.

The attached question was drafted in consultation with the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), who reviewed it and approved of its submission to the GSA Board and GSA Council on 1 November 2024.

##### **Jurisdiction:**

###### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section J.BYL.2.1

*"A referendum on a clearly worded 'Yes' or 'No' question regarding any dedicated, on-going fee for a service, facility, or lobbying effort can be initiated by the GSA Board (GSAB) subject to a simple majority vote at any meeting of GSA Council. Normally a referendum will be held in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSAB."*

###### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section J.BYL.2.3

*"Notwithstanding the process by which a referendum is initiated, a clearly worded referendum question will be developed in consultation with the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the GSAB, and GSA Council. GSA Council will approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of a referendum question."*

###### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section J.BYL.3.1

*“Referenda questions will be submitted to GSA Council for approval no later than the first mailing for the November GSA Council meeting, unless a referendum is determined to be urgent by the GSAB as noted above.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Policy, Referenda, Section J.POL.7.6.

*“GSA Council will vote whether to approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of the question.”*

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Policy, Referenda, Section J.POL.7.7

*“If GSA Council approves the holding of a referendum and the wording of the question, a referendum is then held in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda.”*

## Item 7.2b: U-Pass Referendum Question and Background

**2025 U-PASS REFERENDUM QUESTION****Background:**

U-Pass is the student group discount program that provides students with unlimited public transit offered by Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route).

In 2006, the GSA, along with the University of Alberta Students' Union and the MacEwan, Norquest, and NAIT student associations, negotiated to implement the initial U-Pass program. The first GSA U-Pass referendum was approved in 2007 and subsequent referenda have been approved in 2010, 2013, 2017, and 2021.

More information about the U-Pass can be found [here](#).

The current U-Pass agreement is due to expire on 31 August 2025. After negotiation, an Agreement-In Principle was reached that would see the cost of the U-Pass set on a 3 year contract at the following rates:

2025-2026 - \$180.00/term

2026-2027 - \$182.50/term

2027-2028 - \$185.00/term

The previous Agreement-In-Principle ran a pilot program with additional exemptions under the U-Pass program for:

- Seniors (any student over the age of 65 at the start of a given academic term);
- Recipients of the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program (any student who can demonstrate participation in the AISH program); *and*
- Distance (any student who can demonstrate their principal residence is greater than 100 km from Edmonton).

After this round of negotiations, these exemptions are now permanent.

In November 2024 GSA Council, pursuant to GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda, approved the wording for the 2025 U-Pass referendum question and the holding of the referendum.

**Question:**

Do you support the continuation of the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) subject to the following conditions:

- The U-Pass would provide unlimited usage of regular transit systems in Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route) within the participating municipalities' service area during the Fall, Winter, and/or Spring/Summer (May-August)

terms to all continuing graduate students enrolled in at least one course for credit in a term (includes thesis registrations);

- The cost of the U-Pass fee to each graduate student would be mandatory and set at \$180.00/term in 2025-2026, \$182.50/term in 2026-2027, and \$185.00/term in 2027-2028 (for each of the Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer terms), beginning 1 September 2025 and extending to 31 August 2028;
- Under certain circumstances, some graduate students would continue to be exempt or eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program (below are excerpts from the current U-Pass agreement concerning exemption and opt-out provisions, with the addition of the pilot program exemptions.

**Excerpt from the 2025-2028 U-Pass Agreement (addition of pilot program exemptions)** The following graduate students would be exempt from the U-Pass program:

- “a) a Student who is not enrolled in any course for credit located on a University of Alberta campus within any of the Municipalities for that School Term;
- b) a Student who is enrolled only in the Executive MBA program;
- c) a graduate Student who is designated as an off-campus thesis student by the University; *and*
- d) a Student who is enrolled only in a program of study offered by the University’s Faculty of Extension, which program of study leads to a certificate.”

The following graduate students would be eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program:

- “a) a Student who has a valid Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS) registration, Strathcona County Mobility Bus registration, or St. Albert Handibus registration, Spruce Grove Specialized Transit Service (STS) registration, Fort Saskatchewan Special Transportation Services Society (STSS) registration, or Leduc Assisted Transportation Services (LATS) registration; and is able to prove their registration with a valid photo ID card;
- b) a Student who has a valid CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) registration and is able to confirm such registration with a valid CNIB-issued photo ID card;
- c) a Student who is currently an employee of a transit system owned and operated by any of the Municipalities and is able to provide written confirmation on official letterhead of their employment at the beginning of each School Term; *and*
- d) a Student who, pursuant to official University regulations, policies or procedures (as may be amended from time to time) respecting registration and fees assessments, has the option of being assessed the athletics and recreation fee or the health services fee by the University, and who is in a cooperative work experience program or work internship and who is registered only in one or more courses designated as “Work Experience” for that School Term, and who is either: i. For Fall and Winter

Terms - fulfilling their course requirements outside the boundaries of the Municipalities for the majority of the School Term; or

ii. For Spring/Summer Term – fulfilling the majority of their course requirements outside of the boundaries of the Municipalities; or

e) a Student who is enrolled at another post-secondary educational institution and is required to participate in a transportation program similar to the U-Pass Program (if any) being offered to students of this other post-secondary educational institution by said institution and the Municipalities.”

f) a Student who is, or will be turning, 65 years of age or older during the relevant School Term, and who can provide documentation verifying the same;

g) a Student with a valid registration in the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program during the relevant School Term, and who can provide documentation verifying the same; or

h) a Student whose principal residence is outside of a 100km radius measured from the main campus on which their in-person courses are delivered, and who can provide documentation verifying the same.

Item 8a: Nominees for GSA Speaker

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): TWO (2) NOMINEES**

These positions were advertised in the GSA newsletters of October 25 and November 1 2024, with a deadline of November 8 2024. Two (2) nominations were received for the position of Speaker and GSA NoC-approved.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the November 18 2024 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday November 18 2024 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday November 18 2024 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

**Speaker**

- 1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)**
- 2. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)**

**Jurisdiction:**

Section D.BYL.3.1.d

*"The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, and DRO will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council."*

Section E.POL.3.2.a

*"The GSA NoC provides GSA Council with the names of nominees for all GSA Council-Elected Officer positions. These positions will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement."*

Section E.POL.3.2.b

*"Prior to forwarding the names of nominees for GSA Council-Elected Officer positions, the GSA NoC will review the resumes and bios received with reference to eligibility criteria as set out in GSA Bylaw and Policy and will forward the names of nominees who meet the eligibility criteria to GSA Council."*

**Biographies and brief resumes of the nominees for Speaker are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).**



**Nominations for SPEAKER  
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)  
Two (2) Nominees**

**1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology) - Resigned from DRO as of Nov. 12, 2024**

<p><b>Statement of Interest</b></p>
<p>I have served on GSA Council for approximately two years – 1 year as a councillor and 1 year as DRO. I would like to continue being involved with the GSA by serving as the GSA Speaker. During my time as DRO, I extensively familiarized myself with bylaw and policy, namely for Elections and Referenda, but have also familiarized myself with other relevant pieces such as council structure, meeting procedures, ACB procedures among others. The role of Speaker is to act as neutral and impartial arbiter of bylaw and policy during Council meetings and I believe I am suited to this role - my experience as DRO showcases my ability to provide neutral and impartial perspectives in various situations. The 2024 General and Re-Election as well as the recent 2024 by-election demonstrate my ability to problem solve and work efficiently in high-stress situations.</p> <p>I also believe that familiarity with bylaw and procedures are essential for all council members. Some potential initiatives I'd like to take to ensure all council members (new and continuing) are on the same page include providing brief reminders of relevant policies at the beginning of meetings, namely on how elements of meetings like voting, motions and such work. This would also support council attendance and engagement. Council attendance is also crucial to ensure the graduate student base is aware of significant updates and changes. Familiarity with bylaw and procedures in council meetings could go a long way to promote better engagement in council. Other strategies to promote engagement would be to effectively manage question periods to ensure key points are addressed concisely and to facilitate discussion as needed.</p>
<p><b>Bio</b></p>
<p>Currently I am in my fourth year of a PhD in Cell Biology. During my undergraduate and graduate studies, I have been extensively involved with various initiatives on campus, such as Week of Welcome, NeurAlbertaTech, Cell Biology Students' Association, and the GSA Council. All of my experiences on campus have enabled me to develop key skills in communication, conflict resolution, leadership, problem solving and critical thinking. More recently, I have served as DRO for the GSA which has played a significant role in furthering my understanding of GSA operations.</p> <p>Furthermore, I recognize that there is still much for me to learn, but I believe that the skills I've developed and the experiences I have had over the years will provide an essential framework for my success in the position of GSA Speaker. My aim is ensuring that the Council meetings continue to run smoothly and in accordance to bylaw and policy, and ensuring there is mutual trust and respect between all members of council including DEOs and council members.</p>

**2. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)**

<p><b>Statement of Interest</b></p>
<p>As a student I believe having a blend of extracurricular activities alongside your main course of studies is a balance approach towards once education. I would like to take on this Speaker role as a way of grooming myself to tackle societal issues pragmatically from a neutral stand point. I believe this is also a way to develop my sense of responsibility in leadership roles.</p>
<p><b>Bio</b></p>
<p>I am Sumaila Sulemana. I am currently a PhD student at the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta where I am currently researching waste rocks such as mine tailings potentiality for CO2 mineralization. Prior to this I had my masters in Geoscience and Sustainable Energy at the University of Manchester and a Bachelor's degree in Geological Engineering at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. During my BSc. I worked with the Student Representative Council by helping them initiate the free studies of French and Chinese courses for students across campus. I happen to also form business initiatives with my colleagues and our team came in 3rd place in a business innovation challenge that was organized by the Student Representative Council at that time. I worked as a Teaching assistant after my BSc. at the department of Geological Engineering where I was still handling the affairs of students. In my masters degree at the University of Manchester, I had the opportunity to serve as a Program Chairperson of the Society of Petroleum Engineers(SPE) student chapter and served as a Secretary for American Association of Petroleum Geoscience(AAPG)student chapter at the University. I recently held a position as an ATLAS representative of the Remote Sensing and GIS department at the department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, UofA. I led my team to participate in the just-ended Imperial Barrel Award Competition 2024 where we represented the University of Alberta and came first in the Regionals and won second place in the Global final. As someone who likes learning languages as a hobby, aside from my fluency in English, I have basic to medium fluency in French, Chinese and Arabic. I believe my experiences in the side of academia has set a good basis for me to apply for the role of Speaker at the Graduate Student Association at the University of Alberta and I think this position will also help build up my leadership skills. Thank you.</p>

Item 9.1a: GSA President Report

**2024-2025 President  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2024/11/13

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between Oct 21 to Nov 18, 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Oct 21	Monthly Meeting with Chief of Staff, J. Smith & President Flanagan
Oct 21	GAC Meeting
Oct 21	Meeting with NASA Rep
Oct 22	DEO Governance Training Session
Oct 22	People Strategy Launch Event
Oct 23	University Awards Night: Teaching, Learning & Research
Oct 24	Ellement Contract Negotiations
Oct 24	Campus Recovery Pledge Follow-Up Meeting
Oct 24	Referendum Edits
Oct 28-31	CAGS Conference
Oct 29	Leg Day for Provincial Advocacy Planning
Oct 31	Leg Day for Provincial Advocacy Planning
Nov 4	Ellement Contract Discussion
Nov 4	Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney
Nov 5	NDP Caucus
Nov 5	UCP Caucus
Nov 5	UC GSA Team Lunch
Nov 6	GFC APC
Nov 6	GSA Fall Social
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall

Nov 12	GSA Budget Discussion
Nov 12	DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting
Nov 13	TBAC Meeting
Nov 13	Meeting with BoG Student Reps
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 Chief of Staff, J. Smith & President Flanagan

Dear Council Members,

I hope this report finds you well. As we reflect on November and the significance of Remembrance Day, we also find ourselves midway through our term in office, with just three months remaining before the elections for the next executive team. Our institutional memory reminds us that much of our success today stands on the foundation laid by our predecessors, and we should acknowledge their contributions. I am very excited for you all to see the progress that my team has made regarding our Strategic Work Plan (SWP), which will be presented at the next Council meeting.

Working towards our ambitious SWP plan is no small feat—it demands dedication, and a commitment to prioritizing graduate students’ interests. Among our most important goals this year is the course-based graduate scholarship. I’m thrilled to share that the application for this hybrid award will open next week. This initiative, built on two years of our research, is both timely and essential, given the immense financial pressures faced by our course-based graduate members. While the university’s administration has lauded this effort, we have worked tirelessly to ensure they also recognize that inadequate funding is often the root cause of a subpar academic experience. We continue to advocate for an increase in our graduate student support fund to sustain these awards in future years, as the GSA may not be able to fund them indefinitely otherwise.

Similarly, we are actively collaborating with the university to address the lack of guaranteed minimum funding packages for thesis-based master’s students. Following the approval of the PhD minimum funding package, this area has seen limited attention. However, in my meeting with Provost Dr. Verna Yui, she has committed to addressing this gap. She acknowledged the vital contributions of graduate students to knowledge production, and teaching in our institute that aspires to climb international ranking and be a leader in research.

It goes without saying that optimal academic experience surpasses beyond just funding. It’s about ensuring that graduate students can pursue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. I’m pleased to report that the

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre has resumed full operations, thanks to the efforts of the new Assistant Dean of Community Wellness Support, Dunsie Strohschein. Drop-in services and virtual appointments are now available during operational hours (8:30 AM to 4 PM). Additionally, I've been working closely with the UASU to advocate for a campus recovery pledge, supporting students and community members recovering from drug addiction. Discussions with the Dean of Students' office have been promising, and I will follow up with UASU President (Lisa Glock) to formalize our vision for this initiative.

As you all are aware that transitioning to a new health and dental insurance provider (Ellement) was a major undertaking. As someone who dealt with numerous concerns about StudentCare's inefficiencies during my tenure as VP Student Services, this is an issue close to my heart. I'm pleased to report that we have finalized our contract negotiations with Ellement, and the board will soon present recommendations for plan benefits to the Council. We are committed to ensuring that we will at least keep the same benefits while striving to reduce the plan premiums. This is going to be a challenging task given that current inflationary pressure in Alberta is around 3%.

This month, I also attended the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies Conference in Toronto with our VP Academic (Rija), which offered valuable insights into funding and supervision practices across Canadian institutions. These ideas will help inform our ongoing student-supervisor survey, which is currently in the planning phase.

Externally, our VP External Parman and I engaged with provincial stakeholders, including the Minister of Advanced Education (Rajan Sawhney) and NDP, UCP MLA caucuses, to advocate for graduate student priorities. Our key asks included 10% targeted funding in terms of scholarships and bursaries for graduate students, more transparent MNIFs guidelines, institutional accountability regarding tuition fee proposals, carve outs in Bill 18 for post-secondary institutes, student loan forgiveness via creating a policy to encourage students to stay in Alberta to get this facility, and finally amendments in the Labour relation code (LRC) to allow academically employed graduate students to choose their own bargaining agent by amending 58.4(a)(c), and striking out 58.4(2), 58.2(b). The feedback from these meetings has been encouraging, particularly regarding targeted funding and LRC amendments. We also met with the UCGSA to discuss reviving ab-GPAC, recognizing the importance of a unified provincial graduate advocacy body.

Finally, regarding the tuition fee town hall and the upcoming proposal, I must emphasize the financial pressures faced by our members. Over 70% of CFB members are graduate students, yet many live below the minimum standard of living set by the university. The lack of financial aid for course-based master's students, combined with the alarming finding that 40% of respondents in our recent mental health survey reported being clinically diagnosed with mental health issues after starting their graduate studies, highlights the urgent need to address these challenges. Notably, inflation in Alberta is currently at 3%, which is significantly lower than last year. Additionally, according to Stats Canada, the percentage increase in tuition fees across Canada this year is lower (1.84%) compared to last year's increase (2.5%). For context, the University of Calgary proposed increases of just 2% for domestic students, 4% for international students, and 0% for thesis-based programs. I urge you all to amplify your constituents' concerns at the upcoming town halls—our collective voice is crucial to making a difference.

In closing, transparency and accountability have been my guiding principles as President. I admit that this year has been particularly challenging due to factors beyond my control. I have been working closely with the staff to implement significant changes in our bylaws to ensure greater accountability within our association. That said, I want all of you to know that I take your concerns very seriously and have done my utmost to address them, whether they relate to operational matters or transparency in decision-making. I encourage all of you to familiarize yourselves with our integrated bylaws & policy and board policy documents to provide informed feedback. I have always strived to adhere to the bylaws, but I am also eager to seek your advice on how we can further enhance the transparency in our operations. I understand that this process may take longer than anticipated, but I assure you that together, we can create lasting positive change for our association.

I want to thank our management team, Lewie and Cindy, and our dedicated staff—Grace, Dorota, Brandy, Vanessa, and Seidy—for their invaluable contributions. Your hard work often goes unseen but is deeply appreciated. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all. Let's continue to strive for a better graduate experience, together.

Sincerely,  
Haseeb Arshad  
President, GSA

Item 9.1b: GSA Board Report

**GSA Board  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA Board
Date: 2024/11/13

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.

**13 November 2024 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Estimated Travel Expenses for the CASA Advocacy Week 2024 Conference, Kids & Company Discussion, Future with CASA Discussion, Student Meeting Reports Reminder, DEO's Reports

Motions and Agreements:

**Motion:** That the GSA Board APPROVE the estimated expense for two (2) representatives to attend the Canadian Association for Student Associations (CASA) Advocacy week, November 24-29, 2024, in Ottawa, Ontario BK **MOVED.** RK Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6 November 2024 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

U-Pass Referenda Question, GC-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes for Section O, Awards Policy, Savver AI Discussion, Work Ticket System, Proposed Changes to the Education Amendment Act 2024, the Health Statutes Amendment Act 2024, and the Fairness and Safety in Sport Act Discussion, DEO's Reports, Last week of November Scheduling.

Motions and Agreements:

**Motion:** That the GSA Board RECOMMEND to GSA Council the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass program, to run concurrently with the 2025 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached. BK **MOVED**. PS Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**Motion:** That the GSA Board RECOMMEND to GSA Council, for approval, the recommended changes to GSA Policy: Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section O.POL.2.5 and 2.7. BK **MOVED**. SI Seconded. HA, BK, and RK voted against. SI and PS abstained. **NOT CARRIED**.

### **23 October 2024 GSA Board Meeting**

#### Main Agenda Items:

My UAlberta App Presentation, Student Financial Support Process for Emergency Bursaries, 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements, IRCC Updates, DEO's Reports

#### Motions and Agreements:

**Motion:** That the GSA Board RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION and forward the GSA Council the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements. BK **MOVED**. SI Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

I am happy to answer any questions.

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



Item 9.1d: GSA Governance Committee Report

**GSA Governance Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council Members
From: Vice-Chair GSA GC
Date: 2024/11/13

Dear Council Members,

On November 5, 2024, the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) met to review the proposed bylaw and policy updates to GSA Policy, Section O.POL. 2.5 and 2.7. After careful consideration, the GSA GC voted to recommend the proposed changes to the GSA Board for further review.

The GSA Board further debated the proposed changes and decided to vote against bringing these changes to council this month. The rationale behind not bringing the changes to council at this time is based on the need for further consideration with both the Budget and Finance Committee and the Awards Selection Committee.

I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Thanks,

Benjamin Kucher, VP Student Life and GC Vice-Chair

Item 9.2: GSA VP Academic Report

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

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

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 21 to November 18 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Oct 21	Graduate Program Support Team Meeting
Oct 21	GAC Meeting
Oct 22	DEO Training Session
Oct 23	GFC Nominating Committee
Oct 23	University Awards Night: Teaching, Learning & Research
Oct 28-31	CAGs Conference
Nov 4	Graduate Program Support Team (GPST)
Nov 4	GFC Executive Committee
Nov 6	CASA Campaign Tabling Session
Nov 7	GFC Programs Committee
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
Nov 7	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC) - Meeting #2
Nov 7	Council on Student Affairs
Nov 12	LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting

Nov 13	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee
Nov 13	GAC Meeting
Nov 15	GFC Council Caucus
Nov 15	College of Health Sciences Round Table Discussion
Nov 18	GPS Caucus

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are well. Fall term continues to be a busy term for us as we work to further the key initiatives and priorities for this year.

**(October 21) Graduate Program Support Team Meeting'**

I attended the GFC Programs committee meeting. We discussed an item on the updates to Code of Applicant Behavior (CoAB), that called for a review of the existing CoAB and the Admissions Policy. The recommended approach was the rescission of the CoAB and to move the information about application misconduct and consequences into the Admissions Policy to streamline the policies. We also discussed changes and clarification in language around external examiners in candidacy and final thesis defense. The meeting concluded with a consultation on an interdisciplinary program in sustainability that is being proposed by the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

**(October 28-31) CAGS Conference**

Along with GSA President H. Arshad, I attended the 62<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) Annual Conference, which was themed "Graduate education in an age of uncertainty: challenges & opportunities". I had the opportunity to learn about and discuss the current landscape of graduate studies in Canada. We presented the reports from our financial realities survey and mental health survey, steps taken to address the issues and some recommendations. The program included a keynote address by Dr. Joseph Aoun, President of Northeastern University. It was an insightful guide for Canadian universities to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with the transformative effects of artificial intelligence. The program included a comprehensive update from the Tri-Agency Council (CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC) on innovations in supporting Indigenous & racialized graduate students. This was a wonderful opportunity to network with administrators, faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students from across Canada.

**(November 6) 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. We were able to meet with some graduate students and learn about the impact of these grants on their life as a graduate student.

#### **(November 7) GSA Tuition Town Hall**

We hosted a town hall to present the updates on the tuition proposals for the upcoming academic year. The University has proposed a 2% tuition increase for domestic graduate students keeping in line with the tuition increase cap as defined by the provincial government. We will be hearing about the proposal for international tuition increase at the council meeting and will be hosting another townhall following that. Historically, these town halls have not been very well attended. I would encourage you all to attend the town hall session and voice your concerns about the proposed tuition increases.

#### **(November 7) GFC Programs Committee**

I attended the GFC Programs committee meeting. We discussed the new Master of Nurse Practitioner Practice, changes to Masters of Science in Laboratory Medicine and Pathology 2<sup>nd</sup> level specialization in molecular diagnosis, as well as some changes to the GFC Programs Committee Composition.

#### **(November 12) LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting**

I am continuing to participate in LMS of future advisory committee meetings. This committee is working to ensure a smooth transition from Moodle (e-class) to the new LMS Canvas. Together with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), this committee is also working to create resources like a glossary of terms comparing features of e-class and canvas, as the needs are being identified by the university community. The new LMS Canvas is being adopted in 3 phases with some departments and courses transitioning to Canvas this Fall. For this academic year, e-class and Canvas will both be accessible for students depending on where the course is being housed. As we navigate through this change, please feel free to pass on any comments or concerns about Canvas to me, and I will take them to the committee on your behalf.

We are continuing work on the implementation of PhD minimum funding and tuition relief mechanisms for thesis-based students. I will provide your more updates as they come through.

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 9.3: GSA VP Student Life Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Benjamin Kucher
Date: November 13, 2024

Date	Meeting
October 21	World Social Justice Day Working Group Initial Meeting
October 21	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
October 23	Prayer, Worship & Ceremony Space Support Grant - Adjudication
October 23	UASSC
October 23	Living Library Chat
October 23	Deans' Advisory Committee
October 24	SGBV in WIL Working Group
October 25	CASA Board Meeting

October 25	EDI Plan Steering Committee
October 29	NIAC Meeting
October 31	SEAP Support Team Meeting
October 29-31	National Gathering on Unmarked Burials – The Release of an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework
November 1	Food Services RFP Consultation
November 4	Meeting with Dunsı Strohschein
November 5	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
November 5	UC GSA Team Lunch
November 5	Meeting with C. Smith, EDI Vice-Provost
November 6	EDI Reading Group
November 7	Unitea/ASSET Discussion
November 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
November 7	Meeting with Indigenous Services Canada
November 8	Meeting with NIAC Delegate
November 8	CASA Board Meeting
November 11	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
November 12	Living Library: Event Sub Group
November 12	NIAC Meeting
November 12	Meeting with DoS
November 12	Meeting with R. Sanghera
November 13	NIAC/Painted Warriors Ranch Meeting
November 13	Meeting with UASU NIAC Delegate
November 14	SGBV in WIL Working Group

November 14-17	NIAC/CASA Board Retreat
November 18	Meeting with Dunsı Strohschein

GSA Council Report

Date: November 13th, 2024

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

I hope you are all staying warm as we transition into the colder months. It’s hard to believe that we’re already nearing the end of both the fall semester and the calendar year! Time seems to have flown by, and I hope everyone is wrapping up their projects and getting ready for a well-deserved winter break. Below, I have provided an update on my recent activities and initiatives since our last meeting.

This past month has been particularly busy as we gear up for Advocacy Week with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), scheduled to take place next week from November 24th to 30th. Much of my work has been centered on refining and preparing the key asks we will be presenting to the federal government during this critical week of advocacy. These asks are designed to address pressing issues affecting students nationwide, and you can find more details on CASA’s website [here](#). Additionally, I have been involved in drafting briefs and other formal submissions to the House of Commons to further articulate our priorities and proposals. We are in the final stages of editing a comprehensive summary advocacy document, which delves deeper into CASA’s specific policy recommendations and the research supporting them. Once this document is finalized, I will ensure that it is shared with all of you, so you have a thorough understanding of the issues we are advocating for.

Another significant area of focus this month has been engaging in extended, thoughtful conversations with the Vice-Provost of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and the Dean of Students. These discussions have revolved around analyzing the impact of new policies recently introduced by the United Conservative Party (UCP) during their Annual General Meeting. In particular, we are assessing how these policies may affect marginalized and underrepresented groups within our university community. Our conversations have explored existing support systems across different units on campus, identified gaps in those supports, and strategized on how best to connect students with resources that can meet their specific needs.

In addition to these ongoing dialogues, I have been actively working on initiatives to foster a stronger sense of community and engagement around EDI principles among students. One of the key efforts in this area has been the establishment of an EDI Reading Group in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS). We have successfully hosted the first two of our four planned sessions in October and November, with the remaining sessions scheduled for February and March of next year. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with registration exceeding our initial expectations. This group has provided a valuable platform for graduate students to critically engage with literature on EDI topics, while also offering a space to share personal reflections and experiences.

Additionally, I've been working closely with Unitea and the ASSET program to coordinate a collective tea time centered on the theme of social connection and combating the pervasive sense of isolation often experienced by graduate students. This initiative will align with the upcoming GSA Social Hour, scheduled for December 3rd from 1 to 2 pm. It aims to create a relaxed, inclusive environment where students can connect and support one another over discussions that matter to them. Further details will be shared through the GSA newsletter in the coming week, so please keep an eye out for those updates.

As we head into the final stretch of this year, I remain committed to advocating for the needs of our student community, especially in areas where their voices are most crucially needed. The efforts outlined above represent only a fraction of the work being done, and I am deeply grateful for your continued support and collaboration. As always, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these initiatives in greater detail. I look forward to continuing our shared efforts in the months ahead, and I wish you all a warm and restful holiday season.

Thank you for your continued support and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or feedback you may have.

Benjamin Kucher,

GSA VP Student Life.



Item 9.4: GSA VP Student Services Report

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

<b>To:</b> GSA Council
<b>From:</b> Saad A. Iqbal
<b>Date:</b> Nov. 14, 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended by Saad A. Iqbal  
*Below is a list of meetings I attended between October 18 and November 14, 2024 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
October 21	CFB Policy Committee Meeting
October 22	CFB Prairie Urban Farm Volunteering
October 22	DEO Training Session
October 23	DOA Meeting
October 28	FGPS Caucus (attended on behalf of VP Academic, Rija Kamran)
October 28	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting
October 28	GFC Executive Committee meeting (attended on behalf of VP Academic, Rija Kamran)
October 29	Meeting with Kevin Friese
October 29	CFB Discussion with Erin O’Neal
October 30	FGPS Council
November 1	Heroes for Health Grant Discussion
November 4	Student Group Mental Health Network
November 4	CFB Board Meeting
November 5	UAI Meeting with Diana Kim
November 5	UC GSA Team Lunch

November 12

GSA and DoS Bi-Monthly 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 October 18 and November 14, 2024:

#### CFB Policy Committee Meeting

In this routine meeting, the CFB Policy Committee discussed items of concern to streamline the policies of the Campus Food Bank.

#### DEO Training Session

This training session for the GSA Executive Board covered organizational policy setting, recognizing the goals of leadership, defining key challenges, prioritizing key mandates, defining what success is and how to get there. Together, we discussed and went through exercises that encouraged us to think about our individual and collective challenges and opportunities to work together in realizing the goals and objectives of the GSA.

#### DOA Meeting

In this meeting, members were briefed about the World Mental Health Day programming along with feedback on how to enhance future events and activities. Overall, these discussions were around the River Valley Wellness Walk led by Dr. Dwayne Donald, the Mindful Drawing Workshop led by Stephanie Medford, and the Light Up Purple Campaign. The GSA front desk was also decorated with Light Up Purple Campaign materials during the week of World Mental Health Day. Participants appreciated being out in nature, hands-on activities, and learned how to slow down, allow themselves to experience feelings, and not be judgmental about themselves as well as Indigenous wisdom and Knowledge. The meeting also covered updates related to mental health and wellness activities from various groups on campus.

#### MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting

In this meeting, the MNIF Report (2023-24) was shared for approval followed by a preliminary proposal discussion. For context, attendees were also provided with MNIF agreement terms of reference, the 2022-23 MNIF Annual Report and the MNIF Committee Work Plan (2024-25). Important issues and concerns were also raised by the GSA to seek more clarification about the MNIFs and their usage.

#### Meeting with Kevin Friese

In this meeting, Kevin shared important highlights about the One-at-a-time Therapy (OAATT) program. This is a new program that has been offered since April and is run by the Counselling and Clinical Services. More details about the program can be found through [THIS](#) link. We also discussed some positive updates about Kevin and Erin (CFB) working together to make the food pantry more sustainable by incorporating enhanced fundraising and some creative programming around the 'Adopt a Week Model'. The child-minding proposal whose details were shared earlier in the year has also moved forward and updates will be shared soon.

#### CFB Discussion with Erin O'Neal

Erin O'Neal, the Director of the CFB will be sharing the annual report in one of our upcoming Councils. Considering that food insecurity is a key concern among our graduate students and many councilors have shared their enthusiasm to help support the CFB, I think this would be a great opportunity for the council members to ask questions and show support in whatever capacities they can. We also discussed the rising costs as an issue to maintain sustainable working of the CFB and the food pantry. For context, the cost to run the food pantry for a week is approximately \$1500, which could go as high as \$2000 in the near future.

#### Heroes for Health Grant Discussion

Earlier this month, I shared an idea with the GSA Executive Board to see how the GSA can enhance the service value and the aesthetic appeal of the GSA Parent's Lounge located in Triffo Hall. All Board members agreed that it would be a good initiative to enhance the outlook of the lounge to make it more appealing for children and parents and increase its usage. For this purpose, we are looking at applying for the Heroes for Health Grant. More details can be found through [THIS](#) link.

#### Student Group Mental Health Network

In this meeting, members discussed updates from various groups on campus to support the mental health and well-being of students. Also discussed were ideas about which strategies and events work better and how these may improve in the future.

#### CFB Board Meeting

In this board meeting, we discussed various issues and updates related to the Campus Food Bank. Among the key issues discussed were the rising costs and increasing usage of the CFB and ideas on how to make the CFB's operation more sustainable and productive to counter the rising demand and food insecurity. For context, please note that the CFB spends around \$15,000 per month on groceries and the demand has increased by more than 600% (for more details please visit this [ARTICLE](#) and the CFB [WEBSITE](#)). Despite the financial challenges, the CFB continues to support all clients in effort to not turn away anyone who visits.

#### UAI Meeting with Diana Kim

In this meeting, Diana Kim from the UAI attended on behalf of Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison. Diana and I discussed some of the upcoming events that the UAI organizes every year to see how the GSA can help spread the information to our GSA members. We also discussed three potential events that the GSA and UAI can mutually organize. More details about these events will be shared after receiving some feedback from the Board and the relevant staff members.

#### GSA and DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting

In this meeting, Dr. Ravina Sanghera, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Students discussed key ideas around the purpose and values of the Office of the DoS. Earlier in the term, we requested some statistical data on the use of the Writing Services, Academic Success Centre to understand what the usage of these services looks like at the

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graduate student level. To help us find these details, Dr. Ravina invited Dr. Kate Pratt from the Writing Services who briefed the Executive Board by sharing data about the usage of the services as well as testimonials and feedback from graduate students. It was also discussed that in future, the office of the DoS will also coordinate that various offices and service providers periodically share this data with the GSA Council. For those who wish to learn more about the Academic Success Centre can refer to [THIS](#) link, and for a more detailed overview of the services offered by the Writing Services, through [THIS](#) link.

*A personal Note,*

*Referring to the DEO Training Session held on October 22, one key takeaway for me was the realization that we often forget to celebrate our individual and collective achievements and accomplishments!*

*As graduate students, we juggle a multitude of responsibilities extending to academic progress, research, social engagements, families, and, for many of us, volunteering or job-related commitments. It's easy to dwell on what we haven't accomplished, rarely pausing to reflect on our successes.*

*Therefore, halfway into the fiscal year and moving towards a new calendar year, I wanted to take a moment and celebrate all the collective achievements that we have made so far in our diverse student advocacy and leadership roles. Most importantly, we need to celebrate the individual and collective roles that allow us to serve graduate students in different capacities. In fulfilling these challenging responsibilities, we must remember that our well-being depends on the emotional and mental support we provide each other.*

*As DEOs, many of our achievements and advocacy efforts hinge on collaboration. Although we have different portfolios, we seek collaborative feedback and brainstorm ideas to ensure that everything that we talk about, the initiatives we pick up and the resulting actions are all supportive of our graduate students' diverse needs and help them successfully navigate their graduate journeys. During the first half of our terms, we have achieved great success in advocating for our members both within and outside the University. Our efforts, whether through advocacy, expanding support networks, or enhancing services, demonstrate our shared commitment to improving the graduate journey. As these updates will be shared soon, I will not delve into the details at this time. But these are all important issues to celebrate!*

*Here, the role of our staff members is also crucial. From providing administrative support to consultations, guidance and feedback, our staff is integral for us to carry out our fiduciary responsibilities. In my role as the VPSSE, I have found that our staff is very dedicated to providing their support where and whenever required, and often, even goes beyond their stipulated duties and responsibilities to help us achieve our goals.*

*At the Council level, the diversity of our councillors and their perspectives enriches our decision-making process. Not only does the Council support the effective functioning of the GSA but also holds the GSA Board accountable. Whether it is through advocating for diverse needs and perspectives, providing suggestions, and feedback, or raising concerns about particular issues, the Council ensures that whatever the GSA does is aligned with the best interests of our graduate student community. So, please don't ever feel that any comment, suggestion, question, or even criticism is unnecessary or irrelevant if it is for the collective benefit of the GSA members. If nothing else, you are just fulfilling your obligations to the Council!*

*In the end, I would like to thank my fellow Board and staff members for their support, feedback, and guidance, and to our councillors for actively participating in the discussions, raising important issues, and helping us keep on track to support graduate students. I would also like to thank all the volunteers of the GSA, members of various standing committees, and non-voting members whose contributions and commitment to supporting the GSA is equally important.*

*I would like to end with this: in fulfilling our respective roles and responsibilities, let us all take time to reflect back and appreciate what we do individually and collectively – for ourselves and others. And while we do this, let us also continue to uplift each other and ensure we keep achieving great successes!*

Best Regards,

**Saad Arslan Iqbal**

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

Item 9.5: GSA VP External Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Parman Mojir Shaibani
Date: November 13, 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
Oct 9	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
Oct 10	UASSC Update/Q&A
Oct 15	Meeting - Chancellor & GSA Executives
Oct 16	Advisory Search Committee for Vice President International and Enterprise
Oct 18	Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy
Oct 21	ESA Meeting
Oct 22	Alumni Careers Committee Meeting
Oct 29	GSA Social Hour
Oct 31	Legislature day preparation
Nov 1	ISA Council Meeting
Nov 4	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Grant Hunter
Nov 4	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney
Nov 5	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with NDP

Nov 5	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with UCP
Nov 6	CASA Campaign Tabling Session
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
Nov 8	GAC Meeting
Nov 12	CASA GIRC Consultation
Nov 12	CASA FPC Consultation

**Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (Oct 9<sup>th</sup>)**

The meeting addressed several key issues, including concerns over potential interference by the Alberta government in federal research grants to universities and issues related to Bill 18. Updates were provided on upcoming strike votes and rallies by education support workers within Edmonton Public Schools and the broader public sector. The session also included updates on the bargaining processes and labour concerns affecting various post-secondary institutions across Alberta. Participants expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the bargaining process on member engagement and momentum. Discussions included strategies for collaboration among unions and preparations for potential job action. The organizers encouraged student groups to share their perspectives and labor-related concerns.

In addition, the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA) is considering an accelerated bargaining timeline, with potential job action anticipated as early as 2023. The Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) at the University of Alberta also faces negotiation challenges.

**UASSC Update/Q&A (Oct 10<sup>th</sup>)**

A report was presented detailing the activities of the University of Alberta Safety and Security Committee (UASSC). The UASSC team highlighted their responsiveness to safety, security, and maintenance issues on campus. They referenced a 2024 Student Experience Action Plan survey in which 89% of students selected "Somewhat agree" or "Agree" in response to whether they felt safe on campus. However, a baseline from the 2024 Student Experience survey showed only 58% of students selected "Agree" when asked if they feel safe at U of A. This discrepancy was attributed to the 58% reflecting those who chose "Agree" exclusively, while the 89% included responses for both "Agree" and "Somewhat agree."

I also raised concerns regarding the water fountain filters in the DICE building, as there appears to be no evidence of recent filter replacements. I was advised to submit a maintenance ticket for this issue. Unfortunately, it has now been over a month without any updates on the status of this request. Additionally, it was revealed to me that many water fountains across campus, including most in the DICE building, do not currently have filtered water.

**Meeting - Chancellor & GSA Executives (Oct 15<sup>th</sup>)**

This meeting provided the Chancellor with an update on the specific responsibilities of each GSA Department Executive Officer (DEO). The Chancellor also offered his support to students, including assistance with providing resources to the campus food bank.

#### **Advisory Search Committee for Vice President International and Enterprise (Oct 16<sup>th</sup>)**

The purpose of the meetings done with this committee is to review applications for the new Vice President, International and Enterprise positions and ultimately select a candidate for the role. All matters discussed in these meetings are confidential.

#### **Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy (Oct 18<sup>th</sup>)**

The presentation covered definitions for tuition waivers, remissions, scholarships, sponsorships, bursaries, and salaries. A significant portion of the meeting focused on outlining the differences between the tuition fees paid by domestic students and those paid by international students at different institutions across Canada.

#### **ESA Meeting (Oct 21<sup>st</sup>)**

Carrie Hotton-MacDonald, the first female ETS branch manager, shared plans to conduct a transit survey for post-secondary students. ETS aims to gather insights through focus groups to shape the survey questions, with the project timeline running from fall 2024 to spring-fall 2026.

Abdul, the University of Alberta Students' Union VP External, suggested combining transit and affordable housing topics in one survey. I proposed that students should have the option to choose which part to complete, to avoid survey fatigue.

We also discussed the city's welcome package for students, noting that it's difficult to access and lacks appeal. Abdul plans to provide this feedback to the mayor.

#### **Alumni Careers Committee Meeting (Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

In the meeting, we reviewed mentee applications and discussed recommendations for upcoming Career Services activities. We also explored strategies for student-to-alumni transitions, considering new ideas and conducting an environmental scan. Additionally, we took a tour of the Campusbridge platform and discussed the rollout of Career Conversations in partnership with the Career Centre.

#### **GSA Social Hour (Oct 29<sup>th</sup>)**

A Halloween themed social hour was hosted to connect with the graduate students.



**Legislature day preparation (Oct 31<sup>st</sup>)**

The purpose of this meeting was to prepare the attendees for upcoming discussions with provincial MLAs.

**ISA Council (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>)**

The primary focus of the meeting was to select two distinct chancellors for the ISA—one representing graduate students and the other representing undergraduates. Unfortunately, the graduate candidates were unavailable, so their selection was postponed to a future meeting. However, the undergraduate candidates presented, and a chancellor was successfully chosen from their group.

**Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Grant Hunter (Nov 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Among these, Minister Hunter committed to reviewing the proposal to separate labor relations and advocacy.

**Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney (Nov 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Minister Sawhney committed to allocating some targeted funds for the graduate students. Additionally, she asked how the funding should be allocated, and we suggested directing it more toward students through grants and bursaries rather than university administration.

**Graduate Students' Legislature Day with NDP (Nov 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Additionally, the possible impacts of Bill 13 on students were also discussed. There were hopes of increasing targeted funding for

graduate students, supporting the separation of labor relations from student advocacy, clarifying the roles of the GSA and its representatives, and engaging in a deeper discussion about Bill 13 with authorities.

#### **Graduate Students' Legislature Day with UCP (Nov 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. The UCP is likely to support the separation of labor relations from student advocacy through their authority.

#### **CASA Campaign Tabling Session (Nov 6<sup>th</sup>)**

The event was held to encourage student participation in securing federal grants by gathering insights on the level of financial aid needed to support their basic needs.

#### **GSA Tuition Town Hall (Nov 7<sup>th</sup>)**

The university gave a presentation to inform students about upcoming tuition increases. The meeting also provided a platform for students to voice their concerns about the tuition hikes and overall student experience.

#### **CASA GAC Meeting (Nov 8<sup>th</sup>)**

The meeting reviewed the materials that the CASA GAC committee will present during Advocacy Week at the end of November.

#### **CASA GIRC Consultation (Nov 12<sup>th</sup>)**

The policy changes regarding CASA GIRC were discussed.

#### **CASA FPC Consultation (Nov 12<sup>th</sup>)**

The policy changes regarding CASA FPC were discussed.

Item 9.5a: GSA Awards Selection Committee Report

**GSA Awards Selection Committee  
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting**

Dear GSA Council,

Here are some updates on recent discussions regarding policy changes to the awards offered by the GSA. After reviewing the recommendations suggested by staff and students, suggestions were brought forward for further discussion with the Awards Selection Committee (ASC). I then prepared a list of policy changes and Saad (ASC vice-chair), along with staff, prepared a final draft of the proposed policy changes, which I reviewed and approved to be brought to the Governance Committee.

However, due to the rushed process, I did not have sufficient time to review the changes in detail with the staff. While the Governance Committee (GC) approved the changes, some concerns were raised, particularly by Haseeb (GSA President), who could not attend the Governance Committee meeting but shared valid feedback separately after the meeting. Following these concerns, the GSA Board decided to allocate more time for further review, allowing us to refine the policy changes and enhance the quality of the awards program.

The proposed changes will be discussed in greater depth at the next council meeting.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns at [gsavpext@gmail.com](mailto:gsavpext@gmail.com).

Best regards,

Parman Mojir Shaibani  
GSA VP External and ASC Chair

Item 9.6: GSA AVP Labour Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 13 Nov 2024

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 22 Oct to 15 Nov 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
22 Oct	DEO Training Session
22 Oct	People Strategy Launch
23 Oct	Meeting with PSAC Regional Executive Vice President Pierie Region
24 Oct	Meeting with UofC and UofL Labour Representative
26 Oct	Trick or Treat – Campus Food Bank
29 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
29 Oct	GSA Social Hour
29 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
30 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
30 Oct	GPS Council
30 Oct	GSA Grievances Discussion (Confidential)
31 Oct	ACAA Solidarity Meeting
1 Nov	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)

5 Nov	Lunch with UofC GSA Team
6 Nov	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
6 Nov	GSA Fall Social
7 Nov	Grievances Discussion (Confidential)
7 Nov	GSA Tuition Townhall
14 Nov	Meeting with PSAC Representatives
15 Nov	UofA JHSC 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:

**(Oct 22) DEO Training Session**

In this training, the attendees discussed the organization's goals and plans of the GSA. Through different sessions, we focused on sharing ideas, setting priorities, and identifying best practices for moving the GSA forward. The training covered organizational priority setting, recognizing leadership goals, defining challenges, prioritizing mandates, and defining what success looks like and how to achieve it.

**(Oct 22) People Strategy Launch**

I participated in the launch of the People Strategy as a member of the committee. The strategy is designed to help the university attract, develop, and retain top talent while fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes collaboration, well-being, and ongoing learning in support of teaching, research, and engagement. It focuses on strengthening our culture and workplace in ways that empower, energize, and support individuals, positioning the University of Alberta as an employer of choice that helps people build fulfilling and long-term careers. I urge you all to read the people strategy report [here](#).

**(Oct 23) Meeting with PSAC Regional Executive Vice President Pierie Region**

We were recently informed that Keira Gunn is no longer with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), which came as both a surprise and disappointment given the positive working relationship we had established with her. Unfortunately, we were not notified about this change directly by PSAC and I had to reach out to a PSAC representative within the Edmonton regional office to get more information. In a meeting with Marianne Hladun, PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President (REVP), Prairies, we voiced our concerns regarding the lack of communication from PSAC and the potential challenges ahead. However, we were reassured that PSAC would honor the service agreement and continue to provide support in the same capacity.

Since that meeting, we have been assigned a new representative from the PSAC Edmonton Regional Office. While we remain optimistic that this transition will not impact the upcoming bargaining process or the level of support

we've come to expect from PSAC, I will be closely monitoring the situation to ensure that the necessary support is provided in line with our service agreement.

**(Oct 24) Meeting with UofC and UofL Labour Representative**

In this meeting, we addressed our ongoing situation with PSAC regarding the service agreements. We are working together to gain better clarity on the interpretation of the agreement and to ensure that our members receive the support outlined within it. Additionally, we emphasized the importance of keeping collective bargaining as a top priority throughout this process.

Over the month, I have been focused on resolving several issues faced by academically employed graduate students. In addition to that, we are preparing to present our bargaining proposal to the university on December 3.

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 9.6a: GSA Labour Relations Committee Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 13 Nov 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council:

We have been focused on expanding our outreach by providing more autonomy and support to our faculty stewards. Each steward is now assigned to directly communicate with their faculty, introducing themselves and explaining their role and how they can support academically employed graduate students (AEGSs) in their roles as employees. This approach will help strengthen the connection between stewards and members within each faculty, enabling more direct support for our members. Additionally, we are working to finalize the list of departmental groups to extend union support to them. This initiative will allow us to collect broader feedback and ensure we stay well-connected with our members through these groups. We will be reaching out to these groups soon to begin building strong connections with each of them.

Besides that, we are seeking five AEGSs to serve on the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC). Nominees must come from departments not currently represented, which include Electrical & Computer Engineering, Policy Studies, Biological Sciences, Human Geography, and Pharmacology. If interested, please submit your nomination by Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 12:00 PM (Noon) by filling the form provided in this [link](#). The nomination for the GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC) was also included in the AEGS newsletter sent on Wednesday. It is crucial that we fill these positions as soon as possible, as we are currently struggling to reach quorum for our regular LRC meetings. Your help participation is greatly appreciated.

In Solidarity,

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

## Item 7: GSA Senator Report

**To:** GSA Council  
**From:** Ola Mabrouk, GSA Senator  
**Date:** November 12, 2024  
**Subject:** Summary of GSA Senator Activities

**Report on Activities as GSA Senator**

As part of my ongoing commitment to representing and advocating for the graduate student body, I would like to highlight my recent activities and contributions in my role as GSA Senator:

**1. Senate Plenary Participation:**

I attended the Senate Plenary sessions on two consecutive days, fully engaging in discussions on key issues impacting the university community. My presence ensured that graduate students' perspectives were included in decision-making processes.

**2. Committee Involvement:**

I was an active member of several committees (confidential). My contributions helped to shape the outcomes and final decisions of the committee.

**3. Meeting with the Chancellor:**

I had the opportunity to meet with the Chancellor one-on-one to discuss topics of importance to the graduate student community, such as housing, tuition and minimum guaranteed funding. This meeting allowed me to emphasize the needs and concerns of graduate students.

**4. Support for Campus Food Bank:**

Recognizing the increasing need for food security resources, I actively participated in a fundraising initiative for the campus food bank. Through this effort, we were able to raise donations, which will contribute to supporting students experiencing food insecurity on our campus.

These engagements have provided me with valuable insights and opportunities to advocate effectively for the graduate student community. I look forward to continuing my work as GSA Senator and contributing to initiatives that benefit our students.

**Thank you for your attention and support.**

Ola Mabrouk  
GSA Senator



Item 9: GSA CRO/DRO Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee  
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting**

Dear GSA Council,

I hope everyone had a restful Reading Week!

I have been working closely with ERC to make recommendations for minor policy changes to the elections section of the Bylaw and Policy. I also met with Haseeb to discuss his suggestions for referenda policy changes. Thank you to ERC as well as Cindy and Grace for their continued work on these revisions.

I also met with Cindy and Saad to discuss the upcoming U-Pass referendum, which is being presented at this Council meeting. If this referendum passes GSA Council, it will appear on the ballot for all graduate students to vote on. As the deadline for referenda to be brought to Council was November, the U-Pass is the only potential referendum for this year's election cycle.

The nominations for the upcoming election will open in late January. Please keep this timeline in mind and make your constituents aware of it as well.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact [gsa.elections@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.elections@ualberta.ca).

Sophie Shi  
GSA Chief Returning Officer

Item 10: GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair Report

**2024-2025 Nominating Committee Vice Chair  
Report to GSA Council for the October 21 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council

From: Tianxu Wang

Date: November 13, 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I am pleased to provide an update on the recent activities of the Nominating Committee since the last GSA Council meeting. Our primary focus has been on addressing outstanding vacancies within several key committees to ensure the GSA continues to function effectively with capable and committed members.

All advertisements for GSA committee vacancies were reviewed by the Nominating Committee prior to dissemination. Currently, we have vacancies for the roles of GSA Speaker and GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB). While we received two nominations for the Speaker position, unfortunately, no applications were submitted for the ACB role. We are actively working to broaden our outreach and will continue to issue calls for nominations to encourage applications for this important position.

For the Speaker position, the evaluation process involving structured interviews with all candidates was conducted by the GSA Associate Director and myself. To ensure thorough documentation and transparency, we prepared an interview report following each session. This report, which included detailed assessments of each candidate's qualifications and responses, was distributed to all Nominating Committee members along with the candidates' bios and relevant background information. These materials provided the Committee with a complete view of each candidate, facilitating an informed decision-making process.

The voting phase was conducted in a transparent and orderly manner. Each Nominating Committee member cast their vote based on a careful review of the interview materials and the candidate's potential to fulfill the responsibilities of the Speaker role. We ensured that each member had time to consider the interview findings, enabling a thoughtful and unbiased selection process.

We are dedicated to maintaining a high standard of integrity and inclusiveness in all our work. The Nominating Committee will continue to actively seek qualified candidates for vacant roles and refine our processes as needed to align with the GSA's goals and values. We remain committed to fostering a collaborative and equitable environment that serves the best interests of the GSA community.

Sincerely,

Tianxu Wang

Nominating Committee Vice Chair

Item 11: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee  
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Elsie Osei  
Date: 13th November 2024

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) met in November to review and propose updates to the GSA Bylaws regarding referenda and elections. Critical suggested revisions include changes to some sections in Elections Bylaw I, which now limits the renewal period for referenda to three years, and Referenda Bylaw J, which mandates a one-year waiting period before a failed referendum can be re-submitted. The committee also discussed the importance of GSA members being nominated by fellow graduate students, including all candidates in the all-candidates forum and the need for strict adherence to the nomination form requirements. The election timeline was revised to promote fairness, and the need for prompt communication during the election period was

highlighted. The members of the ERC will vote to recommend these suggested revisions to the GSA Governance Committee.

These changes are crucial for maintaining fairness and transparency in GSA elections and referenda processes. Limiting referenda renewal to three years ensures that issues are regularly revisited, allowing for timely updates and preventing outdated mandates. The one-year waiting period for re-submitting failed referenda discourages redundant proposals and fosters thoughtful consideration before resubmission. Peer support is guaranteed by mandating nominations from other graduate students. Equal participation is encouraged by combining all candidates in forums. During the election period, clear instructions on the nomination form and timely communication ensure an efficient and equitable process that fosters confidence in the democratic processes of the GSA.

The meeting concluded with the CRO's onboarding presentation for the new committee members, ensuring we are well-prepared to contribute effectively to the election and referendum processes. This onboarding session provided a comprehensive overview of the ERC's responsibilities, key policies, and upcoming tasks, allowing us to familiarize ourselves with our roles and expectations.

Sincerely,

Elsie Osei, Chair of the GSA ERC

Item 12: GSA Management Report

**GSA Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for November 18 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Lewie Moodley  
Date: November 18, 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I trust this message finds you well and you are enjoying the cooler days and getting ready for the winter/holiday season. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the various initiatives and activities currently underway within the Graduate Students' Association. Below, I outline the key points of our ongoing efforts.

Our recent social events, the Halloween-themed social and the Fall Social, were great successes, with many graduate students in attendance who thoroughly enjoyed the festivities. The atmosphere was lively and engaging, bringing together students from various departments. A special thank you goes to Brandy Ellamil for his hard work and dedication in organizing these events, ensuring that everything ran smoothly and that everyone had a wonderful time. His efforts were instrumental in creating a fun and welcoming environment for all.

The staff have been working behind the scenes to organize the tuition townhalls. We have planned two tuition townhalls in the month of November 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.

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 November.

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.

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,

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Lewie Moodley

Executive Director

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, October 23 2024**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **October 16 2024**.

#### **Executive Director update:**

- Grants are now open and students have started using the Good Grants platform. Good Grants has successfully launched and we have 30 applications submitted so far.
- Our annual audit with RSM Canada is ongoing; this is an annual financial report. The audit report will be presented to the BFC on October 17 2024, Board on October 23 and Council on November 18.
- Nearly all spots on Standing Committees are filled; there is one spot left for Councillors on ACB. We are arranging monthly meetings for Standing Committees, as well as training sessions.
- Social Media updates:
  - **Facebook** Reach: +40.9% (Oct 15 - Oct 22) Followers: no change (current: 2065)
  - **Instagram** Reach: -11.9% ( Oct 15 - Oct 22 ) Followers: -1 follower (current: 1438)
  - **Twitter/ X** Followers: no change (1354)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, November 6 2024**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **October 23 2024**.

#### **Executive Director update:**

- Grants are now open again for summer. All forms in Good Grants have been completed and we will continue training with our specialist on next steps to complete the setup. We have 60 new applications so far this month. For new system updates, we have been approved for integration with CCID.
- The staff are preparing to host a range of seasonal events, including the Halloween Coffee Break and the Fall Social. We're focused on fostering a welcoming community atmosphere that celebrates the season and brings everyone together.
- The staff have been working behind the scenes to get everything ready for the Tuition Town Hall and upcoming Council.
- We have been onboarding and working with our new HR and Payroll manager who is getting acquainted with her new role. The leadership team is working hard to bring forward the first draft of the 2024-2025 budget in the coming weeks.
- Elections - No nominations for ACB have come forward and only one has come forward for GSA Speaker, we are sending out an additional reminder email to the Council. A new opening has come up on the GSA EDIC that will be advertised as well.
- Social Media updates:
  - **Facebook** Reach: +104.5% (Oct 22-Nov 4); Followers: +2 followers (current: 2067)
  - **Instagram** Reach: +125.6% ( Oct 22-Nov 4); Followers: +12 followers (current: 1450)
  - **Twitter/ X** Followers: -2 followers (1352)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, November 13 2024**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **November 6 2024**.

#### **Executive Director update:**

- Grants are now open and students have started using the Good Grants platform. Good Grants has successfully launched and we have approved over 70 applications so far.
- We are currently preparing our 2025-2026 budget which will be due at the end of this month as a first draft.
- Our annual audit with RSM Canada is ongoing; this is an annual financial report. The audit report will be presented to the BFC on October 17, Board on October 23 and Council on November 18 2024.
- Nearly all spots on Standing Committees are filled; there is one spot left for Councillors on ACB. We are arranging monthly meetings for Standing Committees, as well as training sessions.
- Social Media updates:
  - **Facebook** Reach: +11.8% (Nov 4 - Nov 12); Followers: -2 followers (current: 2065)
  - **Instagram** Reach: +35.3% (Nov 4 - Nov 12); Followers: +14 followers (current: 1464)
  - **Twitter/ X** Followers: -9 followers (1343)