

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, May 27, 2024, at 6:00 pm
Held in-person in Council Chambers

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

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

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

Speaker Farhan Khalid in the Chair

OPEN SESSION	Attached Numbered Pages
1. Approval of the May 27, 2024 Agenda <i>(suggested time: 1 min)</i>	1.0
2. Approval of the Minutes from the April 15, 2024 GSA Council Meeting <i>(suggested time: 1 min)</i> Attachment: i. Minutes from the April 15, 2024 GSA Council Meeting	2.0 - 2.5
3. Changes in GSA Council Membership <i>(suggested time: 1 min)</i> i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members <i>(If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting)</i> ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members <i>(If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last GSA Council meeting is approaching, please let us know)</i>	
GSA Council Member Announcements	
4. GSA Council Member Announcements <i>(suggested time: 5 min)</i>	
Presentation Item:	
5. Creation of the new GSA Vice President of Indigenous Relations role <i>(suggested time: 20 min)</i> Haseeb Arshad (President) will present the item and introduce the guests (Tiffany Kung).	
Action Item:	
6. New GSA Officer Portfolio Creation (Vice President – Indigenous Relations) Haseeb Arshad (President) and Benjamin Kucher (Vice - President Student Life) will present the item i) Outline of the issue ii) Recommended Bylaw updates and Portfolio responsibilities	6.0 6.1
Discussion Item:	
7. GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP) Consultation <i>(suggested time: 10 min)</i>	7.0-7.7

Prepared by L Moodley for GSA Council May 27 2024

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<p>Haseeb Arshad (President) will present the item <i>Members will be asked to provide feedback on the strategic priorities that the GSA Board will be focusing on in the upcoming year and outlined in the 2024-2027 Strategic Work Plan (SWP). The Town Hall has taken place and themes have been collated. The final SWP will then be presented to GSA Council over the summer months.</i></p>	
<p><u>Elections</u></p>	
<p>8. GSA Council Elections (suggested time – to be determined) Arseniy Belosokhov (GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair) will present the item.</p> <p>GSA Council-Elected Officer Positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Returning Officer (CRO), Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), and Senator Attachment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominees for Speaker (1 GSA Member vacancy) and Deputy Speaker (1 GSA Member vacancy) 8.0-8.3 ii. Nominees for CRO (1 GSA Member vacancy) and DRO (1 GSA Member vacancy) 8.4-8.6 iii. Nominees for Senator (1 GSA Member vacancy) 8.7-8.11 <p>GSA Standing Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) Attachment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominees for the GSA ACB (4 Council Member vacancies) 8.12-8.13 ii. Nominees for the GSA ACB (3 GSA Member vacancies) 8.14-8.17 c. GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) Attachment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominees for the GSA NoC (1 GSA Member vacancy) 8.18-8.19 d. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) Attachment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominees for the ERC (1 GSA Member vacancy) 8.20-8.21 <p>9. Farhan Khalid (GSA Speaker) will present this portion of the item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (GSAB/GSA NoC) Attachment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominees for the GSAB/GSA NoC (2 GSA Councilor vacancies) 9.0-9.1 	
<p><u>Reports</u> (suggested time: 15 min)</p>	
<p>10. President (Haseeb Arshad, President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. President’s Report 10.0-10.4 ii. GSA Board Report (no written report at this time) iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report (no written report at this time) iv. GSA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report (no written report at this time) v. GSA Governance Committee Report (no written report at this time) 	
<p>11. Vice-President Academic (Rija Kamran, Vice-President Academic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Academic’s Report 11.0-11.1 	

12. Vice-President External (Mariam Mughees, Vice-President External) i. Vice-President External's Report	12.0-12.1
13. Associate Vice-President Labour (Muneeb Masood Raja, Vice-President Labour) i. Associate Vice-President Labour's Report	13.0-13.2
14. Vice-President Student Services (Saad Iqbal, Vice-President Student Services) i. Vice-President Student Services' Report.	14.0-14.3
15. Vice-President Student Life (Benjamin Kucher, Vice-President Student Life) i. Vice-President Student Life's Report	15.0-15.2
16. Senator (Ola Mabrouk) i. Senator's Report (no written report at this time)	
17. Speaker (Farhan Khalid, Speaker) i. Speaker's Report (no written report at this time)	
18. Chief & Deputy Returning Officers (Sophie Shi, Chief Returning Officer & Zain H. Patel, Deputy Returning Officer) i. Chief Returning Officer's Report ii. Deputy Returning Officer's Report	18.0 18.1
19. GSA Nominating Committee (Violet Sun, GSA Nominating Committee Chair) i. GSA Nominating Committee Report (no written report at this time)	
20. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (Andrew Pohlka, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair) i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report	20.0
21. GSA Management (Lewie Moodley, Executive Director) i. Executive Director's Report ii. GSA Annual Report 2023-2024	21.0-21.4 21.5-21.14
<u>Question Period</u>	
Written Questions (none received at this time; questions may be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4 PM on Thursday, May 23, 2024)	
22. Oral Questions	
23. Closed Session: Audit Report to be presented by the Executive Director	
<u>Adjournment</u>	

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, 15 April 2024 at 6:00 pm
Held in-person and online [via Zoom] in Council Chamber

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bishoi Aziz (President)	Goldy Thevaruparambil Raju (Councilor-at-Large)	Amanda Nhi Tran (Chemistry)	Pouneh Mohammadi Nejad (Math & Stat'l Sciences)	Victoria Young (Political Science)
Rija Kamran (VP Academic)	Arseniy Belosokhov (Councilor-at-Large)	Kiera Greenaway (Civ & Enviro Eng)	Simon Walker (Med Microbio & Immun)	Emilie Desnoyers (Psychiatry)
Hamid Hassani (VP External)	Laura Manerus (Councilor-at-Large)	Cassandra Baragar (Comm Sci & Disorder)	Saeed Ataei (Neuroscience)	Cheryl Pan (Psychology)
Tiffany Kung (VP Student Life)	Uthman Khan (Anthropology)	Michelle Bey (Dentistry)	Nancy Hammer (Nursing)	Nicole Lau (Renewable Resources)
Haseeb Arshad (VP Student Services)	Andrew Poholka (Biochemistry)	Zhuohao Li (Primary - Drama)	Leo Remillard (Alternate - Oncology)	Yan Xue (Sociology)
Muneeb Masood Raja (AVP Labour)	Samantha Tan (Biological Science)	Lyudmyla Honcharova (Alternate- Drama)	Constantin Mouzaaber (Ophthalmology)	Allyson Brinston (Guest)
Camila Rodrigues De Freitas (Speaker)	Carly Weber (Biomedical Eng)	Shaun Woudstra (Earth & Atmo Sci)	Janye Johnson (Pharmacology)	Benjamin Kucher (Guest)
Sophie Shi (CRO)	Mehri Ebrahiminejad Baloochi (Business PhD)	Hannah Louis (Indigenous GSA)	Farid Saberi (Philosophy)	Margaret Decoste (Guest)
Zain Patel (Deputy Returning Officer)	Solomon Hussein (Alternate -Cell Biology)	Taylor Walsh (Primary -Lab Med & Path)	Evan Vienneau (Physics)	Christine Hymanyk (Guest)
Ola Mabrouk (Senator)	Hadi Afsaneh (Chem & Mat Eng)	Tamara Semeria Maitret (Alternate- Lab Med & Path)	Grace Essuman (Physiology)	

Deputy Speaker Camila Rodrigues De Freitas in the Chair.

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

Approval of Agenda**1. Approval of the 15 April 2024 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 15 April 2024 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. Bishoi proposed to add a closed session. BA MOVED. RK SECONDED.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Approval of Minutes**2. Minutes from the 18 March 2024 GSA Council Meeting**

Members had before them the 18 March GSA Council meeting minutes, which had been previously distributed. TK **MOVED**; HH **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

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

- i. **Introduction of New Councillors:** Samara (unknown) Solomon (Cell Biology), and Tamara (LMP)
- ii. **Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members :** Taylor (LMP), Nancy (Nursing), BA, Hamid, and Tiffany (GSA Board)

GSA Council Member Announcements

4. **GSA Council Member Announcements:** None at this time

Presentation Items:

5. **Canadian Alliance of Student Association (CASA) (suggested time: 20 min)**
Bishoi Aziz (President) will present the item and introduce the guests (Wasiimah Joomun).

Discussed during the meeting was CASA's role in national student advocacy, presented by WJ via Zoom. In the overview WJ provided, she mentioned that CASA represents more than 365,000 members from 24 institutions, operates as a non-partisan entity that emphasizes flexible membership and transparency, with all financials and meeting records publicly accessible. WJ highlighted CASA's research-backed advocacy efforts, which recently included initiatives to increase student grants and address housing issues for international students. Notable achievements such as meetings with government officials like Minister Freeland were discussed, showcasing CASA's influence on graduate student funding and broader policy changes. Council members asked about the tangible outcomes of CASA's advocacy, questioning the absence of graduate associations from larger institutions and the effectiveness of federal versus provincial advocacy. Responses clarified CASA's impactful federal-level approach and the shift towards a more student-driven operational model, aiming to expand involvement and address specific student needs more effectively.

Action Items:

6. **2024 GSA General Election and Election of the Associate Vice-President Labour Results:** To Receive for Information for the Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority (suggested time: 5 min)
Sophie Shi (Chief Returning Officer) will present the item.

MOTION: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2024 GSA General Election and Associate Vice-President Labour Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President [Muhammad Haseeb Arshad], Vice-President Academic [Rija Kamran], Vice-President External [Mariam Mughees], Vice-President Student Life [Benjamin Kucher], Vice-President Student Services [Saad Arslan Iqbal], and Associate Vice-President Labour [Muneeb Masood Raja]. TK **MOVER**. HH **SECONDER**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

7. **GSA joining Canadian Alliance of Student Association (CASA)**
Presented by BA

ACTION: That GSA Council **APPROVE** recommended by the GSA Board, that the University of Alberta Graduate Students Association join the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) with full membership status. TK **MOVER**. BA **SECONDER**.

Discussed the potential of the GSA joining the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) to enhance national-level advocacy for graduate students. The presentation highlighted CASA's focus on critical areas like Tri-Council Funding and international student immigration. Concerns from council members were raised about the actual benefits for everyday graduate students, with skepticism about the tangible outcomes of such advocacy. Key points from the discussion included the redirection of existing membership funds from the now-dissolving ab-GPAC to CASA, allowing for a cost-neutral transition. Also touched on the benefits of having a voice in federal advocacy, especially concerning funding and immigration policies that affect graduate students directly. Questions were raised about the value of joining CASA, with some attendees questioning the impact on individual students and the representation of graduate student concerns compared to undergraduate issues. BA and HH highlighted that CASA's research and lobbying efforts, although traditionally undergraduate-focused, could be leveraged to address graduate-specific concerns by becoming full members and actively participating in setting agendas and influencing policy.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

8. **GSA Health and Dental Plan Changes for 2024-2025**

Presented by BA

Guest: R Patches, Program Manager, Studentcare

MOTION: A motion that GSA Council **receives for information**, on recommendation of the GSAB, changes to the Plan coverage for 2024-2025 year and rationale behind the 15% increase to the plan fee. BA **MOVER**. RK **SECONDER**.

Discussed the potential changes to the Graduate Student Association's health and dental plans, focusing on the reduction of Preventative Dental coverage from 80% to 70% and a proposed 15% increase in the plan fee for the 2024-2025 academic year. RP presented detailed insights into the financial health of the plan, emphasizing the need for adjustments due to a significant rise in claims and the decreasing enrollment which affects the overall funding pool. Key points included the necessity of managing the reserve fund carefully to avoid depleting it entirely, as it has been used in recent years to subsidize the increasing costs of claims.

Concerns were raised about the quality of care from network dentists and the potential impact of reduced coverage on students. RP reassured that all network dentists are rigorously vetted and spot-checked to ensure they meet high standards and offer the required discounts. RP also explained the strategic financial planning behind the proposed changes, aiming to stabilize the fund by increasing fees and slightly reducing benefits, which would lessen the yearly financial draw from the reserve fund. This approach is intended to preserve the fund's longevity and ensure future financial stability without drastically impacting student costs or benefits.

ACTION: GSA Council **APPROVE on recommendation of the GSAB** reducing Preventative Dental per visit maximum to from 80% to 70% for the 2024-2025 year and a 15% plan fee increase.

Seven (7) **OPPOSED**. Motion **PASSED**.

9. **Labour Relations Committee Policy changes**

Presented by MR

ACTION: That GSA Council **APPROVE** recommended by the GSA Board, the policy amendments put forth for the Labour Relations Committee policy. TK **MOVED**. HA **SECONDER**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Discussion Items:

10. **GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP): Update to GSA Council (suggested time: 20 min)**

Bishoiz Aziz (President) will present the item.

Discussion focused on significant achievements and ongoing projects as the current board's term ends. Highlights included progress on the PhD minimum funding package, set for an upcoming vote, and the new VP Indigenous Relations position aimed at strengthening ties with indigenous communities. Efforts to diversify funding through the Growth Fund were also discussed, which aims to reduce reliance on membership fees and enhance student services.

The board's restructuring efforts to decrease bureaucracy and improve value for members were noted alongside the successful Peer Support Program, which has significantly boosted mental health support for students. The discussion also covered the need for long-term planning and governance updates to sustain and enhance the GSA's effectiveness.

Questions from the council centered on the details of the restructuring process and future priorities, emphasizing the importance of support for graduate students completing their programs and advocating for more robust academic and mental health services. The meeting underscored the necessity for future boards to focus on strategic, long-term planning to maintain the GSA's effectiveness and relevance.

Elections

11. GSA Council Elections (suggested time – to be determined)

Arseniy B. (GSA Nominating Committee Vice- Chair) will present the item.
GSA Council-Elected Officer Position

Voting for candidate-at-large happened with one nominee on the ballot.

12. Camila (GSA Deputy Speaker) will present this portion of the item

b. GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (GSAB/GSA NoC)

Attachment:

i. Nominees for the GSAB/GSA NoC (1 GSA Councilor vacancies)

Reports

13. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Board

No written report at this time

iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee

No written report at this time

iv. GSA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report

No written report at this time

v. GSA Governance Committee

No written report at this time.

14. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted. RK highlighted the PhD Minimum Funding proposal will come to GPS council for a vote. Urged council members who are aware of their GPS Reps to attend the council and support the proposal.

15. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted. HH highlighted his meeting with the Mayor of Edmonton focused on the safety and affordability of housing in the city, specifically addressing concerns related to student safety in transit and downtown areas. A notable outcome from these discussions was the announcement of a 26% increase in bus service coverage throughout Edmonton, enhancing accessibility and convenience for students. Also touched on the rising rent costs, which are regulated by the provincial government, not the city. HH also facilitated introductions between the incoming VP and city officials to ensure ongoing dialogue and to address these critical issues further. Plans are in place to continue these engagements to advocate for student needs effectively.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee

No written report at this time.

16. Vice-President Student Life

i. Vice-President Student Life's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted.

17. Vice-President Student Services**i. Vice-President Student Services' Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted. HA mentioned the student-who-parent survey coming out in the last week of April, encouraging students who parent to participate in the survey.

18. Associate Vice-President Labour**i. Associate Vice-President Labour's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted. MR highlighted his visit in Calgary for some workshops with other union representatives. Also discussed creating solidarity statement for many of the academic unions that are on strike or are going on strike.

ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

No written report at this time.

19. Senator**i. Senator's Report**

No written report at this time.

20. Speaker**i. Speaker's Report**

No written report at this time.

21. Deputy Returning Officer**i. Deputy Returning Officer's Report**

DRO summarized the recent GSA elections, noting an unprecedented 18 formal complaints, significantly higher than in previous years. The DRO congratulated the incoming DEOs and expressed gratitude to team members and the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) for managing the complex election process. The DRO outlined the complaint handling process, emphasizing that the ACB has the final say on appeals. A significant issue this year was a complaint against the GSA Speaker, leading to a re-election for the VPSL position to ensure fairness. The DRO acknowledged that responses to a discriminatory comment made by a candidate were not strong enough and assured stricter handling in the future. The DRO highlighted the need for revising the ACB's procedures and bylaws to improve election integrity going forward.

22. GSA Nominating Committee

- **GSA Nominating Committee Report reported by Arseniy B**
- Vacancies in standing committees will be advertised again in May

23. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**■ GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted. AP comments on the loss of institutional memory due to recent GSA restructuring. AP noted that the restructuring led to a significant decrease in familiarity with GSA bylaws and processes among officials, complicating the management of elections. BA clarified that the current elections coordinator has institutional memory and that position is the primary conduit for all things elections. BA added that the other positions were not due to restructuring but chose to resign from their roles with emphasize on only one position being affected by the restructuring.

24. GSA Management**i. Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 April 2024. The report stood as submitted.

Question Period**25. Written Questions**

- a. No written questions were received.

26. Oral Questions

AB asked the outgoing VPs to address their ongoing transition efforts, VPs noted that all work should be completed by the end of the month. Regarding Bill 18, it was mentioned that HA had a meeting with Melissa Padfield, during which they discussed the bill's potential implications on academic freedom and its contribution to increased bureaucracy. The university has not yet taken a definitive stance on the bill. There was a consensus on the need to understand the bill's specifics, particularly how it might affect federal funding for grants, before deciding on any opposition. It was also noted that the bill has not yet been tabled, suggesting a wait for more detailed information before forming a position.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Outline of Issue

New GSA Officer Portfolio Creation (Vice-President Indigenous Relations) : Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy

Suggested Motion:

That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Governance Committee and the GSA Board, the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, as noted in the attached proposal, effective following two readings by GSA Council (in the case of GSA Bylaw) and approval by GSA Council (in the case of GSA Policy), with the changes to take effect on 1 May 2025.

Note: This is the first reading of changes to GSA Bylaw. The second reading will occur on June 24 2024. The recommended changes to GSA Policy are currently presented for information and will be presented for approval on June 24 2024.

Background:

The GSA Board engaged in extensive discussion over the Fall, Winter, Spring of 2023 and 2024, as GSA Council has been previously informed, and decided to move forward with a proposed creation of a new GSA Officer Portfolio. The recommended changes are aimed at creating a Vice-President Indigenous Relations position.

The position would still be considered as a Directly-Elected Officer and would be elected by GSA members during the GSA General Elections. In regards to the stipend for the new position of Vice-President Indigenous Relations, it would be drawn from the GSA's operating budget.

Please note that as the recommended changes impact multiple sections of GSA Bylaw and Policy (some also under the mandates of other GSA standing committees), elements of this proposal have been previously reviewed and/or recommended to GSA Council by the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. The financial aspect of funding this position was raised at the GSA Budget and Finance committee meeting with no objections. The proposal in its entirety was then recommended to the GSA Council by the GSA Governance Committee on April 8, 2024.

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."

Vice-President Indigenous Relations

- Duties
 - The Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) has overall responsibility to represent all graduate students in matters relating to Indigenous relations within the scope of the GSA's operations.
 - The VPIR position is student-facing and intended to interface with First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) graduate students and groups, University committees and institutions, governments, and represent FNMI graduate student perspectives and experiences within the GSA Council.
 - This position will support the other DEOs as they work towards the goals set out in Braiding Past, Present, and Future and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. The burden of educating others on reconciliation, and the burden of advocating for decolonizing or Indigenizing the University or GSA remains on the DEOs as a whole.
 - The VPIR is responsible for connecting with Indigenous student groups and supporting said groups in their engagement with the GSA, as they determine needed.
 - The position of VPIR requires regular weekly contact with the President, ED (or delegate), Executive Coordinator, and the other DEOs.
 - The VPIR will have priority access to the use of the Indigenous Strategic Initiatives fund.
 - The position of VPIR will be filled by a GSA member who is an FNMI student from Canada. In the event that a suitable candidate for the Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) position is not found, the following actions will be taken, in order:
 - A re-election will be held as per I.BYL.5.
 - The GSA Council will be asked to nominate a student who meets the eligibility criteria, in close consultation with the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA). The nomination process should give due consideration to the current IGSA Councillor and IGSA President as possible nominees, among other eligible candidates
 - If no student is found after all of the above, to ensure the GSA is still fulfilling their commitment and responsibility to Truth & Reconciliation, the salary for the position will go towards funding for FNMI students.
 - The position of VPIR totals approximately twenty (20) to thirty (30) hours per week on average and may include evenings and weekends. This includes but is not limited to both time spent preparing for and attending formal meetings as well as time spent reading and responding to emails, participation in travel associated with conferences and advocacy opportunities, work done on various projects and initiatives, informal strategic and problem-solving meetings, etc.
- Committees Section D: GSA Officers 24
 - The VPIR serves as vice-chair for the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, and sits on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Governance Committee.
 - The VPIR is a member of the following University boards and committees:
 - GPS Council
 - General Faculties Council
 - The Council of Student Affairs
 - University and GSA committees related to Indigenization/Indigenous relations, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (where applicable)
 - Qualifications: Experience with Indigenous student groups, cultural protocol, matters relating to Indigenous relations is advantageous

GSA Strategic Work Plan (2024-2025)

G.E.A.R. Framework:


Grow, **E**ngage, **A**dvocate, **R**eimagine



Introduction

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at the University of Alberta is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all graduate students.

Our strategic work plan, presented through the **G.E.A.R. framework**, outlines our refined priorities and goals for the 2024-2025 term and a three-year plan, focusing on growth, engagement, advocacy, and reimagining our future.



Grow

Engage

Advocate

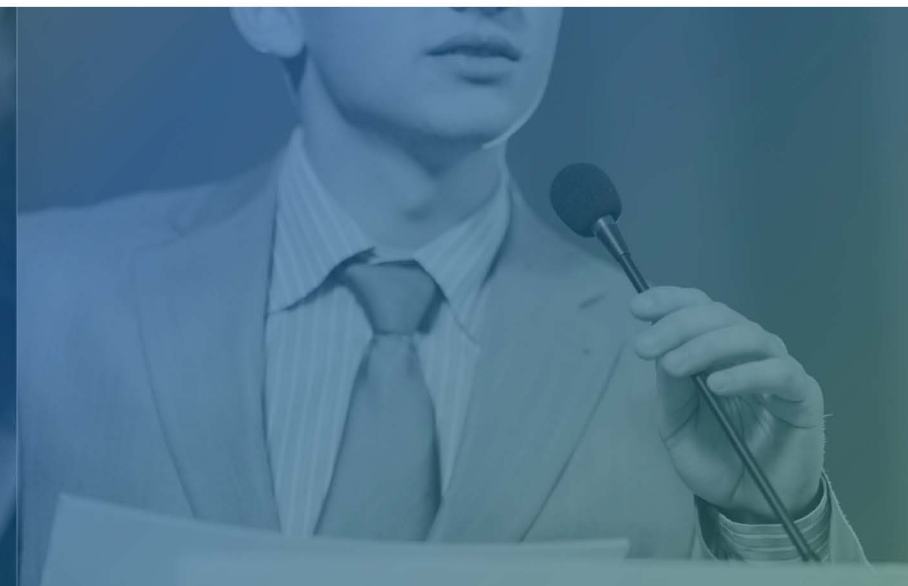
Reimagine

Fostering
Development and
Building Strong
Foundations

Creating Vibrant
Connections and
Inclusive
Communities

Championing
Student Rights and
Enhancing Support
Systems

Driving Academic
and Personal
Growth





GROW

Emphasizes the importance of nurturing the development of graduate students by creating supportive and accessible environments.

This involves establishing strong foundational services and initiatives that contribute to the overall well-being and academic success of students. By fostering growth, we aim to build a resilient and thriving graduate community.



ENGAGE

7.3

Focuses on fostering active participation and building meaningful connections within the graduate student community. This involves creating opportunities for students to be involved in GSA activities, interact with peers, and contribute to a vibrant and inclusive community. By engaging students, we aim to enhance their overall university experience and ensure they feel connected and supported.



ADVOCATE

Championing the rights of graduate students and enhancing support systems to address their needs. This involves lobbying for better resources, policies, and services that directly impact students' academic and personal lives. By advocating for students, we aim to create a supportive and equitable environment where all students can thrive.



REIMAGINE

Focuses on driving both academic and personal growth by rethinking and enhancing existing programs and services. This involves offering innovative training and development opportunities that cater to the evolving needs of graduate students. By reimagining our approach, we aim to empower students to achieve their fullest potential.

Grow

Cultivate Accessibility: Establish regular office drop-in hours to provide a welcoming and accessible space for student interactions.

Foster Digital Community:

Implement Discord or Slack channels to create dynamic and inclusive digital spaces for communication and collaboration.

Expand Childcare Services: Assess and plan for increasing childcare opportunities on and around campus to support Students-Who-Parent services.

Strengthen Social Fabric: Organize engaging social events such as the *Coffee Break* series to build a sense of community and belonging among students.

Peer Support Program: Finalize pilot framework for the GSA Peer Support Program including facilitating and funding.

Engage

Encourage Involvement: Launch digital engagement platforms like Discord and Slack to facilitate active student participation and communication.

Host Interactive Events: Organize various interactive events such as the *Coffee Break* series to promote meaningful connections and a strong sense of community.

Promote Inclusivity: Develop initiatives that celebrate diversity and inclusion within the student body (ex. collaborating on events).

Establish Communication Channels: Create and promote multiple channels for students to communicate with the GSA and each other.

Advocate

Improve Communication: Advocate for better communication channels between departments to streamline professional development and support services.

Secure Funding: Lobby for increased university funding towards the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF) and enhanced health and dental plans.

Mental Health Advocacy: Secure funding for mental health support through the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).

Safety and Housing: Advocate for transit safety measures and pursue affordable housing grant opportunities for students.

Reimagine

Grant Application Training: Provide targeted training opportunities for students applying for provincial and federal grants to enhance their academic prospects.

Pilot Funding Programs: Implement a pilot program for PhD funding and scholarships to support advanced research and study.

Highlight DEO Priorities: Ensure that Directly Elected Officers' (DEO) priorities are prominently featured in advocacy efforts.

Improve Service Awareness: Update and enhance communication channels to increase awareness and access to health, dental, and peer support services.

Building the Foundation for Future Years

Year I is not only focused on making the immediate goals attainable but also on **laying the groundwork for long-term goals**. As the new board comes in, we acknowledge that their priorities may differ, but the goals set for Years 2 and 3 are likely to **remain relevant and critical for continued progress**.

The foundation established in Year I will ensure that the new board can build upon these initiatives effectively.

Grow

Sustainable Support Framework:

Develop and begin implementing a sustainable framework for peer support services to ensure ongoing student well-being.

Celebrate Achievements: Develop hybrid award and scholarship opportunities in collaboration with the Deputy Provost to recognize and support student excellence.

Inclusive Family Services: Increase the availability of childcare services.

Continue Engagement Initiatives: Maintain and expand initiatives that promote community engagement and inclusivity

Engage

Build Community Networks: Develop long-term community networks that support continuous student interaction and engagement.

Enhance Participation: Implement strategies to encourage ongoing student involvement in GSA activities and initiatives.

Sustain Engagement Efforts: Ensure engagement efforts are maintained and adapted to meet the evolving needs of the student community.

Advocate

Elevate Financial Support: Continue advocating for improved minimum grant funding for graduate students to ensure financial stability.

Transform Housing Initiatives: Explore creation of grants and housing projects to provide affordable living options for students. This will create a more accessible and affordable housing environment.

Technology Advocacy: Establish a Service Management Committee to lead advocacy efforts for updated technology and better service provision.

Reimagine

Sustained Scholarship Funding:

Develop long-term funding strategies for Masters and scholarship programs to ensure continuous academic support.

Affordable Housing Initiatives: Prioritize the development of affordable housing options and restructure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) frameworks.

Grow

Full Implementation of Support

Framework: Fully implement the sustainable peer support framework and transition as a permanent service offered by the GSA.

Sustain Community Engagement:

Evaluate and refine engagement initiatives to ensure they meet the evolving needs of students.

Engage

Evaluate Community Networks: Assess the effectiveness of community networks and make improvements as needed.

Boost Participation: Introduce new programs to boost student participation based on feedback from previous years.

Long-Term Engagement: Establish a plan for sustaining engagement initiatives beyond the three-year period.

Advocate

Sustain Financial Support: Ensure the financial support mechanisms established in previous years are maintained and refined.

Enhance Technology: Evaluate the impact of technology advocacy efforts and plan further improvements as needed.

Reimagine

Collaborative Initiatives: Work closely with stakeholders on diverse group initiatives and affordable housing projects to support a diverse student body.

Evaluate and Expand: Evaluate the success of funding programs and collaborative initiatives, and plan for their expansion based on feedback and outcomes.

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE
and DEPUTY SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): THREE (3) NOMINEES**

As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, the GSA NoC will open nominations for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO and DRO “on or about 1 May of every year” and nominations will be submitted in writing to the GSA NoC “by 30 May or the next working day” (Section D.BYL.3.1.b and Section D.BYL.3.1.d). These positions were advertised in the GSA newsletters of May 3, 10 and 16 2024, with a deadline of May 22 2024. One (1) nomination was received for the position of Speaker and three (3) nominations were received for the position of Deputy Speaker.

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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. Farhan Khalid (Chemical and Materials Engineering)**

Deputy Speaker

- 1. Sumaira Niazi (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)**
- 2. Malik Awan (Civil and Environmental Engineering)**
- 3. John Duru (Educational Policy Studies)**

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 and Deputy Speaker are BELOW on pages 8.1 – 8.3. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**Nominations for SPEAKER
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
One (1) Nominee**

1. Farhan Khalid (Chemical and Materials Engineering)

Statement of Interest
I have served as the GSA Speaker for more than a year. As the speaker I have tried my best to guide the debate to a positive conclusion and have remained impartial and unbiased. Being a speaker has helped me to enhance by communication and critical thinking skills. And I hope I can continue this position forward to serve the GSA.
Bio
I am a second-year international graduate student pursuing my MSc in Materials Engineering. I did my bachelors from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Mechanical Engineering. I have student body experience being the past Director of Academic Affairs at ISA UAlberta where I have successfully held two workshops focused on library resources and mental health. I am also involved with the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) as Graduate Chair of Edmonton Chapter. In my undergrad at Hong Kong I co-founded and served as Head of Events of South Asian Society which was comprised of students from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Serving in all these positions and being an international student for the past 5 years has given me tremendous opportunities to serve students and to help them solve their collective issues. Currently I am serving as the present GSA Speaker and Graduate Chair AMPP Edmonton Chapter.

**Nomination for DEPUTY SPEAKER
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
Three (3) Nominees**

1. Sumaira Niazi (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)

Statement of Interest
As a current Ph.D. student and an actively engaged volunteer, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to further contribute to the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) in the role of Deputy Speaker. My experience as a Graduate Student Faculty Steward and active participation in various governance and advisory committees have equipped me with the skills needed for this role. I am eager to contribute to the GSA Council's mission and look forward to the opportunity to serve our academic community in this new capacity.
Bio
My academic journey, complemented by my involvement in student governance, has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the GSA's structure and governing documents. Previously, I was actively involved with the Graduate Student Council at the University of North Texas (UNT), where I advocated for graduate students and ensured their needs were addressed.

Additionally, my volunteer work during my master’s program at UNT with two NGOs in the United States allowed me to contribute meaningfully to the community, a passion I continue to carry with me.

As an international graduate student and a mother of two, I have a unique perspective on the challenges faced by graduate students. My professional and volunteer experiences have honed my skills in facilitating discussions, mediating conflicts, and maintaining neutrality and order, essential qualities for the GSA Deputy Speaker role.

I have completed all course requirements for my Doctoral program, giving me ample time to dedicate to this role. I am eager to bring my skills and experience, as well as my time to the GSA Council to help achieve its goals effectively.

2. Malik Awan (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

Statement of Interest
With a background in civil engineering and having held the position of Vice President of IEEE during my undergraduate studies, I possess a unique combination of technical proficiency and demonstrated leadership abilities. I am enthusiastic about utilizing these skills in the position of Deputy Speaker, where I will promote impartial decision-making and efficient communication within our GSA.
Bio
With a BSc in Civil Engineering from COMSATS University Islamabad and currently pursuing an MSc in Construction Engineering, I've garnered invaluable experiences that have shaped my academic and professional journey. My leadership roles at COMSATS, including Vice President of the university's Literary Society and Chief Coordinator in the Society of Civil Engineering, have honed my ability to foster creativity, intellectual discourse, and cooperation among peers. Additionally, serving as Vice President in IEEE during my undergraduate studies has bolstered my organizational skills and adeptness in team coordination and communication. These experiences have not only fortified my technical expertise but have also ignited a passion for community engagement and collaboration. Armed with a robust understanding of engineering principles and a proven track record in leadership, I am eager to leverage my skills and experiences to drive meaningful contributions as Deputy Speaker.

3. John Duru (Educational Policy Studies)

Statement of Interest
Having served in different leadership roles both in circular and educational settings, I hope to leverage on my experiences in supporting the speaker to preside over meetings as well as make well informed decisions for the greater good of the Graduate Students’ Association. Also, I want to seize the opportunity to learn more about governance in a post secondary setting.
Bio
Leadership is central to every aspect of life. As a trained leader, I have learned to recognize the need for consistency and continuous improvement while I collaborate with other team members to make difficult decisions for organizational good and development. I have served in several leadership roles as chairman of committees, secretary general as well as representative for student bodies, understand the importance of respecting other people’s opinions/choices and representing their interests without prejudice. Given the opportunity to serve as deputy speaker,

I will leverage on my leadership, multicultural and collaborative skills to support the chief speaker as well as other members of the council to achieve success during our tenure.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER (CRO) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE
and DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER (DRO) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE

As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, the GSA NoC will open nominations for CRO and DRO “on or about 1 May of every year” and nominations will be submitted in writing to the GSA NoC “by 30 May or the next working day” (Section D.BYL.3.1.d and Section D.BYL.3.1.c). These positions were advertised in the GSA newsletters of May 3, 10 and 16 2024, with a deadline of 22 May 2024. One (1) nomination was received.

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday May 27 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.

CRO:

1. Sophie Shi (Chemical and Materials Engineering)

DRO:

2. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.BYL.3.1.d

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, 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.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, 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 CRO and DRO are BELOW on pages 8.5 – 8.6. Biographies and brief resumes have been attached as received (i.e. not edited).

**Nomination for CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
ONE (1) Nominee**

1. Sophie Shi (Chemical and Materials Engineering)

Statement of Interest:
After being involved with GSA elections for the past 4 years, I want to continue to contribute to ensuring a fair and equitable process. I will continue to remain neutral and act impartially when making decisions. I have an excellent understanding of GSA Bylaw and Policy, specifically those pertaining to elections and referenda. I have dealt with many unique and complex situations during elections, particularly in the last two election cycles. I hold several years of institutional memory of the GSA elections and referenda that will make my role easier and can potentially help others involved in the next election cycle. If elected for a 5th term, I will continue to work towards identifying Bylaw and Policy that require changes and work on them alongside the Governance Committee and the Board. I will also build connections with other units in the university such as the Students' Union to improve our electoral processes.
Bio:
I attended the U of A for my undergraduate degree (BSc, 2016-2020) and am currently pursuing a PhD in Materials Engineering (2020-Present). I was the Head Teaching Assistant for CHEM 103/105 at the Engineering Student Success Centre (2020-2023) and am currently the Head Teaching Assistant for CH E 243 (2023-Present). I work as a Research Advisor at the Undergraduate Research Initiative at the U of A (2021-Present), helping undergraduate students get involved in research and facilitating events. I served as the GSA CRO for two terms (2022-2024) and DRO for two terms (2020-2022). I also served on GFC (2021-2023) and FGSR/GPS Council (2021- 2023), and EFC (2023-Present). I volunteer for various organizations such as WISEST and FEM+ on campus. In my community, I serve on the board of my condo association. My experience working with people from various backgrounds, dealing with difficult situations, making time-sensitive decisions, and remaining impartial and professional throughout, makes me an asset to this position and to the GSA and allows me to succeed as the CRO.

**Nomination for DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
ONE (1) Nominee**

2. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)

Statement of Interest:
The elections are an integral component of the GSA as it ensures that students' voices are heard and that the leadership remains accountable. I'd like to rerun as DRO to continue ensuring a fair, equitable election wherein all students have a voice during election season, while also ensuring candidates are running fairly and in accordance to bylaw and policy.
Bio:

8.6

I served as DRO for the 2024 GSA elections and assisted the CRO throughout the general election. I also conducted the GSA Re-election for the VPSL position. Both elections provided me with the fundamental experience to serve as DRO again.

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
SENATOR (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): THREE (3) NOMINEES**

Information regarding the vacancy for one (1) GSA Senator position was circulated via the GSA newsletter on May 3, 10 and 16 2024 with a nomination deadline of May 22 2024. Three (3) nominations were received.

Duties

“The Senator is the GSA’s representative to the University of Alberta Senate” (Section D.BYL.3.2.b)

“All GSA Council-Elected Officers and Deputies are non-voting members of GSA Council” (Section D.BYL.3.2.e)

“The Senator is a non-voting member of the GSA Board (F.POL.3.1.d)

Qualifications

“The Senator should have prior experience acting as a representative for the GSA and/or as a liaison with bodies external to the University” (Section D.POL.12.2.a)

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

- 1. Nathaniel Morley (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)**
- 2. Joseph Nanao (Medicine)**
- 3. Ola Mabrouk (Chemistry)**

Jurisdiction:

Section D.BYL.3.1.d

“The Senator will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council.”

Section E.POL.3.2.a

“The GSA NoC provides the 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 Senator are BELOW on pages 8.8 – 8.11. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**Nominations for SENATOR
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
Three (3) Nominees**

1. Nathaniel Morley (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)

Statement of Interest:

I have been eager to serve as the graduate representative for the University of Alberta Senate since I was accepted into my graduate degree last year. I firmly believe that universities should serve as a cornerstone for art, life, and culture in their broader communities; through its mission to Inquire, Connect, and Promote, I would be able to use my resources as Senator to understand how we can better connect with our communities in Edmonton and beyond.

One issue about which I am passionate is how the broader community perceives the financial attainability of graduate school. Through my conversations with friends, family, and other students, as well as my own experiences, I have come to realize that there are many misconceptions in the community about applying for graduate school – particularly surrounding funding requirements. While graduate school is a significant educational investment that should be taken seriously, prospective students should be aware that most graduate positions are fully funded at the University of Alberta. As Senator, I will use my platform to raise awareness about how funding, and admission more broadly, works at the University of Alberta to reduce the financial barrier to entry into graduate school.

Another issue that I am keen to pursue as Senator is how we can improve the graduate student experience at the University of Alberta. Having been a student at this university for the past five years (first as an undergraduate and now as a graduate student), I have experienced the university's financial crisis and witnessed the administration's response. Although this has been hard on all groups involved, I have always felt that graduate students were particularly hard-hit by these changes: tuition has increased; funding has stagnated; and in the context of post-pandemic inflation, many of us have had to take student loans or second jobs to make ends meet. Beyond that, increased administrative burdens have made our supervisors more inaccessible than ever. This is not okay. As Senator, I will advocate for our financial security and our right to dedicate our time to our studies as we have in years past.

Finally, I am eager to use my resources as Senator to elevate the University of Alberta in broader discourse pertaining to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. I feel that this is particularly true when it comes to environmental sustainability: although many of us are in labs pioneering techniques in conservation and environmental remediation, our university is noticeably absent from national discourse on the issues of biodiversity loss and climate change. In 2020, for example, twenty major national universities signed onto the Climate Charter for Canadian Universities – a commitment to reduce emissions and adopt environmentally sustainable practices. The University of Alberta did not sign onto that charter. This is an embarrassment and must be changed. If elected as Senator, I will fight to increase our presence in the national sustainability discourse so that we may help ensure a safe future for students in the generations to come.

As Senator, I will use my authority to make graduate school more accessible to the public; advocate for the rights and financial security of graduate students; and elevate our research in broader discourse pertaining to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. I will serve as the bridge between the GSA and the broader community through the Senate's mission to Inquire, Connect, and Promote.

Bio:

My name is Nathaniel Morley, and I am a first-year master's student in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. I am studying conservation paleontology with Dr. Lindsey Leighton. My thesis is focused on identifying the factors that contributed to extinction survivorship in the fossil record and ways we can apply this knowledge to mitigate modern-day biodiversity challenges.

Throughout my educational career, I have consistently been involved in leadership positions. I was in Students' Council from Grade 6 through Grade 12, serving as an executive from Grade 8 onward. This has given me an appreciation for the basics of student governance and how I can use my voice to help the wider student population. I have also been involved as a mentor for the Taekwondo Club here at the University of Alberta. This experience has given me an appreciation for the needs of my peers and has taught me the importance of coming up with strategies that allow all of us to achieve our personal goals. Finally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I became dissatisfied with the university's response to climate change and founded the UofA Climate Advocacy Club – a student organization focused on raising awareness about climate change and advocating for the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices at the university and in the province at large. Founding this club has familiarized me with the administrative processes at the University of Alberta. As a GSA representative on the Science Faculty Council, I have used these skills to advocate for graduate students' rights in my faculty. Being a councillor on the Faculty Council has given me an understanding of how governance works at the University of Alberta, and how I can promote our interests in such legislative sessions. These experiences will help me be an effective advocate for our interests as graduate students in the University of Alberta Senate.

As a paleontologist, I am trained to think about problems from a broad perspective. This skill is essential for effective governance. Although we may be debating a particular surface-level issue, I will always bear in mind the underlying structural challenges and vote accordingly. This is especially important when we are voting on matters of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. As a conservation paleontologist, I am trained to think about how I can apply my research to real-world problems. This skill is also essential for effective governance. Graduate Students at the University of Alberta do not exist as an isolated entity, but instead as part of a broader community in the university and beyond that, Edmonton. While I will always vote in the best interest of graduate students in the Senate, I will endeavor to extend those interests to people in our broader community and fulfill our founder's vision of "uplifting the whole people."

2. Joseph Nanao (Medicine)

Statement of Interest:

Serving on the 2023/2024 Nomination of Chancellor Joint Committee gave me a great deal of exposure to the workings and activities of the Senate including the Senate Strategic Plan with emphasis of Indigenous Initiatives and EDI. I believe I come with a wealth of experiences and knowledge of the University Senate leveraging on my extensive network with Senate members including the incoming and outgoing Chancellor, the president, and other prominent figures of the University community. This position would advance my graduate school experience by building varied experiences, give another opportunity to continue my service to the GSA in a different role and collectively push in building a stronger GSA where our voices heard, grievances addressed, and graduate students adequately represented.

Bio:

I am in my second year of graduate studies in the department of medicine where my research emphasizes on discovering novel targets and biomarkers in cancer diagnosis, treatments and cardiotoxicity induced chemotherapy. Having obtained my MD degree and license to practice medicine in Ghana, I am of the firm belief that I have the professional and personal development skills to take up this role. I have served in several volunteer roles in Ghana and especially Canada including serving as the 2023/24 VP Academics and Professional Development of the BGSA where I organized several activities geared towards developing members of my community, opened a continued dialogue with the dean of GPS and the GSA, Vice-provost EDI, Black Faculty Collective amongst others. I sat on several consultations with various stakeholders of the university and the province in nominating the next chancellor of the university. I believe these experiences amongst others have given me great strategic policy planning and implementation, high diplomatic acumen, advocacy skills and a clear understanding of the Senate role to inquire, promote and connect the university to the community and these skills be would be important in the role as the GSA senator.

3. Ola Mabrouk (Chemistry)

Statement of Interest:

I would like to reaffirm my commitment and enthusiasm for serving as a GSA Senator. I have dedicated the past year to this role with passion and diligence, and I would like to thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Over the course of the past year, I represented the GSA in the U of A senate. I believe that I was the voice for graduate students, international and parent students. I have presented and discussed many topics and issues during the senate meetings as minimum guaranteed funding for graduate students and affordable housing for students, research funding etc.

I have had the privilege of attending all the senate plenary meetings and being part of the election process of the new Chancellor. I also served on several committees in the senate and attended various public events (judging 3MT thesis competition, Uschool, etc). Through my involvement, I have gained invaluable insights, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have collaborated with fellow Senators, GSA executives, and university stakeholders in bridging communication between the public community and the University driving positive change. I still think there is a lot more that can be done in this regard, I am eager to build upon my experiences of the past year.

Bio:

I believe I have good experience acting as a representative for student associations.

8.11

I am currently serving on APC (Academic Planning committee), I served as GSA senator (March 2023-June 2024). I am also the Safety Officer for the McDermott research labs in CCIS at University of Alberta. This involves doing annual lab inspections, chemical inventory management and update, implementing preventive measures to control hazards and minimize risks, etc. (September 2021 to present).

I have previous experience as a member of the postgraduate committee at the Faculty of Pharmacy Ain Shams University-Egypt (where I got my Master's degree), this committee serves to develop and improve postgraduate programs and courses (September 2018 to August 2019). My role in the committee was to create surveys targeting the students and staff and collect feedback on the postgraduate courses and provide suggestions to improve the courses.

I was also a member of the purchasing committee of the department of Pharmaceutical Analytical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy Ain Shams University. This involved negotiating deals with several companies and publishing requests for tenders to purchase new equipment for the department and the faculty (May 2018 to August 2019). And a member of the Quality Assurance committee of the department of Pharmaceutical Analytical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy Ain Shams University (January 2014 to August 2019). This committee helped achieve the Egyptian accreditation requirements for the faculty. My role was to monitor the implementation of these requirements within the Analytical Chemistry department. It involved reviewing documents and suggesting corrective actions, etc.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD (GSA ACB)
(FOUR (4) POSITIONS FOR GSA COUNCILORS): ONE (1) NOMINEE

Information regarding the positions for four (4) GSA members was advertised via Council email on 3, 10, and 16 May 2024 with a nomination deadline of 22 May 2024. One (1) nomination was received for the four (4) GSA Councilor vacancies. The nominee was then interviewed by GSA NoC members who have been trained in procedural fairness by the GSA and have a record of demonstrating impartiality through their work on the GSA NoC. A member of GSA management was also present for the interview. During the interview, the nominee was asked a series of questions aimed at assessing their awareness of the basic tenets of procedural fairness and their ability to adjudicate potential cases in accord with those tenets (note as well that all individuals elected to the GSA ACB receive training in procedural fairness).

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

- 1. Andres Dorado Solarte (Rehabilitative Medicine)**

Current GSA ACB membership can be found [here](#).

Jurisdiction:

Section H.POL.7.1 and H.POL.7.2

“Eight (8) GSA members elected by GSA Council as voting members [and] four (4) Departmental Councilors (including the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) Councillor), alternates, or recent former Departmental Councilors, elected by GSA Council as voting members.”

Section H.POL.8.1

“The GSA NoC will interview all nominees to the GSA ACB and forward selected nominees to GSA Council.”

The name and biography received for the one (1) nominee is **BELOW on page 8.13**. The biography and brief resume is presented as **received** (i.e. not edited).

**Nominations for GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR GSA MEMBERS)
One (1) Nominee**

1. Andres Dorado Solarte (Rehabilitative Medicine)

<p>Statement of Interest:</p> <p>I would like to volunteer to serve on this committee because it is of great interest to me to understand how complaints and appeals are managed by the GSA, and participate in the process behind dealing with appeals and complaints received by the ACB – which can be imperative for me to know about, as I learn to advocate for myself and other students that I represent throughout my various positions in student associations. Additionally, I may offer a unique perspective as a South American immigrant and member of the Albertan Francophone community. Appeals can become a major part of a graduate student’s academic career and can affect their personal life as well. I hope to be of value as part of the ACB.</p>
<p>Bio:</p> <p>My name is Andres, I’m a Colombian immigrant and Canadian citizen. I am in my first year of graduate school, starting my master’s program with a focus on young children’s language and literacy development. Although language acquisition has been an integral focus of my research and academic studies, most of my professional experience is in aquatics. I taught swimming lessons, lifeguarded, coached lifesaving sport, trained national lifeguards and certified folks in first aid for over a decade. However, I am also passionate about creating and consuming art: I love painting, playing guitar, watching movies and listening to music. My eclectic experiences and interests would be an asset to this position as I can be pragmatic in my appreciation for people’s unique backgrounds. Additionally, my role as instructor and examiner in all my aquatics courses has given me the tools to critically assess people’s skills, attributes and personal history while also being able to adhere to policies, procedures and other important criteria.</p>

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD (GSA ACB)
(THREE (3) POSITIONS FOR GSA MEMBERS): FOUR (4) NOMINEES

Information regarding the positions for three (3) GSA members was advertised via GSA newsletters of 3, 10, and 16 May 2024 with a nomination deadline of 22 May 2024. Four (4) nominations were received for the three (3) GSA member vacancies. The nominees were then interviewed by GSA NoC members who have been trained in procedural fairness by the GSA and have a record of demonstrating impartiality through their work on the GSA NoC. A member of GSA management was also present for the interview. During the interview, the nominee was asked a series of questions aimed at assessing their awareness of the basic tenets of procedural fairness and their ability to adjudicate potential cases in accord with those tenets (note as well that all individuals elected to the GSA ACB receive training in procedural fairness).

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

- 1. Vicky Lin (Business Administration)**
- 2. Wanas Radwan (Secondary Education)**
- 3. Nana Kwaku Kusi Ofori-Yeboah (Electrical and Computer Engineering)**
- 4. Ali Yavari (Electrical and Computer Engineering)**

Current GSA ACB membership can be found [here](#).

Jurisdiction:

Section H.POL.7.1 and H.POL.7.2

“Eight (8) GSA members elected by GSA Council as voting members [and] four (4) Departmental Councilors (including the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) Councillor), alternates, or recent former Departmental Councilors, elected by GSA Council as voting members.”

Section H.POL.8.1

“The GSA NoC will interview all nominees to the GSA ACB and forward selected nominees to GSA Council.”

The name and biography received for the one (1) nominee is BELOW on page 8-14-8-17. The biography and brief resume is presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**Nominations for GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD
(THREE (3) VACANCIES FOR GSA MEMBERS)
Four (4) Nominees**

1. Vicky Lin

Statement of Interest:
I am interested in gaining experience on a board or committee, along with practicing my ability to exercise judgment. I am working towards my MBA with the goal of becoming a leader in the public sector. Gaining experience regarding the complaints and appeals process of an institution like the University of Alberta would be an asset.
Bio:
I have a background in sociology. I am well-versed in exercising critical thinking, empathy, and understanding in underlying forces that may be affecting others. I currently work in operations at the U of A Hospital and have been noted for my reserved and judicial nature. As I often work with strong personalities with competing priorities, I believe my ability to remain calm and neutral would be an asset. I have some experience with the complaints process in a unionized environment. I would be proud to represent the department of Business on this board.

2. Wanas Radwan

Statement of Interest:
I completed a graduate program at the University of Alberta in the department of Educational Policy Studies; this experience provided me with a stronger understanding of the ways in which structural policies and processes interact with the lived experiences and personal needs of those who are involved in these systems. As a newly admitted graduate student, I want to ensure that I immerse myself in the school community and support other students by actively engaging in volunteer opportunities on campus. As an educator, I strive to address disputes through the lens of empathy, equity, and compassion; I am eager to bring my own experiences and strengths to this role, and to continue learning from this experience.
Bio:
I became interested in policies and conflict resolution during my time as an Alberta certificated classroom teacher. This role required me to have a strong understanding of the policies and practices that guided the school community and strengthened my ability to mediate conflicts using a strength-based approach that supported families facing issues and/or decisions that impacted their child(ren)'s education. Currently, I work as a policy research consultant and I have learned more about the dispute resolution and appeals process through this role. I have completed all my post-secondary education at the University of Alberta, which has given me the opportunity to immerse myself in the university's policies and practices as a student. I believe that my experiences as a student on campus and my professional experience outside of the campus will make me a strong addition to your team.

3. Nana Kwaku Kusi Ofori-Yeboah

Statement of Interest:
Serving on the GSA ACB aligns with my long-term goal of contributing to the academic community and developing my leadership skills. This role will allow me to apply my analytical skills and experience, as well as provide an avenue to learn from the diverse skillsets of my colleagues. This experience will improve my ability to handle complex situations impartially, a skill that is valuable in both my academic and future professional journeys. I also look forward to the opportunity to network with my fellow graduate students while contributing my quota to the advancement of the GSA and the university.
Bio:
I received a bachelor’s degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, where I am a native, in 2022. I have two years of professional experience across diverse industries, including energy, finance, and real estate. I am a natural team player with an unparalleled thirst for excellence. As a former Student Council representative for a class of 60 students in high school, I served as the mouthpiece to voice the concerns and challenges of my mates to the council and debated decisions affecting the student body. During my undergraduate studies, I served as a student mentor within the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. I supported first-year students' academic and professional development by connecting them with academic advisors and tutoring services, and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities. By establishing a supportive and trusting relationship, I provided a safe space for students to share their concerns and challenges. I am confident that my experience and skills, coupled with my willingness to learn, make me a strong candidate for this position. I am eager to collaborate with my peers to realize the goals of the GSA.

4. Ali Yavari

Statement of Interest:
I want to volunteer for the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board because I believe in fairness, justice, and transparency in our university. Serving on this board will help me ensure that appeals and complaints are handled impartially and respectfully. This role offers a chance for personal and professional growth, allowing me to develop skills in decision-making, conflict resolution, and governance. By contributing to this board, I can give back to the university and help create a positive environment for all students and staff. Additionally, it will provide me with valuable insights into university policies and help improve them for a fairer academic community.
Bio:

I am excited to apply for the position on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB). With a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, and a current pursuit of a master's in electrical engineering, I bring a strong analytical and problem-solving skill set to the table. My academic journey, enriched by practical experience through industrial internships, has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of professional responsibilities and ethical considerations. As a former research scholar at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL), I have worked with international teams, honing my communication and teamwork skills. My experience as a teaching assistant and participant in professional training programs like "SPARK-ENG" has developed my mentorship abilities, equipping me to handle complex situations with fairness and integrity. Additionally, my research emphasizes safety and ethical practices, aligning with the GSA ACB's focus on upholding the standards and responsibilities of its officers. My multidisciplinary background, combined with my commitment to ethical standards and professional integrity makes me a suitable candidate for the GSA ACB position.

SPEAKER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE

Information regarding this position for a GSA member was circulated in the GSA newsletters on 3, 10, and 16 May 2024 with a nomination deadline of 22 May 2024. One (1) nomination was received.

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

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

1. Hafiz Asher Muhammad (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

Current GSA NoC membership can be found [here](#).

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E.POL.4

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E.POL.5.1

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

The names and biographies received for the two (2) nominees is **BELOW on page 8.18**. The biographies and resumes are presented as **received** (i.e. not edited).

Nominations for the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC)
ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER
One (1) Nominee

1. Hafiz Asher Muhammad (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

<p>Statement of Interest</p> <p>As a graduate student from an underdeveloped country, community service and extracurricular participation have always inspired me. Throughout my undergraduate tenure, I have been firmly committed to promoting diversity and empowerment, which I have demonstrated through my leadership roles in various university student academic clubs and councils to represent and support students' interests. I see the Engineering Faculty Council as an opportunity to further contribute to the community that has shaped my academic journey. Moreover, my involvement with community-based NGOs back home has shown me the transformative potential of education and social involvement within local communities. I see the council as a perfect platform to advocate for advancing graduate student interests, promoting multidisciplinary cooperation, and ensuring students' success within our academic community.</p>
<p>Bio</p> <p>I am a motivated and results-oriented student with a deep enthusiasm for structural engineering. I joined the University of Alberta as an M.Sc research assistant in Fall 2023, blending my scholarly attributes with real-world experience in my academic pursuits. Previously, I served as the Vice President of the Student Union and the American Student Institute at NED University, where I effectively led and advocated for student interests across various platforms. Furthermore, I have demonstrated my technical leadership capabilities on both national and international stages, achieving 1ST position in the National Hangar Design Competition in Pakistan and receiving the Silver Award & Jury's Best Choice Award in the International Tall Building Design Competition in Malaysia, showcasing my ability to excel in competitive environments.</p> <p>Signifying my proactive approach to making a positive impact through volunteerism, my engagement with the Future Energy Systems research program, participation in the University of Alberta's Science Rendezvous exhibition, and involvement with WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology) in their Choices Conference demonstrate my commitment to societal welfare. This commitment is further evidenced by three years of volunteer work with NGOs such as the 'Ansar Burney Trust' and the 'Edhi Foundation,' where I contributed to addressing humanitarian issues and promoting education for underprivileged children. Additionally, spearheading initiatives with the Robin Hood Army gave me hands-on experience in grassroots efforts to alleviate hunger among marginalized communities.</p> <p>Before my graduate studies, I was integral to a professional engineering team tasked with the structural design of Pakistan's first zero-emission mass transit system. Engaging in this project provided me with invaluable experience collaborating with engineers from diverse backgrounds. Working alongside such a multinational team presented challenges that pushed me to adapt to an environment of seasoned professionals. This experience facilitated my technical and communication skills growth, enabling me to engage and contribute constructively within the engineering community effectively.</p> <p>My extracurricular participation and professional and leadership skills position me as a strong candidate to leverage my abilities, enthusiasm, and dedication to bring about positive changes in this role.</p>

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)

GSA ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA COMMITTEE (GSA ERC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR GSA MEMBERS): ONE (1) NOMINEE

Information regarding the one (1) vacancy for a GSA member was advertised in the GSA Newsletters of 3, 10, and 16 May 2024 with a nomination deadline of 22 May 2024. One (1) nomination was received.

The GSA ERC acts to “advise the CRO on all matters pertaining to the GSA General Election, by-elections, and referenda” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.18.1).

There will be an electronic vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

- 1. Hafiz Asher Muhammad (Civil & Environmental Engineering)**

Current GSA ERC membership can be found [here](#).

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy, Section I: Elections, GSA Policy, Standing Committees, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, Section I.POL.16.1

The GSA ERC is composed of “a total of six (6) GSA members including at least one (1) Councillor elected by GSA Council, as voting members.”

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

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

The names and biographies received for the three (3) nominees are **BELOW on page 8.20**. The biographies and resumes are presented as **received** (i.e. not edited).

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE GSA ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA COMMITTEE (GSA ERC)
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR GSA MEMBERS)
One (1) Nominee**

1. Hafiz Asher Muhammad (Civil & Environmental Engineering)

Statement of Interest
As a graduate student from an underdeveloped country, community service and extracurricular participation have always inspired me. Throughout my undergraduate tenure, I have been firmly committed to promoting diversity and empowerment, which I have demonstrated through my leadership roles in various university student academic clubs and councils to represent and support students' interests. I see the Engineering Faculty Council as an opportunity to further contribute to the community that has shaped my academic journey. Moreover, my involvement with community-based NGOs back home has shown me the transformative potential of education and social involvement within local communities. I see the council as a perfect platform to advocate for advancing graduate student interests, promoting multidisciplinary cooperation, and ensuring students' success within our academic community.
Bio
<p>I am a motivated and results-oriented student with a deep enthusiasm for structural engineering. I joined the University of Alberta as an M.Sc research assistant in Fall 2023, blending my scholarly attributes with real-world experience in my academic pursuits. Previously, I served as the Vice President of the Student Union and the American Student Institute at NED University, where I effectively led and advocated for student interests across various platforms. Furthermore, I have demonstrated my technical leadership capabilities on both national and international stages, achieving 1ST position in the National Hangar Design Competition in Pakistan and receiving the Silver Award & Jury's Best Choice Award in the International Tall Building Design Competition in Malaysia, showcasing my ability to excel in competitive environments.</p> <p>Signifying my proactive approach to making a positive impact through volunteerism, my engagement with the Future Energy Systems research program, participation in the University of Alberta's Science Rendezvous exhibition, and involvement with WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology) in their Choices Conference demonstrate my commitment to societal welfare. This commitment is further evidenced by three years of volunteer work with NGOs such as the 'Ansar Burney Trust' and the 'Edhi Foundation,' where I contributed to addressing humanitarian issues and promoting education for underprivileged children. Additionally, spearheading initiatives with the Robin Hood Army gave me hands-on experience in grassroots efforts to alleviate hunger among marginalized communities.</p> <p>Before my graduate studies, I was integral to a professional engineering team tasked with the structural design of Pakistan's first zero-emission mass transit system. Engaging in this project provided me with invaluable experience collaborating with engineers from diverse backgrounds. Working alongside such a multinational team presented challenges that pushed me to adapt to an environment of seasoned professionals. This experience facilitated my technical and communication skills growth, enabling me to engage and contribute constructively within the engineering community effectively.</p> <p>My extracurricular participation and professional and leadership skills position me as a strong candidate to leverage my abilities, enthusiasm, and dedication to bring about positive changes in this role.</p>

SPEAKER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JOINT POSITION ON THE GSA BOARD (GSAB)/GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC) (TWO (2) POSITIONS FOR GSA COUNCILORS): ONE (1) NOMINEE

Information regarding this joint position for GSA Councillors was circulated via email to GSA Council in the 3, 10, and 16 May 2024 Council mailings with a closing deadline of 22 May 2024. One (1) nomination was received.

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

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

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

There will be a paper ballot vote held at the 27 May 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday 27 May 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday 27 May 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.

- 1. Arseniy Belosokhov (Biological Sciences)**

Jurisdiction:

Section F.POL.3.1.f

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

Section E.POL.4

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

Section E.POL.5.1

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

The name and biography received for the one (1) nominee is BELOW on page 9.1. The biography and resume is presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**NOMINATIONS FOR GSA BOARD AND GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSAB/NoC)
(TWO (2) VACANCIES FOR GSA COUNCILORS)
One (1) Nominee**

1. Arseniy Belosokhov

Statement of Interest:
<p>I have dutifully served as Vice-Chair on the GSA Nominations Committee, and I am submitting my application to continue in this role, advocating for the interests of the Council and benefiting the graduate student community. During my previous term, I presented voting items to the Council, thoroughly reviewed numerous applications, and diligently cast my vote to approve many talented and enthusiastic applicants who now represent the GSA interests within various student groups. Although this role carries a significant level of responsibility and requires careful consideration, as the decisions of the Nominations Committee shape the future of the GSA, I am confident that my experience will once again prove valuable in advancing the GSA's mission.</p> <p>Over the past year, serving as a member of the GSAB has provided me with valuable insights into student governance. I have strived to honor the Council's trust by making a tangible impact within the GSA community, contributing my service on the GSA Board, and offering guidance and feedback. I am eager to continue supporting the GSA's proactive initiatives, leadership, and governance. With renewed determination, I aim to support the ongoing GSA initiatives and foster even more positive changes in my upcoming year on the GSAB.</p>
Bio:
<p>I am a second-year PhD student in the Faculty of Science, specializing in Biological Sciences. At my previous university, I held a position within a similar student-led administrative body. This experience gave me a head start in my journey toward leadership with the GSA. Over the past year, I have served as a member of the GSA board, the GSA Emergency Bursary Appeal Committee, and the GSA Nominations Committee, where I am currently honored to serve as vice-chair. My contributions to the ongoing GSA initiatives have been recognized with a GSA President's Citation Award in 2024, an honor I deeply appreciate. Additionally, I have engaged in various volunteering initiatives around the university, such as the Molecular Ecology Postdoc Fellowship Hiring Committee Student Group within my department, the Clothing Repair Café at the Faculty of Human Ecology, and the Welcoming Newcomers Program with UofA International.</p>

**2024-2025 President
Report to GSA Council for the 27 May 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2024/05/18

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 15 April to May 24, 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Apr 15	Meeting with M. Padfield, Deputy Provost, & Bishoi Aziz
Apr 16	Meeting with J. Smith, Chief of Staff
Apr 16	Meeting with T. Raivio, Vice-Provost & Dean of FGSR, & VP Academic
Apr 17	FGSR Council
Apr 18	Meeting with Dr. V. Yiu, Provost, & M. Padfield, Deputy Provost
Apr 23	EDIC Meeting
Apr 24	Meeting with K. Chisholm, Board of Governors Chair, & J. Lemieux, Secretary to the Presidential Review Committee
Apr 24	Gateway Interview
Apr 26	Meeting with Accommodating Growth Group A - Education and Services
Apr 29	GFC Council
Apr 30	People Strategy Steering Committee
May 1	Academic Planning Committee
May 6	CASA Virtual Introduction
May 6	Gateway Interview
May 7	Meeting with M. Padfield, Deputy Provost
May 7	Meeting with Ellement
May 9	GSA SWP Town Hall
May 9	UAGSA/UCGSA Presidents Meeting

May 10	Meeting with Accommodating Growth Group A - Education and Services
May 15	Meeting with President Flanagan, UASU, AASUA, NASA & GSA
May 22	Meeting with President Flanagan, UASU, AASUA, NASA & GSA

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope everyone had a good long weekend amidst the challenging times we are facing due to the current crisis on campus and the availability of conflicting information. I understand the difficulties this situation poses and assure you that I am working diligently on my end to create a task force aimed at facilitating constructive dialogue between protestors and university stakeholders. This dialogue seeks to address student demands and concerns regarding their freedom of expression, protected under Section 2, Subsections b, c, d, and f of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I am also thankful to all graduate students for showing trust in me as the newly elected President of GSA. As this is my first council report in this role, I will be reporting on meetings from the start of my term (May 1); since my successor, Saad Arslan Iqbal, has attending meetings with me in my previous role of VPSSE, these will be reported by him in his first report to Council in May.

(May 1) Academic Planning Committee

During the Academic Planning Committee (APC) meeting held on May 1, 2024, updates were discussed, including those concerning Google storage and the University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS). As this was my first APC meeting, I highlighted the need to categorize graduate students into separate groups based on their research or coursework focus.

I proposed an adjustment to the distribution of storage space, advocating for 40GB for research-oriented graduate students and 15GB for coursework-based graduate students, compared to the current 30GB allocated for general graduate students. This proposal aims to better accommodate the distinct needs of research-focused students, considering their heavier reliance on cloud storage.

Additionally, UAPS representatives reported improvements in campus safety, citing a 30% reduction in trespassing incidents due to increased personnel. The meeting concluded with an agreement for further discussion between myself and Sherry from IST regarding Google storage space policies and the potential for GSA involvement in shaping data management protocols on shared drives.

(May 6) CASA Virtual Introduction

On May 6, 2024, I attended the virtual introduction session for the upcoming CASA foundation conference, scheduled to commence on May 13. The session provided a concise overview of CASA, with participants expressing their interests and enthusiasm for initiating the new year of federal advocacy efforts.

As I will be back from the conference by May 18, I look forward to reporting on the outcomes and discussions during the next council meeting.

(May 6) Gateway Interview

On May 6, 2024, I took an interview with Lily Polenchuk, the Editor-in-Chief of Gateway, regarding our press statement on Bill 18. During the interview, I talked about the additional bureaucratic barriers proposed by the provincial government, which pose threats to our academic freedom.

I highlighted the significance of federal funding, which constitutes one-third of the University of Alberta's research budget, emphasizing concerns over potential delays or reductions in this funding. I emphasized that such measures should not only concern but also enrage individuals who believe in the importance of research driven by passion rather than coercion.

Furthermore, I articulated the necessity for the Alberta government to uphold proper democratic processes and involve Graduate Students' Associations (GSAs) from across the province before implementing any drastic measures. I stressed that imposing provincial priorities on researchers could drive away top talent from the University of Alberta, a leading research institution in Canada.

(May 7) Meeting with M. Padfield, Deputy Provost

On May 7, 2024, I had a meeting with Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost, to discuss the Graduate Students Association's (GSA) priorities for the year. I outlined our focus on both long-term and short-term goals, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in the initiatives undertaken by our DEOs.

During the meeting, I raised concerns regarding the support for graduate students, particularly in terms of the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF). I expressed optimism about convincing the university to increase support for the GSSF starting from next year. I highlighted the challenges faced last year, including the necessity to close grants for two months due to depletion of funds in the GSSF. I suggested that with the university's plans to increase graduate student enrollment, it may be appropriate to allocate additional funds to the GSSF.

Furthermore, I discussed my initiative to establish a hybrid scholarship for coursework-based master's students. I emphasized the need for collaboration between the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS), Melissa's department, and the GSA to support coursework-based master's students. This initiative stems from our recent financial assessment survey, which indicated that these students are among the most vulnerable in terms of maintaining their livelihood and well-being.

(May 7) Meeting with Ellement

On May 7, 2024, I met with the executive team of Ellement, our potential new health and dental care provider. The discussion centered around addressing known issues with our current provider and exploring how Ellement could better meet our needs.

During the meeting, we had productive discussions, and I was impressed by Ellement's dedicated plan tailored to our requirements. Particularly encouraging was the potential for this plan to help maintain the health and dental plan fee for two years, with the possibility of a reduction.

Considering this promising proposal, I intend to meet with a few other insurance providers before the board puts forth a recommendation to the council for the selection of the new health and dental plan provider. These developments mark exciting times ahead as we strive to enhance the benefits and services available to our graduate student community.

(May 9) GSA SWP Town Hall

On May 9, 2024, the GSA hosted a strategic work plan town hall to gather student input in shaping our new plan. Despite our efforts to promote the event through various channels, including social media, newsletters, special bulletins, and even offering free breakfast, attendance was disappointingly low.

Only 8 students attended the town hall, which was concerning given the importance of the SWP as a guiding document for the next three years. While we received valuable feedback from those who did attend, our plans for interactive group sessions focused on key topics such as advocacy, engagement, research, affordability, and accessibility had to be abandoned due to the small turnout.

Nevertheless, we are continuing to work on drafting the document, incorporating the feedback received. The final draft of the SWP will be presented to the council for voting at the next council meeting. Despite the challenges faced in engaging students, we remain committed to developing a comprehensive and inclusive strategic work plan that reflects the needs and priorities of our graduate student community.

(May 9) UAGSA/UCGSA Presidents Meeting

On May 9, 2024, I met with the University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association (UCGSA) to discuss our collective efforts regarding Bill 18. I provided an update on our press release and the Gateway interview, expressing appreciation for their collaboration on the joint letter.

During the meeting, I proposed the idea of collaborating with the Association of Academic Staff of University of Alberta (AASUA) and GSA to issue a joint letter signed by our members to counter the Premier's claims regarding funding balancing. Additionally, I suggested sharing scheduling responsibilities for the new ab-GPAC association, with rotations between UCGSA and UAGSA due to our financial capabilities.

Furthermore, I discussed the possibility of involving University of Lethbridge GSA (ULGSA) and Athabasca University GSA (AUGSA) in the new provincial advocacy body. To reflect this broader collaboration, I proposed renaming the body from ab-GPAC to Combined Graduate Students' Front (CGSF). I will continue to engage with stakeholders to advance these initiatives and promote collaboration among our associations.

(May 10) Meeting with Accommodating Growth Group A - Education and Services

On May 10, 2024, I attended the meeting with Accommodating Growth Group A, focusing on education and services. The primary objective of this meeting was to finalize recommendations for the steering committee regarding educational standards and service delivery improvements in response to anticipated growth.

During the discussion, I emphasized the importance of maintaining consistency in delivering quality education and services amidst potential growth. I highlighted the need for improved IT infrastructure in classrooms and training for instructors to effectively utilize this infrastructure, especially if the university plans to reintroduce hybrid programs to accommodate initial growth targets.

The group will meet again to finalise the recommendations' aim to ensure that the university is adequately prepared to manage growth while upholding educational standards and providing high-quality services to students.

(May 15) Meeting with President Flanagan, UASU, AASUA, NASA & GSA

During the meeting held on May 15, 2024, President Flanagan, along with representatives from UASU, AASUA, NASA, and me, engaged in discussions surrounding the recent protests on campus.

President Flanagan acknowledged the complexity of the situation, emphasizing his commitment to freedom of expression and the safety of the university community. He discussed the decision-making process, highlighting the role of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) in evaluating threats and the final decision-making authority resting with him.

I raised the questions regarding de-escalation techniques and why senior leaders were hesitant to engage with protestors. Melissa clarified that efforts were made to communicate with protestors, including attempts by senior leaders and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) office, but because of safety concerns no top university stakeholder came out to talk to the protestors in person.

There were serious concerns regarding the presence of pallets and the university do believe they have necessary security footage to prove the safety concerns. President Flanagan addressed these concerns, emphasizing the importance of campus safety and the need for swift action based on assessed risks.

We requested a third-party investigation for all involved in the decision making of calling EPS to remove the protestors by force. President Flanagan confirmed no restrictions for students and staff to come to campus and no current trespass notices.

President Flanagan welcomed ASIRT's review and expressed openness to considering a third-party review alongside ASIRT's investigation. He highlighted concerns over campus safety and items discovered during the protests posing risks.

NASA expressed the need for a working group to review policies and procedures, set timelines, and ensure effective communication. President Flanagan agreed to further meetings and committed to providing agreements in writing. President Flanagan offered to reconvene next week for further discussions to ongoing dialogue and addressing concerns.

**2024-2025 Vice-President Academic
Report to GSA Council for 27 May 2024**

To:	GSA Council
From:	Rija Kamran
Date:	May 13, 2024

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 15 April 2024 to May 24 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Apr 16	Meeting with T. Raivio, Vice-Provost & Dean of FGSR, & GSA President
Apr 17	FGSR Council
Apr 17	Weekly Steering Committee
Apr 18	IEGP: Areas of Focus Group on Graduate Programs
Apr 22	ISA/GSA Regular Meeting
Apr 23	Meeting with a Student
Apr 24	Meeting with K. Chisholm, Board of Governors Chair, & J. Lemieux, Secretary to the Presidential Review Committee
Apr 24	Weekly Steering Committee
Apr 24	Committee on the Learning Environment
Apr 26	University Research and Innovation Advisory Committee
Apr 29	GFC Council
May 1	Meeting with a Student
May 3	Experiential Learning Council
May 3	DTLSE Steering Committee
May 6	GFC EXEC Governance and Procedural Oversight
May 6	Meeting with a Student
May 8	IEGP: Areas of Focus Group on Graduate Programs
May 9	GSA SWP Town Hall
May 9	GFC Caucus
May 10	Meeting with a Student
May 13	GFC Executive Committee
May 14	LMS of Future Advisory Committee Meeting
May 14	Meeting with T. Raivio, Vice-Provost & Dean of FGSR, & GSA President
May 15	FGSR Council
May 16	GFC Programs Committee
May 20	Meeting with a Student
May 22	GFC Nominating Committee
May 24	ABT Community of Practice
May 24	IEGP: Areas of Focus Group on Graduate Programs

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are doing well amidst the trying times we are faced with as the campus community. As I officially begin my second term as your Vice-President Academic, I would like to thank everyone for entrusting me. I have shared some highlights from the work I have been involved in since the last council meeting.

17 April 2024 - FGPS Council (Formerly FGSR)

Along with GSA President B. Aziz, VP Student Life T. Kung, I attended the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies council meeting. In a historic vote, the FGPS council endorsed a University of Alberta commitment to provide a Minimum Funding Guarantee of \$25,000 per year for all PhD students in year 1-4 of their programs, beginning in Fall 2025. This was the culmination of the advocacy work done over the past several years and is a win for graduate students. The FGPS council also approved the new and improved thesis formatting guidelines that allow for flexibility in submitting theses in several different formats.

29 April 2024 - GFC Council

I attended the GFC council. The council started with a discussion on Bill 18 and the threat it causes to academic freedom. The GFC Council approved a motion to oppose Bill 18 as proposed unless the post-secondary institutions are fully exempted from any and all provisions of Bill 18. The motion called on the Government of Alberta to withdraw Bill 18 entirely. The GFC council also approved the new Academic Integrity Policy Suite, which is moving away from punitive responses and toward academic misconduct. The council also approved the new changes to exam schedules and considerations for conflict.

3 May 2024 - DTLSE Steering Committee

I attended the DTLSESC meeting. We had a discussion on technology-enabled classrooms. Department-controlled classrooms were identified as an issue for Faculties and Colleges, as well as for scheduling. There were recommendations on having a comprehensive inventory, so having an institutional plan going forward would be helpful. We also had a discussion around Principles and Criteria for New Digital Learning Tools. Documents have been created to support the adoption of digital tools. The goal is to have a toolset that is delivered & supported centrally, and the principles to make the determination for implementation. These principles will be adopted, and the committee will be moving forward in its application.

9 May 2024 - GSA SWP Town Hall

The GSA held a Town Hall on May 9th to set up the Strategic Work Plan to guide the advocacy efforts through the year. This year we are moving to set a long-term plan for the GSA in addition to the one-year plan. This change will ensure continuity in advocacy efforts as the GSA board transitions year after year. Some key initiatives for my portfolio this year will include working on tuition relief for graduate students, implementation of PhD minimum funding guarantee and increasing engagement with graduate students.

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

Rija Kamran, Vice-President Academic 2024-25

**2024-2025 Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the 27th May 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Mariam Mughees
Date: May 13, 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Mariam Mughees)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 17 April to 24 May 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Apr 17	Alumni Council
Apr 17	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
Apr 22	Faculty of Excellence Awards Adjudication Committee Orientation Meeting
Apr 24	Meeting with K. Chisholm, Board of Governors Chair, & J. Lemieux, Secretary to the Presidential Review Committee
Apr 25	Alberta Student Post-Secondary Council
Apr 25	ISA Council
Apr 29	GFC Council
May 8	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
May 9	GSA SWP Town Hall
May 15	APC
May 23	Alberta Student Post-Secondary Council

Dear Council Colleagues,

Alumni Council (Apr 17 2024)

During the Alumni Council Meeting, award recipients were congratulated, although their identities remain confidential. The council discussed the criteria for alumni awards and the involvement of various departments in the selection process. Fundraising efforts from alumni were also addressed, alongside initiatives aimed at enhancing student success. Additionally, there was a focus on increasing the number of internships and fostering more collaborations with the university.

Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (April 17 2024)

The meeting began with an introduction of the new GSA member. Hamid provided additional insights into GSA initiatives, including efforts to secure minimum PhD funding and bargaining for teaching assistant positions.

Faculty of Excellence Awards Adjudication Committee Orientation Meeting (April 22 2024)

During the meeting, the committee discussed and revised the evaluation rubrics. The process was updated to include a two-stage criteria system: Phase 1 focuses on eligibility, and Phase 2 involves detailed rubrics. Additionally, there was a special emphasis on integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into the evaluation criteria.

Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (May 8 2024)

Key topics discussed during the meeting included Bill 18, the use of AI in universities and its potential to replace human roles, and the situation in Gaza, with expectations of backlash from institutions. Additionally, updates on the bargaining agenda from NASA were provided, noting that some postdocs at the University of Calgary have accepted the opening offer.

GSA SWP Town Hall (May 9 2024)

This meeting was focused on addressing affordable housing issues for students by collaborating with the municipal government. Discussions also centered on enhancing transit and campus safety. Long-term and short-term goals were established to tackle these challenges effectively.

2024-2025 Associate Vice-President Labour
Report to GSA Council for May 2024

To:	GSA Council
From:	Muneeb Masood Raja
Date:	May 14, 2024

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 11 Apr and 24 May 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

11 Apr	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
12 Apr	Discussing Student Case with Faculty Relations
18 Apr	Labour Management Meeting
18 Apr	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
24 Apr	GSA Executive Kate Chisholm John Lemieux re: Presidential Review
24 Apr	Bargaining Survey
26 Apr	GSA Spring Social
27 Apr	Meeting with faculty relations representative to discuss a student issue (confidential)
29 Apr	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
30 Apr	People Strategy Committee
2 May	Check-in with PSAC Representative
3 May	Meeting with the Negotiating Team
4 May	Governance Retreat
6 May	Meeting with a Student (confidential)
8 May	Meeting with Faculty Relation (confidential)
9 May	GSA SWP Town Hall
9 May	Labour Outreach
9 May	SWP One-on-One with GSA President
9 May	Chancellor Garritty Farewell
10 May	Check-in with PSAC Representative
10 May	GSA SWP Discussion
14 May	Meeting with a Student
May 15	Meeting with a Student
May 16	Disciplinary Meeting - Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences
May 17	JHSC
May 17	Union Breakfast
May 24	CFB Student Leader Forum

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are all enjoying the weather and looking forward to the upcoming summer. This is our first council meeting of the year, and I would like to thank you for continuing to trust me for my second term as the AVP Labour. I have attended several meetings between 11 April 2024 and 24 May 2024 which are listed in the table above. Here are the details of the meetings:

(18 May) Joint Labour/Management Meeting:

The Joint Labour/Management Committee met to discuss various issues related to the collective agreement. The committee reviews matters of mutual interest arising from the application of the collective agreement. During the meeting, the committee deliberated on matters such as leaves, the training of employees, the time-use guideline form, and other related issues. This marks the final meeting before the upcoming negotiations commence.

(8 May) Meeting with Faculty Relations:

Although the details of the meeting held on 8 May are confidential, I brought forward a significant concern outside the confidential discussion which involves students experiencing harassment, discrimination, or racism and their reluctance to report these issues due to fear of losing their funding. Currently, there is no university policy ensuring job security for students facing such treatment from their supervisors, particularly research supervisors. I proposed that departments commit to providing alternative sources of funding and match the support offered to students if they lose supervision due to raising these concerns. Faculty relations officers will arrange a meeting with the GPS Dean or a Vice-Dean, where we will explore strategies for providing job security to these students and removing barriers that prevent them from reporting such harmful behaviors.

(10 May) Check-In with PSAC Representative

During the meeting, we discussed the upcoming collective bargaining. I was also notified that we have been assigned a negotiator by PSAC. I will set up a meeting with the negotiator to discuss the timelines for our collective bargaining. Our plan is to send notice to the university to start bargaining next month. The negotiating team will sit together to draft our initial proposal after the bargaining mandate vote closes on 23 May. Aside from bargaining, we discussed preparing an education plan for our Stewards and other members, aimed at providing opportunities to our faculty Stewards to learn about union operations and to feel comfortable in their roles.

(3 May) Meeting with the Negotiating Team:

The GSA Negotiating Team (NT) and GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC) have met several times to discuss bargaining priorities, held tabling sessions, and other activities to gather feedback about the bargaining priorities of academically employed graduate students (AEGSSs). The GSA negotiating team met on 3 May to finalize the bargaining mandate before sending it to AEGSSs. The vote is currently active and will close on 23 May.

(4 May) Governance Retreat:

During the governance retreat, incoming and outgoing Directly Elected Officers (DEOs) met to facilitate a smooth transition of leadership. The incoming DEOs received training, while the outgoing DEOs shared their valuable experiences. This event also provided an opportunity for team bonding and enhancing our ability to work together effectively as a team.

(9 May) GSA SWP Town Hall:

The GSA organized a Town Hall meeting to gather feedback from members regarding their expectations from the GSA and the current DEOs. The DEOs also presented their priorities and answered questions from the attendees.

(10 May) SWP Discussion:

The GSA DEOs met to discuss their individual priorities, both short-term and long-term. During this meeting, I outlined several priorities, including securing gains in the upcoming collective bargaining, promoting an educational culture, strengthening the Steward network, improving outreach and the union's mobilization capabilities, and expanding external outreach efforts, including provincial advocacy through the Alberta Academic Coalition for Action (AACA) and collaboration with groups such as Ab-GPAC and others.

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

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

**2024-2025 Vice-President of Student Services
Report to GSA Council for the May 27, 2024, Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: VP SSE
Date: May 15, 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended (Saad Arslan Iqbal)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 15 April to 24 May 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Apr 16	Quarterly U-Pass Meeting
Apr 18	U-Pass Administrative Committee Meeting
Apr 24	Meeting with K. Chisholm, Board of Governors Chair, & J. Lemieux, Secretary to the Presidential Review Committee
Apr 25	Meeting with K. Friese, Assist Dean Health & Wellness
Apr 25	DoA Meeting
Apr 29	GFC
May 1	Meeting with a Student (VP SI)
May 6	Meeting with a Student
May 7	Students Who Parent Working Group Discussion
May 9	GSA SWP Town Hall
May 9	Meeting with K. Friese, Assist Dean Health & Wellness
May 9	SGBV in WIL Working Group Meeting
May 10	LRC Breakfast
May 13	Student Housing Stability Working Group
May 13	CSJ Coffee Break Meeting
May 13	IEGP Meeting
May 15	FGPS Council
May 16	U-Pass Administrative Committee Meeting
May 21	U-Pass Administrative Committee Meeting
May 21	CFB Committee
May 22	DOA Committee
May 24	CFB Student Leader Forum

Dear Members of the Council,

I hope all of you are well and excelling in your academic endeavours and having a relaxing spring break. This is my first Council report submitted as the Vice President of Student Services. I am excited to share that I have received a detailed orientation on my responsibilities as a DEO and this process has helped me understand the expectations. I have also had numerous chances to shadow my predecessor, Haseeb

Arshad, in various meetings and events, allowing me to continue with the GSA mandates without (hopefully) much disruption.

Below is a brief overview of some of the most important meetings that I have attended as the VP SSE between March 12 – and May 1, 2024.

1. Wellness Supports Student Team Appreciation – March 13
 - I joined the Wellness Supports during their student team appreciation. I had a chance to interact with various students who have been a part of the Wellness Supports events, as well as the organizing members such as Tiffany Sampson and Heather Ritz.
 - Heather also introduced me to other members as the incoming GSA representative. Heather and I also briefly talked about some of my priorities on working with the Wellness Supports and we agreed that there are many potential collaborations that we can schedule throughout the year.
2. Students Who Parent Working Group Conversation – March 18
 - This was one of the introductory meetings where I had a chance to learn about the mandates of the working group. Clint Galloway gave some updates about the child-minding initiatives being discussed with the YMCA. Michelle Peters-Jones updated the group about the family corner (things going well, Partnership with the pantry, seeking out changing supplies, upcoming campaign to bring awareness to the space) and creating a UofA map as a resource for parents on campus. Devanshi Shah briefed about the Student Caregiver Survey, discussed some suggestions, and explained how it would be administered.
 - Other updates included: an increase in CFB usage and adding a new volunteer position that students can bring their kids to, the UHC's search for a walk-in pediatric clinic, having a behavioural consultant that can meet with students (non-pediatric), GSA- child care grants (open on April 1, currently no deadline, done once the funds are all gone), SPOC- new BOG rep got a request for a second family corner on campus, and the lookout to recruit new members and new exec members and get more commitment.
3. U-Pass Administrative Committee – March 21
 - An issue was discussed that students are unable to tap their Arc card at the front of the bus on card readers. It was suggested that this is more likely an ETS issue rather than an IST one. The matter would be brought up in the next City Meeting.
 - It was also discussed how the Transit Watch Program works and how the ETS can be notified currently of the issues faced using the transit system.
4. Campus Wellness Network – March 26
 - This is also an introductory meeting where I learned about the Campus Wellness Network and its mandate. Some updates for upcoming end-of-year/exam season events included: Unwind Your Mind with CCR: [FREE drop-in fitness classes](#) - for students and staff, CSJ Unwind Your Mind- care packs, encouraging notes, Faculty of Arts Brain Break tables- snacks before exams, Law (last week of classes): 2 days of Massages, BBQ (LawDogs), Student refresh table for exam season, and [Unwind Your Mind](#)- Wellness Supports.

- For campus trends, we learned about mental health offerings for Faculty and Staff, CCR and HRHSE collab for programming in Enterprise Square, starting in April, Bright Breaks- quick yoga, stretch breaks, Wellness Fair on April 5, 12 - 3 pm.
 - There was also a discussion on reports by Augustana students of harassment and bullying through Instagram posts – it was mentioned that a course of action was being discussed. Also discussed were the impacts of tuition increases, promoting social connection and belonging on campus.
 - For area updates, I briefed about the GSA Coffee Break on March 28 with ASSET & Unitea (games and facilitated group discussion) and the Mental Health Accessibility survey whose results would be shared at the end of April.
5. Days of Action Committee Meeting – March 27
- In the DOA Committee Meeting, we discussed new members for the 2024-25 term and Renson Alva was introduced as a new member from the UASU and me from the GSA.
 - Also discussed was the review of the 2023-24 year and the important events and relevant updates. Important meetings were scheduled as follows: April - Days of Action Review & Celebration, May - first DOAC meeting for the 2024-25 year, June/July: no committee meetings, working groups only, and August - resume monthly committee meetings.
6. Interview for UAlberta (incoming and outgoing DEOs) – March 28
- This was a scheduled interview with Parisa from YouAlberta where the outgoing DEOs provided an overview of their term and the incoming DEOs discussed their priorities for the upcoming terms. The interview has since been published and can be accessed here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/youalberta/2024/04/a-conversation-with-present-and-future-member-of-the-graduate-students-association-gsa.html>
7. VPSI and VPSSEE Transition Meeting – April 15
- In this meeting, the outgoing VP of Student Life, Tiffany Kung briefed the incoming VP SI and VPSSE about the potential roles that Benjamin and I can play as incoming DEOs. Important strategies were shared and discussed were some key areas of priority and some joint initiatives that fall under the two portfolios and potential collaborations between the two roles.
8. DEO Training and Mixer – April 17
- This was yet another chance for the incoming DEOs to get training on their roles. Together with the GSA staff members, the outgoing DEOs provided important insights about the overall requirements of the portfolios and some key strategies to ensure that the incoming DEOs can fulfill their mandated tasks effectively.
9. GSA Grants – April 18
- This was a brief meeting with the GSA Grants Coordinator, Venessa where the incoming DEOs - Benjamin, Maryam, and Saad - were briefed about the GSA grants: how can graduate students apply for them, the review process, appeals and decisions process and other relevant details about the grants processes.
10. CFB April Board Meeting – April 22
- This was my first CFB Meeting as the GSA representative. Jessica Dugan (chairperson) discussed the vision, mission, and values as well as some updates on the upcoming meetings

for the new year. Erin O'Neil (ED) shared financial and operational updates. The dashboard showed very promising progress in terms of food access, food education, fiscal sustainability, and relationship development.

- Other updates by the Chair, ED, and other members included details on policy, finance, standards of excellence and new initiatives. The meeting adjourned following an in-camera session on the ED's contract.

11. Kevin Friese – April 25

- I attended this meeting with my predecessor, Haseeb Arshad. Kevin updated us about the UASAC, and we also talked about having more lactation stations for students who parent on campus, the Peer Support Program, and my priorities as the incoming VP SSE.

12. Meeting with Student (Confidential) – May 1

- A graduate student reached out to me to discuss a student-supervisor relationship issue. Upon request, the VP SI, Benjamin Kucher also joined. The student was given some options to move forward along with a list of resources that can be utilized and the concerned personnel and/or offices that can be reached to resolve the issue.
- We also assured the student that they are welcome to reach out again to discuss the issue further, and Benjamin will help direct the issue to other relevant DEO(s) once we have enough information.

**2024-2025 Vice-President Student Life
Report to GSA Council for the May 27th, 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Benjamin Kucher
Date: May 13 th , 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Life Meetings Attended (Benjamin Kucher)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 1 April to 27 May 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

April 2	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Council
April 2	GSA and UASU VPSLs Introduction
April 5	BGSA and Dr. Tracy Raivio (Dean of FGPS)
April 11	Meeting with L. Adam, EDI Strategic Initiative Officer
April 11	SGBV in WIL Working Group
April 12	UASU/GSA Focused Consultation – UASAC
April 15	Transition VPSI & VPSSE Working Relationship
April 16	UAI Meeting
April 16	Dr. Sanghera, Dean of Students
April 17	FGSR Council
April 19	Meeting with T. Ira, EDI Strategic & Indigenous Initiative Officer
April 22	Meeting with ISA
April 23	EDI Action Plan Steering Committee
April 23	EDIC
April 24	Days of Action Committee
April 24	Meeting with Dr. Melissa Padfield (Vice-Provost Students and Enrollment)
April 25	SCPC
April 25	DOA Transition Meeting
April 26	EDI Action Plan Steering Committee
April 26	Meeting with Dr. C. Smith, Vice-Provost (EDI)
April 29	GFC Council

May 1	Meeting With Student
May 6	Meeting with a Student
May 7	SEAP Co-Sponsors Meeting
May 7	Meeting with T. Ira, EDI Strategic & Indigenous Initiative Officer
May 7	Meeting with L. Adam, EDI Strategic Initiative Officer
May 9	GSA SWP Town Hall
May 9	SGBV in WIL Working Group
May 13	Student Housing Stability Working Group
May 13	Interview Preparation for Assistant Dean: Community & Sexual Violence Supports Interview with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
May 14	Meeting with K. Huising, Associate VP Facilities & Operations
May 14	Meeting with N. Loveless, Associate Professor Arts & Design; Faculty of Arts Associate Dean EDI
May 14	Meeting with T. McGee, Associate Dean (EDI) College of Natural and Applied Sciences
May 14	Assistant Dean: Community & Sexual Violence Supports Interview with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
May 15	Assistant Dean: Community & Sexual Violence Supports Interview with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
May 16	Meeting with UASU VPSL Renson Alva
May 17	Meeting with Dr. T. Raivio (Dean of FGSR)
May 21	UASSC
May 22	DOA Committee
May 22	Killam Award for Excellence in Mentoring Adjudication
May 22	BGSA
May 22	Assistant Dean: Community & Sexual Violence Supports Interview with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
May 23	COC (Community Operations Coordination) Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope the end of your winter semesters went well and that the spring and summer semesters go smoothly. Firstly, I would like to extend a congratulations to my fellow DEOs and the new Councillors At-Large and welcome the new and returning members to GSA council. I look forward to getting to know you all and working together over the next year.

Secondly, as we have seen over the last few weeks, we find ourselves in a position where tensions between students and the university are at an all-time high. The events that have occurred and the actions taken by the university are not only deeply upsetting but entirely unacceptable. As has been outlined in the statements our Executive team have issued, each of us are here to support you and stand in solidarity with our members who are expressing their concerns and voicing their thoughts. I encourage

you to reach out to us to share your thoughts and help shape the work that we are going to be doing. As you are the highest decision-making body within the GSA, as DEOs we report to you. Your insight and perspective on the various initiatives we are working on is critical to ensuring that the GSA is an effective advocacy body that meets the needs of graduate students.

Lastly, part of my campaign was to maintain transparent and accountable governance. As such I want to extend the invitation to you all now to email me and set up a meeting to discuss what I am working on and the various initiatives I am supporting and provide feedback about what you'd like to see over the next year or what you want to see change from the previous year. Below you will see highlights from what I believe are the most important meetings that I've attended since being elected, you have also been provided with a list of all the meetings that I have attended. If you would like to know more about specific meetings or have questions about any of them, I am happy to address them here in council or via email.

(April 26th) EDI Action Plan Steering Committee

The EDI Action Plan Steering Committee met to discuss the implementation of the next consultation phase of the plan titled "Continuing Our Stories" and to discuss the next round of consultation. The Continuing Our Stories document launched on May 1st and can be found [here](#). The document summarizes the primary findings gathered from the extensive input and stories shared by the university community around equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and further outlines the major themes that will be addressed in the action plan. The EDI Action Plan is on track to launch later this fall.

(April 26th) Meeting with Dr. C. Smith, Vice-Provost (EDI)

Dr. Carrie Smith, Tiffany and I met to discuss my transition into the VPSL role and some of the upcoming priorities we have for the year ahead. In this meeting we had a rich discussion about three major points. The first item we discussed was the co-development of an EDI resource hub that provides students, staff, and faculty with EDI-related resources within the university and the Edmonton area more broadly. This will look similar to the resource page that Carrie's office launched last fall for students in times of crisis. Secondly, we discussed the creation of a speaker series around controversial ideas and the responsibility institutions have in responding to them. Lastly, we discussed a transformation to the EDI Reading Group that Tiffany started last year - pivoting to an EDI Movie Series.

(May 7th) SEAP Co-Sponsors Meeting

The Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) Co-Sponsors - which consists of myself, Lisa Glock (UASU President), Sarah Wolgemuth (Assistant Dean, Student Life) and Melissa Padfield (Deputy Vice-Provost Students and Enrollment) - met to discuss the progress of SEAP now that it is 6 months into implementation. We have developed a scorecard and reporting framework to gauge the effectiveness of the plan. The card and framework will be presented to the SEAP Support Team over the summer and implementation will follow. The SEAP Support Team is actively recruiting members, so if you are interested in joining this team, please let me know!

CRO Report

Dear GSA Council,

As this year comes to an end, I would like to report on this past year's elections and referendums to provide transparency to Council.

This year, we ran a total of 4 referenda, with 2 of them passing. One group approached me in August to initiate a conversation but did not have a question drafted, and I did not extend an invitation for them to present to the Board. I was not aware of the other 3 referenda until days before the November Council meeting, when I was made aware that they had skipped the procedure to initiate a referenda and were directly brought forward to GSA Council. I was asked to retroactively review and approve the proposals and given only a few hours to do so. I was not able to complete this with the timeline requested, and upon reviewing them, discovered that their referenda questions did not meet the requirements laid out in Bylaw and Policy, despite having already "passed" the Board and moving on to Council. Due to this, I was forced to meet with all of the referenda askers in one day to meet the timeline required for them to present at December Council. A previous member of the Board had requested that I edit my previous report to diminish the seriousness of the situation; however, I believe that Council deserves transparency surrounding all work related to elections.

There were over 20 candidates running this year for the 6 DEO and 10 CAL positions. The voter turnout remained low, hovering around 10%. As I have previously reported, this year's General Election and Election of the AVPL had an unprecedented number of complaints and appeals of CRO decisions, all of which can be found on the GSA website. There were a total of 10 complaints and 3 appeals of CRO decisions, the majority of which were dismissed, with 2 small penalties issued and 1 large penalty. In light of this, I am working with ERC to give recommendations for revisions of the GSA Bylaw and Policy Section I and J. This work will be communicated to Council in future meetings as it is ongoing.

As we redirected our attention to the Re-Election of the Vice President Student Life, I voluntarily recused myself from this position due to a conflict of interest.

I would like to thank everyone for their work in the elections, particularly Zain for his dedicated work on the re-election (which he will report on), Monica for her guidance on every aspect of elections and referenda, and Andrew and ERC for their input. Thank you all for your support this year on the elections and referendums. Good luck and welcome to our incoming executive team!

Sophie Shi
Chief Returning Officer
Graduate Students' Association

DRO Report

Dear GSA Council,

I would like to extend my immense appreciation to Sophie and Monica who provided extensive support throughout the VPSL Re-Election process this year. I'd also like to thank ERC Chair Andrew and the ERC members for their input and support, too.

As mentioned in the CRO's report, Sophie recused herself and so I was responsible for conducting the re-election. As has been previously reported, the ACB opted to rerun this part of the election due to an incident at an International Students' Association event held in Triffo Hall. The complaint and ACB decision are publicly available on the GSA website.

I want to highlight that the GSA has not run a re-election in 10 years with the last one being conducted in 2014. This created a lot of stress for myself, Sophie and Monica as we had not experienced this before. We especially did not feel there was much support from the GSA, which may be a result of a lack of institutional memory.

ACB decided to rerun the election from the All-Candidates Meeting and that no new candidates may join the race. Three of the four candidates opted to rerun.

Several complaints were made against candidates prior to the ACM, during campaigning and the voting period. All DRO decisions pertaining to the re-election may be found on the GSA website. Many of these decisions had appeals filed against them, which the ACB would rule on themselves. Most decisions were upheld, while some were adjusted. The ACB decisions can also be found on the website. The complaints led to several voter penalties against candidates, including a net 75% voter deduction against Ajibola Adigun, which was discussed in extensive detail during the last council meeting. The winner of the VPSL race after accounting for these deductions was Benjamin Kucher.

In summary, this election cycle was very stressful. Myself, Sophie, Monica, GSA Speaker Farhan and the former ACB chair Laura have had to deal with a lot of attacks from a candidate. In addition, statements were made against us both as individuals and as an institution on social media. In the end, we are all students and colleagues and there should be no room for this kind of behavior.

I went into extensive detail regarding the re-election in the last council meeting, but if there are any questions or concerns regarding anything pertaining to these elections, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Zain H. Patel
Deputy Returning Officer
Graduate Students' Association

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Year-End Report to GSA Council for the 27 May 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Andrew Pohlka
Date: 13 May 2024

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

Over the past year the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) has worked to plan the 2024 GSA General Election and Election of the Associate Vice-President Labour, as well as support and advise the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) on all matters pertaining to that election.

After the 2024 GSA General Election, Election of the Associate Vice-President Labour, and the Re-election of the Vice-President Student Life, the GSA ERC has continued to discuss the election and develop revisions of GSA Bylaw and Policy Sections I and J.

The 2024 GSA General Elections and Election of the Associate Vice-President Labour were challenging for the GSA ERC. I would like to thank all the members of the ERC for the time and effort they put into the planning and execution of this election, as well as the time and effort put into properly advising the CRO and DRO throughout the process. I would also like to thank GSA Elections Coordinator Monica Brzak for her insight on interpreting the bylaw and the extensive work she put into these elections. Finally, I would like to thank CRO Sophie Shi and DRO Zain Patel for the immense amount of work they have put into maintaining a fair process for these elections.

Sincerely,
Andrew Pohlka, Chair of the GSA ERC

**GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for May 27 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Lewie Moodley
Date: May 27 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I trust this message finds you well and enjoying the advent of spring. I am writing to apprise you of recent developments and forthcoming initiatives within the Graduate Students' Association (GSA).

Our office has been actively engaged in the training and onboarding of the newly appointed board and CALs. We recently conducted a professional development day for both outgoing and incoming board members, in addition to the GSA 101 training sessions. The staff have assisted the board with the new Strategic Work Plan which has been attached to this mailing for your convenience. The newly elected CALs have also received training from GSA management. This month, we had the pleasure of welcoming Grace Kinley, our new Administrative Support Specialist, to the team, and we are delighted to have her on board.

The office has been particularly focused on supporting both the board and students impacted by the outcomes of the recent peaceful protest on campus. Our staff and management are committed to assisting all GSA members seeking further support in this regard. I have been collaborating closely with the GSA President on all matters pertaining to the encampment and its resultant effects.

In addition, I have had multiple meetings with representatives from Ellement (Study Well) and Alberta Blue Cross (Student VIP) regarding our health and dental plan. We plan to present these providers to the council in the Fall for a thorough review. In the interim, I will continue to conduct comprehensive background research. Since the opening of the grants application period in April (April 1 - May 2024), we have processed and approved the following applications: ATG: 161 applications amounting to \$78,706.52; CCG: 53 applications totaling \$107,000.00; EB: 1 application for \$1,731.00. We are currently in the process of implementing a new grants management software, which will be hosted on the Good Grants platform.

Furthermore, the GSA management team is preparing for our annual audit, which will be conducted over the summer. The audit results will be publicly accessible in early fall.

Thank you for your attention and continued support.

Warm Regards

Lewie Moodley, Executive Director.

Management Report to the GSA Board, May 1 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **May 1 2024**.

Strategic

- Work associated with the Collective Agreement (soliciting expressions of interest for the steward network, advising individual graduate student workers, and supporting the work of the GSA Labour Relations Committee, distribution of new agreement, outreach and strategic planning with PSAC).

Executive Director update

- We have received over 140 new grant applications. Vanessa and I have worked hard to get them processed in a timely manner. The new grants software will be implemented in May-June. The software will be hosted on the Good Grants platform. Our 2024-2025 GSSF funding has been confirmed by the University and we have received the cheque.
- We have hired a new Admin Support Specialist starting this week, we are excited to have Grace Kinley join us. This will give other staff more capacity to assist on projects and other GSA duties.
- Our application for the grant funding application for the Canada summer students grant was approved. We will be advertising for an 8 week paid intern later this week.
- **Facebook** Reach: -49% (vs April 1) Followers: +6 followers (current: 2052) **Instagram** Reach: +42.9% (vs April 1) Followers: +27 followers (current: 1267) **Twitter/ X** Followers: - 3 follower (1345)
- The Spring social was held at the Muttart Conservatory last week and we have received a lot of great feedback about the event.
- Our final budget numbers have been submitted to the BOG and have now passed.

Management Report to the GSA Board, May 8 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **May 1 2024**.

Executive Director update

- Since opening the grants in April, we have approved \$176,526 with another \$86,550 pending prior to the May 10th cut off. The new grants software is currently being implemented. The software will be hosted on the Good Grants platform. Our 2024-2025 GSSF funding has been confirmed by the University and we have received the cheque.
- We are preparing for our annual audit with RSM Canada; this is an annual financial report.
- Our application for the grant funding application for the Canada Summer Students grant was approved. We are advertising for an 8-week paid intern later this week.
- Facebook
 - Reach: +31.6% (vs. April 29); Followers: -1 follower (current: 2051)
- Instagram
 - Reach: -43.3% (vs. April 29); Followers: -3 followers (current: 1264)
- Twitter/X
 - Followers: -1 follower (1344)
- The office has been busy with the GSA 101s and the GSA Board Retreat.
- I have been meeting with Health and Dental providers and working with them to achieve the best quotes to bring to the Board and Council in the Fall.

Associate Director update

- For Labour, the Bargaining team met on Friday to review the mandate letter. Once this is finalized, we will send it out for members to vote on. There is a tabling session this week in SUB on Thursday from 10 am - 2 pm and a Labour Breakfast on Friday from 10 am - 12 pm (noon) in Triffo Hall.

Management Report to the GSA Board, May 15 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **May 8 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Since opening the grants in April (April 1 - May 2024), we have processed and approved the following: ATG: 161 applications \$78,706.52; CCG: 53 applications \$107,000.00; EB: 1 application \$1,731.00. The new grants software is currently being implemented. The software will be hosted on the Good Grants platform.
- I am currently organizing the Grants Appeal Committee to help resolve a confidential student issue.
- We are preparing for our annual audit with RSM Canada; this is an annual financial report.
- Our application for the Canada Summer Students grant was approved. Interviews will be commencing over the next two weeks.
- The office has been extremely busy with all matters related to the weekend's violence on campus against the peaceful protestors. This is an evolving situation and takes precedence over regular operations.
- I have a meeting with Alberta Blue Cross regarding our Health and Dental plan and they will present figures to the Board on May 29 2024.
- Social media:
 - Facebook Reach: +118.4% (April 30-May 14); Followers: -2 followers (current: 2049)
 - Instagram Reach: -33.8% (April 30-May 14); Followers: +22 followers (current: 1286)
 - Twitter/X Followers: + 10 followers (1354)

Management Report to the GSA Board, May 22 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **May 15 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- We have further processed over 50 new grants in the last week. The new grants software is currently being implemented. The software will be hosted on the Good Grants platform.
- We are preparing for our annual audit with RSM Canada; this is an annual financial report.
- Our application for the Canada Summer Students grant was approved. Interviews have commenced and we are shortlisting a candidate.
- The office has been extremely busy with all matters related to the violence on campus against the peaceful protestors. This is an evolving situation and takes precedence over regular operations.
- I had a meeting with Alberta Blue Cross regarding our Health and Dental plan and they will present figures to the Board on May 29 2024.
- Social media:
 - Facebook Reach: +118.4% (April 30-May 14); Followers: -2 followers (current: 2049)
 - Instagram Reach: -33.8% (April 30-May 14); Followers: +22 followers (current: 1286)
 - Twitter/X Followers: + 10 followers (1354)



Annual Report

The 2023 GSA Annual Report showcases a year of strategic growth and innovative initiatives at the University of Alberta, driven by a commitment to enrich the graduate student experience. Key achievements include the development and approval of the PhD Minimum Funding Package, the creation of a Vice President of Indigenous Relations role, and the establishment of a Growth Fund to ensure financial sustainability. The report highlights significant operational improvements, including a restructuring that led to substantial cost savings and enhanced efficiency.

As we continue to advocate for accessible education and expand professional development opportunities, the GSA leverages advanced data analysis tools to support informed advocacy and operational decisions. The 2023 report reflects our ongoing dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all graduate students.

For questions, please send an email to gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca



2023-2024

TRIFFO
HALL

Our Team

At the heart of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) are our dedicated executives, a dynamic team of leaders committed to enhancing the graduate student experience at the University of Alberta. Each member brings a unique set of skills and a shared passion for advocacy, student welfare, and community engagement. Our team is composed of visionary individuals who are deeply involved in every facet of graduate student life. From advocating for better funding packages to fostering inclusivity and diversity, they work tirelessly to ensure that all graduate students' voices are heard and their needs are met.

A Message from Our Team

We are privileged to have served the graduate student community at UofA. This past year has been filled with both challenges and significant achievements. As we transition responsibilities to the newly elected executives, we are confident that the foundation we have built will support continued advocacy and enhancement of student life. We thank each of you for your engagement and trust in us. Your success is our priority, and together, we look forward to seeing the continued positive impact of the GSA on our community.



Bishoi Aziz

GSA President



Rija Kamran

GSA VP Academic



Hamid Hassani

GSA VP External



Tiffany Kung

GSA VP Student Life



Haseeb Arshad

GSA VP Student Services



Muneeb Masood Raja

GSA Associate VP Labour

Highlights of 2023-2024

1

PhD Minimum Funding Package

This year, we successfully moved from planning to action with our PhD Minimum Funding Package. After drafting a solid proposal and securing initial commitments, we are thrilled to announce that it was approved by the FGPS Council in April 2024. This achievement represents a significant step forward in supporting our PhD students financially.



2

New Vice-President Position at the GSA

We have established VP of Indigenous Relations role, set to begin in the 2025-2026. This important position underscores our commitment to truth and reconciliation, focusing on representing Indigenous graduate students within and beyond the university. Development of this role was a collaborative effort, involving key partners such as the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association, the Vice Provost of Indigenous Programming and Research, and Indigenous student groups.



3

Establishment of the Growth Fund

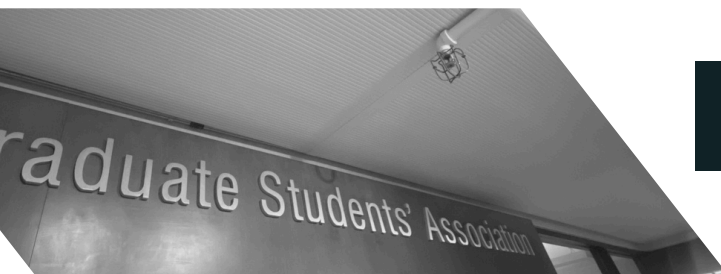
A fund established to enhance the GSA's financial stability by diversifying our revenue sources. This fund will support future investment projects, reducing our reliance on graduate student fees and university grants, and strengthening our financial independence.



4

GSA Office Restructuring

The GSA office restructure resulted in a savings of \$80,000, which will allow us to build up our Growth fund and fund the creation of the new Vice President of Indigenous Relations.



5

Peer Support Program

VP Student Services has held multiple meetings with DOS and other university departments to begin building the framework for our new Peer Support Program. He has also been meeting with the university administration about securing funding to run this program.



CONNECT

Professional Development and Advocacy Initiatives

Our Vice Presidents for External Affairs and Student Life have actively promoted co-op work opportunities through partnerships with organizations like MITACS, AIESEC, and WIL. Their advocacy extends to securing internal grants to broaden professional opportunities for graduate students.

Communications and Engagement

This year, we significantly improved our communication strategies, resulting in a growth from under 200 to over 830 survey responses in just 12 months. A restructured communications team and revamped social media strategies have increased our engagement and visibility. Continuing into 2024, we plan a comprehensive communications overhaul and rebranding effort.

Operational Transparency and Advocacy

Our Vice Presidents have been instrumental in fostering transparency and reducing bureaucracy within university administration, participating actively on over 12 committees. Our advocacy efforts have been particularly strong in opposing tuition increases and supporting the PhD Minimum Funding Package, which has now been approved.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Leveraging AI tools, the VP of Student Services has enhanced our ability to analyze survey data, leading to more precise and actionable insights. This has strengthened our advocacy efforts, allowing us to effectively present our case in various forums, including media engagements and academic conferences.

Decreasing University Bureaucracy

Through a strategic restructuring of our advocacy groups and the introduction of new grant software, we are simplifying processes for our students, making our operations more efficient and less bureaucratic.



These strategic initiatives demonstrate our commitment to improving the graduate student experience through enhanced professional development opportunities, more effective communication, and streamlined operations. We are setting a strong foundation for future growth and success.

SUPPORT

Indigenization and Reconciliation Efforts

This year, the GSA has deepened its commitment to Indigenization and reconciliation. A landmark achievement has been the collaboration between the President, VP Student Life, and the IGSA with the Vice-Provost of Indigenous Programming and Research to establish a new VP position of Indigenous Relations. Set to commence in the 2025-2026 term, this role is designed to enhance representation and service for Indigenous graduate students across university committees and beyond. Additionally, the restructuring savings have enabled us to support the IGSA's financial processes, further solidifying our commitment to these vital efforts.

Fostering Relationships and Community Engagement

Under the guidance of the VP Student Life, our association has strengthened ties with equity-deserving groups such as the IGSA and BGSA. Their active participation in the Strategic Action Plan and SEAP committees has been instrumental in ensuring that the graduate student perspective is incorporated into university-wide action plans.

The VP Academic and VP Student Life have also been pivotal in advocating for the concerns of the ISA, enhancing the graduate student experience through proactive engagement. Meanwhile, the VP External has been enhancing our relationships at both the city and provincial levels through collaborations with ab-GPAC and ESA.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives

The GSA has made significant strides in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through various channels. The VP Student Life has spearheaded efforts in the EDI committee and the newly formed EDI reading group, fostering a collaborative environment where equity-seeking groups can contribute to campus-wide EDI strategies.

Mental Health and Housing Stability:

The VP Student Services has championed the development of a Peer Support Program, aimed at providing comprehensive mental health support tailored to the diverse needs of our graduate community. Additionally, the VP Student Life's involvement in the Student Housing Stability Working Group has been crucial in addressing and mitigating student homelessness, ensuring the foundation for the creation of a graduate students' residence association.

These efforts collectively underscore the GSA's dedication to supporting a vibrant, inclusive, and responsive community, ensuring that all graduate students feel valued and supported throughout their academic journey.





ADVOCATE

Supporting Community Needs

The VP Student Services has been instrumental in enhancing food security on campus. This includes supporting the campus food bank, advocating for culturally inclusive food options, and finalizing key agreements like the Rutherford Pantry lease and the use of garden space for fresh produce. These efforts have directly addressed the nutritional needs of our diverse student body.

Enhancing Family-Friendly Campus Environments

Continued advocacy led to significant improvements in support for students who are parents. This includes the creation of a graduate student research internship to evaluate policies for student parents across Canada, and the establishment of family-friendly spaces such as the Rutherford Family Room.

Promoting Internships and Practical Opportunities

We have actively pursued funding for co-op programs and partnered with organizations like MITACS and AIESEC to secure internship opportunities for our students. Efforts also focused on increasing graduate co-op placements and making application processes less burdensome.

Improving Campus Infrastructure and Safety

The GSA has advocated for increased bus route frequencies to the university and the installation of multi-faith prayer spaces and gender-neutral washroom facilities. Safety initiatives have included regular meetings focused on campus security and transit safety, as well as advocating for improved access to campus facilities through enhanced pedway systems.

These advocacy efforts demonstrate our ongoing commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive, and safe educational environment for all our graduate students.

LABOUR

Over the past year, the Associate Vice President (AVP) of Labor has been instrumental in enhancing labor conditions for graduate students at the University of Alberta. Through numerous outreach efforts, including tabling events and breakfast meetings, the AVP has fostered a community well-informed about labor rights. This initiative has been supported by a strengthened partnership with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), enriching our labor strategies and advocacy.

To better represent our students in bargaining and relations, the AVP Labor introduced two pivotal roles: the Outreach Coordinator and the Chief Steward. These positions have significantly improved our negotiation capabilities and student representation. Coupled with frequent newsletters and surveys, these efforts ensure that the voices of academically employed graduate students are heard and their needs addressed effectively.

A major focus of our advocacy has been the reclassification of Graduate Research Assistantships - Funding (GRAF) as employment contracts. This initiative aims to provide better funding, enhanced benefits, and stronger protections for thesis-based graduate students, marking a significant stride towards more equitable and supportive labor conditions at the university.



Engaging with Our Graduate Community

The Graduate Students' Association is proudly led by graduate students, for graduate students.

Our interactions and initiatives are tailored to meet their diverse needs, whether through personalized one-on-one meetings, targeted service offerings, or larger community events. This past year, we've implemented several new approaches and hosted numerous engagements that reflect our commitment to the graduate student body. Here are some highlights of how we connected with and supported our students during the 2022-2023 academic year.



Graduate Student Orientations: A Fresh Approach

This year, the Fall Orientation was held at Dinwoodie Lounge, and the Winter Orientation debuted at the GSA Lounge in Van Vliet, enhancing our in-person engagements. Along with our ongoing departmental orientations, these sessions effectively provided crucial information on the different GSA Services.



GSA Awards Night: A Celebration of Excellence

This year's GSA Awards Night featured significant enhancements, including a streamlined program and an upgraded venue at the prestigious Maple Leaf Room in Lister Centre. These improvements created an elegant and memorable setting to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our graduate students. Access the [full list of awardees](#) here.



GSA Socials: Refreshed and Revitalized

Our GSA social events saw some exciting updates. The Fall Social was held at Tasty House with an impressive turnout of nearly 200 students, featuring an evening of mingling, games, and great food. Adapting to the seasonal spirit and student feedback, the Winter Social was transitioned to a Spring Social for the first time, hosted at the Muttart Conservatory. This change provided a unique and refreshing backdrop that significantly enhanced the experience, making it a standout event.



GSA Event Innovations: Fostering Engagement and Well-being

This year, the GSA has been proactive in exploring new event formats to enhance student engagement and provide a reprieve from academic stress. We introduced fun and recreational activities tailored to the interests and needs of our students. A highlight was the GSA Movie Night, hosted at the Telus Auditorium. This event, organized by our newly established GSA Volunteer Team, offered students a relaxed and social atmosphere, allowing them to unwind and connect with peers outside the classroom. Become a volunteer by signing up this [form](#).



GSA Town Halls: Amplifying Student Voices

This year, the GSA hosted three critical town halls to discuss key academic and financial issues. Two sessions addressed the tuition fee proposal, while another focused on the PhD Minimum Funding initiative, allowing students to voice concerns and provide feedback. These forums demonstrated our dedication to transparency and active student participation in university decisions.

Financial Highlights

21.13

\$1.7M

The President and VP Academic have strongly advocated for at least a **\$1.7 million increase** for the international student bursary, slated to start in the 2025–2026 years.



\$80K+

The new structure streamlines operations, cuts admin work, and boosts our focus on strategy, creativity, and data. We have **over \$80,000 in savings** that will fuel growth initiatives and expand our reach.

\$420K

Child Care Grants
Disbursed



\$34K

Graduate Student Group Grants
Disbursed

\$355,388

Academic Travel Grants
Disbursed

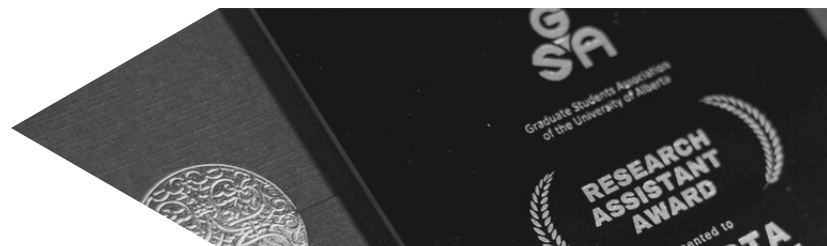


\$1.7K

Emergency Bursary Disbursed

\$22.5K

Recognition Awards
Disbursed





Get Involved with the GSA! Explore Governance, Services, Funding & Collective Agreement.

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

CONTACT US!

 780-492-2175

 gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca