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Item 1: Agenda

Monday, August 18, 2025

Held hybrid in 2-100 Council Chambers

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

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

GSA SPEAKER:

Zain Patel in the Chair

GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Laith Khatib

CLOSED SESSION:

Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
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5:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1		Approval of the Agenda for August 18, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2		Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of July 16, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	4		Announcements	
10 min	5		<u>ELECTIONS</u> A. GSA Councillors-At-Large: a. Two vacancies b. Four nominations	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
30 min	6		<u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u> A. Disability Cultures & Graduate Student Life Presentation a. Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost Accessibility, Community & Belonging, and her associates will present this item	C. Smith, T. Ira, D. Peers
20 min	7		<u>CLOSED SESSION</u>	

1 hr	8	<p><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></p> <p>A. That the GSA Council APPROVE the formation of an <i>ad hoc</i> committee and call for a third-party review of the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association, subject to the "Terms of the Motion" outlined herein.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F: First Reading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Outline of Issue: Section F</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Section F Revisions</p> <p>C. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">c. Outline of Issue: Section J</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">d. Section J Revisions</p> <p>D. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: First Reading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">e. Outline of Issue: Section K</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">f. Section K Revisions</p> <p>E. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 1</p> <p>F. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 2</p> <p>G. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 3</p>	<p>Z. Patel, GSA Speaker</p> <p>A. Kumar, GSA President</p> <p>T. Dubé, GSA VPIR</p>
30 min	9	<p><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></p> <p>Reports:</p> <p>A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. President's Report</p>	<p>*See Legend</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. GSSF Proposal sent to University Administration c. GSA Priorities sent to the Minister of Advanced Education d. GSA Exam Reimbursement Program Draft Policies B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor C. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal E. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah F. Vice-President Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé G. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Labour Relations Committee H. GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy I. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel J. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Wajid Ali K. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov L. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei M. GSA Management 	<p>Currently suspended</p> <p>NMS</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NMS</p> <p>NMS</p>
15 min	10		<p>Question Period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on the day of the meeting) 2. Oral Questions 	
	11		Adjournment	

***Report Legend**

NRS: No report submitted

NMS: No meeting scheduled

Item 2: GSA Council July 16 2025 Minutes

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Held hybrid in 2-100 Council Chambers

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

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GSA SPEAKER:

Zain Patel in the Chair

CLOSED SESSION:

Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

- Chief Returning Officer: Wajid Ali
- Senator: Hussain Alhussainy

GSA Executives:

- GSA President: Aashish Kumar
- VP Academic: Chen Okafor

Departmental Councillors:

- Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering
- Selin Simsek, Business MBA
- Shamsheer Ahmad, Chemistry
- Saniyya Mirza, Civil & Environmental

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal ● VP Student Life: Hazel Kemuma <p>Councillors-At-Large:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jeff Akhagbosu 2. Ashif Rahman 3. Anagha Devkota 4. Julianna Durham 5. Mohamadali Tofigh 6. Muhammad Faizan Tariq 7. Rishabh Dagur 8. Haroun Elyasir <p>Standing Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair <p>Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tamara Dubé ● Benjamin Kucher ● Andrea DeKeseredy ● Patrick Erickson ● Denee Reansbury ● Annalisa Gyanfosu ● Catherine Mar Pineda ● Sandra Fahl ● Shivani Sonkar ● Marzie Jalilehvand ● Laith Khatib ● Tabish Said Abbasi 	<p>Engineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vera Fiawornu, Communication Sciences & Disorders ● Iain Smith, Computing Science ● Michelle Bey, Dentistry ● Andy Zhang, Digital Humanities ● Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences ● Devinder Pal Singh, Economics ● Ajibola Adigun, Educational Policy Studies ● Jennie Burton, Elementary Education ● Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion ● Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology ● Meredith Leary, IGSA ● Tamara Semeria Maitret, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology ● Dalia Cristerna Roman, Linguistics ● Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology & Immunology ● Pooja Praveen Kumar, Obstetrics & Gynecology ● Seth Peyton, Oncology ● Toqa Abdelwahab, Ophthalmology ● Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics ● Thomas Hammond, Pharmacology ● Joshua Barden, Philosophy ● Daniel Carleton, Physics ● Mohaddeseh Pakzamir, Physiology ● Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences ● Emily Ward, Psychiatry ● Vi Tran, Public Health ● Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Sciences ● Shea Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources ● Juan Andrés Luchsinger Rivera, Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology ● Celine Beaulieu, Sociology ● Ivan Ma, Surgery
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	<p>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Luke Nelson, Biological Sciences ● Sohrab Hejazi, Chemical & Materials Engineering ● Reyna Álvarez, Drama ● Shuvo Saha, Educational Policy Studies ● Mackenzie O’Neill, History, Classics & Religion ● Joëlle Kasongo, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology ● Vincent Yu, Library & Information Studies ● Madeleine Ho, Neuroscience ● Ahmed Abdelfattah, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences ● Angely Claire Suerte, Psychology
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Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
5:05	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1		Approval of the Agenda for July 16, 2025 GSA Council C. Cowan moved. D. Carleton seconded. Motion PASSED. 33 votes in favour. 1 vote against.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2		Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of June 23, 2025 GSA Council C. Cowan moved. D. Carleton seconded. Motion PASSED. 36 votes in favour. 1 vote against. 2 abstentions.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Luke Nelson, Biological Sciences Alternate Councillor ● Madeleine Ho, Neuroscience Alternate Councillor 	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hussain Alhussainy, GSA Senator ● Meredith Leary, IGSA Councillor ● Wajid Ali, GSA CRO ● Pooja Praveen Kumar, Obstetrics & Gynecology Councillor 	
2 min	4		Announcements	
	5		<p><u>ELECTIONS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (3 vacancies):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Five nominations b. Successful Candidates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Catherine Mar Pineda ii. Marzie Jalilehvand iii. Sandra Fahl <p>B. GSA Elections & Referenda Committee (2 vacancies):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One nomination b. Successful Candidate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tabish Said Abbasi <p>C. GSA Deputy Speaker (1 vacancy):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One nomination b. Successful Candidate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Laith Khatib <p><u>ELECTION DISCUSSION ITEM</u></p> <p>A. Update on ACB Vacancies & NoC Filling Procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A. Belosokhov, GSA Nominating Committee Chair, delivered a comprehensive report on the status of the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB): he clarified that the ACB remains functional, currently with eight members, as some had previously resigned due to academic and personal reasons. He assured Council 	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair

			<p>that the board has not collapsed, and that active recruitment and contingency planning are underway to maintain its operation. He invited two councillors or recent former councillors to step forward for appointment to the remaining Council-reserved seats on the ACB: applications can be submitted via the GSA website here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key points included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ACB is short two members from Council or former Council members. Council was urged to volunteer or nominate candidates. ● A contingency plan is being developed in case the current policy steps prove insufficient. ● The ACB remains active, but processing delays are a concern. ● A set of procedural ambiguities was presented for Council feedback, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handling of interim appointments versus elected replacements. ○ Eligibility of interim appointees to continue after losing an election. ○ Continuation of interim members involved in active cases post-replacement. ○ Determining which interim member steps down when replacements are elected. ○ Role of the Nominating Committee in ACB officer elections. ○ Potential implementation of a soft cap (e.g., 6 or 12 months) on interim terms to prevent indefinite service. ○ Whether long-serving interim members could be formally confirmed via Council vote. 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C. Cowan, Rehabilitation Medicine Councillor & ACB Councillor, suggested reaching out to previous ACB members for their experience for interim positions on the Board. For continuing, formalized positions, new members would be welcome. ● A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair, replied that the former members were our first port of call, which is where we retained a previous ACB Chair, who has been a significant training resource. He stated that the resignations arose from academic conflicts and graduations. Former Board members will be prioritized. ● Councillors supported allowing interim members to continue case-by-case, emphasizing procedural continuity. ● D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, raised concerns about data privacy, advocating for vetting and use of elections over appointments when possible. ● A. Belosokhov clarified that members without ACB experience undergo an interview with the NoC, and any candidates that were previously forwarded to Council (who will be invited for an interview for emergency appointment) were previously vetted by the NoC. ● A. Belosokhov confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only vetted and qualified individuals are appointed. ○ A formal confirmation process for long-serving interim members may be considered if policy allows. ○ Interim Vice-Chair roles are already addressed in policy, but there is interest in clearer facilitation processes without overstepping ACB independence. 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council agreed feedback would be relayed to the Governance Committee for policy consideration. 	
	6		<p><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. GSA 2025-2026 Strategic Work Plan Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Kumar, GSA President, stated that the Board has arranged their priorities from the views of graduate students through the online form that collected feedback and suggestions for this year. • A. Kumar outlined strategic initiatives shaped by member feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration with Career Services and FGPS to ensure more internship opportunities for graduate students at events, such as a career fair. ○ Proposal for an exam reimbursement program for students who pass professional certification exams ○ Continued advocacy for increased funding for course-based scholarships. ○ Efforts to increase the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), including submitting a data-driven proposal. ○ Support for the Campus Food Bank and pursuit of external partnerships (e.g., with Loblaws) to expand its capacity and resources. ○ Working on avenues for provincial advocacy, including discussions with CAUS to include GSAs. • H. Kemuma, VP Student Life, will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redesigning social hours to include more engaging activities and inter-group collaborations. ○ Engaging with student groups to promote cross-silo interaction. 	A. Kumar, GSA President

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing the need for more and better religious and community spaces for graduate students. ○ Exploring long-term partnerships and collaborations within and outside the university. ● VP Academic, C. Okafor, is in the process of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalizing interviews for the new Graduate Student Peer Support Program. ○ Assisting students with academic integrity concerns. ○ Conducting office hours every Friday from 9:00 AM–1:00 PM. ○ Beginning an internal review of tuition and fees across departments to explore potential waivers and affordability measures. ● VP Student Services, S. Iqbal, announced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Launching a “Know Your Services” campaign to improve awareness of health, dental, and wellness services. ○ Supporting winter orientation sessions for student parents. ○ Developing a GSA Health and Wellness Hub by restructuring underutilized spaces like the parents’ lounge. ○ Reviving the hydroponics farm project through partnerships with the Dean of Students Office and Mechanical Engineering. ○ Working on initiatives such as the “Help Your Shelf” sustainable store. ● VP External, N. Mir Fallah, was on academic leave through this period, but is contactable at gsavpext@ualberta.ca ● AVP Labour, N. Lamarche, is currently suspended. Any labour questions or inquiries should be directed to 	
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			<p>gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C. Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion Councillor, asked about GSA's response to recent university childcare funding cuts. A. Kumar and S. Iqbal detailed efforts to increase GSSF, update income thresholds, and secure better support through coalitions. The GSA Childcare Grants continue to be available for students who parent. ● J. Akhagbosu, Councillor-At-Large, praised the DEOs and suggested vouchers as an alternative to full exam fee reimbursements. They also requested more clarity on the VP Academic's tuition affordability efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A. Kumar confirmed voucher systems were under consideration. ○ C. Okafor explained they are in the early data analysis phase and will explore options with university officials to reduce or waive specific fees. ● Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, stated he asks for remaining questions to be through the Question Period to move on for time constraint reasons. <p>B. GSA VP Indigenous Relations: ERC Action Plan Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ERC Chair E. Osei provided an update regarding the VPIR vacancy and the ERC's efforts to fulfill Council's directive to return with a solution. She explained that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ERC held an emergency meeting, but was unable to reach a conclusion due to quorum issues and a tie in voting. ○ The ERC is composed of six voting members and two non-voting (CRO and DRO). Following recent resignations, the voting body was reduced to four. After a 3-way tie, one member abstained from breaking the tie, effectively ending the ERC's deliberations. 	<p>E. Osei, ERC Chair</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As a result, E. Osei stepped forward as ERC Chair to bring forward a recommendation directly to Council. ● E. Osei confirmed that, in line with policy and the Council’s previous direction, she consulted with the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) regarding the VPIR vacancy. The IGSA nominated Tamara Dubé, a Métis graduate student from Augustana Campus. Her professional and academic profile was shared with Council and can be viewed here. ● E. Osei emphasized that the ERC would not scrutinize IGSA’s internal nomination process, trusting that IGSA had followed its own procedures. She added that IGSA had chosen to nominate only one candidate, although the option for multiple nominees had been left open. ● T. Dubé was present and accepted questions from Council. In her remarks, she: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduced herself as a Red River Métis graduate student pursuing Occupational Therapy. ● Shared her extensive teaching and leadership experience, particularly in Indigenous education and inclusive pedagogy. ● She posited that her decision to withdraw from the by-election was due to an exclusionary and culturally unsafe environment. ● Expressed disappointment in how the process had unfolded but reaffirmed her interest in taking up the VPIR role to make a positive difference and ensure better representation for Indigenous graduate students. ● Emphasized her desire to move forward with healing, collaboration, and bridge-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and proposed a healing circle to begin restoring relationships. ● M. Leary, IGSA Councillor, expressed unequivocal support for Tamara’s nomination and stated that: 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IGSA followed its own internal consultation process and received no other expressions of interest from Indigenous students. ○ The VPIR role is intended to represent Indigenous graduate students, and it is vital that the candidate be selected and supported by the Indigenous student body. ○ She posited that voting against Tamara’s nomination would undermine Indigenous self-determination and reconciliation efforts within the GSA. ● W. Ali, newly elected CRO, asked whether the IGSA had informed all Indigenous graduate students about the VPIR opportunity and how Tamara’s nomination was conducted. IGSA confirmed that Tamara had received their call for nominations and was the only person to express interest. They stated that, following their usual practice, Tamara was acclaimed by the IGSA executive after internal discussion. The opportunity had also been shared via private email lists and public social media, but no other nominees came forward. The ERC Chair confirmed that IGSA attended two ERC meetings to discuss the nomination and that proper consultation had occurred with the full ERC prior to the recommendation. ● E. Osei presented two formal paths forward to Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediate Appointment: Council accepts IGSA’s nomination and appoints T. Dubé as VPIR without requiring a by-election. 2. Nomination & By-Election: Council accepts the nomination but requires T. Dubé to stand for confirmation via a GSA-wide vote (a simplified by-election process). ● She clarified that both options were procedurally valid under current policy and reiterated her own preference for final resolution that evening. ● Z. Patel added further context that he has from the creation of the VPIR policy with T. Kung, previous VP Student Life: during one of the consultations, the IGSA executive team at the time rejected the notion of only 	
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			<p>FNMI students voting on this position and required that all graduate students vote the VPIR into office. All grad students pay fees, which go toward DEO stipends (aside from the AVPL, who get their stipend from the labour fund).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M. Leary, IGSA Councillor, will look into their Council minutes and stated surprise regarding the whole graduate student base voting the VPIR into office, despite all graduate students supporting the VPIR stipend. ● A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair, stated support for solving this issue, but also advocated for following our policies. ● Council members raised concerns about procedural integrity, Indigenous self-governance, and adherence to policy. E. Osei and A. Belosokhov confirmed a Council vote is supported by D.POL.10.1. ● M. Leary, IGSA Councillor, supported immediate appointment to avoid further delays, emphasizing Indigenous representation and consultation had already occurred. After discussion, Council chose the first option and raised a motion to appoint T. Dubé directly to the role. ● M. Leary suggested Council vote to approve T. Dube’s nomination first. ● Motion that the GSA Council APPROVE in consultation with the IGSA the nomination of Tamara Dubé for the position of VPIR. S. Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources, moved. S. Ribeiro, Political Sciences, seconded. 31 votes in favour. 4 abstentions. Motion PASSED. ● A. Adigun, Educational Policy Councillor, moved a motion for the Council to act as representatives of all graduate students and vote for the position of VPIR. A. Belosokhov raised that this is not good governance practice, as there are not Councillors for every graduate student department. ● E. Osei clarified that the ERC will begin the process of changing the bylaw to realign the bylaw and policy. 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● L. Nelson, Biological Sciences Alternate Councillor, raised that lack of representation of all areas is usual for voting, and that humanity should come first. ● N. Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, agreed that action should be taken to fill the position. A. Cheng agreed. ● A. Belosokhov clarified that Councillors must do what they feel is right and should know that there may be possible repercussions regarding the bylaw, but agreed that humanity should come first. ● M. Bey, Dentistry Councillor, agreed to vote on this issue today. ● The GSA Council voted on the VPIR election route: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ S. Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources, moved. D. Carleton, Physics, seconded. ○ Option 1: GSA Council directly appoints the candidate to the position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 30 votes in favour ○ Option 2: A by-election is held for all GSA members to cast their vote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 6 votes in favour ○ Option 3: Abstain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No abstentions <p style="text-align: right;">Option 1 Motion PASSED.</p> ● The GSA Council voted to APPROVE the direct appointment for VPIR position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tamara Dubé ○ None of the Candidates ○ Abstain <p>S. Ribeiro, Political Sciences, moved. C. Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion Councillor, seconded.</p> <p>Motion PASSED. 29 votes in favour. 1 against. 3 abstentions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To certify the election results, Z. Patel raised that the GSA Council CERTIFIES the Election of the VPIR: ● S. Ribeiro, Political Sciences, moved. S. Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources, seconded. <p style="text-align: center;">35 votes in favour. 2 votes abstaining. Motion PASSED.</p>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E. Osei thanked the Council for making a quick decision, and apologized for the issue arising. The CRO and DRO will work to resolve this issue so it does not arise again. ● Outcome: Tamara Dubé was formally appointed to the position of GSA Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR). ● Z. Patel raised the option to motion to extend the meeting to attempt to complete the agenda. He raised that we have only managed to address one action item since February. N. Morley moved. L. Nelson seconded. <p>10 votes in favour. 17 votes against. Motion DOES NOT PASS. Council was adjourned due to reaching the end of the meeting time.</p> <p>C. GSA Board Presentation on Clarifying Misinformation</p>	
	7		<u>CLOSED SESSION</u>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal E. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Labour Relations Committee G. GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Wajid Ali & Temi David J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei L. GSA Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Labour Relations Committee 	<p>Currently suspended</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>DNS</p>
	10	<p>Question Period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on Tuesday, July 15, 2025): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Question from N. Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences Councillor: GSA Bylaw and Policy, section K.BYL.1.2 states, "GSA Council will receive a recommendation on the annual operating and capital budgets, together with a recommended three (3) year budget and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting." As we found out during the latest budget proposal, the university requires a finalized budget by early May, effectively leaving Council with two regular sessions to approve the budget. Two regular sessions does not provide Council with much time to work with the Board and BFC to resolve a contentious budget, and failure to pass a budget during the regular April meeting would have a disastrous impact on the financial viability of the GSA. Are there any external reasons why the bylaws stipulate a March deadline? Or is this an internal deadline that 	

			<p>can be amended to provide Council with more time to collaborate with the Board and BFC to resolve any budgetary issues?</p> <p>2. Oral Questions</p>	
	11		<p>Adjournment 8:02 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Z. Patel clarified that ten Councillors are required for requesting a special Council session, but raised that he will be away for the next few weeks and the new Deputy Speaker will require training. 	

Item 5a: Nominees for GSA Councillor-At-Large Vacancies

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
**GSA Councillor-at-Large By-Election (2 POSITIONS):
FOUR (4) NOMINEES**

Two serving Councillors-At-Large have stepped down from their positions as of June 2025. As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, GSA Council fills any remaining positions from nominations forwarded by the GSA NoC (Section I: Elections, GSA Policy, Elections, Section I.POL.16.3). The duties of GSA Councillors-at-Large are to attend all meetings of GSA Council, and “to provide additional voices on GSA Council from those offered by DEOs, Departmental Councillors, and the IGSA Councillor” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section C: GSA Council, GSA Policy, GSA Council, Section C.POL.3.3.b.iii).

These positions were advertised in the GSA newsletters of June 27th and July 4 with a nomination deadline of July 11th at 12:00 PM. Four (4) nominations were received by the deadline and approved by the NoC.

There will be an electronic ballot vote held at the August 18 2025 GSA Council meeting.

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

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

- 1. Mohammad Hamza (Mechanical Engineering)**
- 2. Izhan Khan (Biomedical Engineering)**
- 3. Jovi Krieger (Sociology)**
- 4. Hafiz Muhammad Usman Shafique (Electrical Engineering)**

Jurisdiction:**Section I: Elections, GSA Policy, Elections, Section I.POL.16.3**

“In the event that any CAL positions are not filled by the end of the GSA General Election, or a CAL position is vacated prior to December 1 (or the next working day) GSA Council will be responsible for electing any remaining CALs. When electing any remaining CALs, the GSA Council will aim to elect graduate students from as broad a range of disciplines as possible. The GSA NoC will decide on procedures and then provide one or more names to GSA Council for consideration, except that the GSA

NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process specifies that all vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement. If the matter is urgent, GSA Council can hold this election electronically.”

The names and biographies received for the nominee(s) are BELOW. Biographies and resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

1. Mohammad Hamza (Mechanical Engineering) - current GSA BFC member

<p>Statement of Interest</p>
<p>I have a strong interest in financial planning and organizational strategy, and I see this role as an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the long-term financial health of the GSA. My background in engineering management has exposed me to budgeting, project planning, and cost control, which I believe can be valuable to the committee’s work. I’m passionate about student representation and would like to be part of a team that supports graduate students by ensuring the GSA's resources are managed effectively.</p> <p>Serving on this committee would allow me to apply my skills in a real-world setting while learning more about nonprofit financial governance.</p> <p>As an international graduate student, I bring a diverse perspective and a commitment to understanding and supporting the broader student community.</p> <p>I am eager to collaborate with other committee members to ensure transparent, well-informed decisions that reflect the GSA’s strategic goals.</p>
<p>Bio</p>
<p>While working at Toyota-Indus Motor Company, I volunteered to assist in cost optimization initiatives, which involved analyzing supplier cost performance and identifying areas for savings without compromising quality. This hands-on involvement gave me exposure to budgeting principles in a high-stakes corporate environment.</p> <p>I supported internal improvement projects where we monitored production inefficiencies and proposed financially responsible solutions—contributing to better budget allocation and resource planning across departments.</p> <p>During my time at NED University, as the Lead Director of Industrial Liaison for the IMechE NED Chapter, I managed external sponsorships and industry partnerships. This included preparing budget proposals, estimating event expenses, and ensuring funds were used effectively.</p> <p>I was also part of the marketing and events team for multiple student-led conferences like SENTEC and HVAC ASHRAE, where I helped track event budgets, manage vendor negotiations, and ensure we stayed within our financial limits—all while maintaining the quality of the event experience.</p>

These experiences taught me the importance of transparent budgeting, cost-conscious decision-making, and aligning financial planning with organizational goals.

I'm a graduate student currently pursuing my Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with a specialization in Engineering Management at the University of Alberta. With a professional background at Toyota-Indus Motor Company, I've had hands-on experience in project management, budgeting, and cost optimization on large-scale initiatives, including a \$100 million vehicle launch. Academically, I've taken courses in operations management, supply chain, and project planning, all of which have deepened my understanding of financial strategy and long-term planning. In addition to my professional experience, I've been involved in student organizations such as IMechE at NED University, where I handled sponsorships and budgeting for technical events and industry collaborations. I'm also currently engaged in volunteer roles with the U of A International Student Association and the GSA Safe-Walk program. These combined experiences have equipped me with strong analytical, organizational, and teamwork skills that I believe would make me a valuable contributor to the GSA Council.

2. Izhan Khan (Biomedical Engineering)

Statement of Interest
I am eager to serve on this committee because I want to make a tangible, positive impact on the graduate student experience. Graduate students often face high levels of stress and mental health challenges, and I am deeply committed to supporting their well-being. I would work diligently to advocate for initiatives that improve the academic, emotional, and social lives of all graduate students at the university.
Bio
I have extensive volunteer experience at Alberta Hospital, where I assisted patients with mental health issues through exercise and group activities. I also have committed a large amount of time to the Alberta Schools Cricket Association, where I recently got elected as president and am responsible for organizing events and overseeing the budget, activities, bylaws, etc.
I believe that my skill set would be useful in the Councillor-At-Large position for the GSA. Academically, I have shown a high level of work ethic and competence by graduating with distinction during my undergraduate degree and maintaining a high GPA throughout my master's. Beyond just GPA, I am a punctual student who regularly attends classes and always gives my 100% in any endeavour. Additionally, my experience as a volunteer in a management role would aid in decision-making, communication and leadership, which are all qualities required for GSA members.

3. Jovi Krieger (Sociology) - current GSA EDIC member

Statement of Interest

I am deeply interested in serving as a GSA Councillor at Large to contribute more actively to the governance and decision-making processes of the Graduate Students' Association. Currently, I serve on the GSA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and have been participating as a guest in recent GSA Council meetings. I am committed to transitioning into a formal leadership role where I can directly support the Council's work, advocate for equitable policies, and amplify the voices of marginalized graduate students.

Bio

I volunteered on multiple boards, communities and associations at the University. I served as the Interim SGSA president and now serve as Event Coordinator. I am also a member of the Latin American Student Association and serve as the Graduate Representative (having also served in the past as a volunteer ambassador). Currently, I serve as a member of the GSA EDI Committee.

As a committed graduate student and active member of the GSA EDI Committee, I bring firsthand experience advocating for equitable policies on campus. My participation in GSA Council meetings provides me with insight into governance processes, while my academic and volunteer work have strengthened my communication and problem-solving skills. I am committed to fostering inclusion and ensuring that the GSA effectively represents all graduate students.

4. Hafiz Muhammad Usman Shafique (Electrical Engineering)

Statement of Interest

I am eager to serve as a GSA Councillor-At-Large to advocate for graduate students, address their challenges, and enhance their experience at the University of Alberta. With my leadership and advocacy skills, I am committed to shaping equitable policies, fostering community, and ensuring student voices are heard while developing my leadership skills.

Bio

While I have not previously volunteered within a university setting, my commitment to community service has grown significantly since arriving in Canada in December 2024. Recognizing the importance of community engagement, I have actively participated in several volunteer initiatives in Edmonton. I volunteer with the Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women, where I assist immigrants, newcomers, and individuals in need by providing educational resources, counseling, and support services to facilitate their integration into Canadian society. Additionally, I contribute to the Youth Club of the Pakistan Canada Association of Edmonton, supporting programs that empower young people through community activities and cultural engagement. I also volunteer with the Aesthetic Arts Club in Edmonton, where I help promote artistic expression and community connection through creative initiatives.

In my home country, I volunteered with a blood donation society, organizing donation drives and raising awareness to support critical health initiatives. I also participated in various other community-based projects, fostering collaboration and positive change. These experiences have strengthened my skills in communication, advocacy, and teamwork, which I am eager to apply as a GSA Councillor-At-Large to effectively represent and enhance the graduate student experience at the University of Alberta.

Item 8a: GSA Third-Party Review

Suggested Motion

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the formation of an *ad hoc* committee and call for a third-party review of the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association, subject to the "Terms of the Motion" outlined herein.

Background (see Speaker's Letter from June 23 2025 Council Mailing)

Over the past months, the integrity of our organization has been questioned on a variety of fronts, including various complaints raised concerning the conduct of GSA executives, members who volunteer for our committees, and the staff we employ to support the work of the organization. I clearly recognize and fully acknowledge the seriousness and gravity of these issues. I also think it is important that we be aware that the sentiments that have arisen have the potential to be interpreted as inflammatory, especially when a proper, thorough investigation of all the claims and allegations has not been conducted. The seriousness of the various complaints brought forward recently by various parties demand judicious consideration and action, in a manner that is in adherence with established legal standards of procedural fairness and which includes a chance to hear from the various parties.

These issues, some of which have been presented in the form of a motion that may have reached your email inbox or which may be presented at the upcoming Council meeting are of a serious nature and demand investigation by an unbiased party. I don't believe it is appropriate that the operations of the GSA be impacted before a thorough assessment of the situation(s) at hand can be completed. I am not discounting that there may be structural issues within the GSA's governing documents (Bylaw, Policy, and Board Policy) that may need to be refined or even reformed, nor am I dismissing the idea that there may be more serious issues at play within the organization. What I am asserting is that it is inappropriate for Council to not engage in a comprehensive, unbiased, and fair review of these matters before any decisions are made.

I stress again my fear that, without this commitment to an unbiased review, the organization is potentially opening itself up to various liabilities such as lawsuits. Simply put, Council meetings are public venues and associated materials are also public and available on the GSA website. Without a thorough and impartial investigation of claims made against specific individuals associated with the organization, sharing those claims publicly without them being in some way verified is a potential legal, financial, and reputational risk. Third-party reviews are not uncommon for student associations across Canada - this has happened to the University of Alberta GSA before. In 2009-10, the GSA contracted an external consultant following a series of allegations against DEOs, complaints by staff to NASA and staff resignations, as well as intervention by the University of Alberta administration. The Provost at the time stepped in and, as noted, an external consultant was brought in to restore and rebuild the GSA. **I firmly believe an unbiased, neutral review of the organization and the various associated allegations will be necessary to pave a path forward for the organization in a fair manner.**

As Speaker of the GSA, I am expected to remain neutral and unbiased in any and all affairs pertaining to the GSA and its governing Council. I take that responsibility seriously. **To this end, to resolve the matters that have been raised in an unbiased manner and to conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations being made, I suggest that a motion be moved and voted upon by the Council calling for a third-party review.**

This will be a complex endeavour, but I believe a necessary one if we are to meaningfully engage with the issues presented and move forward. I cannot say for certain what the review will encompass, but this will be something that takes time and may be expensive. Though this solution sounds extreme, it is a necessary step to resolving the issues at hand, avoiding future scrutiny and the potential for lawsuits. In the interim, however, we must ensure that the business of the organization continues as it is essential for a variety of reasons including for the graduate students we serve and represent.

I ask the GSA Council to reflect and consider the claims being made and the circumstances which we

face in order to find the best path forward.

Terms of the Motion

In passing this motion, the GSA Council agrees to a call for a **top-down and end-to-end, unbiased, third-party review by an appropriate legal entity** (ideally a legal firm, consulting company or independent consultant with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student associations within Alberta and Canada) selected by the GSA Council via majority vote based on the processes outlined hereafter. **The review will encompass any and all affairs and concerns pertaining to the GSA within the last eight (8) to twelve (12) months** with a focus on recent events and controversies. This will also encompass a thorough review of GSA Bylaw and Policy as well as GSA Board Policy.

The GSA Council will first form an *ad hoc* committee hereby titled “Third-Party Review Committee” or TPRC, naming at least three (3) to five (5) GSA Council members who are NOT Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) or Council-Elected Officers (CEOs) or a member of a GSA standing committee and have not held such roles in the last twelve (12) months. Candidates, before and after they are selected, MUST exhibit neutrality throughout the entirety of the process. Members of the TPRC will be selected in accordance with GSA Nominating Committee guidelines. Members of the TPRC will internally elect a Chair. **Ideally, a council election to appoint the TPRC members will be run as soon as possible.**

The TPRC will be responsible for engaging a third-party reviewer (ideally, as previously stated, a legal firm, consulting company or independent consultant with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student associations within Alberta and Canada), to research and review various appropriate entities (consulting with local entities such as University of Alberta Students’ Union or the University of Alberta administration for potential candidates) and develop a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will pose questions including:

- Could the reviewer conduct the review?

- How would the reviewer approach the review?
- How long could the review take?
- How much would the review cost?
- Has the reviewer interacted with the GSA before? If so, how could they guarantee neutrality and impartiality throughout the review process?
- Any other questions deemed appropriate or necessary by the TPRC.

The TPRC will select and solicit proposals from **three (3) legal or consulting firms or independent consultants** wherein the proposal addresses the questions posed in the RFP.

Upon selection of three (3) third-party entities, the TPRC will circulate and present the proposals to the GSA Council. Candidates may also be invited to present their proposal if possible. **GSA Council will vote and select one (1) third-party reviewer to conduct the third-party review. Selection of the reviewer by GSA Council should ideally occur within one (1) month of forming the TPRC.**

This process should occur without the support of GSA staff, DEOs or CEOs, and members of Council should understand that it may be a considerable investment of time for those that volunteer as the work will not be supported by staff resources other than funds from the GSA. **It is strongly recommended that the TPRC consult and ask for recommendations from local entities such as the University of Alberta Students' Union, the GSA's current auditor, the GSA's current legal representation, and the University of Alberta to streamline the process for selecting a legal or consulting firm or consultant.** The costs associated with the third-party review will be covered by the GSA's Legal Fund and Contingency Fund in compliance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and by the approval of GSA Council (in consultation with the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, the GSA Finance Team and accountant if necessary). As previously mentioned, GSA Council will have the opportunity to review the proposals and the proposal should include cost estimations.

Once the GSA Council selects a third-party reviewer, the TPRC will inform them and initiate the review

process as soon as possible. Depending on the terms of the review outlined and agreed upon by the TPRC and third-party reviewer, parties may be bound to a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement. During the review process, the TPRC will serve as a liaison between the third-party reviewer and the GSA Council, and the TPRC may provide updates on the status of the review to the GSA Council, should the third-party reviewer permit it. The extent/scope of these updates will be at the discretion of the third-party reviewer.

Upon completion of the third-party review, the TPRC will invite the third-party reviewer to the next scheduled GSA Council meeting (or request a Special Meeting if necessary) to present the findings of the review and what recommendations to enact. A written document of the review will be circulated to GSA Council members at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. The GSA Council will be permitted to ask questions following the presentation. The presentation and question period MAY NOT occur in an *in camera* session (i.e. closed session). **GSA Council will be bound by the findings of the third-party review and embark on work to enact any recommendations therein.**

Upon completion of the third-party review and its presentation to the GSA Council, the TPRC may be dissolved provided there are no pending actions or business.

Upon formation of the TPRC, current or former GSA Officers (DEOs and CEOs), GSA Staff and GSA Council members who are NOT part of the TPRC MUST NOT intervene or interfere with any step of the review process so as to preserve the unbiased, neutral nature of the third-party review. Any breaches will be dealt with in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and on the advice of the selected third-party entity.

Concurrent with the activities outlined previously, effective immediately (i.e August 18 2025) and until completion of the third party review, **the GSA Council will agree to continue with routine GSA Council business**, wherein “routine” business is strictly defined as:

- Monthly GSA Council meetings (and Special Meetings where necessary)
- The receipt of quarterly financial reports and the annual audit for information purposes
- The receipt of strategic work plan updates for information purposes
- The ratification of election results after the General Election or by-elections
- The approval of the annual GSA operating budget and forecast
- Information presentations by GSA members, community members, and stakeholders
- Matters related to collective bargaining and labour operations
- Council elections to fill vacancies on council or standing committees
- Approve changes to bylaw and policy based on approved suggestions or advice from Governance Committee or other standing committees based on the respective committee's mandate
- This may be refined upon consultation with the selected third-party reviewer, should it be necessary.

Concurrent with the activity described in the preceding motions, effective immediately (i.e. August 18 2025) and until the completion of the third-party review, **the GSA Council will agree to suspend all non-routine GSA Council business**, wherein "non-routine" business is strictly defined as:

- Significant amendments to GSA Bylaw and Policy and/or changes to the governance structure/protocols of the organization that have not gone through the current established mechanisms and structures (i.e. through standing committees, Governance Committee and GSA Board) as per the standing committee mandates granted by the GSA Council.
- Major initiatives such as the introduction of new fees etc. requiring the formal approval of GSA Council that do not involve the call for a referendum
- Any other activities NOT described as "routine" business that do not contradict established legal frameworks such as the PSLA or LRC, but this may be refined upon consultation with the selected legal or consulting third-party reviewer, should it be necessary.

Jurisdiction

B.BYL.3.5 All GSA members of the GSA must exercise shared responsibility in monitoring the performance and conduct of GSA Officers, and monitoring for potential conflicts of interest and/or

conflicts of commitment among GSA members, as defined in Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board.

C.BYL.1.1 The mandate of GSA Council is to fulfill all responsibilities listed in Section 95 of the Post-Secondary Learning Act.

C.POL.4.3.b Substantive agenda items are circulated to GSA Council members at least one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting on instruction of the Speaker. Substantive items received after this will be added to the agenda at the discretion of the Speaker. Reports for information are circulated the Friday (or Thursday, in the event of a holiday related closure of the GSA office) before a Monday meeting.

C.POL.4.3.c Changes to the agenda made at meetings require a two-thirds majority vote.

C.POL.4.4.a Special meetings of GSA Council will have specific and limited agendas and may be called when important matters arise for decision either between regular meetings or at a time when pressure of business would not allow them to be adequately disposed of at a scheduled meeting. Procedures governing scheduled meetings will apply to special meetings.

C.POL.4.4.b With reasonable notice (when possible five (5) working days), special meetings will be called by the Speaker following receipt of any of the following: **C.POL.4.4.b.i** A Motion of GSA Council at any GSA Council meeting,

C.POL.4.4.b.ii A Motion of the GSAB, or

C.POL.4.4.b.iii A request to the GSAB made by ten (10) or more members of GSA Council.

C.POL.4.4.c Any request for a special meeting of GSA Council as noted above will specify the intended purpose of that meeting, and all business at the meeting must, unless otherwise mandated, be restricted to the specified purpose of the meeting.

C.POL.5.2 Motions (formal proposals that GSA Council take certain actions), are normally accompanied by a Notice of Motion (advance written notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at an upcoming meeting of GSA Council). Notices of Motion must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the GSA Council material, as described above.

C.POL.5.2.a To move a Motion, voting members of GSA Council must first be recognized by the Speaker. A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should

be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.

C.POL.5.2.c Following discussion and debate, a Motion goes to a vote.

C.POL.5.2.c.i Unless otherwise noted, a simple majority vote is needed for a Motion to pass; in the event of a tie a Motion is considered to have failed.

F.BYL.1.1 GSA Council may delegate its powers to GSA Standing Committees through committee mandates.

F.BYL.1.5.a GSA Council may from time to time create ad hoc committees to address issues that are outside the purview of GSA Standing Committees.

F.POL.2.9.a GSA Council may, at its discretion, form ad hoc committees to address issues that are outside the purview of any GSA Standing Committees.

F.POL.2.9.b Terms of reference, including mandate, will be given to the ad hoc committee by GSA Council.

F.POL.3.2.a The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by GSA Council.

F.POL.3.2.b The GSAB is the discussion forum for the GSA Officers and Directors.

L.BYL.1.1 The administration of the GSA Legal Defence Fund will be governed by GSA Policy.

Motion Change Log

- July 3 2025
 - Change 1: Removed specific mentions of timing, now “as soon as possible”.
 - Change 2: Third-party reviewer could now encompass independent consultants, potentially relieving high costs associated with legal or consulting firms.

Item 8b: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F

Outline of Issue**Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Policy:

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section F**Background:**

This change formalizes current procedure for the public attending GSA Standing Committee meetings. Allowing general members to attend open sessions promotes inclusivity, enhances trust in committee deliberations, and provides an opportunity for members to observe and better understand the GSA's operations.

At the same time, the requirement for prior approval from the Chair ensures that meetings remain orderly, manageable, and focused, while still enabling access where appropriate and is consistent with the existing practice.

Jurisdiction:**GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2**

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Policy (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>F.POL.2.4.a General GSA members may attend the open sessions of any standing committee meeting as a guest following approval from the Chair of the committee.</p>	<p>Allowing general members to attend open sessions promotes inclusivity, enhances trust in committee deliberations, and provides an opportunity for members to observe and better understand the GSA's operations.</p> <p>At the same time, the requirement for prior approval from the Chair ensures that meetings remain orderly, manageable, and focused, while still enabling access where appropriate and is consistent with the existing practice.</p>

Item 8c: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J

Outline of Issue**Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Policy:

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section J**Background:**

Implementing changes to our Referenda bylaws and policies, procedures and definitions to streamline and align with the PSLA and best practices.

Jurisdiction:**GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2**

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Bylaws (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
Referenda Asker Definitions "Asker" is defined as a GSA member(s) or a person acting on behalf of an external organization who wishes to initiate a referendum.	This change aligns with the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) of Alberta, which mandates that the GSA represents the interests of graduate students. By limiting the role of "asker" to graduate student group members, the GSA ensures that referenda reflect organized, collective student interests (PSLA, Section 95).
J.BYL.2.1 A referendum on a clearly worded 'Yes' or 'No' question regarding any dedicated, on-going fee for a service, facility, or lobbying effort can be initiated by the GSA Board (GSAB) subject to a simple 2/3 majority vote at any meeting of GSA Council. Normally a referendum will be held in conjunction with the GSA General Election and election of the Associate Vice-President Labour, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSAB.	Remove on-going as approved referenda will no longer be perpetual. Remove descriptors. 2/3 is consistent with other Bylaw changes and is generally the standard for any type of fee approval.
J.BYL.2.2 The required steps for a GSA member or a person acting on behalf of an external organization wishing to initiate a referendum will be outlined in GSA Policy on referenda.	Change in the bylaw based on the updated definition. Consistent with Definitions and J.BYL.4.2.

Current Policy (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
Referenda Policy	

<p>J.POL.7.1.a Membership in an officially recognized graduate student group stated in Section N: GSA Graduate Student Groups is required for referendum Askers. The Asker must provide evidence of their affiliation with a graduate student group when submitting a referendum request to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO).</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.b When submitting a referendum request to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the Asker must provide valid proof of their GSA membership, i.e., an enrollment certificate.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.c The GSA Board shall have the authority to grant exemptions to the eligibility requirements stated in J.POL.7.1a, J.POL.7.1b.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.d Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Board for consideration.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.e The Board may consider exemptions based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The critical nature of the proposed referendum to the graduate student body b) The Asker's demonstrated understanding of the referendum process and its implications c) Extenuating circumstances that prevent the Asker from meeting the standard requirements. <p>J.POL.7.1.f The decision of the Board regarding exemptions shall be final and shall be communicated to the applicant in writing within a timeframe specified in the GSA's operational policies.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.g The Board reserves the right to revoke an exemption if the circumstances under which it was granted change significantly.</p>	<p>This change aligns with the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) of Alberta, which mandates that the GSA represents the interests of graduate students. By limiting the role of "asker" to graduate student group members, the GSA ensures that referenda reflect organized, collective student interests (PSLA, Section 93).</p> <p>The eligibility exemption through the GSA Board opens the opportunity for all GSA members to initiate referenda, not just those affiliated with recognized graduate student groups.</p> <p>The inclusion of a board exemption clause provides necessary flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances or particularly critical issues. We need this approach to ensure the successful implementation of referenda such as the Campus Food Bank (CFB), which defy standard procedures but are crucial to the graduate student community.</p> <p>By clearly defining the Board's authority in granting exemptions and establishing criteria for such exemptions, the policy promotes transparency and accountability in GSA governance. This approach guarantees the exercise of flexibility within a structured and equitable framework.</p>
<p>J.POL.7.2.a A clearly worded referendum question will address the following criteria (if applicable): description of any dedicated on-going fee, amount of fee, how long a fee</p>	<p>Voters should have an option to opt out of non-mandatory dedicated fees.</p>

<p>will be collected (in accordance with J.POL.6.4), effective date (when a fee will start being collected), end date (when the fee will stop being collected), procedure for changing a fee, whether the fee can be rescinded, opt-out mechanism, and an accountability mechanism for the money collected. The criteria above provided are non-exhaustive and additional criteria may be required to draft a clearly worded referendum question.</p>	
<p>J.POL.11</p>	
<p>J.POL.15 Referendum Duration and Renewal</p> <p>J.POL.15.1 Referenda approved by the GSA membership shall have a duration of three (3) years from the date of implementation.</p> <p>J.POL.15.2 To ensure continued funding and accountability, referendum askers must initiate a renewal process by the year that the current dedicated fee expires.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3 The renewal process shall involve:</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.a Submitting a detailed report to the GSA Board outlining the achievements, challenges, and financial management of the initiative during the first two years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.b Conducting a new referendum vote among the graduate student population.</p> <p>J.POL.15.4 The renewal referendum will be held during the GSA general election in the year of expiration.</p>	<p>This policy addition serves several important purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A referendum should not be perpetual unless there are extenuating circumstances. 2. It ensures that initiatives funded through referendum remain accountable to the graduate student population by requiring a renewal vote based on demonstrated performance. 3. The three-year initial term with a second-year renewal vote allows for adequate planning and implementation while also providing a timely opportunity for review and adjustment. 4. By requiring a detailed report and clear communication of achievements, the policy enables graduate students to make informed decisions about continuing support for initiatives. 5. The policy allows for adjustments to be proposed during the renewal process, ensuring

<p>J.POL.15.5 The renewal referendum question must clearly state:</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.a The original purpose of the initiative.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.b A summary of achievements and value added to graduate students' experience.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.c The proposed continuation of the initiative for the subsequent years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.d Any proposed changes to funding or implementation, if applicable.</p> <p>J.POL.15.6 If the renewal referendum passes, the initiative will continue for the remainder of the original three-year term and an additional three years from that point.</p> <p>J.POL.15.7 If the renewal referendum fails, the initiative will conclude at the end of its original three-year term, with a one-year wind-down period to ensure orderly closure of operations.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 If the renewal referendum fails, the Asker must wait a minimum of two (2) years before consideration by the CRO.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 The GSA Board shall have the authority to establish specific procedures and timelines for the renewal process, ensuring they align with the GSA's broader governance and election policies.</p>	<p>that initiatives can evolve to meet changing needs.</p> <p>6. This structure helps in maintaining financial stability by allowing initiatives to secure funding for subsequent years while also providing a mechanism for discontinuation if they no longer meet student needs.</p> <p>7. Regular renewal referenda keep the graduate student population engaged and informed about ongoing initiatives, fostering a culture of active participation in GSA affairs.</p> <p>8. The two-year wait period gives the Asker time to adjust their request, and it alleviates voter burnout of referenda questions.</p>
<p>J.POL.1516 Reporting</p>	<p>Clerical Change</p>

<p>J.POL.1516.1 The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will draft a procedural report following each referendum. This report will outline major decisions, a summary of discussions and consultations with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC), processes, issues, and recommendations for any future referendum. This report will be provided to the next CRO and Deputy Returning Officer, the GSA ERC, the GSA Board, and GSA Council.</p>	
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Item 8d: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Policy:

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section K

Background:

Implementing changes to our BFC and financial bylaws, policies and procedures to formalize, streamline and align with best practices.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Bylaws (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>K.BYL.1.2 GSA Council will receive recommendations on the annual operating and capital budgets, along with a recommended three (3) year budget forecast and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting.</p> <p>GSA Council shall approve only the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The three-year forecast and business plan shall be received as an information item. The Budget and Finance Committee shall review, recommend, and approve the draft budget and three (3) year forecast, followed by review, recommendation, and approval by the GSA Board, prior to presentation to GSA Council.</p>	<p>This clarification ensures that both the BFC and the GSA Board formally review, recommend, and approve the draft budget and the three-year forecast prior to their presentation to Council. This layered approval process aligns with best financial governance practices by ensuring due diligence, and shared accountability across GSA’s decision-making bodies. It also clarifies that GSA Council’s authority is to approve the upcoming fiscal year’s budget, while the multi-year forecast is presented for information only</p>
<p>K.BYL.1.3 In the event that the GSA Council does not approve an annual budget before the start of the fiscal year, GSA shall continue to operate in a manner consistent with the most recent annual budget approved by the GSA Council.</p>	<p>This new bylaw sets a clear contingency plan to ensure the continuity of GSA operations in the event that the annual budget is not approved by GSA Council before the start of the fiscal year. It reflects best practices in governance by establishing a fallback mechanism that protects the organization from administrative delays while respecting the Council’s budgetary authority.</p>
Current Policies (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>K.POL.3.7.a Financial documents requiring signature, including but not limited to cheques, email disbursements, and investment instructions, require two</p>	<p>By allowing email-based authorization, the policy reduces reliance on physical cheques—saving time, administrative resources, and unnecessary costs associated with cheque processing.</p>

<p>(2) signatures: either any two (2) Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) or any one (1) DEO and one (1) Director.</p>	
<p>K.POL.3.7.d The President and Executive Director will approve amounts below \$600 via email, with explanations provided by the Finance Manager and reported to the GSA Board in the management report. Electronic transfers should be used unless unavailable, in which case cheques may be used. Both approvers will provide electronic "signing authority" confirmation for all disbursements. Cash payments are strictly prohibited.</p>	<p>This policy enables timely and efficient approval of disbursements under \$600 by allowing the President and Executive Director to authorize such payments via email. This process streamlines routine low-value transactions while maintaining proper oversight and documentation. It also ensures that financial controls remain intact through dual electronic "signing authority" confirmation and the exclusion of cash payments, which mitigates risk and aligns with best practices in financial management.</p>
<p>K.POL.5.9.b Confidential material distributed during Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) meetings shall be shared with members through password-protected methods.</p>	<p>This policy establishes a clear and consistent protocol for handling confidential materials shared during Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) meetings. The inclusion of this policy also addresses existing ambiguity regarding the confidentiality status of BFC materials. It reinforces the importance of protecting budget drafts, financial projections, and other documents that may contain preliminary or sensitive data not intended for public circulation.</p>
<p>K.POL.5.2 Any recommended change to a budget line must first be discussed among the Finance Manager, the President, and the Executive Director (or delegate) prior to presentation to the BFC. Once consensus is reached, all members shall support the decision.</p>	<p>This policy ensures that any recommended increase to a budget line is thoroughly reviewed and agreed upon by key members of the finance team—namely, the Finance Manager, the President, and the Executive Director or their delegate—prior to being brought forward to the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC). Requiring consensus at this stage promotes alignment within the finance team, and ensures that</p>

	<p>proposals presented to the BFC are well-vetted and strategically justified. This approach minimizes the likelihood of prolonged or contentious discussions during BFC meetings, allowing the committee to focus its time on high-level oversight rather than operational deliberations.</p>
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Item 8e: GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions, Motion 1

Outline of Issue: Motion 1

Allocation of Unpaid VPIR Salary (May 1 – July 16, 2025) in Accordance with Policy

Whereas GSA Policy D.POL.10.1.f.iii states:

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;**

Whereas the intent of this policy is to ensure resources allocated to the Vice President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) portfolio directly benefit Indigenous graduate students either through the work of a VPIR, or, if the position is vacant, through financial support programs;

Whereas the VPIR position was filled and substantial portfolio work began well before formal recognition on July 16, 2025;

Whereas the VPIR salary is an annual allocation of \$37,413 (equivalent to \$719.48 per week), paid biweekly for administrative purposes;

Whereas the value of the salary allocation from May 1 to July 16, 2025 (11 weeks) is \$7,914.28;

Whereas the VPIR was underpaid by \$720 in the first pay period, which was later corrected after it was brought to attention, highlighting the need to ensure all funds allocated for Indigenous graduate students are used strictly in accordance with policy;

Whereas in raising the matter of this unpaid allocation, the VPIR was told that it would require questioning how the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) or Strategic Indigenous Initiatives Fund was used, despite these being three separate funds, independent of each other and irrelevant to whether GSA policy should be followed;

Whereas the GSA had, only months earlier, considered removing the Indigenous Initiatives Fund from the budget;

Whereas under D.POL.10.1.e, the VPIR has priority access to the Strategic Indigenous Fund;

Whereas under D.POL.10.1.f.iii, the salary allocation, if not paid to the VPIR, must go toward directly supporting Indigenous graduate students;

Be it resolved that GSA Council direct that the \$7,914.28 representing the unpaid VPIR salary from May 1 to July 16, 2025, be transferred in full to the **Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA)** to directly support Indigenous graduate students;

Be it further resolved that this allocation be completed immediately upon approval of this motion.

Item 8f: GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions, Motion 2

Outline of Issue: Motion 2

Motion 2 – Publicizing Councillor and Alternate Councillor Names on GSA Website

Whereas GSA Councillors and Alternate Councillors are elected or appointed representatives of graduate students in their respective departments;

Whereas while some departments identify their representatives, others do not, creating inconsistencies and reducing transparency;

Whereas public access to the names of all Councillors and Alternate Councillors strengthens accountability, allows graduate students to know their representatives, and facilitates communication;

Be it resolved that GSA Council direct staff to maintain and regularly update a public list on the GSA website showing the names and departments of **all** current Councillors and Alternate Councillors for **every** seat except for such instances when an individual does not provide consent;

Be it further resolved that this list be updated within two weeks of any change in representation and reviewed for accuracy at least once per academic term.

Item 8g: GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions, Motion 3

Outline of Issue: Motion 3

Motion 3 – Hybrid Format for All Council and Committee Meetings

Whereas the GSA represents graduate students across multiple campuses, including Augustana, Calgary, and Campus Saint-Jean;

Whereas physical distance and travel requirements create barriers for graduate students on sister campuses to participate fully in GSA governance;

Whereas current vacancies in seats such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Campus Saint-Jean Primary and Alternate Councillor positions highlight the need for improved accessibility;

Whereas hybrid meeting formats allow for equitable participation by enabling members to attend and contribute without being physically present;

Whereas the current Vice President Indigenous Relations is the first DEO to ever be located on a sister campus, and their process was made complicated by not being a student on North Campus;

Be it resolved that GSA Council require all Council and committee meetings to be offered in a hybrid format, providing both in-person and virtual attendance options;

Be it further resolved that staff ensure the necessary technology and procedures are in place to facilitate full participation and voting rights for remote attendees.

Item 9a: GSA President Report

**2025-2026 President
Report to GSA Council for the 18th August 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Aashish Kumar, President
Date: 14 August 2025

2025-2026 GSA President Meetings Attended (Aashish Kumar)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 17th July 2025 to 14th August 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
17 July 2025	Meeting with CASA Chair
17 July 2025	EDIC (Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee) Info Session
17 July 2025	APEGA & Graduate Students Association at U of A
17 July 2025	GSA/Lula Adam
18 July 2025	GC Monthly Meeting
18 July 2025	GSA/Campus Services Leadership Meeting
18 July 2025	UASU/UAGSA Meeting
21-25 July 2025	Poli-Strategy Conference CASA
28 July 2025	CSSH Interviews
29 July 2025	Ministry of Advanced Education Engagement Team Meeting
30 July 2025	PSE Campaign Update Meeting
30 July 2025	OneCard Access Priorities - Grad Students
31 July 2025	Melissa Padfield and Aashish Kumar GSA President
1 August 2025	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic
1 August 2025	(Zoom) Tracy, Doug, Kumarie, Aashish & Hamid
5 August 2025	Foundation of the Energy Collective Meeting for Grad Student Internship
6 August 2025	Finance Manager Meeting with CA
6 August 2025	GSA/SU Municipal Priorities Discussion

7 August 2025	Meeting with Consensus AI
7 August 2025	Aashish Kumar and Maleeka Thomas (CASA)
8 August 2025	Hiring Committee Meeting
9 August 2025	UA GSA/UC SSE-GSC
12 August 2025	CSSH Public Forums and Interviews
13 August 2025	Hiring Committee Interviews
13 August 2025	Federal Policy Committee CASA
13 August 2025	CSSH Public Forums and Interviews
14 August 2025	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic

Dear Council Colleagues,

I am pleased to share that we have finalized negotiations for the GSA health and dental plan, with notable improvements in the dental coverage. Full details of these changes will be marketed to graduate students in due course. I would also like to highlight the efforts of our VP Student Life, who has been diligently planning a series of exciting events for the upcoming year, as well as our VP Academic, whose initiatives to hold policy awareness workshops promise to be valuable for our members. I will do my utmost to support the team in realizing these plans. This is shaping up to be an eventful year for the GSA and our graduate student community.

Please find my draft policy proposal for the exam reimbursement program, which I intend to advance and seek additional funding for from both the University and the provincial government. This idea originated from feedback at our town halls and is intended as a starting point that will eventually include many more exams in the future. Your feedback is highly appreciated as we refine this proposal. Additionally, please find attached the GSSF increment proposal that was submitted to Melissa Padfield. Special thanks to Vanessa for her hard work in developing this submission.

Over the past month, I have focused on advancing the GSA’s advocacy priorities, strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, and making progress on hiring and strategic initiatives. At the federal level, I engaged extensively with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), meeting with the CASA Chair on July 17 to discuss upcoming advocacy work, attending the Poli-Strategy Conference from July 21 to 25 to shape national lobbying efforts, and participating in the Federal Policy Committee meeting on August 13. I also met with CASA representative Maleeka Thomas on August 7 to align our advocacy strategies. Provincially, I attended the Ministry of Advanced Education Engagement Team meeting on July 29 to discuss funding and institutional support for graduate students, and municipally, I joined a joint GSA/SU discussion on August 6 to address shared priorities at the city level.

On campus, I engaged regularly with senior administration to address graduate student needs. These meetings included discussions with Vice-Provost & Registrar Melissa Padfield on July 31, Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies) Tracy Raivio on August 1 and 14, and multiple collaborative sessions with other university leaders, such as the Campus Services Leadership meeting on July 18 regarding graduate student access to facilities and the OneCard Access Priorities meeting on July 30. I also worked to strengthen partnerships with the University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) through a joint meeting on July 18 and participated in coordination efforts with the UA GSA/UC SSE-GSC on August 9.

Hiring and staffing have been major priorities. I met with our Chartered Accountant on August 6 to discuss the hiring of a new part-time Finance Manager. I also participated in the CSSH interviews and public forums on July 28, August 12, and August 13, as well as Hiring Committee meetings and interviews on August 8 and 13.

I am happy to share that the GSA has partnered with Consensus AI. Through this partnership, all graduate students at the University of Alberta will be eligible for a four-month free premium subscription to Consensus AI. Moreover, we look forward to strengthening this collaboration in the future to bring additional tools and opportunities to our graduate student community.

In terms of broader partnerships and strategic initiatives, I met with APEGA representatives on July 17 to explore opportunities for engineering graduate students and joined the Foundation of the Energy Collective meeting on August 5 to discuss internship programs. These efforts, combined with our advocacy, hiring progress, and service improvements, position the GSA well to meet the needs of graduate students in the upcoming academic year.

Thank you
Aashish

GSA Graduate Student Priorities for Alberta's Post-Secondary System

Honourable Minister of Advanced Education,

I write as President of the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association (GSA) to outline our top priorities. These reflect extensive graduate student feedback and align with University of Alberta's strategic goals. We request your support in the following areas:

Career Development and Immigration Pathways

Graduate students need stronger supports to translate their training into careers. University surveys show a [“notable need for enhanced career pathway communication”](#). In response, we recommend:

- Expand Mitacs-style internships. Programs like Mitacs provide research internships for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, fostering industry connections. [Alberta recently invested \\$15M into Mitacs to fund 3,000 internships](#). We propose creating a dedicated graduate-stream within such programs to ensure all UAlberta grads can benefit. This includes partnering with industry and government to co-fund internships and work-integrated projects for master's and PhD students.
- Count post-PhD work toward immigration. Many new PhDs stay in Alberta and seek permanent residency (PR). We urge that all Canadian work experience gained on a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) after defending a PhD be credited toward PR applications. This policy will help retain top graduates in Alberta's workforce.

Sustainable Funding for Universities and Research

Robust, predictable operating funding is critical. Since 2019 Alberta has slashed PSI grants, forcing institutions to defer maintenance and raise tuition. We join other student bodies in calling for renewed investment:

- Restore operating grants (2019+ inflation). [Alberta student associations recommend returning post-secondary funding to 2019 levels \(adjusted for inflation and enrolment growth\)](#). [At UAlberta this is urgent: government cuts have meant no increase in base grants for 2025, despite rising costs](#). In practice, universities now rely heavily on tuition and auxiliary revenues. This shortfall has led to a [\\$1.2 billion deferred maintenance backlog at UAlberta – a stark symbol of underfunding](#). Debt-relief measures or targeted capital funding are needed so UAlberta can repair labs and classrooms instead of cutting student services.
- Invest in research and innovation. Alberta's flagship university delivers outsized economic benefits. [A 2023 UAlberta report found alumni contribute \\$136.6 billion annually to the Alberta economy \(20% of GDP\), with a return on public funding of 47% – higher than returns from oil](#).

[agriculture or construction](#). Continued leadership in research will require increasing competitive grant funds and institutional grants. We urge the province to prioritize grants that fund graduate research, ensuring Alberta remains among Canada's top research performers.

Campus Infrastructure and Growth

UAlberta plans to grow to [60,000 students by 2033](#). Achieving this will be impossible without major new facilities and upgrades:

- Address deferred maintenance and capital needs. [The 60k-student plan entails “substantial new resources” for faculty, staff and support services](#). In particular, many buildings are aging (some even held together with temporary fixes), and critical labs/classrooms are over capacity. We ask for a debt-relief or infrastructure fund to clear the current maintenance backlog and begin campus renewal now. Growth is [“contingent on substantial investment from the Government of Alberta”](#) – delaying action will only deepen constraints.
- Fund expansion to meet enrolment targets. We support UAlberta's 2033 enrolment goals, but expansion must not be paid for by crumbling infrastructure. The province's Targeted Enrolment Expansion (TEE) grants are a start, but dedicated capital funding is also needed for new classrooms, labs, and student housing. Timely investment will ensure larger student cohorts still enjoy a high-quality learning and research environment.

Graduate Student Financial Support and Wellbeing

Finally, we advocate for direct support to students so they can focus on their studies:

- Increase guaranteed stipends. UAlberta has approved a minimum [\\$25K/year stipend for PhD students \(years 1–4\) starting 2025](#). The GSA welcomes this milestone but notes that \$25K barely covers living costs. [Forty percent of graduate students have considered dropping out due to financial pressures](#). We recommend raising minimum stipends and extending guaranteed support to thesis-based master's students as well, so that student researchers are paid a fair wage and can concentrate on research rather than part-time work.
- Enhance student living supports. Financial insecurity is already taking a serious toll: UAlberta's GSA survey found [40% of grads developed mental health challenges linked to money worries](#), and [campus food bank usage has surged by 800%](#). To prevent talent loss and promote wellbeing, we urge increased funding for graduate scholarships, bursaries, and emergency supports. These investments pay dividends by reducing degree delays and dropout rates caused by financial stress.

Each of these priorities is backed by student input and institutional research. For example, the Student Experience Action Plan notes that graduate students [“feel generally positive” about academics but](#)

[clearly want better career services](#). The province's own Expert Panel on Funding will soon report, and we hope it echoes these recommendations for sustainable, strategic investment.

Thank you for your consideration. The University of Alberta GSA stands ready to collaborate with the Ministry, the university, and other stakeholders to ensure Alberta's graduate students thrive as future leaders and innovators.

Sincerely,



Aashish Kumar
President, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
University of Alberta

GSSF Proposal Sent to the University

Executive Summary

The GSA currently administers **\$964,000 annually from the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF)**, distributed via **Academic Travel Grants (ATG), Child Care Grants (CCG), Emergency Bursaries (EB), and Recognition Awards**. While this funding has been impactful, demand has surged due to rising living costs, inflation, increased enrollment, and outdated eligibility criteria—especially for child care.

To address these gaps, the GSA respectfully requests a \$150,000 increase to the GSSF. This modest uplift will:

- Modernize eligibility thresholds to reflect today's economic reality
- Enhance per-student support levels
- Prepare for increased uptake, particularly in high-demand programs like CCG and ATG

This proposal aligns strongly with U of A strategic priorities in equity, retention, graduate enrollment growth, student experience, and institutional reputation.

GSA's Financial Student Supports

The GSA represents ~8,500 graduate students and distributes funding that:

- Supports conference participation and professional development (ATG)
- Eases financial strain for graduate student parents (CCG)
- Provides emergency aid to students in crisis (EB)
- Recognizes academic and leadership excellence (Awards)

These programs are need-based, data-driven, and highly impactful—but current funding amounts limit how many students the GSA can support.

Impact of the GSSF

Since 2022, the GSA has administered the GSSF to:

- Approve and disburse over 2,950 applications
- Support hundreds of students during emergencies and parenting challenges
- Help students access international conferences, boosting academic engagement
- Play a critical role in improving mental health, retention, and academic outcomes

We are pleased to share some students' expressed gratitude for the impact GSA funding streams has made in their lives:

I am truly grateful to be approved for the Graduate Students' Association Child Care Grant in the amount of \$2000. This assistance will make a meaningful difference in managing both my academic responsibilities and child care needs. I deeply appreciate the GSA's commitment to supporting graduate students and their families. - CA

Thanks to the GSA for the grant, it will really go a long way for me and my family. - SA

I truly appreciate this support, as it will greatly assist my family and me during my graduate studies. - RS

I deeply appreciate the support from GSA and recognition of the challenges parents face in balancing childcare needs with study. This grant will help ease the financial burden and provide stability for my family. - YL

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for approving my application for the Graduate Students' Association Child Care Grant. This support means a great deal to me and my family, as it eases the financial burden of childcare expenses while I pursue my graduate studies.

Balancing the responsibilities of being a parent and a student can be challenging, and this grant not only provides financial relief but also reinforces my commitment to excelling academically and contributing to our university community. Knowing that such a program exists demonstrates the association's dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for students with families.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity and for recognizing the unique challenges faced by student-parents. Your generosity makes a significant difference in our lives, and I am deeply appreciative of your support. - VU

Thank you so much for the wonderful news and for awarding me the Graduate Students' Association Academic Travel Grant. I am truly honored and grateful to be selected as a recipient. As a mother to a little toddler at home, balancing family life while completing my Master of Nursing and Nurse Practitioner program has been both a rewarding and challenging journey. Support like this makes a real difference, allowing me to focus more fully on my research and professional growth.

I am deeply appreciative of the GSA and all those involved in making this award possible. Your investment in graduate students not only empowers us in our academic journey but also strengthens the future of healthcare leadership and innovation.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement. I look forward to paying this kindness forward in my future practice and academic contributions. - ZFK

I am delighted by the news! Thank you for recognizing my interest and passion for teaching! Looking forward to the awards night! - RVS

Three-Year Data Overview (2022 - 2025)

Budget Allocation History

Fiscal Year	ATG	CCG	EB	Awards	Total
2022–23	35%	35%	30%	2%	\$964,000
2023–24	44%	39%	15%	2%	\$964,000
2024–25	44%	39%	15%	2%	\$964,000

Utilization & Demand

Fiscal Year	ATG Disbursed	CCG Disbursed	EB Disbursed	Awards	Total Disbursed	Approved Applications
2022–23	\$273,799	\$366,000	\$60,258	\$18,000	\$718,057	838
2023–24	\$355,388	\$420,000	\$78,224	\$18,000	\$871,612	1,152
2024–25*	\$316,539	\$418,000	\$55,243	\$20,000	\$809,782	961

**This apparent decrease is not due to a diminishing need: Approved application volume for 2024-25 dipped due to a brief grant closure while GSA implemented the Good Grants portal.*

Mid-Year Update: 2025–2026 Fiscal Year Spending to Date

As of the second quarter of the 2025–2026 fiscal year, disbursement data from the GSSF indicates that demand for ATG and CCG continues to exceed available resources. This reflects persistent trends from past years and underscores the need for a funding increase to meet student demand.

GSSF Budget Line	Total Spent (Q1–Q2)	Approved Applications	Remaining Funds
Academic Travel Grants (ATG)	\$146,772.43	298	\$262,272.57
Child Care Grants (CCG)	\$192,000.00	93	\$169,845.00
Emergency Bursaries (EB)	\$13,500.00	5	\$112,310.00
Total (All Programs)	\$352,272.43	396	\$544,427.57*

*A portion of the annual GSSF allocation must be held in reserve to bridge potential delays in the University’s disbursement of funds. In some years, GSSF funding has not been received until September, leaving the GSA with limited capacity to meet student needs in the early months of the fiscal year.

Key Observations:

- EB utilization fluctuates based largely on world events; partnership with Student Financial Support (SFS) is ongoing
 - Though modest disbursement, the Emergency Bursary remains a vital safety net for students facing crises. Given global conflicts, it is essential to maintain reserves, as demand can surge suddenly. The GSA has prioritized support for impacted students, including those from Iran and Israel.

- Award levels remain, while we evaluate opportunities for greater impact

- CCG demand consistently outpaces allocation, demonstrating chronic underfunding.
 - 51% of the \$378,400 annual allocation has already been distributed less than half way through the fiscal year. As in previous years, the CCG program continues to experience high early-year demand, reflecting growing financial need among graduate student

parents.

- ATG is recovering post-pandemic and reflects renewed student activity
 - In under two quarters, over 34% of the annual ATG budget has been spent. With two quarters remaining—including peak academic conference seasons in spring and summer—the current allocation is unlikely to meet full-year demand without additional funding.

This early-year overspend pattern demonstrates that even with careful stewardship and rolling quarterly disbursements, the current GSSF budget is not sufficient to meet student demand in core funding areas. Without a budget increase, the GSA will be forced reduce approval rates.

Emergency Bursaries and Global Instability

Although EB disbursement may appear modest at mid-year, this funding stream remains essential for students facing sudden, high-impact crises. Many international students are particularly vulnerable to financial instability caused by the rapid devaluation of home-country currency, civil unrest, or war, which can severely limit their access to family or external financial support. These students often cannot legally work full-time in Canada and may not qualify for domestic emergency aid programs, making the GSA's Emergency Bursary one of their only safety nets. In recognition of these realities, the GSA has prioritized support for impacted students, including those from conflict-affected regions such as Iran and Israel.

Underserved Demand

Child Care Grant

The GSA CCG provides essential support to graduate student parents, yet it is currently constrained by outdated eligibility thresholds and limited funding capacity. As the cost of child care continues to rise in Alberta, the current grant framework is failing to meet real student need.

Current Challenge:

- Eligibility thresholds are based on 2016 Low-Income Measures and do not reflect today's cost of living.
- Average child care expenses in Edmonton now range from \$12,000–\$18,000 per year.
- Per-child support is limited to ~\$1,000/year, well below actual expenses.

Currently Used Income Threshold:

Household Size	Low Income Measure (2016)
2	\$36,00
3	\$44,00
4	\$51,000
5	\$57,000
6+	\$63,000

These outdated thresholds have already resulted in over 50 denials in the past two years, affecting students who technically fall above the cap but are still struggling to balance tuition, child care, and limited earning potential.

Disproportionately impacted students include:

- Single-parent households
- International students
- Equity-deserving groups, particularly racialized and female students

Impact on Students and the University:

- Student-parents are more likely to reduce their course load or take a leave of absence due to affordability issues.
- This leads to increased attrition and reduced diversity within the graduate student population.

Strategic Opportunity:

Expanding CCG funding and modernizing thresholds would:

- Directly support U of A's goal to double graduate enrollment by 2033
- Attract a broader and more diverse applicant pool, especially students with families
- Enhance retention and academic continuity, particularly for underserved populations

By investing in child care support, the university signals its commitment to equity and inclusion, improves student well-being, prepares for enrollment uptake and strengthens its reputation as a family-friendly institution for its growing graduate population.

Academic Travel Grant

While ATG remains one of the most in-demand funding streams:

- The current maximum of \$500 is outdated
- Most international conference travel costs \$2,000–\$3,000
- \$500 often covers less than 25% of expenses
- This forces many to self-fund or forgo opportunities—disproportionately affecting:
 - International students, requiring additional visa for international travel
 - Students from lower-income backgrounds
 - Those without departmental travel support

Supporting graduate students' participation in international conferences advances their research careers and elevates the University of Alberta's academic reputation both globally and nationally. Conference attendance fosters networking and collaborations that often result in publications in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals, which contribute to citation metrics and research output.

These metrics are critical factors in global rankings such as QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education, as well as Canadian university rankings like Maclean's University Rankings and Research Infosource's Canada's Top 50 Research Universities. These rankings consider research funding, publication impact, and graduate student success as key indicators of institutional quality.

By investing more into the Academic Travel Grant, the University of Alberta enhances its research profile, attracts top talent, and strengthens its position within the competitive landscape of Canadian universities—ultimately improving its ranking and prestige nationally and internationally.

Modernization & Fiscal Accountability

To strengthen our ability to manage increasing demand and uphold financial accountability, the GSA has invested in key operational improvements that enhance both efficiency and transparency:

- **Implementation of Good Grants:** This secure, web-based platform streamlines the application process, improves the applicant experience, and enhances real-time data tracking for internal monitoring and external reporting.
- **Operational Independence:** All costs associated with Good Grants are absorbed by the GSA's internal operating budget. No GSSF funds are used to cover these platform expenses.

- **PeopleSoft Integration:** All GSSF disbursements are tracked in PeopleSoft, the University of Alberta’s centralized financial system. This ensures alignment with institutional accounting standards and allows for precise financial oversight.
- **Annual Reporting:** Each April, the GSA provides the University with a detailed Annual GSSF Report outlining the disbursement of funds across all streams, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and compliance with University expectations.

These modernization efforts reflect the GSA’s commitment to maintaining the highest standards of financial management, scalability, and transparency.

Strategic Alignment & Institutional Impact

U of A Priority	GSSF Expansion Impact
Graduate Enrollment & Retention	Reduces barriers to degree persistence
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	Targets support to underserved and marginalized groups
Student Well-being & Mental Health	Reduces stress, enhances community belonging
Research & Global Reputation	Enables international academic participation

Comparative Benchmarking & Funding Request

Graduate students at the University of Alberta face financial pressures comparable to those at peer institutions yet receive less institutional support in direct grant funding. For example, the Graduate Students’ Association at the University of Calgary distributes over \$1.1 million annually to its graduate population, compared to the \$964,000 allocated to the U of A GSA through the GSSF. This gap places U of A students at a disadvantage in terms of access to critical financial resources, particularly as living costs, tuition, and academic travel expenses continue to rise.

To close this gap and ensure equitable, scalable support for all graduate students, the GSA is requesting a modest increase of \$150,000 annually to the GSSF. This targeted investment will allow the GSA to:

- Update CCG income thresholds to reflect current (2024) cost-of-living realities, allowing more student-parents in need to qualify for assistance
- Increase per-student CCG support to better align with actual child care expenses in Edmonton and surrounding areas
- Expand Academic Travel Grant (ATG) and Emergency Bursary (EB) availability to meet growing demand—especially among international and lower-income students disproportionately affected by inflation, global instability, and lack of departmental or governmental support

Projected ROI Analysis

Metric	Value
Graduate student population	~8,500 students
Projected increase in retention	2% (~170 students)
Average tuition per student	\$7,500
Estimated tuition retained annually	170 × \$7,500 = \$1.275 million
Requested GSSF funding increase	\$150,000
Projected Return on Investment (ROI)	8.5×

Strategic Risk of Inaction

Without an increase to the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), the University faces growing challenges in achieving its institutional goals. Insufficient funding will limit the GSA’s ability to support students in key areas—particularly child care and academic travel—resulting in:

- Higher attrition rates, especially among student parents, international students, and equity-deserving populations
- Missed opportunities for research dissemination and international recognition
- Barriers to meeting the University’s objective of doubling graduate enrollment by 2033
- Reduced institutional competitiveness in the national and international graduate education landscape

A modest funding increase now is a proactive measure to mitigate these risks and sustain momentum in retention, research, and equity initiatives.

Conclusion

The continued use of a 2016 income threshold has excluded over 50 graduate student families from accessing Child Care Grant (CCG) support in just the past two years. These families—many of whom face substantial financial pressures—are disqualified based on outdated eligibility criteria that no longer reflect the realities of living costs in Alberta. This creates a significant access gap in financial support, undermining student retention and exacerbating inequities, particularly among single-parent, international, and equity-deserving graduate students.

At the same time, the University of Alberta has committed to doubling graduate enrollment by 2033. Without a corresponding increase in the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), current funding levels will be inadequate to meet even baseline needs. A modest increase now is a strategic and timely investment that will allow financial supports to grow in step with institutional expansion—ensuring that all students have equitable access to the resources they need to succeed.

The requested \$150,000 increase is:

- Data-driven: Grounded in multi-year trends of rising demand and oversubscription
- Equity-focused: Designed to close access gaps caused by outdated income thresholds
- Aligned with institutional goals: Supporting retention, inclusion, and academic excellence
- Cost-effective: With an anticipated return of 8.5x through tuition retention alone

A Collaborative Path Forward

The GSA welcomes continued partnership with the Provost's Office, Student Financial Support, and other campus stakeholders to ensure sustainable and equitable graduate student outcomes. Our team is committed to:

- Administering all GSSF programs responsibly and transparently
- Providing annual reporting through the University-owned PeopleSoft system to ensure institutional oversight
- Aligning funding programs with institutional priorities in graduate growth, equity, and research excellence

We respectfully invite Deputy Provost Padfield and the Provost's Office to support this recommendation and reaffirm the University's commitment to fostering a thriving, inclusive, and academically vibrant graduate student community.

Together, we can reinforce the University of Alberta's reputation as a leader in graduate education and create the conditions for student success at scale.

Exam Reimbursement Program Draft Policies

GSA Professional Exam Reimbursement Policy Manual

Graduate Students' Association – University of Alberta

1. Purpose

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) supports graduate students pursuing professional designations by reimbursing eligible exam registration fees.

This program reduces the financial burden on students who are preparing for and successfully completing recognized professional certification or licensure examinations during their graduate studies.

The program covers:

1. **Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)** – Levels I, II, and III (*Early Bird registration only*)
2. **Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA)** – *Common Final Examination (CFE)*
3. **Actuarial Exams** – *Exam P (Probability)* and *Exam FM (Financial Mathematics)*
4. **APEGA Exams** – All APEGA-administered or recognized exams, including:
 - National Professional Practice Exam (NPPE)
 - Technical Examinations (assigned)
 - Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam
 - Fundamentals of Geoscience (FG) Exam

Reimbursements are **only provided if the student passes** the exam.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet **all** of the following conditions:

- **GSA Membership:** Be a current graduate student at the University of Alberta and a registered GSA member in good standing.
- **Enrollment:** Have completed at least one academic semester at the University of Alberta.
- **Advance Notice:** Notify the GSA **at least two months before** the exam date using the official Google Form.
- **Pass Requirement:** Reimbursement is only available if the student passes the exam.
- **One-Time Per Exam Type:**
 - CFA – One reimbursement for any level during the degree program.
 - CPA – One reimbursement for the CFE during the degree program.
 - Actuarial – One reimbursement per exam type (P or FM).
 - APEGA – One reimbursement per specific exam type (e.g., NPPE, one assigned Technical Exam, FE, FG).

3. Scope of Reimbursement

3.1 CFA

- Covers: Early Bird registration fee for CFA Levels I, II, or III.
- Cap: CAD \$1,300 per student during their degree program.

3.2 CPA

- Covers: Registration fee for the *Common Final Examination (CFE)*.

- Cap: CAD \$1,300 per student during their degree program.

3.3 Actuarial

- Covers: Official registration fee for Exam P (Probability) or Exam FM (Financial Mathematics).
- Cap: CAD \$1,300 total per student for actuarial exams during their degree program.

3.4 APEGA

- Covers: Official registration fee for any APEGA-administered or recognized exam (NPPE, Technical Exams, FE, FG).
- Cap: CAD \$1,300 per student during their degree program.

Note: These caps are **separate per exam stream** — a student may, in theory, receive reimbursements in more than one category if eligible.

4. Budget and Funding

- **Annual Budget Cap:** CAD \$30,000 for all professional exam reimbursements combined.
- **First-Come, First-Served:** Claims are processed in the order received until the budget is exhausted.
- **Partial Reimbursement:** If the fee exceeds CAD \$1,300, only CAD \$1,300 will be reimbursed.

5. Application Process

Step 1 – Pre-Exam Notification

- Submit the official GSA Google Form **at least two months before** the exam date.

- Provide the exam name, date, and planned registration details.

Step 2 – Post-Exam Claim

- Submit the claim **within three months** of the results release date with all required documentation.
- Late submissions will not be considered.

6. Required Documentation

1. **Proof of Registration and Payment** – Official receipt from the exam provider (CFA Institute, CPA Canada, SOA/CAS, APEGA, or testing partner).
2. **Google Form Confirmation** – Proof of timely pre-exam notification.
3. **Proof of Passing Result** – Official results showing a pass.
4. **Proof of Enrollment** – Transcript or enrollment verification showing completion of at least one semester.
5. **Valid Student ID** – University of Alberta student card or equivalent.
6. **Banking Information** – If not already on file, details for direct deposit.

7. Payment and Processing

- **Method:** Direct deposit to the student's registered bank account.
- **Processing Time:** Typically 2–4 weeks after complete documentation is approved.
- **Other Funding Sources:** Students must declare any other reimbursements; GSA will only cover the unpaid portion up to the cap.

8. Governance

- **Policy Changes:** The GSA may revise, suspend, or terminate the program at any time.
- **Final Authority:** All GSA decisions on eligibility, documentation, and payment are final.
- **Transparency:** Program details will be posted and updated on the GSA website.

9. Summary Table

Exam Category	Covered Fees	Max Reimbursement	Frequency	Pass Required	Pre-Exam Notice
CFA (I–III)	Early Bird registration	CAD \$1,300	Once per degree program	Yes	2 months
CPA (CFE)	Full CFE registration	CAD \$1,300	Once per degree program	Yes	2 months
Actuarial (P, FM)	Official registration fee	CAD \$1,300 total	Once per exam type	Yes	2 months
APEGA	Official APEGA exam registration fee	CAD \$1,300	Once per exam type	Yes	2 months

Item 9b: Vice-President Academic Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President Academic
Report to GSA Council for the August 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Chen Okafor
Date: Aug 13 th , 2025

2025-2026 GSA VP Academic Meetings Attended (Chen Okafor)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14th to Aug 13th (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
July 15 th	Graduate Student Peer Support (GSPS) Interviews
July 15 th	Meeting with a Student and the Office of Accessibility
July 15 th	DEO Training: NASA Collective Agreement Meeting
July 16 th	GSPS Interviews
July 16 th	ED Hiring Committee Meeting
July 17 th	Academic Integrity Hearing with a Student
July 17 th	GFC Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Summer Reading Group
July 17 th	GSPS Interview
July 18 th	VP Academic Walk-In Hours
July 18 th	Meeting with a Student
July 18 th	GSA/Campus Services Leadership Meeting
July 21 st	Strategic Work Plan Discussion
July 22 nd	Debrief: GSPS Interviews
July 22 nd	Meeting with a Student
July 23 rd	Meeting with a Student
July 24 th	GSA Emergency Meeting
July 24 th	GSA ED Interviews
July 25 th	VP Academic Walk-In Hours
July 25 th	GSA ED Interviews
July 28 th	ISA/GSA Meeting
July 28 th	GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group
July 29 th	Meeting with Kelly Spencer and Colin Baril (Alumni Office)

July 30 th	GSA ED Interview
July 30 th	GSA Emergency Meeting
July 31 st	Meeting with a Student and Associate Dean
July 31 st	Meeting with a Student
Aug 1 st	VP Academic Walk-In Hours
Aug 1 st	Meeting with Tracy from FGPS
Aug 6 th	Meeting with a Student
Aug 7 th	VPIR/Academic One-On-One
Aug 8 th	VP Academic Walk-In Hours
Aug 8 th	GSA ED Hiring Committee Meeting
Aug 11 th	GSPS Program Coordinator Interview
Aug 12 th	GSPS Program Coordinator Interview
Aug 13 th	GSA ED Interviews: Round 2
Aug 13 th	GSPS Ice Breaker Planning

Dear Council Colleagues,

The past month has seen me develop a strategic work plan, help a student through an academic integrity hearing and deal with student-supervisor related cases that warrant further investigation. This may be a precursor to what the rest of my tenure may look like in terms of a plan or vision for the future. I intend to host two workshops in late September, one on student-supervisor relationships and the other on the most often cited academic policies. These workshops will help students better navigate university policies and procedures especially when they find themselves in a situation where an understanding of such policies is vital. I will also be a part of committees and consultations on tuition fees and minimum funding in the coming weeks.

Please have a look at all the relevant meetings and events pertinent to my portfolio that are listed below.

Graduate Student Peer Support (GSPS) Interviews (July 15th, 2025)

I was part of an interview panel tasked with determining which candidates were most suited to fill the role of mentor for the GSPS program launching this Fall. These mentors or volunteers will work under the auspices of a program coordinator chosen by a panel that I will also be a part of.

GSPS Interviews (July 16th, 2025)

I was part of the interview panel for another round of interviews for the GSPS mentor position.

GFC Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Summer Reading Group (July 17th, 2025)

During this first meeting we debated GFC composition and whether or not the GFC should be scaled down in size.

GSPS Interview (July 17th, 2025)

I was part of the interview panel for the GSPS mentor position.

Debrief: GSPS Interviews (July 22nd, 2025)

All the panels tasked with interviewing the GSPS candidates for the mentor positions got together to discuss the candidates that would be moving forward in the process.

ISA/GSA Meeting (July 28th, 2025)

I and Hazel (VP Student Life) met with Felix Ayiera from the ISA (International Students' Association) to talk strategy and event planning for the Fall. We are considering events such as a library orientation for international students, a Thanksgiving potluck and a hockey game.

GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group (July 28th, 2025)

During this meeting we discussed the micro credential application for the GSPS program. Anyone who completes the program as a mentor is given the opportunity to apply for this credential which will be certified by the university and can be highlighted on a resume or job application.

Meeting with Kelly Spencer and Colin Baril (Alumni Office) (July 29th, 2025)

I met with Kelly Spencer and Colin Baril from Alumni Relations to discuss ways in which we can collaborate on initiatives. Some areas of cooperation include welcoming alumni back to campus to speak and alumni mentoring graduate students who are looking for guidance as they plot out their future careers.

Meeting with Tracy from FGPS (August 1st, 2025)

I along with Aashish Kumar (GSA President) met with Tracy from FGPS to talk about some of my initiatives, namely the workshop on student-supervisor relationships and another workshop/Q&A on academic policies which affect graduate students the most.

VPIR/Academic One on One (August 7th, 2025)

Tamara Dube (Vice President Indigenous Relations) and I met one on one for the first time to talk about ways in which we can collaborate. We agreed, for example, on the need for an indigenous course for newly admitted grad students to the university. However, that may be something that Florence Glanfield's office is already handling.

GSPS Program Coordinator Interview (August 11th, 2025)

I was part of the interview panel for the GSPS Program Coordinator position.

GSPS Program Coordinator Interview (August 12th, 2025)

I was again part of the interview panel for the GSPS Program Coordinator position.

GSPS Ice Breaker Planning (August 13th, 2025)

Kevin Friese (Health & Wellness) and I decided on an icebreaker activity for the Graduate Student Peer Support (GSPS) volunteer training session happening on August 25th.

Thanks for allowing me to deliver this report. Please reach out at gsa.vpacademic@ualberta.ca with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,
Chen Okafor
VP Academic (2025-26)

Item 9c: Vice-President Student Life Reports

2025-2026 Vice-President Student Life’s Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 12 to August 13 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board and other internal meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Reports:

1. VP SL Report
2. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report

July 14	Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations
July 14	Messaging re: GoA Bill
July 16	ED Hiring Committee meeting
July 17	Meeting with Lula Adam
July 18	Governance Council Meeting
July 18	Campus Services Leadership Meeting
July 18	Meeting with SU
July 21	EDI and Indigenous Initiatives Multi-Institute Committee
July 21	EDIC and Harm Reduction Tent
July 23	EDIC Monthly Meeting
July 23	ED Hiring Interview (1)
July 23	ED Hiring Interview (2)
July 24	Health and Dental Plan Meeting
July 24	ED Hiring Interview(3)
July 25	Campus & Community Recreation & GSA Bi-Monthly
July 25	Friends Across Campus (FAC) Meeting
July 25	CCR Collaboration Events discussion
July 28	ED Hiring Interview (4)
July 28	ISA/GSA regular meetings
July 29	GSA/ISVS Collaborations meeting
July 30	ED Hiring Interview (5)
July 31	ED Hiring Interview (6)
August 1	WMHD Walking subgroup Meeting
August 5	GSA/SU Childcare Discussion
August 5	Residence Turkey Dinner for Graduate Students
August 6	Social Justice Day Meeting
August 7	Meeting with Deb Eerkes, Lead SGBV Response
August 8	Hiring Committee Meeting
August 9	UA GSA/UC SSE-GSC

August 11	Student group Collaboration Meeting
August 13	ED Hiring Interview (2nd round)
August 13	ED Hiring Interview (2nd round)

Date: August 13th, 2025

From: Hazel Kemuma, Vice President (Student Life)

1. VP SL Report

Dear Council Members,

As we ready ourselves to resume the fall semester, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued collaboration and support. This is a brief report of the past month's engagements within my portfolio.

Meeting with Campus and Community Recreation (CCR)

I met with the CCR team to explore collaboration opportunities for the fall and winter terms. Among other events with other units on campus, students can look forward to a run/walk, a climbing session at the Wilson Climbing Center and a plant/crafts night. For the Fall Run/Walk on October 5th, CCR recommended that we join their existing event instead of planning a new one, as obtaining city permits requires significant lead time, they began planning back in April. We can support their event by providing coffee for attendees, while also exploring the possibility of organizing a separate on-campus walk.

Meeting with International Students' Association

Following an introduction from our VP Student Services, the VP Academic and I met one of their representatives to introduce the GSA and explore potential collaborations, including the September and October events. These are still in deliberations and will be reported to council once plans are more concrete. They also invited us to attend their orientation, where in coordination with our VP Student Services, information on services available through the GSA will be shared.

Meeting with ISVS

We discussed upcoming collaborations, including a Truth and Reconciliation Walk along the Indigenous Art Trail, where participants will be encouraged to wear orange. Coordination with the Faculty of Native Studies is underway, and we are exploring the possibility of serving Indigenous foods at the end of the walk. We also reviewed plans for a Thanksgiving Dinner on October 9th and a Movie Night in January of 2026, with TELUS Room 150 as the venue. These events aim to foster cultural exchange, strengthen community connections, and provide spaces for students to engage meaningfully outside of academics.

World Mental Health Day Working Group

Two walks are planned: a CCR-led walk on October 10th and a mindfulness and meditation walk on October 9th. The latter will be approximately 1.5 hours (weather permitting) and will take participants around campus. Route and meeting point details are still being finalized.

Dinner with Campus Services

We discussed hosting a Turkey/Thanksgiving potluck dinner for graduate students living in residence, tentatively scheduled for the evening of October 9th in the Nipisiy Multipurpose Room. The event will be a collaboration between the GSA, Campus Residence, and ISVS, with additional catering support from chosen vendors. Communication will be sent to graduate students and RSVPs may be requested to ensure adequate catering. Residence student staff will support event setup, room access, and cleanup. The event is expected to engage up to 25% of the approximately 200 graduate students living in residence this year.

Meeting with University of Calgary Team

We hosted a delegation from the University of Calgary to share insights on student advocacy. Discussions covered both student life—such as events, engagement, and campus resources—and academic concerns, including minimum funding levels and broader advocacy strategies. The session also provided an opportunity to exchange best practices and lessons learned from different approaches to student engagement and support. Both teams expressed interest in maintaining ongoing dialogue and collaboration throughout the year.

2. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report

The EDIC committee welcomed new members this month (congratulations to all elected members!) and began with introductions and orientation on ongoing initiatives. A key discussion focused on supporting Palestinian students and exploring ways the GSA can advocate against anti-Palestinian racism.

A major initiative the committee has been working on, the Harm Reduction Tent, is now finalized for the upcoming Week of Welcome. Funding for this year's event has been secured, thanks to contributions from the Student Success and Experience formally Dean of Students Office (Kevin Friese) and the GSA. In my capacity as EDIC Chair, I worked with Emma Chambers to outline key agreements for the initiative, emphasizing that the tent should become an annual event under the VPSL portfolio to ensure sustainability and ongoing impact. These agreements include:

- Before the event: Developing a sustainable funding and fundraising strategy.
- During the event: Finalizing volunteer recruitment, role descriptions, and optimal location for maximum student engagement.
- After the event: Conducting a survey to gather feedback on impact and identify areas for improvement.
- Partnerships: Coordinating a joint meeting with all key stakeholders, including the GSA/VPSL, Dean of Students, Sexual Assault Centre, and other partners, to formalize collaboration.

- Materials: Updating pamphlets and other resources to ensure relevance, accuracy, and accessibility.

Overall, the committee is committed to making the Harm Reduction Tent a sustainable, collaborative, and impactful annual initiative that responds proactively to student needs while strengthening partnerships across campus.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Kemuma
VP Student Life (2025-2026)

Item 9d: Vice-President Student Services Report

**2025-2026 VP Student Services
Report to GSA Council for the August 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Saad A. Iqbal
Date: August 13, 2025

Below is a list of meetings I attended between July 11 and August 13, 2025 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
July 11	GSPS Interview with Candidate
July 14	Lab Visit for Hydroponics Farm
July 14	CFB Board Meeting
July 15	GSA DEO Training
July 15	GSA DEO Training
July 16	GSA ED Hiring Committee Meeting
July 16	GSPS Interview with Candidate
July 16	GSPS Interview with Candidate
July 16	GSPS Interview with Candidate
July 17	CFB Board Chairs and ED Meeting
July 17	Meeting with Lula Adam
July 18	GSPS Interview with Candidate

July 18	GSA/Campus Services Leadership Meeting
July 21	GSA Strategic Work Plan Discussion (VP Student Services Portfolio)
July 22	GSPS Interview Debriefing
July 22	Introductory meeting with GSA VPIR
July 24	GSA/Studywell Meeting
July 24	GSA/Studentcare Meeting
July 25	GSA/CCR Bi-Monthly Meeting
July 25	Council of Residence Associations Meeting
July 25	Meeting with CCR Representatives (Fall Collaboration)
July 28	Health & Dental Plan Promotion Material Discussion
July 28	GSA VPIR/VPSL,VPSSE Meeting
July 30	GSA/Studywell Meeting
July 30	GSA ED Interview with Candidate
July 30	GSA Health & Dental Plan Discussion with GSAB
July 31	CFB Discussion
July 31	CFB ED and Co-Chairs Meeting
July 31	GSA ED Interview with Candidate
July 31	GSA ED Interview with Candidate
August 1	Meeting with Sarah Wolgemuth
August 5	GSA/SU Childcare Service Provider Meeting
August 5	Days of Action Programming Meeting
August 5	Student Parent Working Group Meeting

August 6	GSA/Studywell Meeting
August 7	Meeting with Student (confidential)
August 8	GSA ED Hiring Committee Meeting
August 12	Meeting with Kevin Friese
August 12	Meeting with Bredin Early Bird
August 13	GSA ED Interview with Candidate
August 13	GSA ED Interview with Candidate
August 13	GSA/Studywell Meeting

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope you're all doing well in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between July 11 and August 13, 2025:

The Graduate Student Peer Support Program is gaining strong momentum and is on schedule to launch in the Fall term. Over the past few weeks, two interview committees have conducted interviews with candidates. Our VP Academic, Chen and I were part of the two committees. The successful candidates have now been notified and will start training at the end of this month. Chen will be representing the GSA in the training and the GSPS program overall.

Last month, the Dean of Students, Ravina, the Assistant Dean for Health & Wellness, Kevin, the CFB Executive Director, Yetayale, and I met again with Dr. Rafiq from the Chemical and Materials Engineering Department during a visit to the Aquaponics 4.0 Learning Factory. We discussed the potential resources needed, the anticipated demand for supplies at the CFB, and some space-related issues. As we move forward, we are working to address these concerns.

Our VP Student Life, Hazel, and I have held multiple meetings with the Campus and Community Recreation representatives to discuss various collaboration ideas this year. Besides discussing the use of the CCR facilities, we are planning a few social events together, and the planning is

moving forward as scheduled. Once the VP Student Life and the staff finalize the details, the Council members will be notified.

Hazel and I have also conducted several meetings with the SU VP Operations and Finance, Nathan, to ensure strategic alignment between the SU and the GSA. Moving forward, we plan to arrange meetings with childcare service providers who can offer additional discounts to undergraduate and graduate student parents. Similarly, I met with the representative from Bredin Early Bird alongside Cindy to discuss our partnership this year. Bredin Early Bird is currently providing a 15% discount to graduate students, and we intend to replicate this arrangement with other service providers.

The Student Parent Working Group is also preparing for a tailored orientation for undergraduate and graduate student parents on campus. From the GSA, I will be presenting the resources offered by the association and answering potential questions from the attendees.

Recently, a graduate student parent raised an important advocacy concern regarding the [Leisure Access Program](#) offered by the City of Edmonton. The program allows eligible low-income Edmontonians access to the recreation facilities in the City at a free or reduced cost. As per the discussion and the information on the website, full-time students at some universities, including the UofA, are ineligible for the program. However, some aspects require further clarification regarding the eligibility criteria. If graduate students can access the LAP, this will open new opportunities for them to visit recreation facilities close to their residence and avail themselves of benefits, including drop-in childminding. Once we have more information, we will be able to better decide on how we can pursue this further.

I also had meetings to streamline working on the SWP initiatives related to my portfolio. One of the initiatives I have undertaken for this year is the *GSA Know Your Services Campaign*. Graduate students often struggle to access basic information in a clear and consolidated manner. I plan to create a GSA handbook that details the different types of services and programs available through the GSA and the University. Although the guide provides only a brief overview of these services, it is expected to be helpful, particularly for newly enrolled members.

I have also put forward the Space Revitalization Proposal that includes the creation of the GSA Health & Wellness Hub, albeit with some relocation of our office space. The Hub will have mental health resources, supports for parents and children, as well as a study and resting space.

Students will be able to book these spaces and use them during regular operating hours. The plans to introduce the *Help Your Shelf* Program are also underway, although the process is taking a little longer than anticipated. Through the efforts of our President, Aashish, we are also working on extending the support network for the Campus Food Bank; however, these are ongoing discussions.

As you all are aware, we are moving to a new Health and Dental Plan provider, Studywell, at the start of the Fall term. Over the last few weeks, the Executive Board has had many meetings with Studywell to determine the plan coverage, the new website, promotional materials and other details. Moving to the new plan, graduate students will be charged \$10 less than in the prior years. The GSA Executive Board has made significant efforts to negotiate the plan coverage. In addition to the services offered previously, we successfully negotiated the basic services under the dental plan to increase from 50% to 60%, and major restorative benefits from 30% to 35%. In the upcoming weeks, the details about the new coverage will be shared with graduate members through emails, newsletter, social media, and tabling sessions that the staff and I have planned for the Fall and Winter terms. The link for the new website for the Health and Dental Plan can be accessed through [THIS](#) link.

Important Notes:

1. The Office of the *Dean of Students* has changed its name to [Student Success and Experience \(SSE\)](#) as of August 1, 2025.
2. The SSE is offering ***Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)*** to our student communities. There are limited spots available for these dates: Oct 16-17, Nov 6-7, and Dec 11-Jan 1. Interested councillors can directly contact Kevin Friese at friese@ualberta.ca. Please note that if interested, you will have to attend both days together as shared above.

Best Regards,

Saad Arslan Iqbal

GSA VP Student Services (2024-25)

Please email me at gsavpsse@ualberta.ca if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback related to my portfolio or the initiatives.

Item 9e: Vice-President External Report

**2024-2025 Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the August 18, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Niloufar Mirfallah
Date: August, 18, 2025

2025-2026 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Niloufar)

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

Date	Meeting
Aug 12	Internal Meeting
Aug 13	ED Hiring committee

Internal Meeting

I returned from academic leave and first met with the other DEOs to get updated and develop a plan for the upcoming event.

ED Hiring committee

We are currently in the process of conducting interviews for the ED hiring and hope to wrap it up by the end of the month.

Item 9f: Vice-President Indigenous Relations Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President Indigenous Relations
Report to GSA Council for the August 18, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Tamara Dubé, Vice President Indigenous Relations
Date: Wednesday, August 13, 2025

2024-2025 GSA VP Indigenous Relations Meetings Attended (Tamara Dubé)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 July to 13 August 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Friday, July 18	Campus Services Leadership
Friday, July 18	VP Student Services One-On-One
Monday, July 21	EDI and Indigenous Initiatives Multi-Institute Committee
Tuesday, July 22	VP Student Services One-On-One
Tuesday, July 22	VP Student Life One-On-One
Wednesday, July 23	GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Wednesday, July 23	Student
Monday, July 28	ED Interview – Round 1
Monday, July 28	VPIR Strategic Work Plan Discussion (Brandy)
Monday, July 28	Portfolios & Committees with VP Student Services & VP Student Life
Tuesday, July 29	Student
Wednesday, July 30	Indigenous Graduate Students' Association
Wednesday, July 30	ED Interview – Round 1
Thursday, July 31	Student
Thursday, July 31	ED Interview – Round 1
Thursday, July 31	ED Interview – Round 1
Thursday, July 31	Student
Friday, August 1	Student
Wednesday, August 6	Dr. Florence Glanfield
Thursday, August 7	GSA 101 (Brandy)
Thursday, August 7	VP Academic One-On-One

Thursday, August 7	Student
Friday, August 8	Student
Friday, August 8	ED Hiring Committee – Round 1
Friday, August 8	Student
Monday, August 11	GSA 101 (Cindy)
Monday, August 11	Chair of Nominating Committee One-On-One
Tuesday, August 12	Student
Wednesday, August 13	ED Interview – Round 2
Wednesday, August 13	ED Interview – Round 2

Dear Council Colleagues,

It is because of your decision at the July Council meeting, and the advocacy of many before us, that I stand here today delivering the very first Indigenous Relations report to GSA Council in our 53-year history. I am honoured to serve as your inaugural Vice President Indigenous Relations, the first Directly Elected Officer based on a sister campus (Augustana), and only the second Indigenous woman to hold a DEO position at the GSA.

This milestone is worth celebrating. It represents progress, persistence, and the collective work of students who insisted on a seat at the table. The journey here, however, has included challenges and barriers that should never have existed. Now that I am finally acknowledged in the role, my focus is on building momentum, addressing unresolved issues that continue to affect this portfolio, and ensuring that the work benefits all graduate students at the University of Alberta. When Indigenous Peoples are supported and included, all students benefit. Indigenous voices do not take away from anyone; they add to the richness of our community.

I am the fourth Indigenous student to hold a DEO role in our history. That number is small, but each has left a mark. Dr. Florence Glanfield, now Vice-Provost, was the first. Last year, Benjamin became the second after a massive gap. This year, Nathan is the third. I am honoured to be the fourth, and the first Indigenous woman to serve in this capacity in forty years. I want to celebrate this achievement, but I also cannot ignore the truth. My presence alone does not mean the work is done, nor that the barriers have disappeared.

Our stories are not without hardship, and they speak to the urgency of making these roles spaces of genuine support rather than harm. Last year, Benjamin was unable to complete his term because of mistreatment. This year, Nathan was denied access to his office keys without University of Alberta Protective Services being called and has already been suspended for two months. I struggled immensely to take my seat at this table. I remain concerned about whether I will be able to complete my term and pass this portfolio to the next student, as only **one** Indigenous student to date has completed a full 12-month term and not for lack of effort.

These incidents are not isolated. They reflect systemic gaps in how we protect and respect leaders, particularly Indigenous leaders. At our last Council meeting, the questioning directed toward the Elections and Referenda Committee, the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association, and me went beyond reasonable scrutiny. The rhetoric we faced was unacceptable, especially from those entrusted to represent all graduate students. Two entire Council meetings debating whether the Vice President

Indigenous Relations should be welcomed is indefensible. Earlier this year, the Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Fund was also targeted. We must ask ourselves why so many Council meetings result in discussing actions being done to harm the most marginalized peoples in Canada. This is not coincidence; it is a pattern.

One immediate example is the unresolved question of where the VPIR salary from May 1 to July 16, 2025, should be allocated. This should have been a straightforward application of existing policy. It is exhausting and unacceptable that Indigenous students are subjected to heightened scrutiny at every step. Being told we cannot follow policy without interrogating how the Indigenous Graduate Students' Associations spends its funds (different fund), or pre-approving how I will use the Indigenous Initiative Fund (different fund) is unnecessary and harmful. Constant reminders that I cannot spend a penny without Board approval feel less like procedure and more like distrust. Policy is clear: the funds go to the Vice-President Indigenous Relations or directly to supporting Indigenous students. Nowhere does it say we must jump through numerous additional hurdles. This is not simply about a budget line, it is about ensuring policy is applied consistently, respectfully, and without imposing extra barriers on Indigenous students.

Real change begins with accountability. The GSA is independent under the Post-Secondary Learning Act, which means we have both the power and the responsibility to ensure our processes are fair, respectful, and transparent.

I have been told that governance moves at the pace of a grandmother crossing an icy sidewalk. I know I do not have a magic wand, but I have former students who I hope will one day be graduate students at the University of Alberta, and I want this to be a place that welcomes them fully. We can start with small, meaningful steps like blanket exercises, conversations, nature walks, sharing circles, laughter, storytelling, sweats, smudging, and reading books written by Indigenous Peoples. These all add up together to build connection, understanding, and lasting change. My years as a Kindergarten teacher taught me that strong foundations make all the difference.

As summer winds down, many people have been away from campus and progress has been slower than I would like. **I will be presenting my initiatives at our September Council meeting, where I expect to share significant updates.** I remain optimistic about what we can accomplish together when we commit to both truth and progress, and to creating a GSA that truly supports all students.

Warmest wishes,

Tamara

Summary of Meetings (July 18 – August 13, 2025)

Over this period, I engaged in a mix of student support, internal planning, committee participation, and Executive Director hiring processes. Key meeting types included:

Student Support & Advocacy – Numerous one-on-one meetings with graduate students to build relationships, address individual concerns, and connect them with resources.

Executive Director Hiring – Participated in multiple interview rounds, scoring and evaluating candidates, and contributing to selection discussions.

Portfolio Planning & Collaboration – Strategic work plan development for the VPIR role, portfolio coordination with other executives, and onboarding sessions (GSA 101). Look forward to these to be shared at the September Council meeting! 😊

Committee & Partner Engagement – Active role in GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, EDI and Indigenous Initiatives Multi-Institute Committee, and meetings with the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association.

Relationship Building – One-on-ones with executive colleagues (there will be more of these in the upcoming weeks), Dr. Florence Glanfield, and other campus leaders to advance Indigenous initiatives and strengthen partnerships.

Item 9k: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: August 13, 2025

The Nominating Committee (NoC) continues its work, despite operating one member short. We hope to fill this vacancy soon.

Since the last Council meeting, the NoC has remained in close contact with the ACB, adjusting our strategy to meet their immediate needs. We have appointed three interim members: the former ACB Chair and two general interim members. At present, ACB is still one general and one Councillor member short. While this is a relatively stable situation, the ACB Chair has not withdrawn our authorization to operate under policy E.POL.3.1.d, given that the interim members have not yet been replaced by Council-elected appointees. We will continue monitoring and supporting the ACB's needs.

Beyond ACB matters, we have reviewed and approved candidates for:

- the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC),
- the FACRA Board (First Alberta Campus Radio Association),
- and a Councillor-at-Large position (voted on during this Council meeting)

We also reviewed a nominee for the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC), but at this time are not ready to recommend their candidacy for a Council vote.

Finally, I had the opportunity to attend a Governance Committee meeting. However, due to their saturated agenda, I was not able to present the NoC's proposed governance changes. I hope to be included in a future meeting to bring those forward.

Sincerely,

Arseniy Belosokhov,
Nominating Committee Chair

Item 9m: GSA Management Report

**GSA Management
Report to GSA Council for August 18 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Cindy Roose
Date: August 18 2025

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

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

Staff have been busy helping department associations run their elections, providing training for the VPIR and incoming CEO's, and processing grant requests. The Board's Strategic Work Plan (SWP) quarterly updates are being posted. Engagement activities are being planned for the fall semester and fall orientations with departments are currently being scheduled. The Fall Orientation event will be on September 3rd in the Dinwoodie Lounge. Staff have created an orientation video that will serve as the primary information piece for department orientations this year. The new health and dental plan is rolling out soon. Advertising for the plan will commence next week.

The ED Hiring Committee is conducting second round interviews this week. If all goes well, a new ED will be in place soon. With the departure of the Finance and HR Manager, I have consulted with the Accountant and initiated the hiring process for a new Finance Manager, which will once again be a part-time position. The annual audit work for the GSA 2024 - 2025 finances has begun with our Accountant, Seidy Louangxay taking the lead in working with a local firm to provide the necessary materials.

We have once again benefited from having a summer student in the office over these past weeks. Alexia Ionescu has been assisting staff with projects, organizing, and doing research for operational policies. As her time with us ends on August 19, 2025, we thank Alexia for all of her hard work; it has been a pleasure working with her!

The office has been supporting the work of several standing committees including the Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC), Labour Relations Committee (LRC), and Governance Committee (GC). These committees have been reviewing potential changes to bylaw and policy. The staff have been helpful in coordinating meetings, providing research support, and ensuring these committees have enough members and resources to work effectively.

Sincerely,

Cindy Roose
Acting ED

Management Report to the GSA Board, July 17 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from July 9, 2025:

Strategic

- Management has been providing assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity. The latest Bargaining took place at its regularly scheduled time on July 7th and 8th, 2025 and an update will go out to AEGS students soon.
- The summer student is busy in the office. She is helping to clean out old files, organize others, and will assist with a space planning project. She has also been doing some research on operational policies.
- Members of the Board continue to meet with Studywell to negotiate the Health and Dental Plan. Behind the scenes, work is underway with the university to ensure a smooth transition onto the plan and work on the GSA's dedicated health and dental plan website is underway.
- Work on the annual audit should begin in mid July - early August.
- The ED Hiring Committee has begun to meet, review procedures, and resumes.

Operations

- The NoC is working diligently to advertise and fill the remaining vacancies on the ACB, with one recruit added to the ranks already.
- The ERC is working on its VPIR Action Plan and will hopefully be able to vote to finalize it in the coming days when we get a new member at Wednesday's Council meeting.
- We have a significant number of new Councillors, who have gone through all the required paperwork and onboarding information.
- We're getting a significant amount of interest in our Standing Committees, and will hopefully have most vacancies filled in the coming months.
- The GSA Senator is in training currently; we will be scheduling 101 sessions with him to ensure he feels fully prepared to take on and expand the role.
- Grants are closed until August 4, 2025.

- Orientation Planning - logistics (venue layout, catering, etc) received -- for processing, finalizing orientation video (50% done)
- Looking into some GSA Merch - for planners Brandy is finalizing the design; next step is look for most cost efficient production and working on a t-shirt design.
- Strategic Work Plan updates for VPSL - engagement planning finished - next steps are to start planning logistics for the events; schedule 1-on-1s with the other DEOs.
- Comms - messaging re: GoA Bill on Transgender sports - to work on a draft as a proposal to see if SU wants to work on available support once the uni admin implements it. Website work - to finalize specific interface changes this week; web developers to visit and apply changes.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: +276% (July 8-15)

Followers: +1 follower (current: 2053)

Instagram

Reach: +183% (July 8-15)

Followers: -4 followers (current: 1578)

Twitter/ X

Followers: no change (1274)

Management Report to the GSA Board, August 6 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from July 17, 2025:

Strategic

- Management has been providing assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity. An update, including bargaining status, was sent to AEGS students last week.
- The Health and Dental information will be rolled out soon. Behind the scenes, work is underway with the university to ensure a smooth transition onto the plan and work on the GSA's dedicated health and dental plan website is being finalized.
- Work on the annual audit should begin in late August.
- The ED Hiring Committee has conducted interviews over the past 2 weeks.

Operations

- GSA 101's and other training/onboarding is being scheduled with the VPIR.
- Grants have reopened.
- An email has been sent to student groups asking them to provide the GSA with banking details so we can auto deposit the council remuneration cheque.
- Fall Orientation - logistics (venue layout, catering, etc.) have been finalized. Currently working on the venue layout based on the final list of confirmed booths.
- Orientation video: animation is complete. Awaiting voice over recording to finalize the edit.
- Planners will be available for pickup between **August 13–15**.
- T-shirts: Requested quotes based on the shared design and other merch ideas: still under consideration (pending status).
- Strategic Work Plan - completed 1-on-1 meetings with all DEOs except VP External and AVP Labour.
- VP Indigenous Relations plans to consult with Indigenous groups before setting priorities. Final priorities expected by the end of August and will be presented at the September Council meeting.
- President - no updates; previous priorities have not progressed.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: -91.1% (July 15- Aug 5)

Followers: -2 followers (current: 2051)

Instagram

Reach: -82.4% (July 15- Aug 5)

Followers: +9 followers (current: 1587)

Twitter/ X

Followers: +2 followers (1276)