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Item 1: Agenda

Monday, February 24, 2025

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

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6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

*The GSA and the University of Alberta reside on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Anishinaabe, Dene, Ojibway, Saukteaux, 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:**

Amirah Nazir

**CLOSED SESSION:**

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

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker

1 min	1	1-4	Approval of the Agenda for February 24, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	5-17	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of January 20, 2024 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
10 min	4		Announcements	
15 min	5		<b><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></b> 1. GSA Council & Elections 101 Presentation	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, & S. Shi, GSA Chief Returning Officer
	6		<b><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></b> None at this time	
10 min	7	18-19	<b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b> A. GSA Deputy Returning Officer a. One GSA Member Position: i. One nomination	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
30 min	8	20 - 27 28-30 31-36 37-43 44-	<b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b> Reports: A. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad a. President's Report b. GSA Board Report c. GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report d. GSA Governance Committee Report B. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran C. Vice-President Student Life: None at this time a. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal E. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja	No meeting scheduled

		47	a. GSA Labour Relations Committee	
		48	G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk	Not submitted
		49-50	H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel	Not submitted
		51-57	I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi	None at this time, awaiting final election results
			J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov	
			K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei	
			L. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley	
15 min	9	58	Question Period	
			1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Deputy Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, November 14, 2024)	
			2. Oral Questions	
	10		Adjournment	

Item 2: GSA Council January 20, 2024 Minutes

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

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

<p><i>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.</i></p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p>	
<p><b>GSA SPEAKER:</b> Zain Patel in the Chair <b>GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:</b> Amirah Nazir</p>	
<p><b>CLOSED SESSION:</b> Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session</p>	
<p><b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b></p>	
<p><b>Council-Elected Officials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</li> <li>● GSA Deputy Speaker: Amirah Nazir</li> <li>● Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi</li> <li>● Senator: Ola Mabrouk</li> </ul> <p><b>GSA Executives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSA President: Haseeb Arshad</li> </ul>	<p><b>Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ning Dai, Biochemistry</li> <li>● Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering</li> <li>● Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology</li> <li>● Hadi Afsaneh, Chemical &amp; Materials Engineering</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● VP Academic: Rija Kamran</li> <li>● VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal</li> <li>● VP External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</li> <li>● AVP Labour: Muneeb Raja</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors-At-Large:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair</li> <li>2. Margaret DeCoste</li> <li>3. Destiny Otoadese</li> <li>4. Abdul Hadi Syed</li> <li>5. Andres Dorado Solarte</li> <li>6. Christine Hymanyk</li> </ol> <p><b>Standing Committee Chairs &amp; Vice-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair</li> <li>● Elsie Osei, ERC Chair</li> <li>● Vicky Lin, ACB Vice-Chair</li> </ul> <p><b>Guests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vicky Lin, ACB Vice-Chair</li> <li>● Emmanuel Marfo, ACB Member</li> <li>● Erin O’Neill, Campus Food Bank Executive Director</li> <li>● Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean: Health &amp; Wellness</li> <li>● Chelsea Butler, Wellness Supports</li> <li>● Amirreza Yasami</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vera Fiawornu, Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders</li> <li>● Michelle Bey, Dentistry</li> <li>● Alissa Watson, Drama</li> <li>● Nathaniel Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences</li> <li>● Devinder Pal Singh, Economics</li> <li>● Jennie Burton, Elementary Education</li> <li>● Nathan Lamarche, English &amp; Film Studies</li> <li>● Colin Hamnett, History, Classics, &amp; Religion</li> <li>● Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology</li> <li>● Eileen Ai-Lin Tang, Laboratory Medicine &amp; Pathology</li> <li>● Dalia Cristerna Roman, Linguistics</li> <li>● Phong Ho, Mathematical &amp; Statistical Sciences</li> <li>● Mohamadali Tofigh, Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>● Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience</li> <li>● Toqa Abdelwahab, Ophthalmology</li> <li>● Seth Peyton, Oncology</li> <li>● Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics</li> <li>● Joshua Barden, Philosophy</li> <li>● Daniel Carleton, Physics</li> <li>● Grace Essuman, Physiology</li> <li>● Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences</li> <li>● Cheryl Pan, Psychology</li> <li>● Kathryn Short, Public Health</li> <li>● Matt Ball, Renewable Resources</li> <li>● Samantha Knapp, Sociology</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fleur Issac, Biological Sciences</li> <li>● Dante Terino, Medical Microbiology</li> <li>● Julie Tian, Psychiatry</li> </ul>
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Time	Item	Title	Presenter(s)
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6:01	-	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	Approval of the Agenda for January 20, 2025 GSA Council AB moved. HA seconded.  Motion PASSED unanimously.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of November 18, 2024 GSA Council HA moved. AB seconded.  Motion PASSED unanimously.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3	Changes in GSA Council Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Councillor for Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders, Vera Fiawornu</li> </ul>	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
10 min	4	Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sophie Shi, GSA CRO, stated the elections timeline. Nominations open Monday January 27th and close on February 10th. SS encouraged Councillors to consider running, or encourage constituents to run in the general election for the six directly elected officer positions, the AVP Labour position and 10 Councillor-At-Large positions. The GSA is hosting multiple events to promote the election, including tabling events, a Breakfast &amp; Learn, Lunch &amp; Learn, the GSA Winter Orientation and PhD Welcome Reception.</li> <li>Haseeb Arshad, GSA President, updated the Council that we received a commitment from the university to receive \$400,000 of funding for our course-based scholarship for the next two years to ensure that this community engagement award is sustained.</li> </ul>	
	5	<b>PRESENTATION ITEMS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Camera Session, Closed Session Item Presented by Vicky Lin, ACB Vice-Chair, &amp; Emmanuel Marfo, ACB Member HA moved. PS seconded.  Motion PASSED unanimously.</li> </ol>	

		<p>Moved into In-Camera Session at 6:10 PM. Moved out of In-Camera Session at 6:37 PM.</p> <p>2. Campus Food Bank Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, introduced the guest: Erin O’Neill, CFB Executive Director</li> <li>● E. O’Neill detailed the CFB’s new Strategic Work Plan: they have new mission values this year to help plan for multiple years into the future. The first step was to redefine their vision to include work to not only address immediate need, but systemic issues related to food insecurity on campus. As of November and December, they have held community consultations to learn more about the current and future needs on campus, as well as client preferences. They are currently running a survey on their <a href="#">website</a> and are hoping to arrange at least one more open consultation in January that will work to inform the 3 to 5-year strategic plan mapping. The SWP should be finalized and implemented in September.</li> <li>● E. O’Neill noted that S. Iqbal, GSA VP Student Services, sits on the CFB Executive Board alongside a number of elected student representatives</li> <li>● The operational efficacy of the CFB is down to the volunteers: the CFB has a complement of 160 volunteers to support the program. They recruit new volunteers in the third month of every semester to allow for training.</li> <li>● The annual report is available on the CFB website <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>● The Community Pantry program in Rutherford Library has celebrated its first anniversary. It can be accessed by tapping a OneCard and is accessible throughout Rutherford opening hours.</li> <li>● The CFB has been working to expand their offerings as demand has increased exponentially over the last five years, while trying to plan strategic partnerships to bring down food costs. Food costs have significantly increased, but the CFB has managed to grow their grant income to match for the 2024-2025 year. O’Neill clarified that while demand continues to rise, the rate of year-over-year increase has slowed. In previous years, usage doubled annually; now, the increase is closer to 20%, based on recent data.</li> <li>● In late 2023, demand peaked to the extent that the next</li> </ul>	
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		<p>available appointments were months away. The CFB implemented emergency measures to address this, including same-day appointments and pre-packed hampers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● O’Neill stated that this was the first year in which they have posted a deficit, but the CFB is not in debt. The deficit is apparently covered by significant savings from previous surpluses. The CFB is doing work to maintain and balance future spending.</li> <li>● Several Councillors raised concerns about the potential link between tuition hikes and increased food bank usage. O’Neill acknowledged the rising demand but noted that the CFB does not receive direct funding from tuition offset programs. Councillors expressed concerns that the university might view the CFB as a stopgap for broader student financial challenges, highlighting the unsustainability of this approach.</li> <li>● Erin shared that the CFB is exploring significant programming adjustments, including reducing the amount of food distributed due to funding constraints. These changes will be finalized during the upcoming spring strategic planning process.</li> <li>● Staff capacity, funding limitations, and space constraints were identified as barriers to meeting the growing demand. Suggestions such as increasing vegetarian protein options and providing on-campus meal programs are under consideration.</li> <li>● The CFB emphasized its commitment to serving all students equally, regardless of income or international status. Erin highlighted that recent guidance from Food Banks Canada prohibits means testing, ensuring that all clients are treated with dignity and do not need to prove financial need. The CFB also collects anonymous demographic data for reporting purposes, which helps improve services.</li> <li>● Councillors raised concerns about potential food supply chain issues, such as the impact of the avian flu on protein availability. Erin noted that while the CFB follows Alberta food safety protocols and recalls, its operations are largely reactive due to reliance on donated and bulk-purchased food. Strategic adjustments to mitigate supply chain risks remain a priority for long-term planning.</li> <li>● O’Neill concluded with a call for continued collaboration and support. She encouraged councillors to reach out for additional data or resources as needed and reiterated the organization’s</li> </ul>	
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		<p>dedication to addressing food insecurity on campus while adapting to financial and logistical challenges.</p> <p>3. Dean of Students National Standard for Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Action Plan Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, introduced the guests: Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean: Health &amp; Wellness, and Chelsea Butler, Wellness Supports Social Worker &amp; Project Coordinator</li> <li>● The University of Alberta is implementing a mental health initiative aligned with the National Standard for Mental Health and Well-being, developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. K. Friese and C. Butler provided an update on this initiative, which began in 2022. A collaborative effort involving students, faculty, staff, SU, GSA and service providers, the initiative has included engagement sessions, surveys, and workshops to identify gaps and opportunities. The resulting action plan, set for release in March 2025, outlines key objectives: expanding counseling services through satellite programs in faculties, improving mental health communication strategies, enhancing peer support networks, and increasing accessibility with flexible services such as online booking and same-day appointments. Additionally, the plan emphasizes inclusive, culturally sensitive services by diversifying clinicians and addressing language barriers. The action plan is designed as a living document to adapt to evolving student needs, ensuring accountability and sustained progress over time.</li> <li>● One major takeaway was the need to expand orientation programs to include midterm or mid-year refreshers for all students, especially graduate and upper-year students facing significant transitions. Inclusivity was emphasized, particularly for equity-denied groups such as international students, BIPOC communities, mature students, and parents. Recommendations include integrating mental health education into classrooms via panels, e-class modules, and peer-led presentations, as well as developing culturally relevant communication strategies for international students. Specific attention was given to graduate student-supervisor relationships, highlighting the need for clearer expectations, multilingual and multimodal educational resources, and streamlined pathways for addressing conflicts.</li> </ul>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● H. Arshad suggested holding supervisors accountable for poor mentorship practices and improving faculty evaluation metrics related to student mental health. These efforts aim to create a supportive, inclusive, and transparent environment for all students.</li> <li>● S. Iqbal asked how soon the usage data will be available. K. Friese stated that the report is in the process of being finalized and will be shared with the GSA. The feedback and the data is very supportive of continuing the program.</li> <li>● E. Tang, Laboratory Medicine &amp; Pathology Councillor, asked about support for students dealing with addiction. C. Butler stated that they were surprised this topic wasn't raised as an issue in their consultations; it was a noted gap. They are aware of the need to discuss the topic and have been reviewing recommendations with and how they can support the Student Recovery Community on campus. It is an area that they will continue to research and work toward.</li> </ul> <p>4. GSA Council 101 Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, presented this training session for Council procedure, function and role responsibility</li> <li>● Z. Patel highlighted the importance of Bylaw &amp; Policy and familiarizing Councillors with it; the Robert's Rules of Order for procedure guidelines; Council positions, duties and meeting structure</li> <li>● The GSA is governed by bylaws and policies, with key terms such as quorum (30 voting members required), motions (proposals for discussion or action), and Robert's Rules of Order being central to council operations. Meetings occur monthly, featuring a standardized agenda that includes land acknowledgments, approval of minutes and agendas, presentations, action items, elections, council reports, and question periods. Councillors, representing their departments, act as liaisons between the GSA and their constituents, sharing updates and soliciting feedback. Attendance is critical, as council requires quorum for decision-making. Voting privileges are granted to departmental councillors and councillors-at-large, while alternates may vote only if attending in place of an absent councillor. Proper etiquette involves</li> </ul>	
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		<p>respectful participation, raising placards to ask questions, and identifying oneself for accurate meeting records. Special meetings can address specific issues, requiring advance notice. Benefits for participation include departmental stipends and free food at meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A. Belosokhov, CAL, stated his approval for this training session, and suggested new Councillors be made to sit through a training session before being allowed to attend their first meeting.</li> </ul>	
10 min	6	<p><b><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GSA Elections &amp; Referenda Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - January 20 2025 First Reading <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue</li> <li>b. ERC-Recommended Bylaw Changes</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>H. Arshad moved. S. Iqbal seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H. Arshad gave background to the changes: the specific election timelines are being removed, as the CRO and ERC decide the dates each year, and more neutral parties are added into election procedure for various steps.</li> <li>• N. Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences, asked why the date change was necessary. S. Shi, CRO, stated that the date change was too specific and too late for DEO training.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	H. Arshad, President
10 min	7	<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. GSA Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Member Position: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Eight nominations</li> <li>ii. Successful Candidate: Jovi Krieger</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>B. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Member Position: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. One nomination</li> <li>ii. Successful Candidate: Aeshwarye Aggarwal</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>C. GSA Elections &amp; Referenda Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One GSA Member Position: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Two nominations</li> <li>ii. Successful Candidate: Amanda Nhi Tran</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair

		<p>D. GSA Appeals &amp; Complaints Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Two GSA Councillor Positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. No nominations</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. One GSA Member Position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Two nominations</li> <li>ii. Successful Candidate: Md Atikul Islam Nayeem</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>E. Deputy Returning Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. No nominations</li> </ul>	
<p>30 min</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b></p> <p>Reports:</p> <p>A. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. H. Arshad reported that the GSA has successfully advocated for a fee differential model based on enrollment demand. His approach emphasized the business perspective for the university while advocating for our members and voicing their concerns around the tuition fee hike, highlighting how tailored fee increases could better align with market realities while minimizing harm to enrollment growth. Our advocacy efforts have led to significant revisions to the university's initial proposal: instead of the across-the-board 10% hike for all international students, the updated proposal excludes thesis-based students from any increase and limits the hike to 5% for business studies. While this is a step forward, the remaining 10% increase for other course-based programs is still significant and poses risks to the university's enrollment targets, particularly for prospective students. The International Student Association and the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

		<p>Students' Union have also proposed a student-centric installment plan to allow students to pay their fees in smaller, more manageable installments rather than a current installment plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Google Storage space issue update: IST needs more resources and time to distinguish between thesis- and research-based students. This is a continuing issue for the GSA Board to work on with the university to increase the storage space going forward.</li> <li>iii. Peer Support Program update: the Dean of Students is to support this program, which was included with their application for a Youth Mental Health grant</li> <li>iv. D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, clarified that domestic thesis-based students will still get a 2% increase tuition</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. GSA Board Report</li> <li>c. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee Report</li> <li>d. GSA Governance Committee Report</li> </ul> <p>B. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PhD Guaranteed Minimum Funding implementation is beginning in the fall. R. Kamran encouraged program implementation issues to be forwarded to her, particularly around contract hours and grant values, and for Councillors to spread the word among their constituents.</li> <li>ii. Almost 30% of courses are transferred to Canvas from e-Class. Any issues with this migration are encouraged to be raised with R. Kamran. The LMS of the Future Advisory Committee is also arranging training sessions for any students that require help, which will be advertised in weekly newsletters.</li> <li>iii. General Faculties Council composition discussions: this issue has been brought up over the past few years and has been raised</li> </ul>	
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		<p>again. GFC is one of only large, substantial decision-making committees at the UofA with student representatives alongside faculty, with a majority of the committee being students. GFC has 39 undergrad students and 13 graduate students. Apparently, the University of Alberta faculties Council is one of the biggest general faculties Council across Canada, and also has the biggest proportion of students to academic staff. Academic staff are asking for additional seats without additional student seats. Last year, this motion came up. This motion was not approved, specifically because the GFC cannot increase in size further due to Council Chambers seat limitations (they are currently at 173 members and 150 seats in the room).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Vice-President Student Life: None at this time             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. GSA Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee Report</li> </ul> </li> <li>D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. The Graduate Student Photo Contest has concluded with 72 entries, and the adjudication committee has chosen 8 awardees.</li> <li>iii. S. Iqbal attended the Students who Parent On Campus online orientation, which was a success.</li> <li>iv. S. Iqbal encouraged Councillors to share the Student Parent/Caregiver survey that will be released soon.</li> <li>v. Social Justice Days events: there will be 15 living library speakers on February 25 and 27 with details to be shared later</li> <li>vi. The first Dean of Students Coffee Chat was a success: they received good feedback and will offer more sessions in a casual environment.</li> <li>vii. Food Banks Canada was encouraged to be shared with constituents, as they cannot deny service to those in need</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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		<p>E. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. Edmonton Student Alliance Council: they discussed a post-secondary survey regarding ETS services to identify issues. It will be shared throughout the city. P. Mojir Shaibani encouraged graduate students to participate in this survey.</li> <li>iii. P. Mojir Shaibani is part of the new International Graduate Student Experience working group, which consists of university staff and graduate students, who want to address challenges faced by and improve the experiences of international students</li> <li>iv. UAI is holding an International Movie Night on January 31st, which the GSA is helping with. He encouraged graduate students to attend the community event.</li> <li>v. Post-Secondary Education Task Force campaign: this campaign is aimed to sustain quality post-secondary education and ensure students can afford it. They have run a survey to see what students need, and the GSA will share this among graduate students to have their say.</li> </ul> <p>b. GSA Awards Selection Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The ASC is reviewing applications submitted and will soon adjudicate.</li> </ul> <p>F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. Bargaining updates: the LRC has shared the non-monetary proposal with the university, with meeting dates set for March and April. M. Raja encouraged graduate students to keep an eye on bargaining updates online.</li> </ul> <p>b. GSA Labour Relations Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The LRC has welcomed five new members.</li> </ul> <p>G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. None at this time</li> </ul> <p>H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. None at this time</li> <li>I. Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. S. Shi encouraged students to review Elsie's report for election event details and dates, and emphasized attendance and the free food supplied.</li> </ul> </li> <li>J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> <li>ii. A. Belosokhov advertised two nominations unfilled: ACB councillor positions and Deputy Returning Officer on the ERC</li> </ul> </li> <li>K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>L. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
15 min	9	<p>Question Period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written Questions</li> <li>2. Oral Questions</li> </ul>	
	10	<p>Additional Business</p> <p>H. Arshad raised a motion to go into a Closed Session. R. Kamran moved. P. Mojir Shaibani seconded. Motion PASSED. One against, one abstention.</p>	
	11	Adjournment 9:01 PM	

## Item 7: GSA Deputy Returning Officer Nominations

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

As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, the GSA NoC will open nominations for DRO “on or about 1 May of every year” and nominations will be submitted in writing to the GSA NoC “by 30 May or the next working day” (Section D.BYL.3.1.d and Section D.BYL.3.1.c). “In the case of a resignation or other vacancy in Council-Elected Officer positions, as determined by the GSA NoC, the GSA NoC will advertise the position and arrange for election by GSA Council in the most expedient way possible” (D.BYL.3.1.e). This position was advertised and extended in the GSA newsletters and on the GSA website on January 10, 17, 24, and 31, with a final deadline of February 7 2025. One (1) nomination was received.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the February 24 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday February 24 2025 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday February 24 2025 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

**DRO:**

- 1. Temitope David (Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology)**

**Jurisdiction:****GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.BYL.3.1.d**

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

**GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E.POL.3.2.a**

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

**GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E.POL.3.2.b**

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

**Biographies and brief resumes of the nominees DRO are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes have been attached as received (i.e. not edited).**

**1. Temitope David (Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology)**

**Statement of Interest:**

I would like to volunteer as Deputy Returning Officer to contribute to ensuring a fair and transparent election process within the GSA. With my leadership experience and commitment to fairness, I am confident in my ability to support the Chief Returning Officer and uphold the GSA's positive reputation. I am passionate about promoting fairness, respecting voter wishes, and maintaining the integrity of the election process.

I am also prepared for the time commitment required during the election timeline and dedicated to fulfilling the responsibilities of the position. Ultimately, I see this as an opportunity to further enhance my skills in governance and policy implementation while making a meaningful impact on the GSA community.

**Bio:**

I am a strategic leader with experience in banking, agriculture, and business development. My professional experience, including roles as Executive Director and Branch Manager, has strengthened my leadership, relationship management, and strategic decision-making skills. I am a recipient of the Community Catalyst Award from Niagara College based on my contribution to creating an inclusive and engaged community.

With a strong dedication to upholding the reputation of organizations where I have volunteered, I am committed to ensuring that elections are conducted in an orderly manner. My collaborative mindset and communication abilities will allow me to contribute effectively to this position.

Item 8a: GSA President's Reports

**2024-2025 President  
Report to GSA Council for the 24 February 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2025/2/19

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between Jan 22 to Feb 24, 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Jan 22	FPC Working Group Session
Jan 23	Meeting with DK
Jan 24	Labour Discussion
Jan 27	General Faculties Council (GFC)
Jan 28	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting
Jan 28	Discover Governance: Lunch & Learn (collab with Social Hour)
Jan 28	Advisory Committee on Support for Displaced Palestinians
Jan 29	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic
Jan 29	PhD Welcome Reception Event
Jan 30	Melissa Padfield and Haseeb Arshad GSA President
Jan 30	Discussing GSA opportunities
Jan 31	GSA Office Environment Concerns
Jan 31	Board/GFC/Senate Summit
Jan 31	Haseeb Arshad / John Lemieux
Jan 31	ISA Council
Feb 3	EDIC Monthly Meeting

Feb 5	GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)
Feb 6	Campus Recovery Pledge Follow-up
Feb 10	Budget Cuts Campaign Launch Touchbase
Feb 11	Budget review discussion
Feb 11	Gateway Interview
Feb 12	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
Feb 13	University Governance Budget Briefing with APC
Feb 13	BFC Mandatory meeting - Second Budget review
Feb 13	Erin's Farewell Gathering
Feb 18	Meeting with AVPL
Feb 18	Teaching and Learning AI Subcommittee Meeting
Feb 18	GSA President - Provost
Feb 19	LMS and Syllabus Tool Project
Feb 19	FPC Working Group Session
Feb 20	AB-GPAC Board discussion
Feb 21	GC Monthly Meeting
Feb 24	General Faculties Council (GFC)

Dear Council Members,

Over the past few weeks, I have been working on several initiatives aimed at improving the overall student experience and addressing important concerns that affect both our community and the broader University. Much of my focus has been on supporting research scholars, enhancing research collaboration, discussing budget transparency, and pursuing concrete steps to make our Council more effective. I appreciate your time and attention to these updates, and I look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas.

### **Support for Displaced Scholars**

One of my primary efforts has been within the Advisory Committee on Support for Displaced Palestinians. As you all know, we have advocated for the University to offer similar support for Palestinian scholars as was previously provided to Ukrainian students. I am pleased to share that all the initial recommendations put forward by this advisory committee have been accepted by the Office of the President. In fact, the University will be welcoming Dr. Ihab Naser, former Dean of the Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences at Al Azhar University in Gaza, who has officially joined the University of Alberta after

Al Azhar University was destroyed during the genocidal war on Gaza. As part of the committee's detailed recommendations, I have also suggested automatically waiving graduate application fees and exploring ways to extend library resources to displaced academics, while acknowledging that we cannot feasibly provide full access to all those affected by these tragic events. I will keep the Council informed of any further developments as the Office of the President considers more comprehensive, long-term measures to help these scholars integrate into academic life.

### **Overleaf Subscription Initiative, MNIF, and Career Fair Support**

I have also been in discussions with Deputy Provost Melissa Padfield and Provost Verna Yiu about an Overleaf subscription initiative for graduate students. After hearing from supervisors who purchase individual licenses and from students who find the platform invaluable for cross-departmental and international collaboration, I proposed that the University uses some of its research overhead to fund a campus-wide subscription. Both Deputy Provost Padfield and Provost Yiu recognized the value of this idea and indicated that they will explore how best to integrate such a subscription into the University's existing budget frameworks. During our discussions, I also raised concerns about Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) and advocated for more frequent and direct consultation with our Council. According to the new Alberta Tuition Fee Guidelines, the administration must consult with the student council twice, so combining two council presentations and a single town hall might be more meaningful than multiple town halls that often see low attendance. In the same conversation, I highlighted the need to improve career fairs by encouraging industrial partners to sign agreements that would guarantee a certain number of job placements or internships for recent graduates. Additionally, I recommended exploring partnerships with local landlords to create more affordable housing options for students. The administration is following up on these ideas, and I will update the Council as more information becomes available.

### **Enhancing Council Governance**

In response to concerns from many of you about the functionality of our Council, I have been examining ways to increase efficiency and overall effectiveness. I met with John Lemieux, a governance specialist at the University, to discuss strategies for addressing gaps that can sometimes impede our decision-making. This discussion built on conversations I have had with other governance experts and student leaders across Alberta. My goal is to compile enough evidence and best practices to propose a clear, robust plan for improving how our Council operates. Once I have finalized these recommendations, I will present them to you for feedback and potential implementation.

### **Campus Recovery Pledge**

Another advocacy priority has been the push for the University of Alberta to sign the Campus Recovery Pledge. Along with Students' Union President Lisa Glock, I have been following up on this initiative, which is aimed at improving support for students dealing with addictions and substance use challenges. Similar pledges have already been adopted by the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University, and I am confident that our campus can also commit to providing safe, well-resourced spaces for students seeking recovery. I have pointed to the University of Toronto's harm-reduction programs as models that could guide our efforts, and I have urged Kevin Friese, Associate Dean of Wellness and Support, to consider the long-term benefits of implementing a similar approach here. While the University is currently reviewing budgetary constraints, Lisa and I remain hopeful that a positive decision will be reached soon.

### **Budget Cuts Advocacy**

As you all know, each year brings concerns regarding provincial funding cuts and their ripple effects on tuition fees. This time, those concerns culminated in the launch of a budget cuts campaign on February 10. I collaborated with other student associations and unions to emphasize the long-term economic value that universities provide to the province and to warn against shifting the financial burden onto students. With the possibility of another provincial budget cut, we have been advocating for increased government investment, as reduced public funding often leads to rising tuition costs and increased stress for students. Our plan includes collecting video testimonials that capture the personal impact of these cuts on students' mental health, career prospects, and overall well-being. On February 11, I spoke to The Gateway about these issues, reiterating that while our initial letter to the Minister of Advanced Education may not affect this year's budget, I am also drafting a letter to send to the review panel chaired by Dr. Jack Mintz. That panel is tasked with reviewing and evaluating provincial funding for public post-secondary institutions and proposing a funding model, and I am hopeful that this letter will have a greater effect in shaping future outcomes.

### **University Governance Budget Briefing**

These advocacy efforts are closely tied to my participation in the University Governance Budget Briefing on February 13. The University provided an overview of how its operating budget is allocated among various departments, and I underscored the need for pragmatic solutions such as bulk purchasing of IT

services to reduce costs, directing some capital expenditures toward renovating older buildings, and scrutinizing the projected increase in investment returns to ensure that students are not burdened if the market underperforms. I also stressed that the University's current 3% budget cut for each unit, combined with a hiring freeze, raises significant concerns about maintaining high supervision standards for graduate students. The administration acknowledged these issues, and I will continue to monitor how they address them moving forward.

As I progress with these initiatives, my commitment remains the same: to ensure that our graduate community's voices are heard, to represent our interests in key decisions, and to adopt practical, people-focused strategies to meet our challenges. If you have any questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [gsapresi@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsapresi@ualberta.ca). Thank you for taking the time to read through the lengthy council agenda, it means a great deal to us and to the work we are doing to support our graduate community.

Sincerely,

Haseeb Arshad, President of the GSA



**GSA Board  
Report to GSA Council for the 24 February 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA Board
Date: 2025/2/19

Dear Council Members,

The GSA Board (GSAB) reports regularly to GSA Council by listing its agenda items, motions/agreements, and main items of discussion. Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there are amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. GSA Council members are always able to ask questions about items that were discussed in closed sessions. Open session Minutes are available upon request.

**21 January 2025 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

President Citation Award, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

None.

**28 January 2025 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Kids & Co. Contract Discussion, Edmonton-wide Hackathon with Concordia University, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

None.

**5 February 2025 GSA Board Meeting**

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Main Agenda Items:

DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

**Motion:** Motion to APPROVE to renew the Kids & Co. Contract together with UASU. **SI MOVED;** PS Seconded. **DECLINED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Motion:** Motion to APPROVE the shortlisted nominated candidates for the President's Citation Award **PS MOVED.** SI Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Motion:** Motion to RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION about the actual expenses from the CASA Advocacy Week 2024 for two executives. **RK MOVED;** PS Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Motion:** Motion to RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the actual expenses from the CAGS Oct 29-Nov 1, 2024, for two executives. **RK MOVED;** PS Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**11 February 2025 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Alberta GSA Open Letter, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

None.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Haseeb Arshad, President and Chair of the GSA Board

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the February 24 2025 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA BFC
Date: 2025/2/24

Dear Council Members,

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

The Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) recently met again on February 13, 2025, for the second review of the draft budget numbers for the 2025-2026 budget and the 2025-2028 multi-year budget, and third discussion of the draft budget. The drafts provided a comprehensive overview of projected revenues, expenses, restricted funds and strategic financial priorities for the coming years. The meeting focused on assessing the alignment of the proposed budgets with the GSA's long-term goals, ensuring adequate resource allocation to critical areas such as advocacy initiatives and operational efficiency. Members engaged and deliberated the budget lines, raising important questions about the projected increase in membership, the membership fee difference for part-time and full-time students, Human Resources expenses and DEO stipends.

Following these discussions, further changes were identified by the committee members to refine certain budget lines for better use of funds. The updated drafts will incorporate these changes and be presented to the committee on February 27, 2025, for another review and potential approval. This process demonstrates the BFC's commitment to transparent and strategic financial planning. We are hoping to provide the council with the final budget at the March council.

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

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

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Item 8b: Vice-President Academic Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Rija Kamran
Date: February 20, 2024

**2024-2025 GSA Vice-President Academic’s Meetings Attended (Rija)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between January 20 2024 to February 24 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board and other internal committee meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (Jan 20)
GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and Student Affairs (Jan 22)
Council on Student Affairs (Jan 23)
GFC Council Caucus (Jan 24)
GPST (Jan 27)
GFC (Jan 27)
Meeting with T. Raivio & GSA President (Jan 29)
Meeting with a Student (Jan 29)
PhD Welcome Reception Event (Jan 29)
National Community of Practice on Graduate Supervision (Jan 31)
University Research & Innovation Advisory Committee (Jan 31)
CASA E-Plenary (Jan 31)
GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (Feb 3)
EDI Reading Group (Feb 5)
NAC (Feb 6)
FGPS Caucus (Feb 10)
GFC Executive Committee (Feb 10)
LMS of the Future Advisory Committee (Feb 11)
“Changing the Story” Action Plan Launch (Feb 12)

FGPS Council (Feb 12)
LMS and Syllabus Tool Project (Feb 19)
CASA Sustainable Growth Strategy (Feb 19)
GFC Council Caucus (Feb 21)
Sustainable Growth Strategy (Feb 21)
GPST (Feb 24)
GFC (Feb 24)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are well. My term with the GSA is quickly coming to a close and we are preparing for the transition. Thank you for your engagement and support. I have provided some highlights of the meetings since the last council report.

**(Jan 22) GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and Student Affairs**

I attended the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and Student Affairs meeting. Committee discussed several important items including regulation reassessment in the Dental Hygiene program in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, changes and calendar language clarification in external examiners and candidacy exam guidelines, framework on ethical use of AI, and finally an update from the coalition on affordable textbooks (doesn't apply to graduate students at this time).

**(Jan 23) Council on Student Affairs**

I attended the Council on Student Affairs meeting. We discussed the Discrimination & Harassment and Accommodation Policy Suites. The Discrimination, Harassment, and Duty to Accommodate (DHDA) policy suite applies to all members of the university community and its purpose is to foster and protect a respectful work, study and living environment that is free of discrimination and harassment; support dignity and equity for all members of the university and ensure that the university meets both its obligations under law and its ethical responsibilities as an institution of higher learning. A consultation process is ongoing to update these policies and is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. We also discussed an update to the University's Funds Investment Policy, which was a work undertaken following the removal of the encampment on May 11, 2024, as one of the commitments from the University. Other pertinent discussions included a final round of tuition consultation.

**(Feb 5) EDI Reading Group**

Along with Jay Friesen from GPS, I co-hosted the EDI reading group this month. This session focused on implicit bias and microaggressions, exploring the subtle and often unintentional forms of discrimination that permeate everyday interactions. The turnout was good, and the groups explored how microaggressions manifest and discuss strategies for recognizing and addressing harmful behaviours.

**(Feb 11) LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting**

I am continuing to participate in the LMS of Future Advisory Committee as we continue to migrate from e-Class to Canvas, the new LMS. As of early Winter 2025, about 30% of courses are now on Canvas and this will continue till later in the year. Some new updates include the option for instructors to enable self-enrollment for their courses. This functionality is currently being delivered through a [manual process](#) triggered by sending an email request to eClass support with ongoing plans to streamline the workflow further. This is an example of one of the features that was requested. We also talked about additional ways to support the transition to Canvas as e-class goes to read only mode starting this Fall. If you have any concerns, questions or feedback, please feel free to pass them along to me.

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

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

Item 8d: Vice-President Student Services Report

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

<b>To:</b> GSA Council
<b>From:</b> Saad A. Iqbal
<b>Date:</b> Feb. 19, 2025

**2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended by Saad A. Iqbal**  
*Below is a list of meetings I attended between January 16, 2025, and February 19, 2025 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
January 16	Meeting with the Chancellor
January 20	Student Housing Stability Working Group
January 20	Meeting with Katherine Huising
January 21	UASSC
January 22	DOA Committee Meeting
January 22	Meeting with a Student - CONFIDENTIAL
January 23	SU/GSA Collaboration Meeting
January 27	SGBV in WIL Working Group
January 27	Ellement Student Enrollment Discussion
January 27	Students Who Parent Working Group
January 29	Meeting with a Student - CONFIDENTIAL
January 29	DAAC Meeting
January 29	PhD Welcome Reception Event (Jan 29)
January 31	Campus & Community Recreation Bi-Monthly Meeting (Jan 31)

January 31	UAI/GSA Movie Night (Jan 31)
February 3	VLHR Committee Meeting (Feb 3)
February 3	Student Group Mental Health Network Meeting (Feb 3)
February 3	Grant Discussion (Feb 3)
February 4	Event Meeting with H. Ritz (Feb 4)
February 10	CFB Board (Feb 10)
February 11	Meeting with K. Friese (Feb 11)
February 11	Meeting with a Student - CONFIDENTIAL
February 11	Meeting with K. Huising (Feb 11)
February 12	“Changing the Story” Action Plan Launch (Feb 12)
February 12	Meeting with a Student - confidential
February 13	CFB ED Farewell Gathering (Feb 13)
February 18	U-Pass Meeting (Feb 18)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you're all doing well, in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between January 16, 2025, and February 19, 2025:

**Meeting with the Chancellor (January 16)**

The GSA Executive Board met with the Chancellor, Nizar Somji to discuss our priorities, initiatives and regular items of interest. Meetings with the Chancellor helps develop a two-way communication channel where the GSA Executives collectively share important updates and listen to the Chancellor’s perspectives and views. Meetings like this help the GSA realign some of its goals and objectives and also raise important advocacy-related issues with the Chancellor.

**Student Housing Stability Working Group (Jan 20)**

In this regular meeting, the group met with Youth Housing First – Encompass representatives who helped us understand how the group supports folks needing help with accommodation and what areas it covers.



We also had discussions on the Student Housing Kit that contains important information about tenant rights, potential scams, renter's insurance, Safehouse initiatives by the DoS, and other related topic areas. The kit also shares available resources including the Graduate Students' Association's emergency bursaries.

**Meeting with Katherine Huising (January 20)**

Katherine Huising (Campus Services) and I met to discuss some of the ongoing work that was being carried out by the then VP Student Life. We realigned our collective goals, and Katherine helped me by explaining what was being done through the VP SL portfolio. We also talked about a potential collaboration with the CS to get some temporary space for the hand-me-down store. Katherine shared that CS might be able to help us use a space for a few months.

**UASSC (Jan 21)**

The University of Alberta Safety and Security Committee meeting is also one of the meetings that were being taken by the then VP SL. This committee comprises members from various offices and discusses key concerns that are related to the safety and security on campus. Members discussed updates related to the purview and information on two important plans, the Communications and Engagement Plan and the Building Action Plan was also shared.

**DOA Committee Meeting (Jan 22)**

In this regular meeting, we had no new business to discuss, but updates included information on the Living Library Programming and the International Day of Happiness. From the GSA, I am contributing to the Days of Action Program – Living Libraries and the registration is currently open for the living libraries sessions. I would encourage all members to visit this [link](#) for more information and attend the sessions which they can.

**SU/GSA Collaboration Meeting (Jan 23)**

I had an online meeting with the VP SL, Renson from the UASU where we discussed two potential collaborations. Renson seems interested in collaborating for the hand-me-down store and our next meetings will determine what it looks like since there are other groups/offices which might also be interested in the initiative. I will be able to share more details in the next few months.

**SGBV in WIL Working Group (Jan 23)**

This working group is also part of the VP SL portfolio, and the group has put up a lot of resources and consolidated them into a toolkit that would help students know about the resources as well as information on how the Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy applies to the Work-Integrated

Learning (WIL) Learners. The toolkit can also be modified based on program-specific guidelines and shares information about hazards and control of psychological safety.

#### **Ellement Student Enrollment Discussion (Jan 27)**

I met with representatives from Ellement (our new H&D plan provider) along with our staff members to discuss key issues that the GSA would like to address once we start working with Ellement. This discussion was mainly based on the feedback received directly from graduate students and our intention is to ensure that Ellement helps us address the issues in a timely manner.

#### **Students Who Parent Working Group (Jan 27)**

In this regular meeting, members discussed updates on the Student Caregiver Survey that was shared with students on January 23. The survey already had 1200 responses at the time of the meeting, so the actual number is expected to be much larger. We also discussed some updates about the University Day Care Centre and important updates from different participating groups.

#### **DAAC Meeting (Jan 29)**

On the recommendation of the President, I joined the Dean and AVP's Advisory Committee and this was my first session with the committee. Members shared different ideas and concerns about issues that they have heard about from students on campus. Discussion items also included student advocacy and mental health followed by a roundtable discussion.

#### **PhD Welcome Reception Event (Jan 29)**

I had a chance to briefly attend the Ph.D. welcome reception hosted by the FGPS. Here, I had the opportunity to meet with some new graduate students and share ideas and perspectives on issues of common interest.

#### **Campus & Community Recreation Bi-Monthly Meeting (Jan 31)**

In this regular meeting, representatives from the CCR shared information and updates on different services offered through them. We also discussed some common areas of interest for potential collaborations. The discussion also included developing a way for the GSA to collect statistical data on the usage of CCR facilities and services by graduate students, which is already being considered.

#### **UAI/GSA Movie Night (Jan 31)**

I attended a movie night along with the VP External, Parman. This was a collaborative event hosted by the UAI and the GSA. Attendees watched a movie titled "Peace by Chocolate" that shares the story of a

Syrian immigrant family, challenges of settling into a new place, and finding community connections. The movie is based on a true story.

### **VLHR Committee Meeting (Feb 3)**

The Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights Committee is also a new committee I joined recently. The committee is working on creating a list of human rights activists who have made substantial contributions in various areas of human rights. The nominations list currently has 16 names and is being updated along the way.

### **Student Group Mental Health Network Meeting (Feb 3)**

In this regular meeting, members discussed various activities and initiatives being organized by the participating student groups on campus. All events and activities focus on mental health, well-being, and other areas of relevance. I also invited student groups to reach out to plan a collaborative event with the GSA. More details will be shared in the coming months.

### **(GSA Wellness and Family Support Hub) Grant Discussion (Feb 3)**

With the help of our Grants Support Specialist, I applied for a grant to transform the GSA Parents Lounge into a GSA Wellness and Family Support Hub. This discussion was focused on asking some questions and clarification about the procedure of the grant's adjudication. Our intention is to introduce more elements and opportunities for graduate students and other members of the community to support their mental health & well-being. If realized, the initiative will provide a safe and welcoming space for de-escalation and avoid conflicts, a place to care for mental health through relaxation, meditation, and self-care practices, resources on mental health and wellness supports, as well as a place for parents on campus to juggle between their academic and parental responsibilities.

### **Event Meeting with H. Ritz (Feb 4)**

In this meeting, I discussed some programming-related matters for the upcoming Living Libraries event and which responsibilities to take on.

### **CFB Board (Feb 10)**

Since Erin O'Neal the ex-Director of the CFB has resigned, this discussion was about re-aligning the goals and priorities as well as important updates and information on the transition. At this time, the CFB is looking for a new Director and a call has already been put out. One of the current employees at the CFB has taken the role of an interim Director.

**Meeting with K. Friese (Feb 11)**

In this regular meeting, Kevin shared some updates. The meal-swipe plan is going well and will be promoted in March-April. The plan involves the use of Onecard, so a communication strategy is being developed, and the Registrar's office will ensure that an eligibility criterion is followed.

**Meeting with K. Huising (Feb 11)**

In this regular meeting with Katherine, we continued our discussions on common areas of concern. There were no pressing business items to discuss, so the discussion was mainly around finding opportunities for collaboration.

**"Changing the Story" Action Plan Launch (Feb 12)**

This was the unveiling of the Changing the Story Action Plan and a celebration for creating a more interconnected campus. I attended the event briefly with the VP Academic, Rija and met with different officials and attendees to share ideas and perspectives.

**CFB ED Farewell Gathering (Feb 13)**

The UASU, CFB, and GSA collaborated in arranging a farewell gathering for Erin O'Neal. Members from all organizations were present to thank Erin for the wonderful contributions made by her and to wish her good luck for future endeavors. The GSA was represented by the President, Haseeb, Executive Board Member and CAL, Arseniy and me. On behalf of the GSA, I also shared some thoughts on Erin's contributions for the CFB.

**U-Pass Meeting (Feb 18)**

In this regular meeting, members discussed updates on the status of referenda that are running or due to run by the participating institutions. I shared the information about our U-Pass referendum which is being run currently, and the results will be shared on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Best Regards,

**Saad Arslan Iqbal**

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

Item 8e: Vice-President External Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Parman Mojir Shaibani
Date: February 24th, 2024

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

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

Date	Meeting
Jan 17	ISA Council Meeting (Jan 17)
Jan 21	ISE Working Group (Jan 21)
Jan 22	Alumni Council (Jan 22)
Jan 23	GAC Meeting (Jan 23)
Jan 27	ISA Regular Meeting (Jan 27)
Jan 30	Meeting with T. Raivio (Jan 30)
Jan 31	CASA E-Plenary
Jan 31	UAI/GSA Movie Night (Jan 31)
Feb 10	Budget Cuts Campaign Launch (Feb 10)
Feb 11	ISE Working Group (Feb 11)
Feb 12	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (Feb 12)

**1) ISA Meeting (Jan 17)**

During recent ISA meetings, I engaged in discussions on key issues affecting students. Ravina Sanghera, Vice Provost and Dean of Students, presented on the range of student support services, including mental health resources, academic advising, and specialized programs for international students. She reaffirmed the office’s open-door policy, ensuring accessibility for students needing guidance.

In the Student Consultation on the Tuition Proposal (2025-26 cohort), Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost, outlined the financial challenges driving tuition decisions. The University proposed a 2% increase for domestic students and a 10% increase for international undergraduate and course-based graduate programs, while thesis-based graduate tuition remains under review. Discussions also covered how tuition revenue is allocated and the financial pressures from government funding reductions.

The ISA raised critical concerns during the Q&A, challenging the fairness of rising tuition, insufficient scholarships, and the lack of transparency in cost-of-living estimates for international students. While the University allocates 5.5% of tuition revenue to financial aid, it falls short of meeting student needs. The ISA strongly advocated for increased bursaries, clearer financial disclosures, alternative revenue strategies, and stronger institutional support for students facing geopolitical and economic hardships. A more equitable approach is necessary to ease the financial burden on international students. Also, several amendments were made on the GSA bylaws.

## **2) ISE Working Group (Jan 21)**

The meeting began with a territorial acknowledgment and introductions from the co-chairs and committee members. At the time of the meeting, the committee was focused on enhancing the international student experience by improving student support, career opportunities, and cultural integration. The group aimed to identify and implement strategies that would benefit both international students and the university as a whole.

The International Student Experience Working Group was tasked with identifying key areas for improvement and using data and student feedback to guide their initiatives. The goal was to demonstrate the university's commitment to international students and ensure their experience aligns with their investment in their education.

During the meeting, plans were outlined to form an advisory committee to analyze data, pinpoint areas for enhancement, and develop an innovation grant process to fund new ideas. A subcommittee was established to design and implement the grant program, with a target launch date of March.

As discussed, a grant program committee was formed to oversee the program's development and implementation. This included determining whether to have separate education and selection committees and identifying priority projects aligned with student needs. The committee also considered ways to support staff and faculty in fostering more inclusive environments for international students.

Several initiatives were proposed to improve the international student experience, including addressing faculty and staff concerns. Additionally, The Catholic International, a partner on the Year One Foundation program, was considered as a potential collaborator to share insights and best practices.

### **3) Alumni Council (Jan 22)**

#### Community Roundup & Alumni Engagement

The meeting covered plans for the Community Roundup, a family-friendly event aimed at fostering engagement among students, alumni, and the broader community. It was also noted that Colleen Graham would be retiring after 30 years of service to the University of Alberta and its alumni network. Additionally, the university is moving away from using the term Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and instead emphasizing access, community, and belonging in its programming and initiatives.

Discussions focused on U of A Days 2024, particularly reunion classes and alumni-specific events such as the cap and gown ceremony and faculty tours. Some large events, including a music concert and the Hertig Lecture, were expected to be open to the public.

The theme for Saturday night, “What Moves You,” was explored, with ideas including a collaborative presentation between different faculties, a motivational speaker, and a family-friendly event in the Butterfield Annex. The discussion also considered ways to incorporate mental health, movement, and interactive programming into the event.

Balancing resources and programming requests was a key topic, with considerations on whether to add a Sunday breakfast or reintroduce a family event on Saturday afternoon. The decision to separate the family event from alumni weekend was made to allow for better marketing and programming. A broader trend was noted, shifting toward more targeted alumni programming, such as the UA Unveiled event for younger alumni.

#### Strategic Planning & Senate Discussions

The University of Alberta Senate sought feedback on its strategic plan, which will shape decisions leading up to 2029. The discussion highlighted the university’s role in bridging connections with the community, student experience, and Indigenous initiatives.

Concerns were raised about the need for a more comprehensive approach to Indigenous initiatives, particularly in response to the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools. There was also discussion on emphasizing the value of education and knowledge amid concerns about anti-intellectualism and a shifting focus toward labor-based jobs.

Recruitment for the Alumni Council and Executive Committee was also discussed, with applications due on February 28. The next meeting was scheduled as a retreat on March 8 at the Lister Centre, with a hybrid option available.

#### **4) GAC Meeting (Jan 23)**

I attended a meeting where we discussed key agenda items, approved the meeting minutes, and reviewed a proposal to update the “Investing in Innovators” report. Originally written last year, the report needs revisions to reflect changes in the Canadian research and graduate studies landscape. A proposal was put forward for graduate students to lead the review and update process, allowing them to co-author the report and gain valuable experience for their resumes.

We also worked on forming a policy document update working group focused on graduate student funding and opportunities. This group will review award values, international student considerations, and indirect stream funding with the goal of finalizing the document before the election. The discussion emphasized the importance of highlighting graduate student experiences and innovation in shaping these policies.

A timeline was discussed for updating the policy paper, aiming for completion in the next couple of months. We also considered streamlining citations and standardizing formatting during the design phase. Additionally, we explored a project to highlight the impact of funding for social sciences graduate students through testimonials and social media campaigns showcasing the real-world benefits of financial support.

We had an important discussion on the value of social sciences and humanities research, particularly in response to potential challenges related to accessibility and inclusive practices. Ideas for a social media campaign and a student testimonial survey were proposed to gather data and build advocacy efforts. There was also discussion about hosting a grad forum at the upcoming Foundations conference to educate undergraduates about graduate studies and the importance of sustained funding and advocacy.

As part of the Foundations event planning, we considered ways to incorporate graduate student experiences, whether through a presentation or an interactive networking event. The goal is to engage attendees meaningfully and showcase the unique aspects of graduate studies. The committee agreed to continue brainstorming and possibly schedule a smaller, more informal event during Foundations.

Lastly, we reviewed scheduling logistics and survey feedback.

#### **5) CASA E-Plenary (Jan 31)**

I attended the CASA E-Plenary meeting where three policies were presented for approval, focusing on:

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Expanding access to Tri-Council graduate scholarships.  
Advocating for separate regulated post-secondary education transfers.  
Ensuring fair compensation for students funded through supervisor grants.  
Recommendations included increasing the number of awards, specifying demographic categories for data collection, and addressing institutional funding shortfalls affecting tuition. These policies aim to respond to scholarship changes in Budget 2024 and broader funding challenges.

A year-in-review process will assess progress towards the strategic plan's objectives. This will involve consultation sessions with members and committees to gather feedback and ensure accountability, with the final document to be presented at the AGM for approval.

Member engagement was encouraged for upcoming consultation sessions. Updates were provided on the political and election landscape, including a recent cabinet shuffle and the potential for an election in March. During the election period, ASAs will maintain a nonpartisan stance, focusing on non-fiscal advocacy and strategic planning in anticipation of government changes.

The ASA advocacy update highlighted a condensed "Get Out the Vote" campaign due to the election timing. A two-part Train-the-Trainer session will take place in late February, focusing on campus recruitment and volunteer mobilization. Board committees have been actively engaged in submitting recommendations to House of Commons Committees and enhancing feedback mechanisms for better communication.

The board is also working on updating membership guidelines and improving board updates for the upcoming AGM. The hiring process for the Communications and Public Relations Officer is underway, with a new officer expected to start in March. The AGM will be held in Winnipeg on April 4th, with nominations for awards and bids to host AGM 2026 opening this month.

A presentation on the strategic plan and an advocacy week reflection report will be given. The strategic framework consultations will lead to a final draft being published at the end of the academic year. There is also consideration of inviting newly elected delegates to the AGM to introduce them to the organization.

There was support for maintaining the option of newly elected delegates attending Foundations, with a suggestion for a soft onboarding process. There was also support for adding an extra day to Advocacy Week while considering a hybrid option for training to accommodate budget constraints.

To support schools unable to attend in person, online sessions will be held the week before Advocacy Week. The budget for membership will be made available upon request.

#### **6) Budget Cuts Campaign Launch (Feb 10)**

At the time of the meeting, twenty-five post-secondary institutions in Alberta were preparing to release an open letter to the provincial government, calling for increased funding for post-secondary education. The letter aimed to highlight the impact of recent budget cuts, including a decline in the educated workforce over six months and increasing student debt.

#### **7) ISE Working Group (Feb 11)**

The plan involved sending the letter and a press release to media outlets, with an embargo until 10 AM on the day of release to ensure a coordinated effort. Media availability for interviews was scheduled from 10:30 AM to 4 PM. The letter was also set to be distributed through various platforms, including social media, with individual associations encouraged to share it from their own channels.

Discussions also covered the logistics of radio and TV scheduling, emphasizing the advantage of providing advance notice to broadcasters. At the time, there was a shared sense of anticipation and relief as the project neared its public launch.

The meeting begins with a territorial acknowledgment and introductions from the co-chairs and committee members. The discussion focuses on strategies to enhance the international student experience, identifying key areas for improvement and leveraging existing resources to make a meaningful impact.

Three priority areas are identified: Community and Belonging, Academic Experience and Adjustment, and Career Support. The group discusses initiatives currently in place to support students in these areas and explores opportunities to enhance them.

The next step is to compile an inventory of existing programs and initiatives that contribute to an improved international student experience. During the workshop, efforts were made to map out resources related to Community and Belonging, with members encouraged to review and add to the list. Similar information is to be gathered for Academic Experience/Adjustment and Career Support, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of available support and potential gaps.

Members are asked to contribute directly to the shared document, providing insights on ongoing initiatives and areas needing further attention. The goal is to complete this step by February 24, allowing for a well-informed strategy moving forward.

#### **8) Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (Feb 12)**

A significant portion of the discussion focuses on bargaining matters, including confidential aspects that are not disclosed in this report.

The PIA Campaign is discussed, with members given the opportunity to express interest in participating. No formal introduction of the campaign takes place, but its relevance and potential impact are noted.

The committee also discusses the name change from EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) to ACB (Access, Community, and Belonging). The conversation explores the reasoning behind this shift and its implications for institutional policies, student experiences, and broader university initiatives.

Due to the confidential nature of the bargaining discussions, further details are not included in this summary.

Item 8f: Associate Vice-President Labour Reports

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

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 19 Feb 2025

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 20 Jan to 21 Feb 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
21 Jan	Winter Orientation
24 Jan	Grievance Discussion & CA Interpretation Issue
28 Jan	Student Case & Interim Measures Discussion
28 Jan	Discover Governance Session
29 Jan	JHSC Safety Summit
29 Jan	Meeting with a Student
30 Jan	Faculty Stewards Monthly Meeting
31 Jan	LRC Breakfast
31 Jan	LRC Onboarding
31 Jan	LRC Onboarding
3 Feb	Meeting with a Student
4 Feb	Meeting with a Student
7 Feb	Meeting with a Student
10 Feb	Meeting with a PSAC Representative

10 Feb	LRC Meeting
10 Feb	GSA Ambassador Program Working Group
11 Feb	Meeting with a Student
11 Feb	Meeting with a Student
13 Feb	BFC Meeting
13 Feb	Meeting with a Student
20 Feb	Monthly Check-in with CS and OC
20 Feb	Grievance Discussion
21 Feb	U of A JHSC Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you all are staying warm. Here are the details of some of the meetings that I have attended over the past month:

**(Jan 28) Discover Governance Session**

This session was designed to encourage graduate students to run in the upcoming GSA General Elections. Each of the GSA Executives introduced their roles and responsibilities to the attendees, followed by a Q&A session. We saw a noticeable increase in engagement from graduate students compared to previous years' Discover Governance sessions. I also got the chance to meet with a few interested candidates after the session and explain my role and what we do at the GSA.

**(Jan 30) Faculty Steward Meeting**

In this meeting organized by the GSA LRC Chief Steward, we discussed ways to improve our outreach and membership engagement. We received feedback from the stewards on how to better connect with our members and explored avenues for strengthening our steward network.

**(Jan 28) Interim Measures Discussion**

I requested a meeting with the Dean of Students (DoS) to inquire about the process of interim measures for students and to share some concerns. I expressed that, despite the non-disciplinary nature of these interim measures, certain restrictions are imposed on students, often without hearing their account. It would be beneficial to align the Code of Student Conduct policy more closely with other university policies, such as those related to duty to accommodate, discrimination, and harassment.

**(31 Jan) Union Breakfast**

A union breakfast was organized for academically employed graduate students (AEGSs). The event received a good response from the AEGS community, providing them with a valuable opportunity to interact with their peers in a relaxed and informal setting. Attendees were able to share their experiences, discuss common challenges, and offer feedback on various employment-related issues. The breakfast served as an excellent platform for networking and socializing, fostering a sense of community among graduate student workers.

**(10 Feb) Meeting with a PSAC Representative**

I met with a PSAC representative to discuss PSAC support related to mobilization. We plan to arrange several social events for our LRC members and all union members in the coming months.

**(Feb 10) GSA Labour Relations Committee Meeting**

At the recent LRC meeting, members were updated on the ongoing work and engaged in discussions around several key topics. This included some recommended bylaw changes, the appointment process of the LRC outreach coordinator and chief steward, the graduate student ambassador program, and important items.

**(Feb 10) Graduate Student Ambassador Program Committee Meeting**

The meeting focused on reviewing the pilot initiative under the Culture of Care Action Plan aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by graduate students, especially the power dynamics between students and Principal Investigators (PIs). The program seeks to establish a network of trained graduate student ambassadors who will serve as safety champions, supporting students' physical, psychological, and cultural safety. These ambassadors will provide peer support, guide students to university resources, and help identify any barriers in university policies.

In terms of training, the ambassadors will receive education on relevant policies which are currently being prepared by the DoS office. In the tentative plan, the recruitment process will start in March/April and the ambassadors will be trained in Spring/Summer. The program will officially begin in September 2025 and run for one year as a pilot.

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

In Solidarity,

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

**GSA Labour Relations Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the 24 February 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Muneeb Masood Raja  
Date: 20 February 2025

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) this month is a summary of our meeting from 10 February 2025. The Labour Relations Committee has welcomed a new voting member, making the committee complete.

Discussion items included timelines for electing the Chief Steward and Outreach Coordinator given the terms are up at the end of April. These positions should be elected at the March LRC meeting. LRC was consulted about clarifying language around AEGS for the purposes of eligibility and/or voting. Across several documents, there is a lack of consistency in definitions.

I am on a working group that is part of the U of A Culture of Care initiative. The intent of the Ambassador Program is to create a volunteer (peer) group of graduate students to provide support to student employees and assistance in navigating the power imbalance with supervisors. Peer volunteers will receive training and ongoing support.

Members brought forward concerns that student employees don't often understand their contracts, especially when it comes to medical leaves, vacations, etc. We can provide more information on member's rights and responsibilities and encourage members to do their due diligence and know their rights. These knowledge pieces will be incorporated in the AEGS newsletter.

I gave an update on the bargaining schedule. The timeline for the next round of negotiations is March 31 and April 1, 2025. Another round is scheduled for April 22 and 23, 2025 and this is where we will present monetary proposals.

As always, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Muneeb Masood Raja, Chair of the GSA LRC

Item 8j: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: February 19, 2024

Dear members of the GSA Council,

Since the last Council meeting, the Nominating Committee considered one nomination for the GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) which has been put to the vote. We also have a vacant position within the committee, which will be advertised by the GSA Executive Director and the GSA Speaker.

Sincerely,  
Arseniy Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair



## Item 8k: GSA Elections &amp; Referenda Committee Chair Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee  
Report to the GSA Council for the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Elsie Osei  
Date: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) oversaw key pre-election activities in late January and early February as part of its mandate to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process for the GSA General Elections and Referenda.

**Key Activities:**

**Opening of Nominations:**

- The nomination period for the GSA General Elections officially opened.
- Information regarding nomination procedures and deadlines was communicated to the graduate student body.

**Consultations with the Chief Returning Officer (CRO):**

- The CRO engaged with the ERC on multiple occasions to seek guidance on issues arising during the pre-election process.
- These consultations ensured that procedural decisions aligned with the GSA Bylaws and Policies governing elections and referenda.

**Approval of the General Elections Ballot:**

- The ERC reviewed and approved the final ballot for the GSA General Elections, ensuring accuracy and compliance with electoral procedures.

**Approval of the U-PASS Referendum Communiqué:**

- The ERC approved the official communiqué for the U-PASS Referendum, ensuring clarity and neutrality in the messaging to the graduate student body.

**Next Steps:**

- Continued monitoring of the electoral process as it goes into the campaign phase and the elections.
- Ongoing support for the CRO as additional election-related matters arise.

The ERC remains committed to ensuring a smooth, fair, and transparent electoral process for all candidates and graduate students.

Sincerely,

Elsie Osei, Chair of the GSA ERC

## Item 8L: GSA Executive Director Report

GSA Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for February 24 2025 Meeting

To: GSA Council  
From: Lewie Moodley  
Date: February 24 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.

The GSA office has been actively engaged in preparations for the 2025 elections. This process required a significant amount of effort in planning timelines, coordinating candidate nominations, forums, lunch and learns, and implementing a new voting software. This was to ensure a smooth and transparent election cycle with accurate results. I would like to thank my staff for all the hard work they have put in to ensure the elections ran smoothly. On behalf of the staff we would like to congratulate all the winning candidates.

Final preparations for the GSA Awards night are currently happening and we have finalised all the winners. The GSA Graduate Student Awards Night celebrates the achievements and contributions of graduate students, honouring excellence in research, community engagement and all other important aspects of graduate student life. The awards night provides an opportunity to recognise outstanding individuals who make a noteworthy impact within the university community and beyond. This event fosters a sense of appreciation and motivation whilst highlighting the ongoing efforts of the graduate student community.

There is continuing work on the 2025-2026 GSA budget and the preparation of 2024 winter quarterly financial statements. The budget process involves careful considerations in terms of financial allocations to successfully support GSA operations, events, and student initiatives. The quarterly financial statements provide the council with transparency and accountability of operational spending as this will reflect the current financial health of the association. These efforts ensure fiscal responsibility and demonstrate our commitment to maintaining trust with the graduate student community. These statements and budget will be provided to councillors in the March council. I would like to thank Dorota Dzeikan Kryjak (Finance Manager) and Seidy Loungxay (Accountant) for their efforts in constructing our new 2025 -2026 budget and supporting our ongoing financial operations.

Finally, the office has been actively supporting several critical committees, including the Tuition-Based Advisory Committee (TBAC), Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees Joint Oversight Committee (MNIF), Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), Budget and Finance Committee (BFC), and Governance Committee. These committees are fundamental to shaping policies, advocating for student interests, and

ensuring ethical and effective governance. The staff have been instrumental in coordinating meetings, providing research support, and ensuring these committees have enough members and resources to work effectively.

Sincerely,

Lewie Moodley Executive Director.

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, January 15 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **January 8 2025**

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

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 30 grant applications and 216 awards applications submitted.
- The office is working hard to get the final preparations done for the Winter orientation, which is next week.
- We have finalised our 2025-2026 budget and the 3-year budget plan, which will be delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. The BFC will meet again to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Election prep is well underway with the new updated VPIR position paperwork. The format and paperwork of some events are changing to ensure a smooth transition. The website will be updated with new information on the positions and the nomination forms.
- The awards committee is working hard at processing applications and are getting ready for the Awards Night in March.
- Social Media updates:
  - **Facebook** Reach: -15.4% (Dec 17-Jan 14); Followers: no change (current: 2071)
  - **Instagram** Reach: -14.2% (Dec 17-Jan 14); Followers: +9 followers (current: 1485)
  - **Twitter/ X** Followers: -2 followers (1316)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, January 22 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **January 15, 2025**

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

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 80 grant applications and 216 awards applications submitted.
- We have finalised our 2025-2026 budget and the 3-year budget plan, which will be delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. The BFC will meet again to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Election prep is well underway with the new updated VPIR position paperwork. The format and paperwork of some events are changing to ensure a smooth transition. The website will be updated with new information on the positions and the nomination forms.
- Social Media updates:
  - Facebook Reach: +92.9% (Jan 14 - Jan 21); Followers: -2 followers (current: 2069)
  - Instagram Reach: +14.9% (Jan 14 - Jan 21); Followers: +3 followers (current: 1488)
  - Twitter/X Followers: -1 follower (1315)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, January 29 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **January 22, 2025**

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

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 21 grants approved; 60 grants are being processed.
- The Awards adjudication is closed and the committee meets on January 28 2025 to finalize the winners.
- We have finalised our 2025-2026 budget and the 3-year budget plan, which was delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. The BFC will meet again in the coming weeks to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Election prep is well underway with the new updated VPIR position paperwork. The format and paperwork of some events have changed to ensure a smooth transition. The website has been updated with new information on the positions and the nomination forms.
- On January 28, we held our second election advertising event, the Lunch and Learn. We are seeing an increased engagement around this year's election.
- Social Media updates:

**Facebook** Reach: -28.8% (Jan 21-Jan 28); Followers: -1 followers (current: 2068)

**Instagram** Reach: -62.9% (Jan 21-Jan 28); Followers: +7 followers (current: 1495)

**Twitter/X** Followers: -6 followers (1309)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, February 5 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **January 29, 2025**

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

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 40 grants approved; 60 grants are being processed.
- The Awards adjudication was closed and the committee met on January 28 2025 to finalize the winners. The winners have now been notified about the awards.
- We have finalised our 2025-2026 budget and the 3-year budget plan, which was delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. The BFC will meet again on February 13 2024 to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Election work is well underway. The format and paperwork of some events have changed to ensure a smooth transition. The website has been updated with new information on the positions and the nomination forms. We have held two election Lunch & Learn sessions with the board. We have seen a lot of success from these sessions, many students attended and learned about the roles.
- Social Media updates:  
Facebook Reach: -54% (Jan 28 - Feb 4) Followers: -2 followers (current: 2066)  
Instagram Reach: +25.3% (Jan 28 - Feb 4) Followers: +5 followers (current: 1500)  
Twitter/ X Followers: -1 follower (1308)



### **Management Report to the GSA Board, February 12 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **February 5, 2025**

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

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 50 grants approved; 50 new grants are being processed.
- The Awards adjudication was closed and the committee met on January 28 2025 to finalize the winners. The winners have now been notified about the awards.
- We have finalised our 2025-2026 budget and the 3-year budget plan, which was delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. The BFC will meet again on February 13 2024 to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Elections work is well underway. Nominations have now closed and the forum is taking place this week.
- We held two Lunch & Learn sessions about the elections with the elected board. We have seen a lot of success from these sessions, many students attended and learned about the roles.
- Social Media updates:

**Facebook** Reach: -68.5% (Feb 4 - 11) Followers: -3 followers (current: 2063)

**Instagram** Reach: -80.1% (Feb 4 - 11) Followers: +5 followers (current: 1505)

**Twitter/ X** Followers: -2 followers (1306)

Item 9: Written Question to GSA Council

**GSA Council February 24 2025 - Written Question from N. Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences  
Councillor:**

As everyone likely knows, there have been heightened tensions between the governments of Canada and the USA over the past couple months, with both countries threatening to impose tariffs on one another and thus start a trade war. Although the trade war has been delayed from its original starting date, both countries have refused to rule out tariffs if they cannot cooperate in the long term. Such tariffs would lead to dramatic inflation in both countries, which would disproportionately impact low-income workers such as graduate students, and several of my constituents have raised concerns about how these tariffs, if they were to go through, would affect their housing affordability and food security. What actions are the GSA Board considering to mitigate the financial effects of a potential trade war between Canada and the USA, both to graduate students individually and the GSA as an organization?