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Item 1: Agenda

Monday, January 20, 2025

Held in-person in 2-100 Council Chambers

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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

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

GSA SPEAKER:
Zain Patel in the Chair
GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:
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	2-5	Approval of the Agenda for January 20, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	6-27	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of November 18, 2024 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
10 min	4		Announcements	
20 min	5		<u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u>	
			1. In-Camera Session, Closed Session Item	Vicky Lin, ACB Vice-Chair, & Emmanuel Marfo, ACB Member
20 min			2. Campus Food Bank Update	Erin O'Neill, CFB Executive Director
30 min			3. Dean of Students National Standard for Mental Health & Wellbeing Action Plan Presentation	Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean: Health & Wellness, and Chelsea Butler, Wellness Supports
10 min			4. GSA Council 101 Presentation	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
10 min	6	28 29-44	<u>ACTION ITEMS</u> 1. GSA Elections & Referenda Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - January 20 2025 First Reading a. Outline of Issue b. ERC-Recommended Bylaw Changes	H. Arshad, President
10 min	7		<u>ELECTIONS</u> A. GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee a. One GSA Member Position:	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair

		45-53	i. Eight nominations	
		54-56	B. GSA Budget & Finance Committee a. One GSA Member Position: i. One nomination	
		57-60	C. GSA Elections & Referenda Committee a. One GSA Member Position: i. Two nominations	
		61-63	D. GSA Appeals & Complaints Board a. Two GSA Councillor Positions: i. No nominations b. One GSA Member Position: i. Two nominations	
			E. Deputy Returning Officer a. No nominations	
30 min	8		<u>INFORMATION PIECES</u> 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 a. GSA Awards Selection Committee F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja a. GSA Labour Relations Committee	None at this time None at this time None at this time

		89 90 91-92 93-98	G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel I. Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei L. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley	None at this time None at this time
15 min	9		Question Period 1. Written Questions 2. Oral Questions	
	10		Adjournment	

Item 2: GSA Council November 18, 2024 Minutes

Held in-person in 2-100 Council Chambers

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

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

GSA Executives:

- GSA President: Haseeb Arshad
- VP Academic: Rija Kamran

Departmental Councillors:

1. Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences
2. Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology
3. Kiera Greenaway, Civil & Environmental Engineering
4. Cassandra Baragar, Communication Sciences & Disorders
5. Michelle Bey, Dentistry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VP Student Life: Benjamin Kucher ● VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal ● VP External: Parman Mojir Shaibani ● AVP Labour: Muneeb Raja <p>Councillors-At-Large:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair 2. Georga Boffen Yordanov 3. Andres Dorado Solarte 4. Christine Hymanyk 5. Ibrahim Khodabocus <p>Standing Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair ● Tianxu Wang, NoC Vice-Chair <p>Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winson Co & Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors ● Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost, Students & Enrollment ● Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, Provost & VP Academic ● Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost & Dean FGPS ● Darrell Dancause, AVP Finance, Procurement and Planning ● Norma Rodenburg, Vice-Provost & Registrar, Office of the Registrar ● Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI ● Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI ● Michael Janz, City Councillor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Alissa Watson, Drama 7. Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences 8. Devinder Pal Singh, Economics 9. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion 10. Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology 11. Dalia Cristerna, Linguistics 12. Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology & Immunology 13. Mohamadali Tofigh, Mechanical Engineering 14. Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience 15. Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics & Gynecology 16. Raj Somasundaram, Pediatrics 17. Fulin Wang, Pharmacology 18. Indiresh Akil Mangra-Bala, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences 19. Daniel Carleton, Physics 20. Grace Essuman, Physiology 21. Savannah Ribeiro, Political Science 22. Emilie Desnoyers, Psychiatry 23. Cheryl Pan, Psychology 24. Samantha Knapp, Sociology <p>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chirag Thakur, Business MBA 2. Nancy Wang, Business PhD 3. Caley Campkin, Chemistry 4. Zeynep Oyku Ozturk, Educational Policy Studies 5. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion 6. Jerzy Beaumont, Library & Information Studies
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:02	-	Land Acknowledgement	A. Nazir,

			GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	1	<p>Approval of the Agenda for November 18, 2024 GSA Council</p> <p>Arseniy Belosokhov brought forward an amendment motion: the GSA Nominating Committee moves to add a Candidate Q&A session as a discussion item during the GSA Speaker election segment.</p> <p>AB MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Agenda PASSED unanimously.</p>	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	2.0-2.10	<p>Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of October 21, 2024 GSA Council</p> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED. One abstained.</p>	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
2 min	3	<p>Changes in GSA Council Membership</p> <p>Incoming Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jerzy Beaumont, Library & Information Studies Alternate ● Nancy Wong, Business PhD ● Mohamadali Tofigh, Mechanical Engineering ● Daniel Carleton, Physics ● Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion 	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
	4	<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None at this time 	
	5	<p><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. RSM Audit Report</p> <p>Presented by Winson Co & Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The audit for the year ended March 31, 2024, went smoothly, and a clean audit opinion was issued. The focus of this presentation was on the financial statements, with no detailed discussion of the audit itself, which was reviewed by the GSA Budget & Finance Committee. L. Pfeiffer made a point of thanking the GSA 	W. Co & L. Pfeiffer

		<p>Office for their work on the budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balance Sheet Overview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total assets decreased from \$7.7 million in 2023 to \$5.8 million in 2024, mainly due to a reduction in cash, which dropped by \$1.9 million. This decrease was primarily driven by the settlement of a significant health and dental plan payable balance from the previous year. ● Current assets were down to \$2.5 million (from \$4.4 million), while restricted investments remained stable at approximately \$3.3 million. ● Liabilities, including accounts payable and deferred contributions, were in line with the previous year, with a notable decrease in health and dental plan payable, which was settled during the year. ● The organization’s current ratio improved to 2:1 (from 1.3:1), indicating stronger liquidity. Net assets increased slightly, from \$4.4 million to \$4.6 million. ● Statement of Operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revenues for the year were slightly lower at \$2.3 million (down from \$2.4 million), with a decrease in the Graduate Student Support Fund. However, overall revenues remained consistent year-over-year. ● Expenses dropped to \$2.16 million from \$2.3 million, reflecting effective cost management in line with revenue changes. ● The organization ended the year with a surplus of \$179,000, an improvement from the \$119,000 surplus in the prior year. ● Investment income increased significantly to \$360,000 (from \$208,000), and unrealized gains on restricted investments were \$82,000, marking a positive \$140,000 swing from the previous year. ● However, the health and dental plan continued to incur losses, totaling \$445,000 (up from \$257,000 in 2023), as the organization continued to subsidize these costs for students. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Net Assets and Cash Flow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total net assets were \$4.6 million, with \$1.7 million in unrestricted funds and \$2.9 million in internally restricted funds. ● Cash flow from operations was negative at \$2.05 million, primarily due to the payment of two years' worth of health and dental plan costs. However, this is expected to normalize in the coming year. ● Short-term investments are primarily in GICs, while restricted investments are a mix of mutual funds and GICs. ● Deferred contributions increased to \$1 million, reflecting additional grants received and spent during the year. ● The internally restricted net assets are earmarked for specific purposes, with detailed notes outlining the funds' uses and changes. ● Detailed schedules provide further insight into revenue and expense breakdowns, with a focus on salaries and benefits, which increased to \$611,000 (from \$598,000). ● Overall, the organization managed its finances prudently, achieving a surplus and maintaining healthy liquidity despite some challenges with health and dental plan costs. ● I. Khodabocus, CAL, asked a question regarding GSA investments being actively managed as mutual funds and certificates instead of load indexes. L. Pfeiffer suggested forwarding the question to the GSA BFC for investment questions; L. Moodley, GSA ED, stated he will bring forward this question to the BFC. <p>B. Tuition Discussion Presented by Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost Students & Enrollment; Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, Provost & VP Academic; Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost & Dean FGPS; Darrell Dancause, AVP Finance, Procurement and Planning; Norma Rodenburg, Vice-Provost & Registrar, Office of the Registrar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M. Padfield detailed the previous Tuition Town Halls held: the GSA held a town hall on November 7. M. Padfield detailed an additional town hall for November 	<p>M. Padfield, T. Raivio, K. Brough, D. Dancause, N. Rodenburg</p>
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		<p>26, which is being rescheduled to the second week of January to allow for a combination town hall event with the Students' Union. M. Padfield detailed the consultation procedure as part of the university's formal consultation mechanism via the Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC), which meets several times, is mandated by government, and is conducted with both the Students Union, the Graduate Students' Association, and the Council on Student Affairs. They will also be attending the International Students' Association at the invitation of the SU. Any additional questions can and will be answered at the next GSA/SU Tuition Town Hall in January or via email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M. Padfield explained that tuition fees support various aspects of the university's operations, including salaries and benefits (comprising about 57% of total costs), maintenance, utilities, research support, and library services. Additionally, approximately 5.5% of tuition revenue (\$23.2 million) goes toward student financial aid, which benefits both undergraduate and graduate students. ● The university is facing financial pressures due to stagnant government funding, which has not received any inflationary increases. The domestic tuition cap of 2% creates a \$3 million revenue gap, and rising costs (such as salary and benefit increases, inflation, and an increase in student numbers) are adding additional financial strain. ● The university's revenue sources include a declining operating grant from the Alberta government (down by \$222 million over the last three years), which is not anticipated to receive any inflationary increases. Additionally, the university receives some revenue from investment income and other restricted sources, such as Tri-Council funding, though these funds are not available for general operations. The unrestricted investment income is projected to be around \$30 million in the coming year. ● Tuition Proposals for 2025/26: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Domestic Students: The proposal includes a 2% 	
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		<p>increase in tuition for all programs, while the need-based financial aid offset will remain at \$8.5 million, without any increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Students: For undergraduate programs, the proposal is a 10% tuition increase, with 8.55% of the revenue being directed toward scholarships, awards, and bursaries. For graduate course-based programs, the tuition increase is also 10%, with the same 8.55% offset for financial aid. The university is also exploring a tuition deposit system for these programs to allow for refunds if student visas are denied or other reasons outside of control prevent their attendance. ● International Thesis-Based Programs: There are ongoing discussions about the appropriate tuition rates for international thesis-based programs. A working group is reviewing funding models to ensure fairness, especially considering the contributions that international students make to research and teaching and the guaranteed minimum funding program. The advisory working group will submit recommendations in December, which will inform future proposals for these programs. ● A. Belosokhov, Councillor-At-Large and GSA Nominating Committee Chair, asked after projections of graduate students regarding tuition increases compared to income, particularly within the context of the growing use of the Campus Food Bank. M. Padfield stated that the purpose of the working group will be to look into sustainability of and balance between tuition and graduate student livelihood. She stated that this is the importance of working on a minimum funding level for programs. ● T. Raivio committed to continuing work on minimum funding as a priority in the face of rising living, inflation and tuition costs. ● S. Ribeiro, Political Science Councillor, asked to what extent the university has looked at adjusting the 	
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		<p>investment portfolio to realize more gains on investment to match rising costs. D. Dancause explained that they have to hold a reserve in case of a market drop. The portfolio is examined every three to five years; they are examining the portfolio makeup and performance this year via an external party to make recommendations to the Board Investment Committee, which then is forwarded to the Board of Governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● S. Ribeiro also asked after the data regarding currently enrolled students experiencing homelessness, food insecurity or seeking mental health services due to increasing financial burden, and how this data will change with the proposed tuition increases. M. Padfield explained that the university captures utilization data for counselling and clinical services, they track applications for financial aid, and the CFB shares utilization data and demographics with them. She argued that a straight cause-effect conclusion of financial pressures as a consequence of tuition cannot be assumed. A moderate increase in the utilization of bursaries has been noted through their tracking. She highlighted that bursaries are not competitive, so any qualified applicant receives a bursary. This is the importance of having T. Raivio leading the review to consider alternate viewpoints to ensure the affordability of tuition and graduate programs in general. M. Padfield stated that the university monitors the factors impacting students' ability to afford their education, in the context of total enrollment. Some programs have pressure points, while others don't, so it's important to track usage rates and program demographics to connect services to students in need. ● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, asked after the procedure for international admissions in relation to the tuition deposit program, and whether the university has consulted with the IRCC to ensure balance between offer letters and attendance rates. M. Padfield stated that the university is in regular communication with the IRCC via many departments to ensure they understand the reality for students. The IRCC has controlled access 	
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		<p>to student study permits through the provincial attestation letter requirement process. The university validates the application and then supports the student with the visa application to maximize chances of success. She stated that the university has been strongly advocating against the rejection criteria and rates for international study permits, as they have been higher than usual and for unpredictable reasons. She hopes that the IRCC will take their recommendations and going forward, the criteria and results will improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M. Padfield encouraged further questions to be forwarded to Melissa.padfield@ualberta.ca <p>C. EDI Action Plan Presentation Presented by Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI, and Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● B. Kucher, VP Student Life, introduced the guests ● C. Smith presented the draft of a new action plan aimed at creating a vibrant, interconnected university community focused on EDI. The plan is the result of consultations that began in winter 2023 following the closure of the university’s strategic EDI plan. The consultations involved community partners, governance bodies, and student organizations, and culminated in the release of "Continuing Our Stories" and ongoing conversations over the summer. ● The core of the action plan focuses on addressing shared barriers and moving away from identity-specific actions. The plan encourages cross-unit collaborations alongside unit-specific goals. It highlights that while the work itself is important, the emphasis is on how the work is done, not who is responsible for it. A key element of the plan is the introduction of “values and active practices,” which are seven practices designed to guide action on EDI. These practices will also be featured in a second training module for staff and students. ● To ensure the plan has broad institutional impact, it incorporates a multi-dimensional model that sees equity, diversity, and inclusion as a collective responsibility. This model includes institutional 	<p>C. Smith, T. Ira</p>
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		<p>decision-makers, everyday contributors such as students and staff, and coordinating bodies like councils and departments. The action plan is structured around four main trajectories: supporting uncomfortable encounters (building capacity for cross-difference interaction), enhancing expansive excellence (broadening definitions of excellence), ensuring access (removing barriers to academic and community life), and nurturing transformative collaborations (fostering cross-portfolio cooperation). These trajectories are supported by three types of actions: structural shifts (in policies and procedures), cultural shifts (in supports and resources), and knowledge-sharing shifts (in communication and celebrating successes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finally, the plan outlines commitments for sustaining the work, including the creation of an evaluative framework, a community-facing dashboard, and mechanisms for reporting and feedback. Individual work plans will be developed for everyone within the institution, encouraging personal responsibility for implementing actions. The presentation concluded with open-ended questions, inviting feedback on the language, actions, and alignment of the plan with the work of various university associations and individuals. ● C. Smith encouraged feedback on this plan ● A. Belosokhov asked after action items for the plan. C. Smith explained that the plan details broad, high-level actions for the entire institution. Over the next few weeks and months, her office will be working on building the implementation plan and would like feedback from students, department and program chairs, and the Dean of Students' office to support them in identifying their key actions (for example, increased wraparound supports for international students to support and retain those students). ● T. Ira stated the importance of hearing the graduate student perspective as they move into the implementation phase and begin mapping out accountabilities and connection points across different organizations. He will be in contact with the GSA 	
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		<p>Executives to discuss the best avenues of feedback collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They encouraged students to reach out to Carrie at carrie.smith@ualberta.ca or vpedi@ualberta.ca <p>D. M. Janz Presentation Presented by Michael Janz, City Councillor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Janz, the city councilor for Ward Papastew (which includes the University of Alberta area), began his presentation by introducing himself and providing attendees with his contact information. Janz, who previously served as president of the Students’ Union at the University of Alberta and has a background in education policy and nonprofit work, emphasized his commitment to social justice in his role as a city councilor. He highlighted the importance of addressing affordability, focusing on increasing housing choices and improving transportation in Edmonton, as solutions that can alleviate financial pressures for students and residents. • Janz pointed out the city's sprawling size and challenges stemming from limited revenue sources, particularly with the province's reduced funding for municipalities. Despite these financial constraints, he noted significant improvements in urban planning, such as the addition of more per capita funding to transit to cope with the increasing population and the legalization of more housing options via zoning bylaw changes (8 units/lot and 12 storey buildings allowed in certain areas), including duplexes, triplexes, and multi-story buildings near the university. He stressed the need for increased housing density around campus to reduce traffic and make the area more sustainable. • Transportation was another key focus, with Janz advocating for more frequent bus services, safer streets for pedestrians (structural interventions to protect pedestrians from vehicular accidents), and expanded bike and bus lanes. He acknowledged that car infrastructure is costly for the city and emphasized that 	<p>M. Janz</p>
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		<p>prioritizing transit and alternative modes of transport is essential for a sustainable future. Additionally, Janz discussed the role of transit as a social justice issue, as it is crucial for providing equitable access to the city's services and opportunities, particularly for lower-income individuals and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While acknowledging the challenges Edmonton faces, including rising austerity and a struggling social safety net, Janz expressed his commitment to improving the city's infrastructure and fostering a more inclusive community. He concluded by encouraging students to stay engaged in Edmonton's future, participate in local initiatives, and reach out for support or collaboration on projects. • H. Arshad asked after the lack of plans for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in the city's zoning bylaws. He expressed concerns about the absence of provisions for EV chargers, especially fast chargers, and suggested this could be an important consideration moving forward. Additionally, he raised the idea of exploring partnerships with car-sharing companies, such as Communauto, to potentially offer student discounts. Lastly, the GSA President asked about transit safety, specifically in relation to fare gates, wondering if this idea was still being considered or if it had been dismissed due to practicality concerns. • M. Janz noted that recent zoning changes have introduced requirements for EV charging stations, though challenges remain due to provincial opposition to climate-related actions, such as energy efficiency requirements for new homes. On the topic of car-sharing, Michael acknowledged the GSA President's suggestion about discounts for students and expressed a desire to expand car-share options in the city, especially given that there is currently only one company offering services. Regarding transit safety, Michael highlighted that improvements have been made in recent years, such as the addition of transit safety officers, security enhancements, and outreach teams. However, he acknowledged that transit safety is a complex issue, and 	
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		<p>the city is continuously working on it. He also explained that while transit fare gates have been considered, their high cost and practicality in Edmonton’s open transit system made them less feasible. Instead, the city has focused on increasing security presence and social work teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● G. Boffen Yordanov, Councillor-At-Large, also raised the issue of the lack of Communauto service to South Campus, a concern for students. Michael explained that Communauto is a private company, and while the city can facilitate parking arrangements, the company is responsible for its own service expansion. He added that Communauto is considering expanding its coverage area. ● B. Kucher, VP Student Life, asked about the capacity of Edmonton's buses and the double-decker buses that had been suggested, especially given concerns about overcrowding. Michael mentioned the use of articulated buses on certain routes but noted that streetcars were unlikely due to infrastructure constraints and high costs. He also touched on the limitations of the city’s budget and provincial priorities, noting that the provincial government is focusing on projects like a high-speed rail between Edmonton and Calgary, while local transit improvements struggle for funding. ● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, raised the potential for affordability initiatives for students, especially given the high cost of living and rents, and if Janz’s office could work in conjunction with the VP External. Michael agreed and acknowledged the challenge of addressing affordability in Edmonton, especially since the city has limited control over factors like internet pricing and rental markets. However, he agreed that creative solutions should be explored, especially in partnership with local housing providers. ● P. Mojir Shaibani, VP External, raised concerns about Communauto’s customer service and reliability, which Michael clarified, explaining that the city only facilitates the company’s parking rights and does not directly oversee its operations. He suggested that future 	
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		<p>discussions could include exploring publicly operated car-share options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janz encouraged students to reach out to him at michael.janz@edmonton.ca 	
6	<p><u>INFORMATION ONLY</u></p> <p>1. GSA Council to receive for information the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>HA MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H. Arshad, GSA President, gave some background on the audit report draft; the finalized report shall be shared soon. The GSA BFC is working on bylaw and policy revisions to legislate how the GSA financial team will operate to solidify institutional memory, and savings are expected next year upon changing Health and Dental providers. <p>2. GSA Tuition Town Hall Online Feedback</p> <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahead of the town hall, a survey was distributed to gather feedback from students regarding a proposed tuition fee increase and potential financial aid changes. • Key concerns raised included opposition to any further tuition hikes due to existing financial stress and a perceived lack of transparency about how tuition dollars are being allocated. Students expressed particular interest in a more detailed breakdown of where their fees go, such as salaries and utilities. • The impact on international students was also a major concern, in light of the 10% tuition increase proposal for international students, even though it currently does not affect graduate students. In terms of financial support, students advocated for increased funding, particularly hybrid awards, which currently exclude international graduate students. • Additionally, they called for more job opportunities (highlighted as a main reason for student dropout rates), 	H. Arshad, President	

		<p>with many fearing post-graduation employment challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another common complaint was the increasing tuition without corresponding improvements in services, with students questioning why tuition is rising while service standards appear to be stagnant or declining. • There was also a noted discrepancy between the proposed fee increases and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as well as a reduction in financial aid for domestic students. • The proposal for the upcoming year includes a 2% cap for domestic students (consistent with the previous year), but a 10% increase for international students, while financial aid for domestic students has decreased from 15% to 8.5%. These figures highlight the growing financial pressures on students, and the need for continued advocacy and transparency from the university. 	
		<p><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 Second Reading <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue a. Recommended Bylaw Changes <p>BK MOVED. SI SECONDED.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED unanimously.</p> 2. U-Pass Referendum Question <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue b. Background & Question <p>SI MOVED. PS SECONDED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background presented by S. Iqbal, VP Student Services • There will be no change for 2025-2026 (\$180/year) • \$2.50 increase 2026-2027 (182.50/year), and again for 2027-2028 (\$185.00/year) • Every institution was firm on improvements on transit safety as a demand • Opt-in/out 100km radius to be increased 	<p>H. Arshad, President</p> <p>C. Roose, GSA AD, & S. Iqbal, VP Student Services</p>

		<p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>3. Motion to adjourn due to lack of quorum was raised. SI MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p>H. Arshad clarified that informal discussion can continue, university bylaw only states that quorum is required to start the meeting.</p> <p>26 voted for adjourning, 2 voted against and 3 abstained.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	
		<p><u>ELECTIONS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Speaker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One GSA Member Position <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Two nominations received and NoC-approved ii. Successful candidate: Zain Patel <p>B. GSA Appeals & Complaints Board</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One GSA Councillor Position: No nominations received b. One GSA Member Position: One nomination received, NoC approval pending 	<p>A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair</p>
		<p><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></p> <p>Reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. President's Report <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted ii. Course-based scholarship will open next week iii. UA Sexual Assault Centre has returned to normal operations with in-person and online bookings offered between 8:00am-4:30pm iv. H. Arshad will meet with Carrie Smith and Ravina Sanghera soon to finalize the 	

		<p>Graduate Peer Support Program with their funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. At the GFC, the GSA raised the motion to ask the university to uphold its commitment to EDI, which passed with an overwhelming majority (93 in favour, 2 against) b. GSA Board Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted c. GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted d. GSA Governance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted <p>2. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted <p>3. Vice-President Student Life: Benjamin Kucher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. B. Kucher summarized his ongoing work with the UA Sexual Assault Centre: he has been working closely with the new Assistant Dean for Community Wellness and Sexual Violence Supports to bring about stability and bring the centre back to full operations in alignment with the centre’s ongoing community engagement and action plan for 2024-2025. This has led to the creation of a community advisory group and steering committee - any interested students are encouraged to reach out to Benjamin, who can forward the application form, which is due by November 25th. ii. The Dean of Students Office is in the early stages of exploring and rebranding its name to distance itself from disciplinary connotations and create a perception of inclusivity and support that they provide, including its resources and services. B. Kucher encouraged students to reach out to him with any 	
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		<p>name suggestions to bring forward to the Dean’s Advisory Council and to R. Sanghera. The current names include Student Experience, Success, Student Affairs, among others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. None at this time <p>4. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. S. Iqbal read a personal note to Council: During the DEO training session held on October 22, one key takeaway was the importance of celebrating both individual and collective achievements, particularly in the context of the demanding graduate student experience. As graduate students, we balance numerous responsibilities, including academic progress, research, family commitments, and often jobs or volunteer work. It is easy to focus on what remains undone, but it’s essential to pause and recognize our successes. The first half of the fiscal year has seen significant progress in advocacy, expanding support networks, and enhancing services for our graduate community. These accomplishments are a testament to the collaborative efforts of the GSA Board, staff, and Council members. The dedication of our staff, the diversity of perspectives within the council, and our shared commitment to improving the graduate experience are key to these successes. Moving forward, it is vital that we continue to support each other’s well-being, collaborate effectively, and ensure that the GSA’s work aligns with the best interests of our graduate students. This reflection serves as a reminder of the value of the work we do, both individually and collectively, and the importance of uplifting one another as we continue our advocacy efforts. <p>5. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. P. Mojir Shaibani and H. Arshad met with provincial stakeholders, MLAs, the NDP and UCP caucuses, including the Minister of Advanced Education, in order to advocate for graduate students with some main asks. One of them was a 10% targeted funding for graduate students through scholarships and bursaries. They discussed improvements to the graduate student experience, making transparent guidelines for mandatory non-instructional fees, Bill 18 implications for post secondary institutions and the subject of student loan forgiveness in order to retain students within Alberta. Finally, they discussed amendments to the labor relations code in order to allow academically employed graduate students to choose their own bargaining agents (removing the specific wording of 'GSA' to any bargaining organization). They are optimistic regarding the targeted funding and they seemed open to the LRC amendments mentioned. ii. Post-Secondary Education Task Force is running a campaign in order to raise awareness and to make student life more affordable by sustaining quality post-secondary education in Alberta and increasing accessibility. They are running a survey through a new website, where students are encouraged to participate and can directly send messages to their MLAs. The link will be shared through the GSA newsletter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. M. Raja, VP Labour, provided an update 	
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		<p>on the ongoing situation with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), with whom the GSA has a service agreement for professional support in bargaining and union-related matters. Recently, the GSA's primary contact at PSAC was let go, and while a new representative has been assigned, there are concerns about the level of support PSAC will provide moving forward. M. Raja expressed some skepticism regarding the future of the service agreement, particularly in light of Bill 17, which restricts other unions from representing graduate students in bargaining. Despite these uncertainties, PSAC has assured the GSA that no major changes to the service agreement will occur until the collective agreements are renegotiated. M. Raja also noted some challenges in interpreting the language of the service agreement and highlighted efforts to clarify these issues. Additional updates will be provided as the situation unfolds, and M. Raja is available to meet for further discussions if needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. GSA Labour Relations Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted 7. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted 8. GSA Speaker: None at this time 9. Chief & Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi & Zain Patel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted 10. GSA Nominating Committee Chair & Vice-Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov & Tianxu Wang <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted 11. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted 	
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		<p>12. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley a. As submitted</p>	
<p>5 min</p>		<p><u>DISCUSSION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. Election Candidate Q&A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The process for questioning candidates for a speaker position was discussed. The Q&A session was structured to last five minutes overall, during which each council member could ask one question to the candidates, with a time limit of 10 to 15 seconds per question. The session was moderated to ensure the focus remained on the candidates' qualifications, avoiding personal matters. ● The candidates were not asked to present bios, as their qualifications had already been reviewed and shared with the council. ● The first question, by H. Arshad, asked both candidates how they would create a fair and inclusive environment for all council members. In response, S. Sulemana emphasized the importance of ensuring that all council members' voices are heard, while Z. Patel proposed creating a platform that would encourage participation, especially for those who may feel hesitant to speak up. ● Another question asked was how will the candidates ensure quorum throughout the meeting? S. Sulemana responded that they would kindly remind Councillors of their duties. Z. Patel stated that he would ensure engagement by condensing Council sessions and integrating discussion questions into the time schedule of the meeting. ● Additional questions included how to keep voting members engaged during action items, with suggestions for time management and reminders to help maintain focus. ● After the Q&A, the candidates were asked to leave the room so that the council could discuss their candidacies. In closed session, Councillors clarified the duration of the Speaker position as a one-year term, and were given the opportunity to share their objective experiences with the candidates. 	<p>A Belosokhov, NoC Chair</p>

		<p>B. In-Camera Item: Closed Session Council-Elected Officers, GSA Councillors and DEOs may remain for this discussion. Guests and staff will step out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion to adjourn due to a lack of quorum means this discussion item will be postponed until the next Council session 	H. Arshad, GSA President
		<p>Question Period</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Deputy Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, November 14, 2024) 2. Oral Questions 	
		<p>Adjournment 8:51 PM</p> <p>A motion to adjourn due to a lack of quorum was raised. H. Arshad clarified that informal discussion can continue and wished to discuss the Tuition Fee Proposal.</p> <p>It was put to a vote: 26 voted for adjourning, 2 voted against and 3 abstained.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p>	

Item 6a: Outline of Issue: ERC-Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw & Policy, Section I

Outline of Issue

GSA ERC updates: Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section I: Elections

Suggested Motion:

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Elections Policy.

Note: This is a policy change and only requires one reading and will be effective as of January 21 2025.

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section I: Elections

Background:

Implementing changes to our election policies to streamline the election process and clarify the responsibilities of neutral positions in election procedure.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
which may, in addition, be affected because of earlier complaints not yet resolved “Working Day” is defined as a day that the GSA office is open	
GSA Policy: Elections	
I.BYL.1 Guiding Principle 1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.	
I.BYL.2.1-2.2 Election Timeline 1.1 Elections will consist of a nomination period, a campaign period, and a voting period. 2.2 The timeline for elections will be set out in GSA Policy.	
I.BYL.3 Nominations 3.1 The requirements for the nomination forms will be set out in GSA Policy. 3.2 Candidates for Directly-Elected Officer positions will be GSA members, except associate members, in good academic standing. 3.3 Candidates are not allowed to run for multiple positions.	
I.BYL.4 Voting 4.1 All voting in GSA General Elections and elections of the Associate Vice-President Labour and by-elections will be	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
<p>done electronically, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use.</p> <p>4.2 Each position will be elected on a per ballot basis.</p>	
<p>I.BYL.5 Filling Vacancies Following the GSA General Election and Election of the Associate Vice-President Labour</p> <p>5.1 In the event that a Directly-Elected Officer (DEO) position or Councillor-at-Large (CAL) position is not filled by the end of the GSA General Election and election of the Associate Vice-President Labour (ie no candidates run for a position or “None of the Candidates” is elected), or a DEO position or CAL position is vacated any time prior to 1 December (or the next working day), the Chief Returning Officer and GSA Council will follow GSA Policy on filling vacancies following the GSA General Election (see GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.15).</p>	
<p>I.POL.6 – I.POL.6.3</p> <p>I.POL.6.1 “The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.BYL.1.1).</p> <p>I.POL.6.2 Candidates will abide by GSA Bylaw and Policy concerning elections, and any other applicable policies or laws, and will ensure that Campaign Volunteers do the same. It is the responsibility of candidates to familiarize themselves with GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections. Candidates are limited to 10 Campaign Volunteers and must keep an up-to-date list of names shared with the CRO.</p> <p>I.POL.6.3 Candidates will treat the Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, members of the GSA Elections and</p>	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
Referenda Committee, GSA Officers, management, staff, and fellow candidates with respect.	
I.POL.7 Nomination Forms	
I.POL.7.1 Nomination forms will be made available to GSA members in hard copy at the GSA office or electronically by request.	
I.POL.7.2 On the Directly-Elected Officer (DEO) nomination forms, candidates will include a minimum of ten (10) signatures from GSA members in three (3) different departments <i>from neutral parties (i.e. no signatures from GSA Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, DRO, DEOs, Senator, ERC or ACB members)</i> . The purpose of the signatures is to attest that the nominators, in their view, believe the candidate has the ability and/or experience for the position for which they are running. <i>Candidates are responsible for following nomination form instructions, otherwise their nomination form will not be considered.</i>	<i>Clarification that the lack of completion of the nomination form will lead to the nomination form not being considered and GSA CEOs cannot sign for a candidate.</i>
I.POL.7.3 Councillor-at-Large (CAL) candidates are not required to include signatures in their nomination forms.	
I.POL.7.4 Written and electronic nominations for DEO or CAL positions will be submitted to the GSA office or via email to be reviewed and signed by the CRO in order to verify both	

Current Policy <i>(deletions noted by a strikethrough)</i> and Proposed Changes <i>(additions in red)</i>	Rationale/Background
<p>completeness and that the nomination form has been submitted on time. The original will be filed in the GSA office and one (1) copy provided to the candidate, electronically. If a nomination form is incomplete or late, the CRO will not accept the nomination form. Candidates cannot appeal this decision.</p>	
<p>I.POL.7.5 Candidates can change the position they wish to run for, but must do so prior to the nomination deadline. If a candidate changes the position they are running for, the candidate will be required to fill out and submit a new nomination form for the new position prior to the nomination deadline and must meet the requirements as set out above.</p>	
<p>I.POL.7.6 Once the CRO verifies nomination forms, the names of candidates who have submitted their nomination forms will be listed on the GSA website at the same time and alphabetically by 4:00 PM the day the nomination period closes.</p>	<p>Addition of posting candidate names at the same time to reduce disadvantage.</p>
<p>I.POL.7.7 The following will be stated on nomination forms for the GSA General Election and election of the Associate Vice-President Labour, and any subsequent by-elections: “By signing nomination forms, all candidates acknowledge that they have read and agree to abide by GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections, which is posted in full on the GSA website. By signing nomination forms, candidates also acknowledge that they have read and are aware of</p>	

Current Policy <i>(deletions noted by a strikethrough)</i> and Proposed Changes <i>(additions in red)</i>	Rationale/Background
<p>the terms of an appeal within the GSA of any decisions on alleged breaches of GSA Bylaw and Policy, including the fact that the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), with advice from the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC), receives, manages, and rules on complaints regarding alleged breaches of GSA Bylaw or Policy and that the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) decides on any appeals. Any concerns with potential bias on the part of the CRO, the Deputy Returning Officer, and members of the GSA ERC in making such decisions, and members of the GSA ACB in making such decisions on appeals, will be filed with nomination forms.”</p>	
<p>I.POL.7.8 Nomination forms will list the names of the CRO, Deputy Returning Officer, GSA Speaker and Deputy Speaker, members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, and members of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board.</p> <p>I.POL.7.8.a Any changes to these names will be emailed to candidates who will have twenty-four (24) hours to file any objections with the GSA Speaker GSA Executive Director or delegate.</p>	<p>Change to GSA Office rather than Speaker for any elections procedural complaints.</p>
<p>I.POL.8 Timeline</p>	
<p>I.POL.8.1 Except as specified below, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) approves the</p>	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
<p>timeline for elections with advice from the GSA ERC.</p> <p>I.POL.8.2 “Elections will consist of a nomination period, a campaign period, and a voting period” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.BYL.2.1).</p> <p>I.POL.8.3 Nominations for the GSA General Election and election of the Associate Vice-President Labour will open on or about 31 January in the Winter semester.</p> <p>I.POL.8.4 The nomination period will last at least fourteen (14) calendar days. The nomination period will end on a working day.</p> <p>I.POL.8.5 Within twenty-four (24) hours after the close of the nomination period, the CRO will hold the All-Candidates Meeting as described, below.</p> <p>I.POL.8.6 The campaign period will last at least seven (7) calendar days and will begin no earlier than the conclusion of the All-Candidates Meeting. The All-Candidates Meeting will be mandatory for all candidates and Forum will be mandatory for DEO candidates to attend. Any unexcused absence will lead to disqualification. The Forum will be moderated by the GSA Speaker, ERC Chair or a delegated member of the ERC, if the Speaker and ERC Chair are unavailable.</p> <p>I.POL.8.7 Voting:</p> <p>I.POL.8.7.a Campaigning is permitted during the voting period,</p> <p>I.POL.8.7.b The CRO will ensure that the voting period starts on a working day and</p>	<p>Change to the election timeline to not be so specific. Timeline will remain the same, as per ERC’s historical procedure.</p> <p>Addition of designated moderator for the election forum.</p> <p>Change to the election timeline to not be so specific.</p> <p>Clarification on registry eligibility re voter verification.</p>

Current Policy <i>(deletions noted by a strikethrough)</i> and Proposed Changes <i>(additions in red)</i>	Rationale/Background
<p>I.POL.8.7.c lasts at least forty-eight (48) hours, and Voting will be completed no later than 15 April or the next working day the last week of March.</p> <p>I.POL.8.7.d Students registered with FGPS at the beginning of the voting month are eligible to vote, as the FGPS registry is used to verify graduate student voters. Any students not registered on FGPS' list will be considered ineligible voters and must contact FGPS directly.</p> <p>I.POL.8.8 Disqualification in an election will prevent a Candidate from running in a General Election, by-election or re-election for one (1) year or until the next General Election cycle, whichever is longer.</p> <p>I.POL.8.8.a If a candidate is disqualified in a General Election, on a case-by-case basis, ACB will make the final decision about whether the candidate may run again in any future election.</p> <p>I.POL.8.9 If a standing DEO is removed by ACB, they will not be permitted to run again in any GSA election.</p>	
I.POL.9 All-Candidates Meeting	
I.POL.9.1 - I.POL.9.3	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
I.POL.10 Campaigning	
I.POL.10.1 “The campaign period will last at least seven (7) calendar days and will begin no earlier than the conclusion of the All-Candidates Meeting” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.8.6).	
I.POL.10.2 No form of campaigning (verbal, electronic, and visual) from a candidate or a supporter will contain slander, discriminatory content, or <i>ad hominem</i> attacks of individuals, or groups including the GSA.	
I.POL.10.3 Candidates will ensure all campaign plans, materials, and/or advertisements conform with all University of Alberta policies and regulations and all municipal, provincial, and federal laws.	
I.POL.10.4 Candidates will campaign as individuals and may not serve as Campaign Volunteers for other candidates.	
I.POL.10.5 The GSA office and any associated resources (eg, email accounts, staff) will not be used for campaign purposes, notwithstanding that all candidates will be given the opportunity to submit information about themselves for inclusion on the GSA website. GSA spaces may not be booked during the campaign period.	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
I.POL.10.6 Campaigning will not take place at any GSA meetings. GSA events will not be scheduled during this period.	
I.POL.10.7 Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) and the Senator, or their delegates (whether standing as candidates or not), will not campaign during any committee meetings or events at which they are acting as elected representatives of the GSA.	
I.POL.10.8 The Chief Returning Officer (CRO), Deputy Returning Officer, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, DEOs, Senator, student groups or associations, members of the GSA Nominating Committee, members of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, and members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee will remain neutral and will not show support for or campaign on behalf of any candidate whatsoever.	
I.POL.10.9 Dissemination and Approval of Campaign Materials	
I.POL.10.9.a Candidates will only use SUBprint to print campaign materials to be physically posted or distributed.	
I.POL.10.9.a.i Campaign materials that are physically posted or distributed will require the approval of the CRO.	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
I.POL.10.9.a.ii Candidates will be responsible for removing all physically posted campaign materials within 6 hours after provisional results have been announced.	
I.POL.10.9.b Candidates will circulate campaign materials in-person and through personal social media and email only to their personal contacts and will not utilize moderated (see definitions) mailing lists.	
I.POL.10.9.c Candidates will post campaign materials through online platforms approved by the CRO at the All-Candidates Meeting.	
I.POL.10.9.c.i Campaign materials posted on candidates online platforms, or circulated via messaging accounts, will require the approval of the CRO.	
I.POL.10.9.c.ii The CRO will be provided access to campaign materials posted or circulated on online platforms on which candidates intend to campaign	
I.POL.10.9.d When approving campaign materials as noted in Sections I.POL.10.9.a.i and I.POL.10.9.b.i, above, the CRO will ensure they comply with Sections I.POL.10.2 and I.POL.10.3,	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
above, and any other relevant GSA Bylaw and Policy. Additionally:	
I.POL.10.9.d.i Candidates will not use the University, GSA, faculty, college, department, services logos, crests, signs or branding on any physical or electronic campaign materials. Social media reposts of GSA and University original content with any content modifications are considered an original post.	
I.POL.10.9.d.ii The CRO is not responsible for reviewing the editorial content of campaign materials (e.g. grammar, punctuation).	
I.POL.10.9.d.iii Campaign materials prepared in a language other than English will be accompanied by an English translation when submitted to the CRO for approval. The CRO is not responsible for the accuracy of translations.	
I.POL.10.9.e The turnaround for approving campaign materials will be approximately one (1) working day.	
I.POL.9.11 Candidates will get permission, where appropriate, to campaign in instructional spaces, such as classrooms and lecture halls. Candidates will not campaign in unsafe spaces that require proper safety equipment. The	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
CRO will talk about safety issues, including campaigning in labs, at the All-Candidates Meeting.	
I.POL.9.12 Candidates will not accept gifts of money, gifts in kind, or equivalents.	
I.POL.9.13 Campaign Spending Limit	
I.POL.9.13.a Candidates will be authorized to spend no more than \$150 on campaign materials over the course of the election.	
I.POL.9.13.b Candidates will report to the CRO all campaign-related expenses, and submit receipts (either electronically or in hard copy) no later than two (2) hours after the close of the voting period.	
I.POL.9.13.c Campaign costs will not be reimbursed.	
I.POL. 109 .14 Candidates are encouraged to ask the CRO before acting if they have any questions about GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections (including questions related to the development of campaign materials and the planning of campaign events), interpretations issued by the CRO, or other applicable policies or laws, and to report any alleged	

Current Policy <i>(deletions noted by a strikethrough)</i> and Proposed Changes <i>(additions in red)</i>	Rationale/Background
breaches to the CRO, in accordance with the procedure outlined below.	
I.POL.10 Breaches Discerned by the Chief Returning Officer, Alleged Breaches, and Complaints About Alleged Breaches	
I.POL.10.1 - I.POL.10.7 I.POL.11.1 Breaches Discerned by the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) I.POL.11.1.c If the CRO is unable to resolve the discerned breach through informal resolution, or deems informal resolution to be inappropriate, they may, as per GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.POL.11.1.b, discipline the candidate(s) by imposing the penalties or remedial actions noted in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Sections I.POL.11.4.c to I.POL.11.7.	
I.POL.11 Voting	
I.POL.11.1 "All voting in GSA General Elections and elections of the Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL) and by-elections will be done electronically, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use" (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.BYL.4.1). As per GSA Bylaw and Policy,	

Current Policy <i>(deletions noted by a strikethrough)</i> and Proposed Changes <i>(additions in red)</i>	Rationale/Background
Section B.BYL.3.1, voting for the position of AVPL will be restricted to academically-employed graduate students.	
I.POL.11.2 Candidates will be displayed in alphabetical order by last name on a per-ballot basis and in reverse alphabetical order by last name in communications. Preferred nicknames will be displayed in between first and last legal names in brackets.	
<p>I.POL.11.3 – I.POL.11.6</p> <p>11.4 On ballots, voters will mark their choices of candidate(s) for each race on a ranked ballot.</p> <p>11.5 In the event of a tied vote, the the CRO will extend the voting period by one (1) day for the number of tied positions. The successful candidates which won by plurality of votes shall be secured. The runoff vote, for the tied candidates, shall be conducted no later than two (2) days after issuing of the results indicating a tie.</p> <p>I.POL.12.6 Candidates who receive fewer votes than “None of the Candidates” in the GSA General Election and election of the AVPL cannot run for the same position in any related subsequent by-elections, GSA Council elections, or elections of the AVPL (as outlined in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.15).</p>	

Current Policy (<i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i>) and Proposed Changes (<i>additions in red</i>)	Rationale/Background
<p>I.POL.17 Eligibility</p> <p>I.POL.17.1 All members of the GSA are eligible to serve on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) unless they intend to run in or serve as a Campaign Volunteer in the upcoming GSA General Election and election of the Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL) and/or by-election, serve as a Campaign Representative or Campaign Volunteer in an upcoming referendum, or they have run in the most recent GSA General Election and election of the AVPL and/or by-election or served as a Campaign Representative in the most recent referendum. The following GSA ERC members must also be neutral and impartial (i.e. having no immediate or vested interest in the outcome of GSA General Elections, elections of the AVPL, and referenda): GSA Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, DRO, Senator, and members of the ERC and ACB.</p> <p>I.POL.17.2 If a the following GSA ERC members intends to run in or serve as a Campaign Volunteer in the upcoming GSA General Election and election of the AVPL and/or by-election, or serve as a Campaign Representative or Campaign Volunteer in an upcoming referendum they will resign from the ERC their position: GSA Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, DRO, Senator, and members of the ERC and ACB.</p>	<p>Addition of other neutral positions in eligibility and conflict of interest.</p>

Item 7a: Nominees for the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)

GSA EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (GSA EDIC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR GSA MEMBERS): EIGHT (8) NOMINEES

Information regarding the position was circulated via the GSA newsletter on November 22 and 29 2024 with a nomination deadline of December 6 2024. Eight (8) nominations were received.

The GSA EDIC “works to ensure that the GSA reflects the principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) for all its members in the interests of enhancing the graduate student experience and ensuring the existence of a welcoming environment and cohesive community for graduate students on campus” (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.POL.5.2).

There will be an electronic ballot vote held at the January 20 2025 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday January 20 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Elections Coordinator (gsanomco@ualberta.ca) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday January 20 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

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

- 1. Seyram Avedzi (She/Her, Civil & Environmental Engineering)**
- 2. Alyssa Mae Domingo (She/Her, Nursing)**
- 3. Haroun Elyasir (Civil Engineering)**
- 4. Sandra Fahl (Civil & Environmental Engineering)**
- 5. John C. H. Hu (He/Him, Rehabilitation Medicine)**
- 6. Kiara Kattler (She/Her, Biological Sciences)**
- 7. Jovi Krieger (She/They, Sociology)**

8. Britton McNerlin (He/They, Biological Sciences)

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.POL.5.1.c

“The GSA EDIC is composed of “a minimum of seven (7) and up to nine (9) GSA members elected by GSA Council as voting members. The GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (GSA EDIC) Chair, in consultation with the GSA EDIC Vice-Chair and the Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee, can decide to increase the number of GSA members on the GSA EDIC.”

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

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

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

1. Seyram Avedzi (She/Her, Civil & Environmental Engineering)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
As a Black graduate student at the University of Alberta pursuing a Master’s in Environmental Engineering, I am deeply committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the graduate student community. My lived experiences as the only Black student in my class have cultivated a profound understanding of the challenges underrepresented groups face in academic and professional settings. These experiences have driven me to advocate for inclusivity and cross-cultural collaboration.	

My commitment to equity and inclusion is reflected in my work with the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine on the One Child Every Child: A Transformational Child Health Research Initiative. Funded by the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, this project emphasized equity in child health outcomes by addressing systemic barriers and disparities that marginalized groups face. This experience deepened my appreciation for how equity-focused research and initiatives can transform lives and foster inclusivity in broader communities.

Additionally, I have mentored aspiring graduate students, particularly international students, to help them navigate academic and professional landscapes. This has allowed me to understand and address the unique barriers that racialized and international students encounter. My active involvement in collaborative initiatives, such as my work on health research and safety-focused interventions, demonstrates my ability to contribute meaningfully to efforts that prioritize equity and inclusion.

By joining the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC), I aim to bring my lived experiences and professional insights to foster a supportive environment for graduate students from historically excluded backgrounds. I am excited about the opportunity to work with EDIC to advance equity and inclusion, ensuring every graduate student feels valued and empowered to thrive.

Bio

I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta, pursuing a Master's in Environmental Engineering. I am passionate about advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within academic and professional spaces. My academic journey has provided opportunities to address systemic inequities, including working with the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine on the One Child Every Child: A Transformational Child Health Research Initiative. This equity-focused project sought to improve health outcomes for marginalized individuals, deepening my commitment to fostering inclusive practices.

As the only Black student in my cohort, I have firsthand experience navigating the challenges of underrepresentation, which motivates me to support and empower others from historically excluded backgrounds. My dedication to inclusion extends beyond research, with a passion for contributing to initiatives that promote human and planetary health. I am eager to bring my lived experiences, professional insights, and commitment to collaboration to the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to help create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all graduate students.

2. Alyssa Mae Domingo (Nursing)

<p>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</p>	<p>ACCESS Open Minds Youth Council Member (2019–2023): Served as Youth Chair, providing input on youth mental health initiatives and advising on strategies for community engagement and service delivery.</p> <p>Jack.org Leadership Roles (2020–2023): Acted as Co-President and VP Events for the University of Alberta Chapter, focusing on mental health advocacy and event coordination to address pressing youth issues.</p> <p>University of Alberta Governance Involvement: As VP Academics of the Undergraduate Psychology Association (2018–2019), contributed to the academic development and representation of psychology students.</p>
<p>Statement of Interest</p>	
<p>I am excited to express my interest in serving as a member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. As a graduate student in the PhD Nursing program at the University of Alberta, my academic, professional, and personal journey has been deeply intertwined with advancing equity, fostering inclusion, and advocating for underrepresented communities.</p> <p>Through my leadership roles with Jack.org and the ACCESS Youth Council, I have championed mental health initiatives that prioritize inclusivity and address systemic barriers. Collaborating with diverse groups has strengthened my understanding of the importance of cultural competence and intersectionality in achieving meaningful change. My role as a Graduate Research Assistant with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation further solidified my commitment to equity, as I engaged in research addressing health disparities among African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta.</p> <p>I believe in the transformative power of diverse voices to shape policies and practices that are truly representative. My academic pursuits align closely with this ethos, as my research focuses on participatory storytelling methods to understand the supports of Filipino older adults use for healthy aging. This work seeks to amplify marginalized voices and advocate for community-driven solutions, embodying the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.</p> <p>If given the opportunity to serve, I would bring a collaborative spirit, a strong commitment to equity, and a research-informed perspective to the committee. I look forward to contributing to initiatives that dismantle systemic barriers and cultivate an environment where all individuals feel valued and empowered.</p>	
<p>Bio</p>	

I am actively engaged in initiatives that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion both within the University of Alberta and the broader community. My leadership roles with organizations such as Jack.org and the ACCESS Youth Council have allowed me to advocate for underrepresented populations and address systemic barriers in mental health. Additionally, my research with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation has deepened my understanding of health inequities, particularly within African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta.

I am eager to bring this experience and my commitment to fostering inclusivity to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. By contributing my perspective as a first-generation graduate student and my background in community-based participatory research, I aim to support the committee's mission to advance equitable policies and practices.

3. Haroun Elyasir (Civil Engineering)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
<p>I am eager to volunteer for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee because I believe my background and experiences will bring a valuable perspective to its work. As an African and a member of a minority group, I have firsthand experience with the importance of equitable representation and the transformative impact of inclusivity in decision-making. My academic research focuses on improving Indigenous engagement in energy projects, particularly in fostering collaborative approaches that respect cultural values and create shared benefits. This aligns closely with the EDI committee's mission to promote understanding and meaningful participation of underrepresented communities.</p>	
Bio	
<p>Haroun was raised on an olive farm, where hard work, persistence, and resilience were daily values instilled in him. With a passion for solving problems and a keen interest in science and technology, He pursued a degree in engineering, determined to positively impact the world. Haroun completed his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Regina, where he was involved in many sports and academic committees that delivered outstanding services to students. Currently, Haroun is pursuing a PhD at the University of Alberta, he is engaged in</p>	

advanced research that will utilize engineering and law principles to enhance the sustainability of the construction industry. If elected to the GSA, Haroun is committed to representing the needs and interests of his fellow graduate students. With a deep understanding of students' challenges and a strong desire to make positive changes, Haroun is eager to work collaboratively with others to make the graduate student experience the best possible.

4. Sandra Fahl (Civil & Environmental Engineering)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
During my undergraduate and masters degree I faced many challenges related to ableism. I would like to have an open ear for students to face subjects related to misrepresentation of marginalized groups. Several future initiatives need to be started to increase EDI within the GSA and University wide. I would like to represent others to bring these changes forward.	
Bio	
I am a PhD student in Mining Engineer and I am severely disabled. I came into contact with student governance when I started organizing the week of welcome together with the mining club at RWTH Aachen University during my second undergraduate year. I was later elected president of the mining club and served on many faculty committees. After my exchange to University of Alberta I became a member of the General Faculty Council and focused more on University wide governance. I led several student centered committees while working in the social department of the students union. We counseled students on a regular basis and I never stopped listening to every bodies opinion. My colleagues described me as a helping hand for everybody with a passion to face problems and start new projects.	

5. John C. H. Hu (He/Him, Rehabilitation Medicine)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	No current positions; ex-UAlberta committee service in three committees
Statement of Interest	
To help highlight the voices of students living with disabilities and other intersectional marginalizations, based upon my past work with indigenous students in the global south as a mature student returning from rural development practice. As well, to contribute to a student community that is sensitive to the personalized and potentially unmet needs of diverse members of our community.	
Bio	
I am a second generation immigrant living with a lung-based disability resulting in multiple spontaneous pneumothorax, and have worked in improving accessibility for diverse students in rural areas as part of my past engagements with the non-profit sector. At the university, I have previously served on committees such as the Committee for Learning Environments, which has helped me gain understanding of student concerns and how we can best support them as a community. My academic efforts are largely oriented towards EDI in relation to accessibility of education and how media or arts-based engagements can complement community initiatives. As part of Rehabilitation Medicine, I aim to serve as a channel to amplify voices of students living with diverse chronic health conditions, mental health challenges, and familial caregiving roles.	

6. Kiara Kattler (She/Her, Biological Sciences)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	No governance bodies, just other volunteer roles (RE Peter Conference Committee, Eureka Peer Reviewer)
Statement of Interest	
I am a female and 2SLGBTQPIA+ graduate student with a passion for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the graduate community. My experiences navigating academia as a member of marginalized groups have given me an understanding of the barriers many students face. I am would love to advocate for an inclusive environment where all graduate students feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. I believe the work of the EDIC is essential in creating a welcoming and cohesive community, and I am eager to contribute by helping ensure that the	

graduate student experience is inclusive for all. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with others to advance these important goals.

Bio

I am a first year Master's student in the Department of Biology. My academic journey has been enriched by research and professional experiences that emphasize collaboration and the inclusion of diverse perspectives. I am honoured to have been welcomed by the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department to collaborate on ecological questions that align with their stewardship priorities as a part of my Masters. This opportunity reflects a shared commitment to community-led conservation and the respectful integration of scientific inquiry with Indigenous knowledge systems, incorporating knowledge from many backgrounds. As a former laboratory manager, researcher, and field technician at Simon Fraser University, I contributed to projects addressing ecological challenges, which often use many diverse perspectives. My leadership roles, such as Communication Coordinator for the Pacific Ecology and Evolution Conference and Conference Events Planner for the University of Alberta's R.E. Peter Conference, reflect my ability to foster inclusive and welcoming environments. Additionally, I have served as a Health and Safety Committee Worker Representative, where I advocated for the well-being of teaching staff, demonstrating a commitment to equity and community cohesion. Through my volunteer work as a journal reviewer and experience mentoring undergraduate students, further underscore my dedication to fostering growth and inclusivity in academic and professional settings. My lived experiences as a woman in STEM and my academic and community-oriented initiatives position me to contribute meaningfully to the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee's mission of enhancing the graduate student experience.

7. Jovi Krieger (She/They, Sociology)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
As a trans and non-binary woman passionate about fostering social justice, I am eager to contribute to the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee by advocating for gender and sexuality policies for graduate students.	

Bio
<p>I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta and an international student from Brazil. My research focuses on critical social theory, the sociology of law and justice, and critical criminology. I have served as a teaching assistant for several courses in the Department of Sociology and worked as a Graduate Exam Proctor for the UofA's Exam Accessibility and Accommodation Service. As an Academic Teaching Staff member, I have experience teaching criminology courses and am currently teaching SOC325: Special Topics in Criminology. Additionally, I have volunteered with two student organizations on campus: CJSR and The Landing.</p>

8. Britton McNerlin (He/They, Biological Sciences)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
<p>I would like to serve on this committee in order to help aid and guide university and GSA policy to uplift queer voices in the University of Alberta graduate student community and do my best to lift and promote equity amongst other marginalized groups.</p>	
Bio	
<p>I am a MSc student in Biological Sciences specializing in Ecology. Before coming to the University of Alberta, I was actively involved in organizing queer events and volunteering in queer-oriented spaces in my hometown of Phoenix, AZ, USA. My previous experiences has proven my commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and I am eager to bring my perspectives to the Graduate Student Association's EDI Committee and would love to continue to foster and promote queer joy and resilience within the University of Alberta community.</p>	

Item 7b: Nominees for the GSA Budget & Finance Committee

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)
GSA Budget and Finance Committee (ONE (1) GSA MEMBER POSITION)
ONE (1) NOMINEE

As advertised to GSA Council on December 6 and 13 2024, there is currently one vacancy on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee. The deadline to receive nominations was December 20 2024 at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA received one (1) nomination by the deadline.

There will be an electronic ballot vote held at the January 20 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday January 20 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday January 20 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.

- 1. Aeshwarye Aggarwal (MBA)**

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy, Section K: Finances, GSA Policy, Standing Committees, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, Section K.POL.5.1

"The overall mandate of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) is to advise on the financial affairs of the GSA (including the long-term planning and priorities of the GSA in light of its strategic goals) and on the provision of the long-term financial health of the organization."

GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy, Section K: Finances, GSA Policy, Standing Committees, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, Section K.POL.4.1

The GSA BFC is composed of *"one (1) Councillor elected by GSA Council as a voting member."*

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

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

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

1. Aeshwarye Aggarwal (MBA)

<p>Other Governance Bodies You Currently Serve On (Whether GSA or UAlberta)</p>
<p>Alberta MBA Finance Club, MBA Association, UAlberta Co-chair – Engagement, MBA Association, UAlberta</p>
<p>Statement of Interest & Bio</p>
<p>1. Tell us why you would like to volunteer to serve on this committee I am excited to volunteer for the GSA Budget & Finance Committee as it combines my passion for finance and my commitment to supporting the graduate student community. As a CFA Charterholder and an MBA student specializing in Finance at the University of Alberta, I bring strong expertise in financial analysis, budgeting, and strategic decision-making. In my professional experience as an Investment Banking Associate, I led financial valuations and developed models to optimize operations, which I believe can add value to the committee’s work. Additionally, my involvement in leadership roles, like Co-Chair of Engagement for the MBA Association, has taught me how to collaborate effectively and address diverse needs. I see this role as an opportunity to use my skills to ensure the GSA’s financial health while contributing to initiatives that benefit graduate students. I am confident that my background and dedication make me a strong fit for the committee.</p> <p>2. Please tell us of any previous volunteer experience I currently serve as the Director of the Alberta MBA Finance Club, where I lead initiatives to connect students with industry professionals, organize educational events, and build a strong finance community within the MBA program. This role has strengthened my leadership, teamwork, and planning skills. In addition, I have volunteered as Co-Chair of Engagement for the MBA Association, where I helped organize events to enhance student engagement,</p>

and as a student consultant with Net Impact, working on projects such as policy development for the Queer and Trans Health Collective. I have also taught mathematics to underprivileged students during my undergrad at an NGO back in India.

3. Provide a brief description of yourself and how your skills and experience (academic, professional, and volunteer related) would be an asset to this position

I am a CFA Charterholder and an MBA candidate specializing in Finance at the University of Alberta, with a strong academic and professional background in financial analysis, budgeting, and strategic decision-making. Professionally, I have worked as an Investment Banking Associate, leading financial valuations and developing models to optimize operations. Currently, I serve as the Director of the Alberta MBA Finance Club, where I organize events and connect students with industry professionals.

Through my volunteer experience as Co-Chair of Engagement for the MBA Association and a student consultant with Net Impact, I have developed strong teamwork, leadership, and project management skills. These experiences, combined with my ability to analyze and interpret financial data, make me confident in my ability to contribute effectively to the GSA Budget & Finance Committee.

Item 7c: Nominees for the GSA Elections & Referenda Committee

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
**GSA ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA COMMITTEE (GSA ERC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR GSA MEMBERS):
TWO (2) NOMINEES**

Information regarding the position was circulated via the GSA newsletter on November 22 and 29 2024 with a nomination deadline of December 6 2024. Two (2) nominations were received.

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

There will be an electronic vote held at the January 20 2025 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday January 20 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday January 20 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.

- 1. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)**
- 2. Amanda Nhi Tran (Chemistry)**

Jurisdiction:

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

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

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

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

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

1. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
<p>As a student I believe having a blend of extracurricular activities alongside your main course of studies is a balance approach towards once education. I would like to be part of GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) to develop my sense of responsibility in leadership roles and get more familiar with the graduate student governing body at the University.</p>	
Bio	
<p>I am Sumaila Sulemana. I am currently a PhD student at the department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at University of Alberta where I am currently researching into waste rocks such as mine tailings potentiality for CO2 mineralization. Prior to this I had my masters in Geoscience and Sustainable Energy at the University of Manchester and a Bachelor's degree in Geological Engineering at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. During my BSc. I worked with the Student Representative Council by helping them initiate the free studies of French and Chinese courses for students across campus. I happen to also form</p>	

business initiatives with my colleagues and our team came in 3rd place in a business innovation challenge that was organized by the Student Representative Council at that time. I worked as a Teaching assistant after my BSc. at the department of Geological Engineering where I was still handling the affairs of students. In my masters degree at the University of Manchester, I had the opportunity to serve as a Program Chairperson of the Society of Petroleum Engineers(SPE) student chapter and served as a Secretary for American Association of Petroleum Geoscience(AAPG)student chapter at the University. I recently held a position as an ATLAS representative of the Remote Sensing and GIS department at the department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, UofA. I led my team to participate in the just ended Imperial Barrel Award Competition 2024 where we represented the University of Alberta and came first in the Regionals and won second place in the Global final. As someone who likes learning languages as a hobby, aside from my fluency in English, I have basic to medium fluency in French, Chinese and Arabic. I believe my experiences in the side of academia has set a good basis for me to be part of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) at the University of Alberta and I think this position will also help build up my leadership skills.
Thank you.

2. Amanda Nhi Tran (Chemistry)

Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	

I am excited to apply for a position on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) as it offers a valuable opportunity to support the transparency and effectiveness of GSA governance. Having served in student leadership roles, I understand the importance of fair processes and clear, well-structured policies that represent the interests of the student body. I am eager to contribute my skills in governance and policy analysis to ensure the committee's work reflects the evolving needs of graduate students while upholding the integrity of the organization. I am confident that my experience in collaboration and attention to detail will further the ERC's mission of maintaining integrity and fairness in GSA elections and referenda.

Bio

I have been deeply involved in student leadership and governance, notably serving as a Chemistry Department Councillor on the GSA Committee and as Vice President External for the Chemistry Graduate Student Society during the 2023-2024 academic year. In these roles, I acted as a liaison between graduate students and external organizations, fostering collaborations and outreach with local science funding bodies. Additionally, I contributed to the Graduate Recruitment Committee for the 2024-2025 intake, where I played an active role in shaping the department's recruitment strategies. My strong stakeholder engagement, attention to detail, and governance experience will be valuable in ensuring the clarity, accuracy, and effectiveness of Elections and Referenda Bylaws and Policies, while providing informed recommendations to the GSA Council annually.

Item 7d: Nominees for the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)
GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD (GSA ACB)
(ONE (1) POSITION FOR GSA MEMBERS): TWO (2) NOMINEES**

Information regarding the positions for one (1) GSA member was advertised via GSA newsletters of November 1, 8 and extended to 15 2024 with a nomination deadline of November 22 2024. Three (3) nominations were received for the vacancy and two were NoC-approved. The nominees were interviewed by GSA NoC members who have been trained in procedural fairness by the GSA and have a record of demonstrating impartiality through their work on the GSA NoC. A member of GSA management was also present for the interview. During the interview, the nominees were asked a series of questions aimed at assessing their awareness of the basic tenets of procedural fairness and their ability to adjudicate potential cases in accord with those tenets (note as well that all individuals elected to the GSA ACB receive training in procedural fairness).

There will be an electronic vote held at the January 20 2025 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday January 20 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday January 20 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

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

- 1. Akhil Mohandas (Mechanical Engineering)**
- 2. Md Atikul Islam Nayeem (Civil & Environmental Engineering)**

Jurisdiction:**Section H.POL.7.1 and H.POL.7.2**

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

Section H.POL.8.1

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

The name and biography received for the nominees are **BELOW**. The biography and brief resumes are presented as **received** (i.e. not edited).

1. Akhil Mohandas (Mechanical Engineering)

Other Governance Bodies You Currently Serve On (Whether GSA or UAlberta)	N/A
Statement of Interest	
<p>As a graduate student, I am committed to ensuring fair, transparent, and accountable decision-making in student governance. I am particularly drawn to the Board’s role in reviewing appeals of GSA Chief Returning Officer (CRO) decisions and addressing complaints about GSA Officers. With my strong background in conflict analysis and policy review, I am confident in my ability to contribute effectively to the Board’s important work.</p>	
Bio	
<p>I'm Akhil Mohandas, completed my undergrad 4 years back. So it's good to be back at university considering I get to avoid all the work stress and deadlines ; focusing more on developing my knowledge, meeting new people and getting to know their culture is fascinating. During my undergrad I used to volunteer for an international conference ICMPC for 2 consecutive years. Hosted an event Mechano 2k18 which involves hundreds of students attending from different colleges. I was the core committee member of the photography division and covered many major events such as women empowerment day, ICMPC etc.</p> <p>After my undergrad in Mechanical Engineering I migrated to Dubai for work. Due to covid I did not get a job which matched my education so I took a job which helped me learn communication skills - "Sales executive". I worked as a sales executive for a general trading company which focused on printing and packaging for 1 year. While working I was parallelly applying for engineering jobs. Eventually the market was stable and by 2021 I got a job as a production engineer at a leading engineering rubber manufacturing company in UAE. Although I was a production engineer my job included review of the policy and confirmation in accordance with the labor law of UAE. I worked there for 2.5 years which made me think that I need to acquire more knowledge to evolve in the</p>	

future. Hence I decided to take Masters in engineering management which has a perfect blend of management and engineering which enables us to focus more on management roles in the engineering field.

1. Md Atikul Islam Nayeem (Civil & Environmental Engineering)

Other Governance Bodies You Currently Serve On (Whether GSA or UAlberta)	Works as volunteer at GSA
Statement of Interest	
I am eager to join the GSA Appeal and Complaints Board (ACB) to help ensure fairness and transparency in decision-making processes. My commitment to impartiality, along with my experience in leadership and volunteering, aligns with the board’s mandate to uphold integrity within the GSA.	
Bio	
I am currently pursuing an MSc in Environmental Engineering and Science at the University of Alberta. My academic journey has equipped me with strong analytical and problem-solving skills, which I believe are crucial for evaluating appeals and complaints with fairness and transparency. Beyond my studies, I have gained valuable experience through my role as a volunteer at Provat, where I contributed to community-based projects, developed effective communication strategies, and worked in collaborative settings to resolve conflicts and support organizational goals. In addition, my previous work experience, including roles where I interacted with diverse teams and customers, has further strengthened my ability to assess situations impartially and handle sensitive matters with discretion. These experiences have instilled in me a sense of responsibility and a deep understanding of governance processes, making me confident in my ability to contribute effectively to the GSA Appeal and Complaints Board (ACB). My dedication to fairness, transparency, and accountability aligns closely with the core values of the board, and I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to help ensure these values are upheld within the GSA.	

Item 8a: GSA President Reports

**2024-2025 President
Report to GSA Council for the 20 January, 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2025/1/25

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between Dec 6 to Jan 20, 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Dec 10	Peer Support Framework Discussion
Dec 10	Meeting with T. Raivio
Dec 11	President's Holiday Reception
Dec 12	Gateway Interview
Dec 13	Virtual UA Board of Governors
Dec 16	Monthly Meeting with J. Smith, Chief of Staff
Dec 16	IPR/IGSA Bi-Monthly Meeting
Dec 17	Monthly Meeting with President Flanagan
Dec 18	Meeting with a Student
Dec 19	Gateway Interview
Dec 19	Meeting with V. Yiu, Provost
Dec 20	Meeting with a Student
Jan 8	GSA/SU Tuition Town Hall
Jan 9	Meeting with T. Raivio & VP Academic
Jan 13	Monthly Meeting with President Flanagan
Jan 13	Meeting with V. Yiu, Provost

Jan 15	GFC Academic Planning Committee
Jan 16	Optimizing Google Storage Space for Graduate Research Students
Jan 16	Meeting with the Chancellor
Jan 17	Annual Reports on Student Financial Supports & Enrollment
Jan 20	Monthly Meeting with J. Smith, Chief of Staff

Dear Council Members,

Happy New Year! As we embrace the winter season and a new semester, I hope this year brings growth, resilience, and fresh opportunities for our graduate community. With the start of 2025, our commitment to enhancing the graduate student experience remains steadfast, and I'm excited to share updates on our progress and advocacy efforts over the past month.

1. Tuition Fee Advocacy:

Over the last month, I have had multiple one-on-one meetings with Provost Verna Yiu, President Flanagan, and Melissa Padfield to advocate for a fee differential model based on enrollment demand. My 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.

I am pleased to report that 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.

International Student Association and the 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. While this proposal is still under consideration, Lisa Glock (UASU President) has asked me to continue advocating for its adoption and I will provide updates to the council as developments occur.

On January 8, we hosted a second Tuition Town Hall to gather additional feedback and allow students to voice their concerns around the tuition fee proposal directly to the university administration. To

encourage member participation, we offered five double-pass movie vouchers as appreciation, which included two movie tickets, drinks, and popcorn. Though I was expecting a bigger crowd of charged students, unfortunately there were only 5 graduate students present during the joint town hall, however, constructive input was given by the participants.

The university has now publicly announced its revised proposal. While the changes reflect some progress, I still feel that the symbolic weight of a double-digit percentage increase, even if targeted at future students, risks undermining the university's strategic plan to increase international enrollment by 35%. I've raised this concern directly with the Board of Governors, the Chancellor, and other stakeholders and will continue to voice our opposition to protect the interests of current and future students.

2. Google Storage and University-Wide Wi-Fi Issue:

As you are all aware, the temporary extension to the Google Drive storage space for graduate students was achieved after two months of persistent advocacy on behalf of our members. This accomplishment underscores our commitment to addressing the concerns of graduate students. Building on this, our Executive Director and I recently met with Associate Vice President (AVP) of IST, Sharri Baraniuk, to explore more optimal solution for managing storage space.

Our proposal included reducing the storage quota for course-based graduate students to 15 GB, recognizing that their average program completion time is two years. This adjustment would allow for an increase in the quota for thesis-based graduate students, whose program durations are typically 3.5 years for master's students and 5.7 years for PhD students. By reallocating resources, we estimated that research students could see their storage increased from 30 GB to over 40 GB, addressing their substantial data storage needs.

However, Sharri informed us that the current IST platform lacks the capability to differentiate between course-based and thesis-based students. Implementing such functionality would require significant time and resources, which are currently unavailable due to the constraints on the IST budget. While this outcome is not what we had hoped for, we remain optimistic that this idea can be revisited in the future as backend updates to the IST system continue. I encourage the next GSA team to persist in advocating for this regulatory change to ensure the long-term sustainability of storage solutions for graduate students.

In addition to storage concerns, I have consistently raised the issue of the university-wide Wi-Fi network with Ravina Sanghera (Dean of Students), Melissa Padfield (Deputy Provost), and the AVP of IST. I am pleased to report that Sharri assured us that this concern has been acknowledged by the administration, and IST is actively working on upgrading the university-wide Wi-Fi infrastructure. The timeline for completing this project is set for fall 2026. While this may seem distant, we will continue to push her office to ensure the project remains on track and, if possible, is completed sooner.

3. Graduate Peer Support Program Progress:

This project has been a cornerstone of my efforts for over a year and a half, yet we continue to face challenges in establishing the financial structure necessary to launch it. In our recent mental health survey, an overwhelming 88% of respondents agreed that a graduate peer support program, designed to provide culturally responsive mental health support through a peer-led model, could significantly address many of their mental health concerns. This strong endorsement underscores the critical need for this initiative.

We have consistently advocated for this program with the Dean of Students office and highlighted its importance during my discussions with the university president. To further bolster our efforts, I recently wrote a letter of support for the Dean of Students office as they applied for the federal Youth Mental Health Grant. This letter explicitly mentioned our Peer Support Program, with the intent that if the university secures funding from this grant, we can advocate for financial support for our program as a priority. Our support letter being part of the grant application provides us with a potential avenue to tie our initiative to this broader funding source.

Simultaneously, our finance team has been working hard in exploring options to create a dedicated budget line for this program from our operational funds. However, this has proven challenging due to declining enrollment numbers and a significant drop in interest income. Despite these financial hurdles, I remain optimistic. By the end of this executive team's term, I am hopeful that we will either secure an MoU with the Dean of Students office or establish a sustainable funding model from our resources, contingent upon receiving a funding guarantee from the GPS and DoS offices.

This program remains a top priority, and I am committed to ensuring we lay a strong foundation for its success in addressing the mental health needs of our graduate community.

4. EDI Office Rename:

As many of you are aware, the recent renaming of the Vice Provost Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Office to Vice Provost Access, Community, & Belonging (ACB) has sparked significant discussion and concern among our members. Understandably, questions have arisen about the university's commitment to the EDI principles outlined in SHAPE, the U of A's 10-year strategic plan, Forward with Purpose: A Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation (SPRI), Igniting Purpose: Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) and the People's Strategy document. These concerns are valid, and as your representative, I want to assure you that I share them.

I did raise a motion at the November General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting, calling on the university to uphold its prior EDI commitments. The motion received overwhelming support, passing with 93 votes in favor out of 96, a clear signal of our collective resolve to hold the administration accountable.

In my discussions with the President, Provost, and especially Vice Provost ACB Dr. Carrie Smith, she assured me that this renaming reflects her vision to create an office that fosters safe and inclusive spaces for everyone. While I acknowledge her explanation and understand that this change aligns with the interconnectivity goals of the new "Creating Our Own Story" action plan, I've expressed to the administration that the timing of this rebranding raises legitimate concerns. Many students perceive this change as a reaction to external pressures, rather than a genuine step forward in advancing EDI priorities.

The new action plan, "Creating Our Own Story," contains promising initiatives, and I encourage all council members to review it. However, I have conveyed to the administration that actions must speak louder than words. Rebranding efforts and strategic documents should not overshadow the real, measurable progress our campus community demands. Students want to see tangible outcomes that reinforce the university's commitment to EDI, rather than symbolic gestures for visibility.

As we move forward, I will continue to push the university to honor its commitments. While I remain cautiously optimistic that this change will bring positive developments, I will ensure that our members' concerns remain front and center in every conversation with the administration.

If you have any questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 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 20 January, 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA Board
Date: 2025/1/17

Dear Council Members,

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

11 December 2024 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Closed Item Session, Photo Contest Update, Annual Enrollment Report Discussion, UA Senate Strategic Plan Discussion, DoS National Standard Presentation, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSAB RECEIVE and APPROVE the GSA 2024-2025 Fall Term Budget and Expenditure Reports. The GSAB forwards these statements to the next GSA council for information only. **PS MOVED;** SI seconded. **CARRIED.**

Motion: That the GSAB vote to APPROVE the renewing of the Kids and Company contract together with the UofA Student's Union. This agreement has been in place since March 2021 and expires in March 2025. **Motion to Table** this motion until the next Board. **SI MOVED;** PS Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

18 December 2024 GSA Board Meeting**Main Agenda Items:**

Annual Enrollment Report Discussion, Separate Instagram account for GSA Executives, Slack Workspace Discussion, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSAB vote to APPROVE the renewing of the Kids and Company contract together with the UofA Student's Union. This agreement has been in place since March 2021 and expires in March 2025. Motion to table this motion until we have data. **SI MOVED; RK Seconded. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8 January 2025 GSA Board Meeting**Main Agenda Items:**

Potential Collaboration with UAI, DEO's Reports, Management Report.

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSA Board RECOMMEND to GSA Council for approval, the recommended changes to GSA Policy: Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section I: Elections. **SI MOVED; PS Seconded. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

15 January 2025 GSA Board Meeting**Main Agenda Items:**

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 January 20, 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA BFC
Date: 2025/1/17

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 on January 9, 2025, to review the initial drafts of the 2025-2026 budget and the 2025-2028 multi-year 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 and suggestions to refine certain budget lines for better use of funds.

Following these discussions, several adjustments were identified to better address emerging needs and align with feedback from committee members. These modifications aim to ensure fiscal responsibility while remaining responsive to the evolving priorities of the graduate student community. The updated drafts will incorporate these changes and be re-presented to the committee on February 6, 2025, for further review and potential approval. This process demonstrates the BFC's commitment to transparent and strategic financial planning.

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

Sincerely,

Haseeb Arshad, President and Chair of the GSA BFC

**GSA Governance Committee
Report to GSA Council for the January 20, 2025, Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA GC
Date: 2025/1/17

Dear Council Members,

On December 20, 2024, the GSA Governance Committee met to review the proposed updates to GSA Policy, Section I: Elections. After thorough discussion, the Governance Committee voted to recommend these changes to the GSA Board for further review.

As many of you may recall, during the August council meeting, I proposed forming an ad hoc committee to research best practices from other student bodies and present recommendations to the Governance Committee. However, during that discussion, several councillors expressed a preference for an alternative approach. They suggested that I, as Chair of the Governance Committee, take the lead in developing these recommendations, following our existing governance structure. This structure involves discussing initial recommendations within the Governance Committee, presenting them to the Board, and ultimately bringing them to the council.

At the December Governance Committee meeting, I presented recommendations for council restructuring, offering multiple options inspired by the practices of other student bodies. The committee engaged in a detailed and productive discussion on these options. Following this, I will be working with our Associate Director, Cindy Rose, to draft the necessary policy changes.

I anticipate presenting these recommendations to the council at the next meeting and look forward to your input. If you have any questions, please send me an email or I will look forward to answering your questions during the February meeting.

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

Item 8b: GSA 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: January 15, 2024

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between December 9 2024 to January 20 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

GPST (Dec 9)
GFC Executive Committee (Dec 9)
LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting (Dec 10)
IRCC Technical briefing-- International Student Program (Dec 18)
GSA Ambassador Program Working Group (Dec 18)
FGPS Caucus (Jan 6)
FGPS Council (Jan 8)

GSA/SU Tuition Town Hall (Jan 8)
Integrating Equity Group (Jan 9)
Meeting with T. Raivio & GSA President (Jan 9)
GFC Executive Committee (Jan 13)
LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting (Jan 14)
Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (Jan 14)
Meeting with the DoS (Jan 14)
GSA - General Election Breakfast & Learn (Jan 15)
GFC Programs Committee (Jan 16)
Meeting with the Chancellor (Jan 16)
GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (Jan 20)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are well. I hope this year is off to a great start for all of you. As I approach the final few months of my term with GSA, I am excited to see the great strides we have made over this past year. Thank you for your engagement and support. I have provided some highlights of the meetings since the last council report.

(Dec 9) Graduate Program Support Team-GPST

I attended the last GPST meeting for the year. We discussed changes in School of Public Health, Master of Science in Health Promotion and Socio-behavioural Sciences program around credit load change and changes in Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry as they pertain to harmonized admissions and regulations. The group also had the opportunity to participate in consultations around spring summer withdrawal deadlines and Graduate programing framework.

(Dec 10, Jan 14) 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. If you have any concerns, questions or feedback, please feel free to pass them along to me.

(Dec 18) GSA Ambassador Program Working Group

Along with GSA VP Labour, M Raja I am participating in the Graduate Ambassador Program working group. This group had an item first meeting that was meant to introduce the members, timeline and agenda for this group. As a part of this initiative, Ambassadors will provide peer-to-peer support for any level of graduate student dealing with stress, isolation, challenges within their university work, teaching or research environment, health and safety issues ; guidance and direct graduate students to university resources or subject matter experts ; help build a sense of community across all graduate student programs and insights into any university policy that may prevent graduate students from raising issues of concern. This program will start off as a pilot for one year and with a possibility for continuation. We had discussions around stipends for students in the ambassador program beyond the pilot year. We also discussed recruitment strategy along with plans for communication around this new program. As the discussions on this front continue, we will keep bringing you the updates and welcome any feedback.

(Dec, January) Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Strategy

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

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

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

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

Item 8d: GSA Vice-President Student Services Report

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

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended by Saad A. Iqbal

Date	Meeting
December 5	GSA/DoS Meeting
December 10	Meeting with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
December 17	Meeting with E. O’Neil, CFB ED
January 6	Student Group Mental Health Network Meeting
January 6	Students Who Parent Working Group
January 7	Meeting with a Student
January 7	UAI/GSA Monthly Meeting
January 8	GSA/SU Tuition Town Hall
January 8	Meeting with T. Ira, EDI Initiatives
January 9	WDSJ Working Group Touchbase
January 13	Students Who Parent Winter Orientation
January 13	CFB Board Meeting
January 14	Meeting with K. Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness
January 14	GSA/DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting

January 15	Dean’s Coffee Chat (R. Sanghera, Vice-Provost & Dean of Students, Renson Alva, UASU VP SL)
January 16	U-Pass Administrative Committee Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you're all doing well, in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between December 4, 2024, and January 15, 2025:

GSA/DoS Meeting

We discussed key initiatives and potential collaborations in this regular meeting with the Dean of Students and other officers. We also discussed the Dean of Students’ report for 2023-24. Other items included discussions on celebrating graduate research and how the GSA/DoS/FGPS can collaborate on initiatives such as 3MT (Three Minute Thesis); Images of Research; Falling Walls; Celebrate (an annual event for graduate students); Killam Trustees Meeting and Awards Ceremony (recently held); I Heart Grad Students Event (Valentine's Day); Holiday Open House at GPS; Graduate Student Celebrations at Convocation. The food strategy and prioritizing steps to develop a tracker for food strategy were also discussed.

Meeting with K. Friese

In this regular meeting, Kevin and I discussed different initiatives and updates. Kevin and Erin from the CFB are exploring the idea of OneCard meal plan swipe donations. They have met with Kathrine Huising and OneCard personnel. Starting in January, they will explore the option further. People can donate the swipes to the CFB. If it works, this could then be expanded.

We also discussed a recent app introduced by the University of Ottawa that helps track free food items on their campus and helps with reducing food wastage. This update was shared by Erin from the CFB, and we think that a similar model may be adopted at the U of A. The student caregiver survey has been finalized and shared with the DoS – so it will be coming forward to be shared with parents and caregivers on campus soon.

Kevin also shared some updates and approximate costs involved in the child-minding project that the University is looking to adopt.

Another important update was shared about the Dose of Support initiative (run by the counselling and clinical services, supported by the DoS) that allows graduate and undergraduate students to drop in for 20-minute sessions. This is especially useful for students who need counselling and mental health support during the exam season. Kevin also shared updates about the Change Health Community Program (CHCP) where the DoS partnered with FoMD and ran the first cohort this fall. The program

offers sessions on recipe building, healthy snacks, and eating healthy, and the second half is about fitness, exercise and sleep hygiene. They planned a total of four sessions, two of which will be run in the winter term, one for parents, and a second for international students.

Meeting with E. O'Neil

In this meeting, Erin and I discussed some important items related to the CFB. The highlights were around initiatives such as the Hydroponics Farm. Although a lot of legwork has been done, this initiative needs more time and would most probably be carried on by the incoming VPSSE. We also discussed general ideas about some future models that the CFB could be adopting to ensure sustainable and ongoing ways of support to our campus community.

Students Who Parent Working Group

In this meeting, we discussed important updates about the Student Caregiver Survey. Members were asked to go through the survey and identify any issues or modifications needed. The survey is ready to be rolled out and work is being done around campaigning and QR codes to be disseminated to students who parent utilizing different avenues. One of the mediums used would be the GSA's weekly newsletter as well. The meeting also included updates from various groups such as the CFB, UHC< GSA, and UASU.

UAI/GSA Meeting

In this regular meeting, Parman (VP External) and I met with Diana Kim from the UAI. We discussed some potential collaborative events that both organizations could work on. After discussing these in the GSAB, we think that one potential avenue could be collaborating on a movie night with the UAI. Details will be shared after finalizing with the UAI.

Meeting with T. Ira, EDI Initiatives

I met with Tim Ira to discuss important updates related to the Action Plan on creating your own stories and potential collaborations on various initiatives. Considering the creation of Access, Community + Belonging, there are new directions for us to work on, and the GSA will prioritize our strategic initiatives that support access and belonging in our Campus community. We also talked about GSA's role together with DoS in contributing to harassment and antidiscrimination policies and creating application guides for students to inform them about their rights.

WDSJ Working Group Touch base

In this meeting, I was briefed by Heather Ritz about the Days of Action planning around the World Day of Social Justice. The programming includes living library sessions which will be held both in-person and online. Participants will share their experiences and stories around various topics related to social justice.

The programming is almost complete, and we have about 15 sessions planned. The details will be shared once the registrations are open. Like other Days of Action programs, the GSA will contribute to the WDSJ programming and help the Wellness Supports in organizing the events.

Students Who Parent Winter Orientation

There was an online winter orientation organized by the DoS for students who parent on campus. Attendees were briefed about various supports provided by the University and other bodies to support student parents. Some of the services included those provided by the DoS, Wellness Supports, Student Parents on Campus (SPOC) group, GSA etc. The presentation included details on fundings, grants, on- and off-campus resources as well. From the GSA, I shared details about the GSA's feeding and care space, GSA childcare grants and child-minding services available to graduate students who parent.

CFB Board Meeting

In this board meeting, attendees discussed strategic planning as well as regular business updates such as administrative, operational and committee updates related to the CFB. The discussion mostly revolved around internal operations and some improvements for governance-related policies.

Meeting with K. Friese

In this meeting, Kevin and I discussed updates on the CHCP. As mentioned earlier, work is being done around the session for students who parent and details will be shared soon. The child-minding contract will likely see a pause until funding issues have been resolved. The DoS is also looking for potential funding options for the child-minding program.

We also talked about the GSA Ambassador Pilot Project. Dunsie and Kevin are involved in this committee and the culture of care group is working to develop the Ambassador Program, including training components. We also talked about the National Standards of Mental Health Action Plan whose draft is being finalized. Kevin will be discussing this in our upcoming Council sessions. The plan is to unveil the action plan in March and details will be shared with us for participation.

Another update was shared regarding the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey CCWS that was run last year. The survey included questions about suicide, healthy eating, and drugs. The results were received in the Summer and a graduate student is currently working on finalizing the results which will be shared soon with the wider community.

Last, we talked about the hydroponics farm and some planning around the transitioning of the incoming VPSSE to ensure that the work continues in the subsequent years.

GSA/DoS Bi-monthly Meeting

In this regular meeting, the GSA's executive board met with Ravina Sanghera and other officers to discuss ongoing initiatives and future collaborations. Among other topics, I shared the importance of the Hydroponics Farm and the Hand-me-Down Store, two of the initiatives that the GSA would like to receive continued support for. There were some ideas shared by members regarding the hand-me-down store. It was suggested that before opening up a permanent store, we should pilot a pop-up store to see the potential of the initiative and then look for ways to expand it further.

Dean's Coffee Chat

The Dean's Coffee Chat is a new initiative that was piloted on January 15. The idea is to encourage undergraduate and graduate students to come and share their concerns, feedback, and suggestions related to any matters that can be addressed through the Dean of Students. We saw a positive response from both graduate and undergraduate students who shared diverse ideas with Ravina Sanghera. The UASU VP SL, Renson and I were also present to support our undergraduate and graduate students. We got positive feedback about the initiative. Renson and I will discuss with Ravina soon to set the frequency of future coffee chats.

U-Pass Administrative Committee Meeting

In this meeting, we discussed regular updates related to the administration of the U-Pass fee. The SU and the GSA have had the new contracts reviewed. The signing of the new contracts depends on the referendums which will be held by the UASU and the GSA separately.

Update about the Grad Student Photo Contest

The Graduate student photo contest which is a collaborative event by the DoS, UAI, and the GSA is currently in the stage of adjudication. We received a very positive response from graduate students and a total of 72 entries were received by the deadline. The results will be shared soon once the adjudication process is complete. Eight awards valued at \$100 each will be adjudicated to the winning students.

Best Regards,

Saad Arslan Iqbal

GSA VP Student Services (2024-25)

Item 8e: GSA 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: January 20th, 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
Dec 9	GAC Meeting
Dec 16	CFB Board Meeting
Dec 16	ESA Meeting
Dec 19	International Student Experience Working Group
Jan 7	UAI Meeting
Jan 8	FGPS Council

1) GAC Meeting (Dec 9)

The meeting covered several important topics, starting with a debrief of the recent SRSR meeting. The discussion emphasized the importance of active engagement and maintaining a strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Attention then shifted to the upcoming economic statement, with concerns raised about the potential for funding cuts that could impact research and student support initiatives.

A significant portion of the discussion was dedicated to the need to protect federal research funding, particularly for the social sciences, which may face reductions. Ideas included collecting case studies of successful research projects funded by private sources and developing a social media campaign to highlight their impact. There was also consideration of collaborating with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to demonstrate the value of student research to the business community.

The potential implications of the capstone project on Canadian research contracts and tri-council funding allocations were examined. Concerns were raised about possible reductions in funding for social sciences research and the importance of adopting a more inclusive approach to funding distribution. The possibility of partnering with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) to create national graduate representation was explored, though concerns about their reputation and potential legal issues were noted.

The CASA conference was reviewed positively, with strong engagement and interest from attendees. Suggestions for future events included diversifying presentation topics, focusing more on the graduate student experience, and potentially hosting a similar event at the Foundations conference. Hosting the event at both Foundations and Polystrat was also proposed.

Discussions regarding the upcoming Foundations event included a suggestion to feature a presentation on the “graduate student ask,” aimed at providing undergraduates with better insight into graduate studies and fostering greater understanding and support. Additionally, a proposal to organize a “day in the life of a graduate student” event was made, with the goal of offering undergraduates a closer look at the graduate experience.

2) CFB Board Meeting (Dec 16)

A meeting was held to outline the agenda for the upcoming year, focusing on strategic planning and budget setting. The group reviewed the results of consultations conducted in November and December and planned additional consultations for January, aiming to finalize the strategic plan and budget by April.

The strategic planning process was a key focus, with discussions about hiring Jennifer to facilitate the process. A potential start date of February was proposed, with the goal of completing the plan by spring. Alongside this, the board is considering revising its bylaws and exploring new governance models, including the possibility of adopting a co-CEO structure.

Financial projections revealed a potential funding gap of 10 months to 1.5 years, emphasizing the urgency of finalizing a strategic plan. The timeline for the plan includes consultations, development of options, and implementation, with an anticipated completion by May 2025. A change management strategy for effective communication was also discussed to support these transitions.

Budget adjustments were another key topic, focusing on aligning financial planning with organizational goals and sustainable practices. Concerns about wage costs and the current deficit were addressed, with plans to incorporate solutions into the 2025-2026 budget. The finance committee shared insights from the Q2 report, which showed a surplus and increased fundraising compared to the previous year. A savings strategy was also discussed, prioritizing financial research and preparation for strategic initiatives.

The 2024 budget figures were approved, with a commitment to develop a more detailed budget plan with specific timelines. High-level strategic planning and the board plan were also reviewed.

3) ESA Meeting (Dec 16)

We talked about the agenda for the upcoming meeting with the mayor and city council, which is planned for April, likely before exams. This timing is meant to give incoming executives a chance to connect with city officials while outgoing executives help with the transition. The exact date will depend on the mayor's availability and the exam schedule.

The ETS post-secondary survey was also discussed, with a focus on improving questions related to accessibility and safety. There was also a conversation about the format of focus groups for a transit study. One suggestion was to organize the groups by campus and transit mode to gather more targeted insights. It was also proposed to recruit both transit users and non-users to get a broader perspective.

We also explored the idea of starting a student housing affordability initiative, possibly in collaboration with other student associations, to address this growing concern.

4) International Student Experience Working Group (Dec 19)

A working group is being formed to enhance the international student experience. The group will identify targeted areas for improvement, using data to inform strategic programming and measure success. The group will consist of student representatives from various organizations and faculties, with a student leader co-chairing the committee.

5) UAI Meeting (Jan 7)

Diana shared a spreadsheet of planned events for January and February, including a movie night, a ski trip, and a skating festival. A discussion about collaborating on events, including an instant noodle and movie night on the 31st and an indigenous culture event on the 29th which offers a Canadian experience

with live music and maple syrup. Me and GSA VP Services offered help with the movie night event. As discussed with the GSA board, we will help in the movie night event.

The possibility of a pet therapy event and an indoor skating event in February was also mentioned. A name change was also considered and will be announced after the meeting tomorrow.

6) FGPS Council (Jan 8)

I represented the GSA report to the council. The other details of the meeting shall be shared in the next council meeting after the meeting minutes are available.

7) Meeting with the DoS (Jan 14)

During the meeting, Sarah, a new team member, was introduced, and we discussed preparations for the upcoming election season. The focus was on providing support for candidates and administrative staff while maintaining a non-interfering approach.

The Dean of Students requested a letter of support from the GSA for a youth mental health fund grant. A follow-up meeting was proposed to provide more details about the grant's initiatives, which aim to enhance health literacy and culturally contextual care. Rija proposed talking with the GSA board to bring the letter up.

Updates were shared about a six-week health and wellness program run by EOMB, covering topics such as nutrition, exercise, coping strategies, and suicide prevention. The program also includes tailored sessions for graduate students and students who parent, with efforts underway to secure additional funding. Discussions also touched on plans for a secondhand store for students who parent, where the need to find a suitable space to support the initiative was emphasized.

I raised concerns about campus safety, specifically issues related to theft and unauthorized access in certain areas. We discussed the role of the safety and security committee, faculty managers, and protective services in addressing these challenges. Ravina and Sarah highlighted the importance of reporting incidents, even non-emergencies, to protective services to help track trends and guide patrol planning. The discussion also covered interim measures, explaining how they are used to recalibrate the learning environment without being disciplinary and the processes for reviewing or revising them.

Item 8f: GSA Vice-President Labour Reports

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

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 15 Jan 2025

2024-2025 GSA Associate VP Labour Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 10 Dec to 17 Jan 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
10 Dec	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
11 Dec	Labour Outreach
11 Dec	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
12-15 Dec	Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Directly Chartered Local (DCL) Conference
13 Dec	GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC) Meeting
18 Dec	Graduate Student Ambassador Program Meeting
3 Jan	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
8 Jan	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
9 Jan	Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Meeting
14 Jan	GSA & DoS Meeting

15 Jan	GSA – General Election Breakfast & Learn Session
16 Jan	Monthly Check-in with LRC Outreach Coordinator & Chief Steward
16 Jan	Chancellor & GSA Executive

Dear Council Colleagues,
 I hope you all had a wonderful winter break and are feeling refreshed. Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year, filled with success and growth. Here are the details of some of the meetings that I have attended over the past month:

(Dec 12-15) Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Directly Chartered Local (DCL) Conference

I attended the PSAC DCL Conference in Toronto from December 12–15, where I had the chance to meet with DCL presidents and other union leaders. One of the key takeaways from the event was the distinction between our union and PSAC DCLs. While our service agreement with PSAC is similar to the ones that PSAC has with DCLs, we’re not technically considered a DCL. The main difference is that PSAC isn’t the union of our members, and we only have observer status at their conferences, unlike full DCL affiliates.

During the conference, there was also an extensive discussion about the new DCL committee being created, with a focus on the unique needs of DCLs. This will be an important step in ensuring that the specific challenges we face are addressed within the PSAC structure.

The conference had strong representation from PSAC’s top leadership, including the National President and Regional Executive Vice-Presidents. There were also several workshops, presentations, and group discussions, all of which provided insight into where DCLs fit within PSAC, the support available to them, and how we differ from them.

Overall, it was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the role of DCLs within PSAC and to better understand the resources and support we can access moving forward.

(Dec 13) 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 updates on bargaining efforts, the coalitions of University of Alberta stakeholders, and our service agreement with PSAC. Additionally, we’re planning an onboarding session for the new LRC members later this month to ensure they have the necessary background knowledge to be effective in their roles.

(Dec 18) 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.

The committee discussed extending the scope of the program to cover additional graduate student concerns. The goal is to create a supportive and inclusive environment, and if the pilot proves successful, there may be plans to offer remuneration to ambassadors after the first volunteer year. In terms of training, the ambassadors will receive education on relevant policies. The program will begin in September 2025 and run for one year as a pilot.

(Jan 15) GSA – General Election Breakfast & Learn 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 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 20 January 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Muneeb Masood Raja
Date: 17 January 2025

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) this month is a summary of our meeting from 13 December 2024. The Labour Relations Committee has welcomed several new voting members and faculty stewards since the fall semester.

We were able to share our proposal with the university on December 3rd. This proposal was non-monetary, monetary will be presented later. The university shared their proposal as well. Overall, the discussions were good but due to the university bargaining with AASUA and NASA at the same time, we are not able to pick up negotiations until March and April.

I provided an overview of the U of A People Strategy. Through consultation with stakeholders, they identified 4 themes: prioritizing health and well-being, enabling and empowering people, outstanding leadership in an environment of shared responsibility, and creating connection. LRC members were encouraged to provide feedback and share with their networks to solicit more feedback.

Updates were provided on the Coalition of U of A Stakeholders/Unions/Associations. This is a loose coalition of GSA, AASUA, NASA, UASU, and PDFA. The goal is to collaborate on issues of common interest and show solidarity when appropriate. The relationship is not a legal one nor is the GSA under obligation to provide support. Members pointed to some clarification that is still needed so I will seek clarification.

I presented at the BHRCC. This group asked both GSA and PDFA to present about labour issues. General concerns for students are: pay equity, job security, low cap on GTA & GRA hours (12 hrs/week), funding guarantees fulfilled by GTAs, limiting students to earn a liveable wage, and lack of consideration in the allocation of work hours. The overall impact is financial strain and prolonged time to complete degree. GRAF concerns are: significant pay disparity across the university, lack of protection against retaliation, potential misuse of the appointment, supervisor-student power imbalance, and insufficient student feedback. The impact is an increased likelihood of leaving the program, along with heightened fear, stress, and reduced productivity.

Finally, I provided LRC with a brief update re: changes with our PSAC relationship. PSAC offers bargaining support, education support, access to a strike fund, etc. Since students are not experts in negotiating working conditions, it has been helpful to have access to PSAC's support. We had a dedicated staff support person for the three GSA's in Alberta but that position has been eliminated. Our new support person is not as familiar with the academic sector so there will be a learning curve but they are located in Edmonton so we will have better access to them. LRC will discuss this relationship moving forward.

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

Sincerely,
Muneeb Masood Raja, Chair of the GSA LRC

Item 8i: GSA Chief Returning Officer Report

Dear GSA Council,

Happy new year! I hope you all had a relaxing holiday break and a great start to the new semester.

Over the past couple of months, I have been working with Grace, Cindy, and ERC to prepare for the upcoming election. You can now find election information, including the approved timeline, on the GSA website. Nominations for the 2025 General Election and Election of the Associate Vice President Labour will open on **January 27th at 12 pm and will close on February 10th at 12 pm**. Please note that some rules have changed since last year, due to changes in Bylaw and Policy and ongoing discussions with ERC to improve the process. Voting will take place between **10 am on February 18th and 10 am on February 20th**.

A new initiative that GSA staff have incorporated into the elections process this year is hosting events and tabling sessions to spread awareness about the positions available and the roles and responsibilities of each position. The breakfast and learn that took place had great turnout and gave opportunities to potential candidates to meet with current DEOs to learn about their roles. There is an upcoming tabling session on Friday in CCIS and a lunch and learn next Tuesday in Triffo Hall. Members of ERC will also be present at orientation tomorrow and the PhD welcome event next Wednesday. Please consider attending these events to learn more!

As part of your responsibilities as a GSA councillor, just a reminder to please communicate this information to your constituents. If you have any questions, please contact gsa.elections@ualberta.ca.

Sophie Shi
GSA Chief Returning Officer

Item 8j: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: September 18,
2024

Dear members of the GSA Council,

Since the last Council meeting, the Nominating Committee considered one position out of two nominees for a general member of the Elections & Referenda Committee, and one position out of 8 candidates to serve on the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Currently advertised vacancies on other GSA bodies are reflected on the GSA website and available for review. We are currently looking for applicants to serve on the GSA Budget & Finance Committee and GFC Graduate Program Support Team (GFC GPST).

Of particular interest, given the approaching February elections campaign are:

- One GSA councillor position for the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board - the nominee for this position must be a current member of the GSA Council.
- GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) as this position remains vacant following Zain Patel's transition to the Speaker role's duties.

Sincerely,

Arseniy Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair

Item 8k: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to the GSA Council for the 5th November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Elsie Osei
Date: 15th January 2025

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and the Elections and Referenda Committee (EFC) are excited about several upcoming events designed to inform, engage, and connect graduate students during the election period. These events provide opportunities to learn about the elections, meet fellow graduate students, and contribute to shaping the future of the GSA. We encourage all graduate students to attend and take part in these important conversations.

The Elections tabling and upcoming events are highlighted below:

GSA Winter Orientation Event

Date: Tuesday, January 21

Time: 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Telus Atrium

Join us during the Winter Orientation to meet fellow graduate students and learn more about GSA initiatives and the upcoming elections. This event is an excellent opportunity to network and familiarize yourself with the resources available to you.

Tabling Session #4

Date: Friday, January 24

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Location: CCIS (with CAB as a backup venue)

Stop by to chat with GSA representatives, ask questions about the elections, and gather helpful materials. This session is designed to be informal and accessible, making it easy to get involved.

General Election Lunch & Learn

Date: Tuesday, January 28

Time: 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Location: 1-16 Triffo Hall, FGPS Boardroom

Enjoy lunch while diving deeper into the election process and the importance of graduate student governance. The session will conclude with a social hour where you can connect with peers and discuss the future of the GSA.

PhD Winter Welcome Reception

Date: Wednesday, January 29

Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: 1-16 Triffo Hall, FGPS Boardroom

A warm welcome to PhD students this winter term! This reception provides an opportunity to meet other PhD candidates and GSA members, and to learn how your voice can influence the GSA's work

Attending these events is an excellent way to engage with your graduate community and understand how the GSA elections can impact you. These events are more than just informative, they are a chance to network, share your voice, and contribute to meaningful change within the GSA. Your participation in these sessions and the election process ensures that the needs of graduate students are represented effectively.

The ERC has exciting developments underway:

- The last round of election bylaw and policy revisions has been successfully passed through the Governance Committee and the Board. Next up is Council! However, the Governance Committee requested further clarification on two points: **I.POL.10.9.b.i** and **I.POL.10.9.b.ii**. These clarifications are in progress.
- Referendum revision recommendations are expected to be ready for discussion by February where both the referenda edits and **I.POL.10.9.b** can be addressed.

We look forward to seeing you at these events! Your participation matters, and together we can make a difference for graduate students across the university.

Sincerely,

Elsie Osei, Chair of the GSA ERC

Item 8I: GSA Management Report

GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for January 20 2025 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Lewie Moodley
Date: January 20 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 upcoming 2025 elections. This process requires significant effort in planning timelines, coordinating candidate nominations, and organizing voting logistics to ensure a smooth and transparent election cycle.

Final preparations for the Winter Orientation are underway. This event aims to provide new graduate students with an introduction to campus resources, GSA services, and opportunities for social engagement, with the goal of supporting students in their transition and enriching their academic experience. Our team has worked diligently to make an inclusive program that fosters community and ensures a positive start to the academic term. We have invited various campus partners and services.

The office has also been focused on grants and awards applications for graduate students. As we are approaching our awards ceremony, we have received over 210 applications for the GSA awards. We have reopened our grants services after the holiday shut down period.

There is ongoing work on the 2025-2026 budget and the preparation of winter quarterly financial statements. The budget process involves careful consideration of resource allocation to support GSA operations, events, and student initiatives effectively. The quarterly financial statements provide transparency and accountability, reflecting the financial health of the organization. These efforts ensure fiscal responsibility and demonstrate our commitment to maintaining trust with the graduate student community. These statements and budget will be provided for informational purposes in the coming months to the council.

Lastly, 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 integral to shaping policies, advocating for student interests, and ensuring ethical and effective governance. 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, December 11 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **December 4 2024.**

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now closed for 2024. Good Grants was successfully launched: we have approved over 80 applications and have had no issues from students. Grants are closed Dec 2 - Jan 3 2025. This year we have spent \$704,926.39, approved 828 grants, and reached over 10% of grad students.
- We are currently preparing our 2025-2026 budget, which will be delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. BFC met on December 3 and approved the Fall expenditures and recommended it to the board.
- We recently hosted our final Social Hour of the year in collaboration with Unitea, and it was a resounding success! The turnout was fantastic, with students enjoying a break from their busy schedules to foster community, share experiences, and strengthen relationships. The atmosphere was filled with positivity and engagement, making it a perfect way to wrap up the year.
- The organizing of the General Election has started. We are organizing the Discover Governance series, tabling events and election advertising with Brandy, Cindy and Sophie.
- The awards committee is working hard at processing applications and are getting ready for the awards night in March.
- Social Media updates:
 - Facebook Reach: -43% (Dec 2-Dec 9); Followers: +3 followers (current: 2072)
 - Instagram Reach: +5.3% (Dec 2-Dec 9); Followers: +4 followers (current: 1464)
 - Twitter/X Followers: -3 followers (current: 1318)

Management Report to the GSA Board, December 18 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **December 11 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now closed for 2024. Good Grants was successfully launched: we have approved over 80 applications and have had no issues from students. Grants are closed Dec 2 - Jan 3 2025. This year we have spent \$704,926.39, approved 828 grants, and reached over 10% of grad students.
- We are currently preparing our 2025-2026 budget, which will be delivered as a first draft at the January 9th BFC. BFC met on December 3 and approved the Fall expenditures and recommended it to the board.
- Preparations for the General Election are underway, particularly updates for nomination forms and the website to ensure ease of applications. Tabling and other advertising events are being organized. We will work with DEOs to film video reels to advertise their positions to encourage election participation.
- We have a few departmental elections underway as well, but engagement is dropping as we're getting closer to the holiday season.
- Newest ACB member was trained yesterday and is prepared for the upcoming election.
- On Friday, GC will look over the last changes to the election policy in time for February.
- The awards committee is working hard at processing applications and are getting ready for the awards night in March.
- Social Media updates:
 - Facebook Reach: -1.8% (Dec 2-17); Followers: +3 followers (current: 2071)
 - Instagram Reach: +18.6% (Dec 2-17); Followers: +16 followers (current: 1476)
 - Twitter/X Followers: -3 followers (1318)

Management Report to the GSA Board, January 8 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **December 18 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now open 2025. We currently have 30 grant applications and 26 awards applications submitted.
- The office is working hard to get the final preparations done for the Winter orientation and the Tuition townhall.
- 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. BFC met on December 3 and approved the Fall expenditures and recommended it to the Board.
- Preparations for the General Election are underway, particularly updates for nomination forms and the website to ensure ease of applications. Tabling and other advertising events are being organized. We will work with DEOs to film video reels to advertise their positions to encourage election participation.
- The awards committee is working hard at processing applications and are getting ready for the awards night in March.
- Social Media updates:
 - Facebook Reach: -1.8% (Dec 2-17); Followers: +3 followers (current: 2071)
 - Instagram Reach: +18.6% (Dec 2-17); Followers: +16 followers (current: 1476)
 - Twitter/X Followers: -3 followers (1318)

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. BFC will meet again to review the updates made at the January meeting.
- General Election prep is well underway with the new VPIR position paperwork getting ready. The format and paperwork of some events are changing to ensure things are smoother. Brandy will update the website with the new forms and 'job descriptions' (in word format and videos from the DEOs).
- 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 follower (1316)