

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

[Letter from the GSA Speaker, Zain Patel](#)

[Suggested Motion to be Included in the Agenda](#)

[Item 1: Agenda](#)

[Item 2: GSA Council May 26 2025 Minutes](#)

[Item 4a: Nominees for GSA ACB Vacancies](#)

[Item 4b: Nominees for GSA Chief Returning Officer](#)

[Item 4c: Nominees for GSA Speaker](#)

[Item 4d: Nominees for GSA Senator](#)

[Item 4e: Nominees for GSA Budget & Finance Committee](#)

[Item 7a: GSA President Reports](#)

[Item 7b: Vice-President Academic Report](#)

[Item 7d: Vice-President Student Services Report](#)

[Item 7c: Vice-President Student Life Reports](#)

[Item 7e: Vice-President External Report](#)

[Item 7f: Associate Vice-President Labour Report](#)

[Item 7i: GSA Chief Returning Officer Report](#)

[Item 7j: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report](#)

[Item 7L: GSA Management Report](#)

[Item 9a: Submitted Motions to Council - Outlines of Issue](#)

[Item 9b: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F](#)

[Item 9c: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J](#)

[Item 9d: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K](#)

[Back to Top](#)

**Letter from the GSA Speaker, Zain Patel**

Dear Council Colleagues,

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

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

I stress again my fear that, without this commitment to an unbiased review, the organization is potentially opening itself up to various liabilities such as lawsuits. Simply put, Council meetings are public venues and associated materials are also public and available on the GSA website. Without a thorough

and impartial investigation of claims made against specific individuals associated with the organization, sharing those claims publicly without them being in some way verified is a potential legal, financial, and reputational risk. Third-party reviews are not uncommon for student associations across Canada - this has happened to the University of Alberta GSA before. In 2009-10, the GSA contracted an external consultant following a series of allegations against DEOs, complaints by staff to NASA and staff resignations, as well as intervention by the University of Alberta administration. The Provost at the time stepped in and, as noted, an external consultant was brought in to restore and rebuild the GSA. **I firmly believe an unbiased, neutral review of the organization and the various associated allegations will be necessary to pave a path forward for the organization in a fair manner.**

As Speaker of the GSA, I am expected to remain neutral and unbiased in any and all affairs pertaining to the GSA and its governing Council. I take that responsibility seriously. **To this end, to resolve the matters that have been raised in an unbiased manner and to conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations being made, I suggest that a motion be moved and voted upon by the Council on June 23, 2025 calling for a third-party review. As this motion was not circulated in the first mailing, as per GSA Bylaw and Policy, I suggest someone move to amend the agenda to add this motion as an urgent action item, preceding all other items in the agenda.** At the time of writing this letter, the motion is not ready for circulation in the Second Mailing, but will be available as soon as possible. I sincerely apologize for the delay and recognize that this may break C.POL.5.2. However, I hope that, given the urgency and gravity of the situation at hand, that the GSA Council would still be willing to entertain the motion and engage in good-faith discussion at the upcoming council meeting.

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

a variety of reasons including for the graduate students we serve and represent.

**I ask the GSA Council to reflect and consider the claims being made and the circumstances which we face in order to find the best path forward.**

As a reminder, as I have highlighted multiple times before, beyond our roles in GSA Council, we are all graduate student colleagues. We should be able to discuss and debate respectfully, comfortably and safely. Let us work with respect, collaboration and mutual understanding.

Zain H. Patel

GSA Speaker

Suggested Motion to be Included in the Agenda

### **Suggested Motion**

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

### **Background**

*See Speaker's letter in the Second Mailing for the June 23 2025 Council Meeting.*

### **Terms of the Motion**

In passing this motion, the GSA Council agrees to a call for a **top-down and end-to-end, unbiased, third-party review by an appropriate legal entity** (ideally a legal firm or consulting company with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student associations within Alberta and Canada) selected by the GSA Council via majority vote based on the processes outlined hereafter. **The review will encompass any and all affairs and concerns pertaining to the GSA within the last six (6) to twelve (12) months** with a focus on recent events.

The GSA Council will first form an *ad hoc* committee hereby titled "Third-Party Review Committee" or TPRC, naming at least three (3) to five (5) GSA Council members who are NOT Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) or Council-Elected Officers (CEOs) or a member of a GSA standing committee and have not held such roles in the last twelve (12) months. Candidates, before and after they are selected, MUST exhibit neutrality throughout the entirety of the process. Members of the TPRC will be selected in accordance with GSA Nominating Committee guidelines. **Ideally, a council election to appoint the TPRC members will be run as soon as possible, at the latest by the July 2025 GSA Council Meeting.**

The TPRC will be responsible for engaging a third-party entity (ideally, as previously stated, a legal firm or consulting company with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student

associations within Alberta and Canada), to research and review various appropriate entities (consulting with local entities such as University of Alberta Students' Union or the University of Alberta administration for potential candidates) and develop a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will pose questions including:

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

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

Upon selection of three (3) legal or consulting firms, the TPRC will circulate and present the proposals to the GSA Council. Candidate firms may also be invited to present their proposal if possible. **GSA Council will vote and select one (1) legal or consulting firm to conduct the third-party review. Selection of the firm by GSA Council should ideally occur at or before the August 2025 GSA Council Meeting.**

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

Finance Committee, the GSA Finance Team and accountant if necessary). As previously mentioned, GSA Council will have the opportunity to review the proposals by legal and consulting firms, and the proposal should include cost estimations.

Once the GSA Council selects a third-party entity, the TPRC will inform them and initiate the review process as soon as possible, the latest being the end of August 2025. Depending on the terms of the review outlined and agreed upon by the TPRC and third-party entity, parties may be bound to a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement. During the review process, the TPRC will serve as a liaison between the third-party entity and the GSA Council, and the TPRC may provide updates on the status of the review to the GSA Council, should the third-party entity permit it. The extent/scope of these updates will be at the discretion of the third-party entity.

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

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

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

Concurrent with the activities outlined previously, effective immediately (i.e June 23 2025) and until completion of the third party review, **the GSA Council will agree to continue with routine GSA Council business**, wherein “routine” business is strictly defined as:

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

Concurrent with the activity described in the preceding motions, effective immediately (i.e June 23 2025) and until the completion of the third-party review, **the GSA Council will agree to suspend all non-routine GSA Council business**, wherein “non-routine” business is strictly defined as:

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



legal or consulting firm, should it be necessary.

A summary of the timeline to form the TPRC and select the third-party entity is below:

**Proposed Timeline**

- June 23 2025 - Motion proposed to GSA Council
- On or around June 24 2025 - Consult with GSA Nominating Committee to develop call for nominations for the TPRC
- On or around June 25 2025 - Call for nominations for the TPRC
- On or around July 11 2025 - Potential deadline for nominations
- July 2025 Council Meeting (or earlier) - Council votes to appoint TPRC members
- July 2025 to August 2025 - TPRC solicits proposals from legal firms, with assistance from UASU, GSA legal counsel, and University of Alberta administration as needed.
- August 2025 Council Meeting (or earlier) - Distribution of RFPs to GSA Council and selection of the third-party reviewer
- On or around the end of August 2025 - The third-party review should commence.

**Jurisdiction**

**B.BYL.3.5** All GSA members of the GSA must exercise shared responsibility in monitoring the performance and conduct of GSA Officers, and monitoring for potential conflicts of interest and/or conflicts of commitment among GSA members, as defined in Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board.

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

**C.POL.4.3.b** Substantive agenda items are circulated to GSA Council members at least one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting on instruction of the Speaker. Substantive items received after this will be added to the agenda at the discretion of the Speaker. Reports for information are circulated the Friday

(or Thursday, in the event of a holiday related closure of the GSA office) before a Monday meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**C.POL.5.2.a** To move a Motion, voting members of GSA Council must first be recognized by the Speaker. A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.

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

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

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

**F.BYL.1.5.a** GSA Council may from time to time create ad hoc committees to address issues that are

outside the purview of GSA Standing Committees.

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

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

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

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

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

Item 1: Agenda

Monday, June 23, 2025

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

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

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

**GSA SPEAKER:**

Zain Patel in the Chair

**GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:**

Amirah Nazir

**CLOSED SESSION:**

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

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
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5:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	5-9	Approval of the Agenda for June 23, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	10-22	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of May 26, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	4		Announcements	
10 min	5	<div>23-27</div> <div>28-30</div> <div>31-33</div> <div>34-38</div> <div>39-42</div>	<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <p>A. GSA Appeals &amp; Complaints Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Five vacancies</li> <li>b. Three nominations</li> </ul> <p>B. GSA Chief Returning Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One vacancy</li> <li>b. One nomination</li> </ul> <p>C. GSA Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One vacancy</li> <li>b. One nomination</li> </ul> <p>D. GSA Senator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One vacancy</li> <li>b. Two nominations</li> </ul> <p>E. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One vacancy</li> <li>b. Three nominations</li> </ul>	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair

[illegible]

30 min	9	72-86	<b><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></b> A. Submitted Motions to Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue - Councillor-led Motion Procedure</li> <li>b. Outline of Issue - Bylaw Update Procedure</li> <li>c. Outline of Issue - Bylaw Update Procedure</li> <li>d. Outline of Issue - Standing Committee Attendance, Accessibility &amp; Advertising</li> <li>e. Outline of Issue - Standing Committees &amp; Confidentiality</li> <li>f. Outline of Issue - Impeachment &amp; Vote of No Confidence Procedure</li> <li>g. Outline of Issue - AVP Labour Voting Rights</li> </ul>	N. Lamarche, AVP Labour
		87-88	B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue: Section F</li> <li>b. Section F Revisions</li> </ul>	A. Kumar, GSA President
		89-94	C. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Outline of Issue: Section J</li> <li>d. Section J Revisions</li> </ul>	
		95-98	D. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Outline of Issue: Section K</li> <li>f. Section K Revisions</li> </ul>	
15 min	10		Question Period 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, June 19, 2025): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Question from N. Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences Councillor: GSA Bylaw and Policy,</li> </ul>	

			<p>section K.BYL.1.2 states, "GSA Council will receive a recommendation on the annual operating and capital budgets, together with a recommended three (3) year budget and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting." As we found out during the latest budget proposal, the university requires a finalized budget by early May, effectively leaving Council with two regular sessions to approve the budget. Two regular sessions does not provide Council with much time to work with the Board and BFC to resolve a contentious budget, and failure to pass a budget during the regular April meeting would have a disastrous impact on the financial viability of the GSA. Are there any external reasons why the bylaws stipulate a March deadline? Or is this an internal deadline that can be amended to provide Council with more time to collaborate with the Board and BFC to resolve any budgetary issues?</p> <p>2. Oral Questions</p>	
	11		Adjournment	



Item 2: GSA Council May 26 2025 Minutes

Monday, May 26, 2025

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

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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

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

**GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:**

Amirah Nazir in the Chair

**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
- Deputy Returning Officer: Temi David

**GSA Executives:**

- GSA President: Aashish Kumar

**Departmental Councillors:**

- Laura Enekegho, Biochemistry
- Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering
- Nancy Wang, Business PhD
- Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VP Academic: Chen Okafor</li> <li>• VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal</li> <li>• VP External: Niloufar Mir Fallah</li> <li>• VP Student Life: Hazel Kemuma</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors-At-Large:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jeff Akhagbosu</li> <li>2. Ashif Rahman</li> <li>3. Anagha Devkota</li> <li>4. Julianna Durham</li> <li>5. Mohamadali Tofigh</li> <li>6. Muhammad Faizan Tariq</li> <li>7. Rishabh Dagur</li> <li>8. Haroun Elyasir</li> </ol> <p><b>Standing Committee Chairs &amp; Vice-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair</li> </ul> <p><b>Guests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pooja Kumar</li> <li>• Junqin (Mark) Wang, ACB Candidate</li> <li>• Ismail Nasirudeen, ACB Candidate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saniyya Mirza, Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</li> <li>• Ozge Akca Zengin, Chemical &amp; Materials Engineering</li> <li>• Vera Fiawornu, Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders</li> <li>• Michelle Bey, Dentistry</li> <li>• Alissa Watson, Drama</li> <li>• Nathaniel Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences</li> <li>• Devinder Pal Singh, Economics</li> <li>• Ajibola Adigun, Educational Policy Studies</li> <li>• Jennie Burton, Elementary Education</li> <li>• Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology</li> <li>• Lillian Low, Medical Genetics</li> <li>• Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience</li> <li>• Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics &amp; Gynecology</li> <li>• Seth Peyton, Oncology</li> <li>• Toqa Abdelwahab, Ophthalmology</li> <li>• Fulin Wang, Pharmacology</li> <li>• Joshua Barden, Philosophy</li> <li>• Daniel Carleton, Physics</li> <li>• Grace Essuman, Physiology</li> <li>• Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences</li> <li>• Emily Ward, Psychiatry</li> <li>• Vi Tran, Public Health</li> <li>• Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Sciences</li> <li>• Shea Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources</li> <li>• Celine Beaulieu, Sociology</li> <li>• Ivan Ma, Surgery</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chirag Thakur, Business MBA</li> <li>• Yimiao Zhao, Oncology</li> <li>• Marwa Ramsie, Paediatrics</li> <li>• Joëlle Kasongo, Laboratory Medicine &amp; Pathology</li> <li>• Vincent Yu, Library &amp; Information Studies</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hannah Lam, Linguistics</li> <li>• Arash Salemi, Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>• Dante Terino, Medical Microbiology &amp; Immunology</li> <li>• Ahmed Abdelfattah, Pharmacy &amp; Pharmaceutical Sciences</li> </ul>
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Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
5:06	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	A. Nazir, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	2-5	Approval of the Agenda for May 26, 2025 GSA Council C. Cowan moved. A. Belosokhov seconded. Motion PASSED unanimously.	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	2	6-25	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of April 30, 2025 GSA Council C. Cowan moved. A. Kumar seconded. Motion PASSED unanimously.	A. Nazir, Deputy Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celine Beaulieu, Sociology Councillor</li> <li>• Laura Enekegho, Biochemistry</li> <li>• Ashif Rahman, Councillor-At-Large</li> <li>• Mohamadali Tofigh, Councillor-At-Large</li> <li>• Rishabh Dagur, Councillor-At-Large</li> <li>• Haroun Elyasir, Councillor-At-Large</li> <li>• Vi Tran, Public Health</li> <li>• Aashish Kumar, GSA President</li> <li>• Hazel Kemuma, VP Student Life</li> <li>• Niloufar Mir Fallah, VP External</li> <li>• Chen Okafor, VP Academic</li> <li>• Saad Arslan Iqbal, VP Student Services</li> <li>• Jeff Akhagbosu, Councillor-At-Large</li> </ul>	A. Nazir, Deputy Speaker

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vincent Yu, Library &amp; Information Studies Alternate Councillor</li> <li>• Anagha Devkota, Councillor-At-Large</li> <li>• Muhammad Faizan Tariq, Councillor-At-Large</li> </ul>	
2 min	4		<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S. Shi, Chief Returning Officer, updated the Council on the VPIR by-election. The position was initially run alongside the General Election, which received no nominations. The by-election was also unsuccessful. The ERC are consulting with the IGSA to determine next steps, as our bylaw and policy contradicts itself with regards to filling the vacancy. I.BYL.5.2 states that the position should remain vacant for a year after an unsuccessful by-election, but the VPIR policy lists further steps that involve Council. We have given the IGSA an indefinite timeline currently, as we are getting into the summer months, so we are waiting to hear back on their recommendations. She raised this in relation to N. Lamarche's AVP Labour report, as he stated that the VPIR election may take place in late June, which has not been decided as of yet. She encouraged any Councillors to reach out to her at <a href="mailto:gsacroff@ualberta.ca">gsacroff@ualberta.ca</a> with any questions or concerns.</li> <li>• S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, raised that the Dean of Students' Office is offering Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) through June to December. There are five two-day sessions; the details for sign up are in his report. He encouraged interested students to contact Kevin Friese directly at <a href="mailto:friese@ualberta.ca">friese@ualberta.ca</a></li> <li>• S. Iqbal also raised that the Mobile Pod Launch (lactation station) will be located in SUB and formally opened for use on May 30, 2025 after a ribbon-cutting ceremony. This project is a collaboration between the Office of the Dean of Students and the UASU with support from the UofA's Students Who Parent Working Group. If you are a student parent or know another student parent who might be interested in sharing</li> </ul>	

			insight for these initiatives, please send an email to Saad at <a href="mailto:gsavpsse@ualberta.ca">gsavpsse@ualberta.ca</a> .	
	5		<p><b><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. GSA Strategic Work Plan Update Presentation &amp; Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSA President Aashish Kumar presented the current heading for the GSA Strategic Work Plan for this year, emphasizing that we want to ensure the GSA's priorities reflect the needs of graduate students.</li> <li>● The Board is planning on continuing the work of the previous administration and taking on initiatives students have raised, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advocating for tuition freezes</li> <li>○ Organizing a career fair</li> <li>○ Implementing clearer support structures</li> <li>○ Increasing funding opportunities</li> <li>○ Establishing tech equity initiatives</li> </ul> </li> <li>● He encouraged councillors to ask difficult questions and contribute actively to the shaping of GSA priorities.</li> <li>● Re Minimum Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A. Kumar acknowledged that the recently established \$25,000 minimum funding took six years to implement.</li> <li>○ He expressed intent to expand minimum funding to include Master's students.</li> <li>○ He raised concerns that increasing the minimum beyond \$25,000 could reduce graduate placements, especially in low-funded departments (e.g. Anthropology), as they may not be able to afford higher stipends.</li> <li>○ He emphasized the importance of balance between advocating for more funding and maintaining program accessibility.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Childcare Funding:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	A. Kumar, GSA President

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He criticized the University's \$300,000 funding cut to childcare centres.</li> <li>○ He noted that while the university's childcare contribution remains flat at \$960,000, the GSA contributes \$331,000 to student-parents annually.</li> <li>○ He will advocate for increased support and recognition of targeted subsidies that produce strong student outcomes.</li> <li>● Tuition and Fee Advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He expressed frustration with international tuition increases.</li> <li>○ The GSA is exploring the elimination of fee differentials between domestic and international students in some departments.</li> <li>○ A tuition freeze is a student priority, and he emphasized long-term advocacy on this issue.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Printing Subsidy Initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He proposed to add 15-20 free pages to OneCards of new students to help them print necessary documents.</li> <li>○ Estimated cost is approximately \$10,000.</li> <li>○ This initiative is intended to ease the transition for new international students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Conference and Career Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A. Kumar proposed using funds from the conference budget line to host a combined research and career fair.</li> <li>○ The event would showcase student research to prospective employers and help connect students with industry and alumni.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Funding Sources and Levers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He explained the university's financial levers: tuition, donations, operating grants, and external research grants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He stressed the GSA's role in advocating for increased federal and provincial funding to relieve tuition pressures.</li> <li>● A survey was run in April 2025 to collect student suggestions and feedback, which has been incorporated into our current planning. We also held a Strategic Work Plan Town Hall on May 27 to hear from graduate students. We want to hear from you - submit your thoughts <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>● A. Kumar, GSA President, stated that these consultations are being brought about to ensure that the GSA's priorities reflect graduate students' needs. The previous administration achieved a significant amount, which he felt was not celebrated enough. This Board will continue to build on their work.</li> <li>● He emphasized that the Board wants input to properly reflect graduate student priorities. He stated that the underlying similarity across graduate students is the desire to get a job after the conclusion of their program, and so he wants to use FGPS funding to establish a career fair to increase graduate student opportunities.</li> <li>● A. Adigun, Educational Policy Councillor, asked how the GSA intends on monitoring the implementation of the minimum funding arrangement re TA- and RA-ships, with the international student 24-hour/week work cap.</li> <li>● S. Iqbal answered that the 24-hour cap only applies to off-campus work. A. Kumar and C. Okafor confirmed.</li> <li>● A. Nazir, Deputy Speaker, encouraged graduate students to reach out to DEOs with individual questions and suggestions.</li> </ul> <p>B. Graduate Student Peer Support Pilot Program Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Syed Biyabani, the Manager of the Engineering Safety and Risk Management Department, presented the pilot details of the Graduate Student Peer Support Program.</li> </ul>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syed explained the initiative's roots in the Culture of Care framework launched in December 2022 following serious campus safety incidents.</li> <li>• The peer support program is a joint initiative by GSA, GPS, the Dean of Students, and HSE.</li> <li>• Initiated by the GSA and brought to fruition in conjunction with the university administration, the GPS aims to create a free network for graduate students to reach out to for support from graduate mentors that will be trained to empathetically triage students and direct them to resources and supports available. They will not be subject matter experts.</li> <li>• They are currently calling for graduate student volunteers who have completed their first year, have lived experience, and a high level of emotional intelligence and empathy. They are looking to recruit 20-30 mentors. Training sessions are scheduled for July-August 2025.</li> <li>• Full launch is planned for September 2025.</li> <li>• Any questions regarding this program should be directed to <a href="mailto:hse.info@ualberta.ca">hse.info@ualberta.ca</a> and any interested students can apply <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• For the pilot year, the university will own and fund the program before the host status is given to GSA or GPS.</li> <li>• Syed asked for Councillors to promote the program. A call has gone out through the GSA newsletter. He encouraged students to apply.</li> <li>• D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, asked for clarification regarding the 'second-year' student eligibility, as that would exclude most Master's students. Syed clarified that students would be eligible during their second year of studies.</li> <li>• J. Akhagbosu, CAL, asked if there is a cost to enrolling in the program. Syed clarified it is and will always be free as a support program.</li> <li>• Syed encouraged students to reach out to</li> </ul>	
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			<a href="mailto:hse.info@ualberta.ca">hse.info@ualberta.ca</a> with questions.	
10 min	6	26-30	<p><b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b></p> <p>A. GSA Appeals &amp; Complaints Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five vacancies</li> <li>Three nominations</li> <li>Successful candidates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junqin (Mark) Wang</li> <li>Ismail Nasirudeen</li> <li>Cassandra Cowan</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>A Councillor raised a motion to rescind the election results due to disapproving of the ballot format. A. Adigun stated that the ranked ballot format does not provide Councillors with the option of choosing 'None of the Candidates' for each candidate.</p> <p>A. Adigun moved. A. Kumar seconded.</p> <p>7 votes in favour. 3 votes against. 17 abstentions.</p> <p>Motion DOES NOT PASS as majority was not attained.</p> <p>The vote was reattempted.</p> <p>18 votes in favour 18. 7 votes against. 18 abstentions.</p> <p>Motion DOES NOT PASS as majority was not attained.</p> <p>20 votes in favour. 13 votes against. 9 abstentions.</p> <p>Motion PASSED.</p> <p>The election will be re-run at the next Council session with a reformatted ballot, using the previous system. The candidates were notified and the ACB election will be held at the next GSA Council session on June 23rd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S. Iqbal suggested a short presentation at the next Council session to explain the ranked voting system.</li> </ul>	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
30 min	7		<b><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></b>	A. Kumar, GSA President

			<p>A. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section D: First Reading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Outline of Issue: Section D</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Section D Revisions</p> <p>A. Kumar moved. A. Belosokhov seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These revisions recommend expanding the definition of GSA Officer to include all GSA Council members, committee appointees, and delegates.</li> <li>● Purpose: Allow ACB jurisdiction over misconduct by any of these individuals as GSA representatives.</li> <li>● A. Nazir played a recording from AVP Labour N. Lamarche. He stated disapproval for this bylaw.</li> <li>● N. Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences Councillor, expressed concern that the term ‘officer’ could have unintended legal or financial implications and suggested simply expanding ACB jurisdiction instead.</li> <li>● A. Kumar stressed that council and committee members must be accountable for their conduct and cannot be considered “neutral” if not voting. He cited previous disruptive incidents at Council as justification for clearer codes of conduct. He acknowledged that the GSA lacks a formal code of conduct and committed to developing one.</li> <li>● A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair, noted that redefining ‘officer’ could impact other bylaws, particularly those related to conflict of interest.</li> <li>● S. Ribeiro, Political Science Councillor, and C. Cowan, Rehabilitation Medicine Councillor, supported accountability goals. S. Ribeiro raised concerns about imposing heightened procedural and reputational risk on volunteer councillors.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion DID NOT PASS.</p>	
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			<p>B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F: First Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue: Section F</li> <li>b. Section F Revisions</li> </ul> <p>C. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue: Section J</li> <li>b. Section J Revisions</li> </ul> <p>D. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: First Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outline of Issue: Section K</li> <li>b. Section K Revisions</li> </ul>	
30 min	8		<p><b><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></b></p> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. President's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Graduate Students' Association, University of Alberta Submission to the Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. GSA Board Report</li> <li>c. GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee Report</li> <li>d. GSA Governance Committee Report</li> </ul> </li> <li>B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As submitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>C. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. GSA Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee Report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

			<p>D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <p>E. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah</p> <p>F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. GSA Labour Relations Committee</p> <p>G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <p>H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p> <p>I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi &amp; Temi David</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. S. Shi detailed that the ERC is consulting with the IGSA regarding next steps for filling the VPIR vacancy, and is looking forward to further discussions and decisions through the summer.</p> <p>J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov</p> <p>K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</p> <p>L. GSA Management</p>	
15 min	9		<p>Question Period</p> <p>1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Deputy Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, May 22, 2025):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Question from N. Morley, Earth &amp; Atmospheric Sciences Councillor: GSA Bylaw and Policy, section K.BYL.1.2 states, "GSA Council will receive a recommendation on the annual operating and capital budgets, together with a recommended three (3) year budget and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting." As we found out during the latest budget proposal, the university requires a finalized budget by early May, effectively leaving Council with two regular sessions to approve the budget. Two regular sessions does not provide Council with much time to work with the Board and BFC to resolve a contentious budget, and failure to pass a budget during the regular April meeting would have a disastrous impact on the financial viability of the GSA. Are there any external reasons why the bylaws stipulate a March</p>	

			<p>deadline? Or is this an internal deadline that can be amended to provide Council with more time to collaborate with the Board and BFC to resolve any budgetary issues?</p> <p>2. Oral Questions</p>	
	10		<p>Adjournment 6:58PM.</p> <p>A. Nazir raised a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm. 32 in favour. 9 against. 1 abstention.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>A. Nazir encouraged Councillors to attend the GSA Strategic Work Plan Town Hall on May 27th from 12:00-2:00PM.</p>	

## Item 4a: Nominees for GSA ACB Vacancies

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
**GSA Appeals & Complaints Board Election (4 POSITIONS):  
THREE (3) NOMINEES**

Information regarding the positions for four (4) GSA Members were advertised via the GSA website and newsletter on March 31st, April 4th, April 11th, and were extended again on April 29th (advertised May 2 and 9), with a nomination deadline of May 13th. Three (3) nominations were received for the vacancies. The nominees were interviewed by the GSA NoC Chair who has been trained in procedural fairness by the GSA and has 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 May 26 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the May 26 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday May 26 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. Cassandra Cowan (Rehabilitation Medicine)
2. Ismail Nasirudeen (Sociology)
3. Junqin (Mark) Wang (Medicine)

**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**

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*“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. Cassandra Cowan

<b>Statement of Interest:</b>
I want to get involved with the GSA election process. Also, with my experience at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE), Students' Association Judicial Board (which dealt with non-academic student infractions), I developed skills to appropriately discuss and vote on potentially tense situations respectfully and assertively.
<b>Bio:</b>
<p><b>Current Volunteer Positions:</b></p> <p>Faculty of Rehab Medicine EDI Action Committee, RMSA, BFC, GFC, GPS, Prairie Rehab Conference Planning Committee, Green and Gold, GSA (general counsellor).</p> <p>In addition to the current committees that I serve on, at CUE, I have previously been a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Counsellor (Students' Association)</li> <li>- VP of finance and acting Vice President (Science Union)</li> <li>- Student Ambassador</li> <li>- General member of the Mental Health Committee (Students' Association)</li> <li>- Policy and Governance Committee (Students' Association)</li> <li>- Student Representative of Advisory Health Summit Committee (Mental Health Alberta)</li> </ul> <p>In addition to my involvement with the CUE Students' Association—Judicial Board, I have also volunteered within hospital units, worked in retail during the COVID-19 pandemic, and worked at the Edmonton International Airport. These instances have primed me to address concerns and maintain vital policy in a variety of evolving circumstances.</p>

### 2. Ismail Nasirudeen

<b>Statement of Interest:</b>
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As a current MA student and incoming first-year PhD student, I am eager to take a more active role in shaping the academic and social environment of our university. While I have not previously held student leadership positions during my graduate studies as a MA student, I view the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board as a meaningful opportunity to engage with the governance process, support fairness and accountability, and contribute to a respectful and equitable academic community. I am particularly interested in learning from experienced members of the board, strengthening my skills in critical thinking, impartial decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. These experiences will not only support my growth as a scholar but also prepare me to be an engaged and responsible participant in academic and institutional life.

**Bio:**

I have been actively involved in a range of volunteer activities that reflect my commitment to community engagement, leadership development, and service. In Edmonton, I've contributed to environmental sustainability through the City's Root for Trees program, where I supervised youth participants and promoted environmental stewardship. I currently serve as a Mu'adhin at Masjid Al Omari and help foster a spiritually enriching atmosphere during Friday prayers. As a Student Liaison Officer with the Nigerian-Canadian Muslims Edmonton Association, I advocate for the needs of Nigerian Muslim students and ensure their concerns are communicated and addressed. I also play as a Right Back for the Northside Football Club where I strengthen teamwork and discipline. Among others, I have also previously interned with the Nigeria Police in Ilorin, Kwara State while gaining practical exposure to policing and law enforcement operations.

My name is Ismail Nasirudeen, a current MA student in Sociology at the University of Alberta and an incoming PhD student in the same department. My academic training in criminology and sociology, coupled with a strong research focus on race, policing, and systemic inequality, equips me with the analytical skills and critical perspective necessary for fair and informed decision-making. Professionally, I have served as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) on projects examining police use of force, BIPOC representation in the criminal justice system, and terrorism studies. These roles have honed my skills in qualitative analysis, ethical inquiry, and collaborative problem-solving.

In addition to my academic work, I bring strong leadership and community engagement experience. I currently serve as a Student Liaison Officer for the Nigerian-Canadian Muslims Edmonton Association (NCMEA), where I advocate for student welfare and act as a bridge between community members and organizational leadership. I have also volunteered in various capacities, including as a Mu'adhin at Masjid Al Omari and as a participant in the City of



Edmonton's Root for Trees program. These roles reflect my commitment to integrity, equity, and service—values that align closely with the mandate of the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board. I am confident that my academic insight, professional experience, and commitment to fairness and accountability would make me a valuable contributor to the Board's work in upholding the rights and responsibilities of graduate students.

Sincerely,  
Ismail Nasirudeen

### 3. Junqin (Mark) Wang

**Statement of Interest:**

I am eager to serve on the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board because I firmly believe in the importance of procedural fairness and transparency in our graduate governance. This role offers the unique opportunity to review and decide on appeals and complaints regarding GSA CRO decisions and GSA officer conduct. I am drawn to the challenge of ensuring that every case is evaluated impartially and with meticulous attention to detail. I appreciate that the board provides specialized training on procedural fairness, and I am committed to upholding these high standards. By serving in this capacity, I hope to contribute to maintaining an accountable and respectful environment for all graduate students.

**Bio:**

My volunteer experiences have equipped me with the skills necessary for a role that demands fairness, clear communication, and impartial decision-making. For example, as Co-President of the UBC Acne Education Project, I organized over 40 educational presentations and workshops, ensuring that information was delivered in a balanced and accessible manner. I have also worked as a Free2BMe Program Volunteer and a Wayfinding Volunteer at the University of Alberta Hospital, where I supported community members in dynamic settings and maintained a neutral, service-oriented approach. Additionally, my role as a Medical Student Committee Member provided me with experience in collaborative policy discussions and decision-making processes. These diverse roles have reinforced my ability to work effectively in a team while remaining unbiased and committed to ethical standards.

I am currently pursuing a Master of Science in Medicine at the University of Alberta, where my rigorous academic background and dedication to research have honed my analytical and critical thinking skills. My studies in medicine, combined with my undergraduate background in Microbiology & Immunology, have provided me with a strong foundation in evidence-based

decision-making. Being bilingual in Mandarin and English enables me to communicate clearly and connect with a diverse range of graduate students. Beyond my academic credentials, my extensive volunteer work has instilled in me a deep commitment to fairness and ethical practice. I have consistently demonstrated the ability to manage responsibilities, collaborate with peers, and handle sensitive issues with impartiality. These experiences, coupled with my attention to detail and readiness to engage in thorough procedural training, make me well-suited to contribute positively to the GSA Appeals & Complaints Board. I am confident that my skills and experiences will help ensure that all appeals and complaints are handled with the utmost integrity and fairness.

## Item 4b: Nominees for GSA Chief Returning Officer

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)**  
**CRO (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE**

This position was advertised on the GSA website and in the GSA newsletters of May 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 with a deadline of June 6 2025. One (1) nomination was received for the position of CRO and GSA NoC-approved.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the June 23 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday June 23 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday June 23 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

**CRO**

- 1. Wajid Ali (Civil & Environmental Engineering)**

**Jurisdiction:**Section D.BYL.3.1.d

*"Council-Elected Officers will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council, for a term lasting from 1 July to 30 June of the following year."*

Section E.POL.3.2.a

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

Section E.POL.3.2.b

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

Biographies and brief resumes of the nominee(s) for CRO are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

### 1. Wajid Ali (Civil & Environmental Engineering)

#### Statement of Interest

Currently, I am volunteering only as a member of the academic appeal committee of the GFC, and I feel I have time to serve the graduate students of the UoA by offering my services as CRO to ensure transparency, impartiality, and fairness in the election process.

In the last couple of years, I have noticed that students had grievances about some decisions made during the elections. If selected, I would work with the ERC and other team members to develop a mechanism that can effectively address graduate students' concerns in a positive manner and prevent any procedural unfairness during GSA elections.

#### Bio

Volunteer Experience:

Member of the Program Committee

GSA nominee/member for the GFC

NASA steward for the student staff at the UoA residence

Member Academic Appeal Committee of the GFC

I am a fourth-year PhD student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the UoA. I hold bachelor's and master's degrees in chemical engineering. As a graduate student at UoA, I have maintained an impressive academic track record in both my coursework and research.

Prior to joining the University of Alberta, I served as a lecturer at the University of Engineering & Technology Peshawar, Pakistan. During my tenure there, I was the academic advisor for the student chapter of the Pakistan Institute of Chemical Engineers (PIChe) at UET Peshawar. My responsibilities included overseeing their annual events, managing the electoral system, and

approving event proposals. Additionally, as the undergraduate semester coordinator, I served as the first point of contact for students regarding academic issues, scholarships, and disciplinary matters. In 2018, I supervised the general elections as a presiding officer for members of provincial and national assemblies in Pakistan. This role required long hours of focused work with a diverse team, demanding quick decision-making and adaptability.

In previous roles as a deputy program manager and project coordinator at non-profit organisations, I coordinated and oversaw various activities. These positions involved meticulous planning, mapping daily, weekly, and monthly tasks, and assisting with preparation for successful execution. I managed logistics and finances to ensure smooth operations and was actively involved from initial planning to final implementation. Through these experiences, I developed proficiency in planning and organising activities in collaboration with teams, ensuring efficient and structured task completion.

At UoA, I served for approximately three years as a Resident Assistant (RA) and then Senior Resident Assistant (SRA) for graduate residences. In these roles, I planned and executed social events in collaboration with graduate students and participated in weekly meetings to address their concerns and discuss future events. I also handled conduct cases and resolved conflicts among residents in various East Campus residences at UoA.

Considering my professional and academic experience, as well as my dedicated involvement in volunteer activities (as stated previously), I believe I am among the most qualified candidates for the position of CRO.

Item 4c: Nominees for GSA Speaker

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
GSA SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE**

This position was advertised on the GSA website and in the GSA newsletters of May 2 and 9 with a deadline of May 16 2025. One (1) nomination was received for the position of Speaker and GSA NoC-approved.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the June 23 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday June 23 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday June 23 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

**Speaker**

- 1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)**

**Jurisdiction:**

Section D.BYL.3.1.d

*"Council-Elected Officers will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council, for a term lasting from 1 July to 30 June of the following year."*

Section E.POL.3.2.a

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

Section E.POL.3.2.b

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

Biographies and brief resumes of the nominee(s) are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

### 1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)

#### Statement of Interest

I have served on GSA Council for over two years – 1 year as a councillor, 1 year as DRO and approximately 6 months as Speaker of the GSA Council. I would like to continue serving as the GSA Speaker. During my time as DRO, I extensively familiarized myself with bylaw and policy, namely for Elections and Referenda, but have also familiarized myself with other relevant pieces such as council structure, meeting procedures, ACB procedures among others. In the last 6 months, I have become increasingly familiarized and involved with changes to bylaw and policy as a whole through participation with the Governance Committee and GSA Board. The role of Speaker is to act as neutral and impartial arbiter of bylaw and policy during Council meetings and I believe I am suited to continue in this role - my experiences to date showcase my ability to provide neutral and impartial perspectives in various situations.

I also believe that familiarity with bylaw and procedures are essential for all council members. I've introduced a couple of initiatives to GSA Council such as GSA Council 101 as a means to provide key information on Council operations and GSA operations to council members as a supplement to any onboarding or training they receive. I hope to continue this initiative going forward. This would also support council attendance and engagement. Council attendance is also crucial to ensure the graduate student base is aware of significant updates and changes and to foster an environment of collaboration and cooperation and debate. Familiarity with bylaw and procedures in council meetings could go a long way to promote better engagement in council. With helpful discussions with a council member, I have also opted to switch Council meetings to a hybrid format to improve accessibility for both councillors and GSA members who wish to observe.

#### Bio

Volunteer Experience:

Within GSA

- Department Councillor (Nov 2022 to Oct 2023)

- DRO (Oct 2023 to Dec 2024)

- Speaker (Dec 2024 to present/current term ends June 2025)

Outside GSA

- Cell Biology Students Association (events coordinator; 2023-2025)

- Week of Welcome (various positions including general and senior positions between 2018 and 2024)

- NeurAlbertaTech (workshop lecturer; 2021-2023)

Currently I am in my fourth year of a PhD in Cell Biology. During my undergraduate and graduate studies, I have been extensively involved with various initiatives on campus, such as Week of Welcome, NeurAlbertaTech, Cell Biology Students' Association, and the GSA Council. All of my experiences on campus have enabled me to develop key skills in communication, conflict resolution, leadership, problem solving and critical thinking. More recently, I have served as DRO and Speaker for the GSA which has played a significant role in furthering my understanding of GSA operations.

Furthermore, I recognize that there is still much for me to learn, but I believe that the skills I've developed and the experiences I have had over the years will provide an essential framework for my success in the position of GSA Speaker. My aim is ensuring that the Council meetings continue to run smoothly and in accordance to bylaw and policy, and ensuring there is mutual trust and respect between all members of council including DEOs and council members.



Item 4d: Nominees for GSA Senator

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

This position was advertised on the GSA website and in the GSA newsletters of May 2 and 9 with a deadline of May 16 2025. Three (3) nominations were received for the position of Speaker and two were GSA NoC-approved.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the June 23 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday June 23 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday June 23 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.**

**Senator**

- 1. Ransford Kyeremeh Agyemang (Nursing)**
- 2. Hussain Alhussainy (Political Sciences)**

**Jurisdiction:**

Section D.BYL.1.3

*"The GSA has the following GSA Council-Elected Officers:*

*The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Deputy Returning Officer,*

*The Senator, and*

*The Speaker and Deputy Speaker."*

Section D.BYL.3.1.d

*"Council-Elected Officers will be elected by a simple majority vote of GSA Council, for a term lasting from 1 July to 30 June of the following year."*

Section E.POL.3.2.a

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

**Section E.POL.3.2.b**

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

**Biographies and brief resumes of the nominee(s) are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).**

**1. Ransford Kyeremeh Agyemang (Nursing)**

**Statement of Interest**

I have an admirable interest in serving in any given capacity to advance the course of students. I understand that, in so much as focusing on the academic chores is intrinsically essential, working collaboratively with like-minded students to ensure the fluidity of student life is also deserving of attention. In view of this, I take so much pride to seek such opportunities to bring my experiences on board to ensure the smooth transition of student leadership during the time available to my dispensation. I am happy to volunteer for this student service committee, to secure a spot to lead, learn and contribute my quota to the need beckoning on the GSA senate office.

**Bio**

In my undergraduate education, I served as the Executive Senate Secretary of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) of Valley View University, Ghana, and also was elected as the SRC President during the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years respectively. I also serve as the President-elect of the Nursing Graduate Students' Association for the 2024/25 academic year.

I have developed a full-fledged student leadership, communication, collegial relation, organizational and critical thinking skills over the years. Also, I have a high level commitment and enthusiasm to development and implementation of procedures, policies, and protocols established to the merits of student citizenship and the entire university community. My background as a Senator is a strong personal motivation for me send over this application. Moreover, I am adept to understanding constitutional instruments and their utilization. I am very adaptive to the challenging demands of every commitments I resolve to engage in, and my student-faculty experiences so far as an International Student are a formidable foundation for me to press forward for opportunities available to students in the U of A. I have a hefty conviction of being a better fit for the senator position, and I am happy to serve with the GSA.

**2. Hussain Alhussainy (Political Sciences)**

**Statement of Interest**

I am eager to serve as a GSA Senator to help bridge the voices of graduate students, especially those facing systemic barriers. As someone who has advocated extensively for accessibility,

student equity, and inclusive policy across university governance structures, I see the Senate as a powerful venue to further these goals. I'm especially drawn to the Senate's commitment to "inquire, connect, and promote", pillars that resonate deeply with my work on the Council for Disability Cultures and Access (formerly known as the Council on Systemic Ableism) and within the Political Science Graduate Students' Association.

This role offers a chance to champion not only the Academic, professional, and social student experience but also ensure that the Senate's strategic priorities, particularly in equity, diversity, and inclusion, are translated into meaningful engagement with underserved communities. My objective is to serve as both a listener and a representative, advancing student well-being while amplifying critical issues around accessibility, mental health, and representation within institutional policy.

#### **Bio**

My experience has prepared me to serve in this role with clarity and purpose. Currently, as Vice President Labour for the Political Science Graduate Students' Association, I advocate for fair working conditions, inclusive departmental practices, and transparent decision-making. I also serve as a Councillor and founding member of the Council for Disability Cultures and Access (formerly the Council on Systemic Ableism), working to advance institutional access and disability justice.

During my undergrad, as President of the Organization for Arts Students and Interdisciplinary Studies (OASIS), (the faculty of arts undergraduate student association), I led faculty-wide consultations on proposed policy changes, secured expanded funding for student services, and launched long-term programming around mentorship, accessibility, and marginalized student voices. I also helped organize inclusive faculty events and completed an accessibility audit to inform infrastructure improvements.

Within university governance, I served on the General Faculties Council, Arts Faculty Council, and Council on Student Affairs, where I engaged in academic policy review, contributed to strategic planning, and relayed student concerns with a focus on equity and inclusion.

These roles have deepened my capacity to represent students across diverse governance contexts and to connect institutional decisions to the realities of those most affected by them.

I am a Master's student in Political Science and a SSHRC award recipient with a strong academic and advocacy background in disability justice, governance, and policy. My research engages with structural inequality in post-secondary systems, and my volunteer leadership has consistently focused on translating these ideas into tangible improvements for students.

Professionally and voluntarily, I bring over five years of experience in student representation and community-based initiatives. As a Councillor and founding member of the Council for Disability Cultures and Access (formerly the Council on Systemic Ableism), I work to advance disability inclusion not only through accessibility measures, but through cultural and institutional change. My leadership in student associations, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, has equipped me with experience in policy review, stakeholder engagement, and inclusive programming.

I bring to the Senate an ability to listen deeply, advocate clearly, and promote the needs of Graduate students.

## Item 4e: Nominees for GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee

## GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee (ONE (1) COUNCILLOR POSITION)  
THREE (3) NOMINEES**

The vacancy was advertised in the GSA Newsletter and on the GSA website on May 23 and 30. The deadline to receive nominations was June 6 2025 at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA received three (3) nominations by the deadline.

**There will be an electronic ballot vote held at the June 23 2025 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday June 23 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Administrative Coordinator ([gsaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaca@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday June 23 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. Mohammad Hamza (Mechanical Engineering)**
- 2. Jodie Harbarenko (AFNS)**
- 3. Maryam Shahrokhi Sardoo (Dentistry)**

**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. Mohammad Hamza (Mechanical Engineering)**

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

HVAC ASHRAE, where I helped track event budgets, manage vendor negotiations, and ensure we stayed within our financial limits—all while maintaining the quality of the event experience.

These experiences taught me the importance of transparent budgeting, cost-conscious decision-making, and aligning financial planning with organizational goals—values that I am eager to bring to the GSA Budget & Finance Committee.

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

## **2. Jodie Harbarenko (AFNS)**

### **Statement of Interest**

I would like to become involved with GSA and share my skill set, as well as networking opportunities and skill building. I also look forward to supporting my fellow students and learning more about the work that GSA does.

### **Bio**

Volunteer member of business committee for Nourish Nova Scotia.  
 Volunteer board member for SPCA.  
 Volunteer committee member for Dietitians of Canada Continuing Education in Alberta.  
 Volunteer work with Edmonton Celiac Association, peer support and fundraising.  
 Volunteer work with Kids Action Program.

I am a registered dietitian, currently attending U of A to complete my Masters degree, working on the KETO-IM study. I also work part-time as a clinical dietitian in long-term care. My experience as an RD includes food service management work that encompassed aspects of business and finance.  
 Prior to becoming a dietitian, I worked in management and business banking. I also have a diploma in business administration. I believe these skills would be well suited to work on the finance committee for the GSA. I also have prior experience with board and committee work so I am somewhat familiar with governance procedures and operation of non-profit organizations.

## **3. Maryam Shahrokhi Sardoo (Dentistry)**



**Statement of Interest**

As a graduate student deeply engaged in academic and leadership activities, I am passionate about supporting student-led governance and ensuring responsible financial planning within our community. Serving on the GSA Budget & Finance Committee offers a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the financial stewardship and long-term sustainability of the GSA. I'm particularly interested in helping align the GSA's budget with its strategic priorities and enhancing transparency and value for all members.

**Bio**

Executive Volunteer, Week of Welcome 2025 – University of Alberta

Proctor – University of Alberta

Volunteer Dentist – Abolfazl Charity Dental Clinic

Dentist – Elderly Care Community Program

Executive Staff – First Spring Dental Research School, Shiraz University

Executive Staff – 6th Dental Summer School, Shiraz University

Executive Staff – 2nd Dental Summer School, Shiraz University

Dentist – World Cavity-Free Future Day, Shiraz University

Executive Staff – 8th International Burn Congress, Iran

I'm a Master's student in Dentistry with a background in both clinical work and academic research. I've organized large student events, volunteered in community dental clinics, and been involved in student groups like the SRG at UAlberta. Through these experiences, I've developed strong teamwork, planning, and communication skills. I enjoy working with diverse teams and contributing to something bigger than myself—especially when it helps fellow grad students. I'd love to bring my mix of organization, leadership, and community focus to this committee and help support smart, sustainable decisions for the GSA.

## Item 7a: GSA President Reports

**2025-2026 President  
Report to GSA Council for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Aashish Kumar, President
Date: 20 June 2025

**2025-2026 GSA President Meetings Attended (Aashish Kumar)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Date	Meeting
27 May 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging Department Chair
27 May 2025	GSA: Strategic Work Plan Town Hall
27 May 2025	BFC Meeting - Hybrid
28 May 2025	CSSH College Dean Selection   Meeting 1
28 May 2025	Hold: Edmonton Student Alliance Meeting
28 May 2025	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic
29 May 2025	GSA President/Dept. Chair Introductory Meeting, Mechanical Engineering
29 May 2025	Dr. Ravi Pendse: AI and the Student Experience Action Plan
29 May 2025	GSA President/Dept. Chairs Introductory Meeting, Dept of Music
30 May 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Rehabilitation Science
2 June 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Women and Gender Studies Department
3 June 2025	VIRTUAL: Co-Sponsor Updates SEAP
3 June 2025	Melissa Padfield and Aashish Kumar GSA President
3 June 2025	ZOOM: CSSH College Dean Selection   Town Hall
3 June 2025	UofA Board Finance and Property Committee
4 June 2025	EDIC Monthly Meeting
5 June 2025	GSA President/Dept. Chair Introductory Meeting, FOMD

5 June 2025	GSA Career Fair Discussion (Jia from Career Support Center)
6 June 2025	UofA Board Learning, Research and Student Experience
9 June 2025	GSA President/Dept. Chair Introductory Meeting Biomedical Engineering
9 June 2025	StudyWell (Health and Dental Care Plan)
9 June 2025	Napping Station Pilot Introduction Meeting
10 June 2025	CSSH College Dean Selection   Meeting 2
10 June 2025	Strategic Work Plan Finalizing Discussion
10 June 2025	Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies
11 June 2025	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
12 June 2025	Gateway Interview
12 June 2025	Celebrating our UAlberta Honorary Degree Recipients
13 June 2025	GC Monthly Meeting
16 June 2025	SU/GSA Presidents & VPSL Meeting
18 June 2025	Aashish / Pedro Monthly
18 June 2025	Meeting with GSA/Florence Glanfield
19 June 2025	ED Hiring Committee
19 June 2025	DoS-Freshservice Working Meeting
19 June 2025	In Person: Proposed DSAI graduate certificate consultation
20 June 2025	UofA BOG

Dear Council Colleagues,

Over the past month, my primary focus has been finalizing the new health and dental care plan, a significant initiative aimed at improving student wellness and access to essential services. This effort culminated in collaboration with StudyWell and included the June 9 meeting, which was a key milestone in preparing the rollout.

In parallel, I continued strategic outreach to Department Chairs, reinforcing the importance of integrating COOP (co-operative education) options into newly developed course-based graduate programs. As previously shared, the objective of these meetings is to advocate for graduate student opportunities and experiential learning pathways.

Over the past few weeks, the circulation of a petition and a series of unauthorized messages by a member of the GSA has created significant disruption within our community. These communications, which include serious yet unfounded allegations—such as claims of election fraud and demands for staff

removals—are riddled with misinformation, policy misinterpretations, and privacy violations. In addition to breaching university policy and FOIP regulations, the tone and content of these messages have included xenophobic and defamatory language that deeply undermines the values of inclusion and respect we are striving to uphold. This chaos has significantly hindered my ability to function effectively in my role and has been a major distraction from the work we should be focused on—supporting and uplifting graduate students. Reading the content of some of the circulated emails has been extremely concerning, not only for their factual inaccuracy but for their divisive and harmful rhetoric. My sincere hope is that Council will take decisive and principled action in response to these events so that we can begin to rebuild trust, restore focus, and move forward together toward a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient GSA.

**2025-2026 President  
Report to the University of Alberta Board of Governors**

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

As I step into my role as the new President of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), I am honored to represent the voices and needs of our diverse and vibrant graduate student community. I look forward to building on the foundations laid by previous GSA leadership and collaborating with university and government stakeholders to advocate for a more inclusive, supportive, and sustainable graduate student experience.

1. Multiculturalism Day & Canada Day Celebration:

In the spirit of celebrating diversity, inclusion, and the values shared by Canadians, the GSA is pleased to be a co-host of a special campus-wide event on Friday, June 27th, in recognition of Multiculturalism Day. This event, co-organized with ASSET and ISVS, will take place in Quad and invites all members of the University of Alberta community to participate in a vibrant celebration of cultures, identities, and community spirit.

Importantly, this event falls just ahead of Canada Day and provides a meaningful opportunity for many newly arrived graduate and undergraduate students—many of whom began their programs during the spring and summer months—to experience their first on-campus Canada Day celebration.

As part of this initiative, we are proud to be incorporating elements of community support and solidarity:

- Campus Food Bank donations: Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to support food security on campus.
- Winter Coat Drive for Newcomers: ISVS will set up a table and clothing rack to collect gently used winter coats for newly arriving Palestinian students joining the University of Alberta under the Displaced Palestinian Student Bursary Program. We expect to welcome up to 30 students through this program and were proud to greet the first student on May 21st.

We are committed to ensuring this event is joyful, inclusive, and welcoming to all, and we hope it strengthens a sense of belonging across our campus community.

2. Early Priorities and Transition

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As a newly elected executive team, my colleagues and I are currently in the process of assessing existing GSA initiatives, receiving handovers from outgoing officers, and beginning our internal strategic planning for the 2025–2026 term. Our initial areas of focus include:

- Continuing strong advocacy on tuition affordability and cost-of-living pressures for graduate students.
- Securing sustainable funding for mental health supports, including the Graduate Peer Support Program.
- Advancing digital accessibility and infrastructure, including long-awaited improvements to campus Wi-Fi.
- Expanding international student support, especially for vulnerable and displaced students.

Additionally, I will be advocating strongly for an increase in the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF). While the fund has remained nominally consistent, it has effectively decreased in value over the years due to the absence of CPI adjustments—making it inadequate to meet current student needs in a high-inflation environment. A stronger GSSF is critical to ensuring financial equity and targeted student support.

In particular, the GSA has been a vocal advocate in response to the budgetary cuts to six affiliated childcare centres, which have had a disproportionate impact on graduate student parents. One of the most direct ways to support students juggling research, coursework, and single parenting is by increasing the childcare grants available through the GSSF. The GSA had originally budgeted \$378,400 for these grants but ultimately disbursed over \$418,000, highlighting the growing demand and critical importance of this support. This year, we will be adjusting the low-income threshold to 2023 levels, thereby expanding eligibility and reaching more parents in need.

Increasing the GSSF not only strengthens our support for vulnerable students but also aligns with the University's public values. By demonstrating our commitment to supporting graduate student parents, we send a strong and positive message about equity, access, and inclusion in higher education.

### 3. Organizational Leadership & Transition

I would like to inform the Board that GSA is currently undergoing a leadership transition at the staff level. Following the departure of our previous Executive Director, we have appointed our Associate Director to

serve as Acting Executive Director while we conduct a search for a new permanent hire. The hiring process is already underway and will be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. We are committed to ensuring broad representation in this important decision, which includes a general GSA member as part of the hiring committee. This approach reflects our values of shared governance and accountability to our membership. While we have faced a few operational hiccups over the past few months, I am happy to report that the GSA continues to operate smoothly and effectively. I am confident that this transition will further strengthen our organizational capacity and position us well for the year ahead.

#### 4. Strategic Townhall: Career Support as a Key Priority

In May, we hosted a Strategic Townhall with graduate students to better understand emerging concerns and priorities. A recurring theme across the discussion was the lack of adequate career support, particularly for course-based students, who expressed feeling overlooked despite contributing significantly through tuition and fees. Students voiced a strong desire for a dedicated Graduate Career Fair and more tailored career programming. Many international students shared that they felt particularly disadvantaged due to the lack of local references and networks, further compounding their job search challenges. I will be working closely with the Career Centre to explore potential solutions, with the aim of creating more equitable, effective, and accessible career development opportunities for all graduate students.

#### 5. Exam Reimbursement Program

I am committed to launching an Exam Reimbursement Program to support graduate students pursuing professional credentials. The program will reimburse students for the cost of select passed exams, subject to a strict eligibility criteria.

Eligible exams will likely include: CFA, CPA, FRM, Actuarial (SOA/CAS), APEGA (NPPE), MCAT, LSAT, and licensing exams such as NCLEX, PEBC, MCCQE, RCIC, among others.

This initiative supports career development and aligns with the provincial government's focus on workforce readiness. To ensure sustainability, I intend to fund it through an expanded GSSF, reinforcing the need for increased support in the upcoming year.

#### 6. Graduate Funding Framework Improvements

In addition, I will be working with the GPS Dean Tracy Ravio to promote improvements to graduate funding frameworks, inspired by positive changes recently being implemented in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. These changes ensure that external awards up to \$2,000 are not offset by reductions in base funding, encouraging students to apply for smaller scholarships without fear of losing their guaranteed minimum funding.

For example, under this model:

- Students who receive \$0–\$2,000 in scholarships keep the full amount on top of their base funding.
- As award values increase, students receive a mandatory top-up (e.g., \$2,500 for \$2,001–\$5,000 in cumulative awards), rather than having their base funding reduced.
- Awards over \$40,000 are left to supervisor discretion, unless otherwise specified by the scholarship's Terms of Reference.

I believe adopting similar policies across faculties would incentivize scholarship applications, enhance fairness, and provide meaningful financial recognition to student achievement—while preserving the minimum guaranteed funding model many departments already follow.

## 7. Course-Based Scholarship Continuation

I would like to express my sincere thanks to President Bill Flanagan for his continued support of the Course-Based Graduate Student Scholarship. This funding has provided critical relief to some of our most financially vulnerable students. Building on the GSA's past advocacy and the success of this initiative, I will continue to advocate for the long-term continuation of this scholarship for many years to come, ensuring that course-based students receive the recognition and financial support they deserve.

## 8. Health and Dental Plan Update

We are currently in the process of finalizing the Health and Dental Plan for the upcoming academic year. Ensuring that the plan remains comprehensive, accessible, and affordable continues to be a top priority for the GSA. We are working closely with our partners to assess student needs and ensure the plan delivers meaningful value to our members.



## 9. Launching the "Help Your Shelf" Hand-Me-Down Store

We are actively working toward the launch of a new hand-me-down store, “Help Your Shelf,” which will provide graduate students with access to gently used household items, clothing, and other essentials. This initiative builds on our longstanding commitment to student well-being and complements our work as a founding member of the Campus Food Bank, which continues to offer vital support—particularly to international graduate students facing food insecurity.

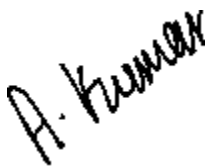
We see Help Your Shelf as the next big step in expanding wraparound support services for graduate students working in collaboration with the Campus Food Bank. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dean of Students Ravina Sanghera, Sarah Wolgemuth, and Kevin Frieze for their ongoing partnership and support in making this initiative possible. We also want to acknowledge the strong collaboration we’ve had with the Students’ Union (SU) on shared priorities—something we deeply value and look forward to continuing in the months ahead.

I would like to acknowledge the work of former President Haseeb Arshad and his executive team, whose efforts on peer support, food insecurity, tuition advocacy, and digital access laid a strong groundwork for continued progress.

Over the summer, we will continue listening to graduate students, engaging with university leadership, and building partnerships to serve our diverse community. In particular, we are preparing for a new cycle of consultations and student engagement leading into the fall, when most of our members return to campus. Our goal is to foster transparent communication and increase student participation in university decision-making processes.

Thank you for your continued support of graduate students. I look forward to working together over the coming year to enhance the academic, financial, and personal well-being of all graduate students at the University of Alberta.

Sincerely,



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

Item 7b: Vice-President Academic Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Chen Okafor
Date: June 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2025

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between May 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 18<sup>th</sup> (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	GMeet: Chen Okafor/Carrie Smith
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Experiential Learning Council Meeting
May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	GFC Council Caucus
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	GFC Council
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	GFC Nominating Committee–Staff Replenishment
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	University Research and Innovation Advisory Committee
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Graduate Program Support Team
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	CSSH College Dean Selection Town Hall
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting
June 12 <sup>th</sup>	UAlberta Honorary Degree Recipient Celebration
June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Convocation: Kinesiology, Public Health & Rehab Medicine

Dear Council Colleagues,

I am now in my second month as VP Academic for the Graduate Student Association. I am happy to report that very soon I will be having regular walk-in hours for graduate students to come and voice any

academic concerns they may be having. My meetings for the past one month are listed below for your review.

**GMeet: Chen Okafor/Carrie Smith (May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025)**

I met with Carrie Smith who is the Vice Provost for Access, Community and Belonging to discuss the Discrimination and Harassment Policy that was set to be voted upon by the GFC at the time. It has since passed. However, I voiced my opposition to the policy because I felt that the language was too vague and open to interpretation, even exploitation. Carrie and I also discussed accessibility for the disabled on our campus. Carrie will be giving a presentation on this very topic at our August Council meeting.

**Experiential Learning Council Meeting (May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025)**

In this meeting I came to understand what experiential learning is: practical, on the field learning that does not occur in textbooks. Such learning includes practicum, internships and work experience. There was discussion on the merits of assessing experiential and work integrated learning as **credit or no credit** vs. **letter grades**. The committee hopes to have a policy in place regarding experiential learning by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

**GFC Council Caucus (May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025)**

I led this virtual meeting in preparation for the May 26<sup>th</sup> GFC Council meeting. The meeting comprised of going through the GFC agenda for the following Monday and asking whether anyone had questions. Questions were directed to Kate Peters, who is the Secretary for the GFC.

**GFC Council (May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

I made clear during this GFC meeting that I was opposed to the Discrimination and Harassment Policy in its current form as I felt it was too vague and had loopholes that could be exploited. The policy did end up passing, however it was still very important for me to make clear that I did not think it was written in a way that adequately protected graduate students. GFC will also be introducing a brand-new IT Security Policy this September, a policy that a few members have already expressed opposition to.

**GFC Nominating Committee–Staff Replenishment (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

For this meeting I was given a roster of names and asked to render my opinion on the respective candidates' qualifications for the various GFC committees being sought after. There was also discussion on the soon to be formed ad hoc committee on academic governance which is tasked with reviewing GFC composition. I have nominated several individuals to be a part of this committee.

**Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

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I introduced myself along with President Aashish Kumar to Tracy Raivio who is the Vice Provost and Dean of GPS. The topics on the agenda included scholarships for course-based Master's students, Peer Connect Conference, GPS Action Partnership Plan and GSSF funds. We also discussed accessing tuition fees information to better assess how to help graduate students. Tracy recommended we reach out to Roger Epp who is the former dean of GPS. Roger may be present at our next executive board meeting.

#### **GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

For this meeting we continued work on the training program for the Graduate Student Peer Support program. We established that the GSPS training will be for 2 days with eighteen hours of required training. As of this meeting 46 people had signed up so far to be a part of the program.

#### **University Research and Innovation Advisory Committee (May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

I attended my first URIA meeting chaired by Ian Winship. Ian and I are currently trying to set up a one on one so he can brief me on the mission of this research based committee and its stated purpose within the university framework.

#### **Graduate Program Support Team (June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025)**

We met to discuss the development of a Postdoctoral Certificate in Medical Physics, for those who already have a degree in Physics. This committee is also overseeing the development of a Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies along with a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Research.

#### **CSSH College Dean Selection Town Hall (June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025)**

I attended this virtual meeting where Verna the Provost opened the floor to questions regarding the process for selecting a dean for the College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

#### **Learning Management System (LMS) of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting (June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

In this meeting we discussed the transition from eClass to Canvas which will be complete on August 15<sup>th</sup>. CTL (Center for Teaching and Learning) has several upcoming Canvas learning opportunities. Come Fall 2025, Canvas will be the only LMS supported by the university.

#### **UAlberta Honorary Degree Recipient Celebration (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

I attended this high-profile event at Timms Center for the Arts hosted by Chancellor Somji, an evening meant to celebrate the conferral of honorary degrees upon five distinguished recipients.

**Spring Convocation: Kinesiology, Public Health & Rehab Medicine (June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

This convocation ceremony for both undergraduate and graduate students in Kinesiology was my first at UAlberta, and I am scheduled to attend more in the coming weeks.

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

Sincerely,  
Chen Okafor  
VP Academic (2025-26)

## Item 7d: Vice-President Student Services Report

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

<b>To:</b> GSA Council
<b>From:</b> Saad A. Iqbal
<b>Date:</b> June 20, 2025

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

Below is a list of meetings I attended between May 21, 2025, and June 20 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
May 22	Meeting with Studywell (Health & Dental Plan provider)
May 26	Meeting with a student (confidential)
May 27	GSA Strategic Work Plan Town Hall
May 28	GSA/ISVS Summer Collaboration Planning (Canada Day Celebration)
May 28	Days of Action Committee Meeting
May 30	GSA/Campus & Community Recreation (CCR) Bi-Monthly Meeting
May 30	Mamava Pod Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
June 2	Student Parent Working Group Meeting
June 3	World Hello Day Working Group Meeting
June 5	GSA/SU Meeting (childcare services and collaboration)
June 5	Campus Food Bank Co-Chairs and ED Meeting
June 9	Meeting with Studywell (Health & Dental Plan provider)

June 9	GSA/Student Group Meeting (Napping Station Pilot Project)
June 9	Campus Food Bank Co-Chairs and ED Meeting
June 9	Campus Food Bank Board Meeting
June 10	Meeting with Christa Engel (Orientation & Transition Programs)
June 11	Spring Convocation (Science)
June 11	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
June 12	Meeting with Kevin Friese
June 13	Spring Convocation (Medicine & Dentistry)
June 13	World Hello Day Working Group Meeting
June 16	GSA/SU Meeting (Re-aligning common goals and advocacy efforts)
June 17-18	Healthy Campus Alberta Summit (Calgary)
June 18	GSA Meeting with Florence Glanfield
June 19	Campus Food Bank Co-Chairs and ED Meeting
June 19	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
June 20	GSA/ Campus & Community Recreation (CCR) Facilities Tour



Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope you're all doing well in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between May 21 - June 20, 2025:

**Meeting with Studywell (Health & Dental Plan provider)**

We have had several meetings with Ellement, our new Health & Dental Plan Providers. During these meetings, we have discussed the coverage, fees, as well as addressed some of the concerns we have to ensure we have a smooth transition. Alongside, we have also been discussing how to ensure that graduate students are aware of the plan coverage, opt-in and opt-out procedures and specific information about service providers. Once we have finalized the plan details, we will be organizing educational and awareness campaigns for graduate students.

**GSA Strategic Work Plan Town Hall**

In our SWP Town Hall, the DEOs described their roles in detail as well as their priorities for this year. As mentioned above, organizing awareness campaigns is one of my key priorities this year, as this gap has been identified multiple times by students. Additionally, I plan to continue working for the Help Your Shelf Store and the Hydroponics Farm, addressing food insecurity and sustainable clothing donations. Similarly (as highlighted in our recent survey), I also want to work to enhance support for graduate students who parent in various ways. Mental health support (also highlighted in the survey) is a key priority as well. Spearheading the GSA Health & Wellness Hub is, therefore, one of the key priorities and I will be working closely with relevant stakeholders. The GSA SWP will soon be shared with all stakeholders.

**GSA/ISVS Summer Collaboration Planning (Canada Day Celebration)**

We were reached out to by the ISVS to co-organize the Canada Day Celebration. In our Meeting, our VPSL, VPE, I and a staff member met with Diana Kim to go through the details of the proposal. We are now collaborating for this event with the ISVS through equal financial contribution. The event will have a free BBQ, flag-bearing ceremony and other fun activities. Alongside, the Campus Food Bank will also organize a tabling where they will share awareness about food insecurity and the services offered by the CFB. Other groups, such as ASSET and UAISA, are also part of the event organizers. The event is set for June 27 in the Main Quad. The details can be found through our social media and the GSA Newsletter.

**Days of Action Committee Meeting**

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In this regular meeting, members discussed key programming ideas for the Days of Action, along with key messaging, behaviours, structure and expectations from the groups, and the key dates for observing the Days of Action.

### **GSA/Campus & Community Recreation (CCR) Bi-Monthly Meeting**

Our VPSL and I met with representatives from the CCR. We discussed ideas of collaboration, especially in the Fall term. We are currently planning some activities for more engagement in the CCR facilities and to include CCR services in our awareness campaigns. At this time, we are considering a GSA Social event in one of the areas under the CCR. More details will be shared once we have had further meetings.

### **Mamava Pod Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

I had a chance to represent the GSA and be a member of the Student Parent Working Group in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly launched Mamava Pod. This is a collaboration between the Dean of Students Office and the SU, with some participation from the Student Parent Working Group. The pod is now accessible, and there is a free [app](#) to help parents who want to use it.

### **Student Parent Working Group Meeting**

In this meeting, members discussed the vision, mission, and values of the working group. We also discussed how to enhance the memberships and representation in the group to include members from all demographics. I also highlighted that the funding cuts to the six affiliated daycare centers are going to impact users, as well as using creative ways to inform student parents about the services offered on campus. The working group is yet to incorporate the results of the recently completed student-parent/caregiver survey.

### **World Hello Day Working Group Meeting**

In the two meetings attended for the World Hello Day Programming, members discussed different types of activities to be planned. We also looked at our availabilities through the Spring and Summer terms. The group is planning two active and one passive activity to observe World Hello Day. We divided the work into subgroups and also looked at communication strategies to be used to advertise the events. Once planning progresses, I will be sharing more details. The main events will also be widely shared using different communication channels.

### **GSA/SU Meeting (childcare services and collaboration)**

Our VPSL and I met with the SU VP Operations and Finance to discuss key strategies and areas of collaboration regarding childcare service providers and support for students who are parents. At this

time, we are looking at a number of collaborations aimed at facilitating both undergraduate and graduate student parents. Information sharing, shared advocacy efforts, and shared resources through childcare service providers are some of the areas that were discussed and agreed upon. We will be discussing more details in future, and I will keep the Council updated.

**GSA/Student Group Meeting (Napping Station Pilot Project)**

The President and I met with a student regarding a pilot project for a napping station. Although this seems like a great opportunity, we may have to postpone this because of funding and space issues. There is, however, a possibility that the SU carries out the project. If the pilot is successful, we may look into this further, provided we have the funding and space to replicate the project.

**Campus Food Bank Board Meeting**

The CFB Board Meeting was a regular online meeting for generative ideas and information sharing. The Board is currently looking forward to positive changes to the policies, assessing benchmarks and standards of excellence while also re-aligning the goals and objectives of the Board. Recently, the Budget for the CFB for this year was passed by the Board, and areas of operation are working as per routine. The President has previously asked me to share data on the usage of the CFB among graduate students. This data is expected to be shared by the ED this week. The President would like to utilize this data to advocate for the need for more sustainable funding sources for the CFB. I am also planning to include the CFB and its services in our educational and awareness campaign. More details will be shared in future.

**Meeting with Christa Engel (Orientation & Transition Programs)**

Christa Engel, as a part of the Student Parent Working Group, is organizing one-on-one discussions with the members of the group to realign areas of focus and collaboration. We had a great discussion on the GSA's priorities for student parents as well as some areas for potential collaboration with the Dean of Students. Alongside advocacy, we believe awareness campaigns, workshops, and social activities involving student parents and their children are some of the ways to support them. I will be sharing more details once we have developed the plans further.

**GSA/SU Meeting (Re-aligning common goals and advocacy efforts)**

Our President and I met with the SU President and VP Student Life to realign our common goals and advocacy efforts. In the meeting, we also briefly looked at some of the areas where we think we can collaborate with the SU. The Presidents also touched upon their key priorities for the year to see if there are any areas where efforts could be joined together. Previously, the SU and the GSA have shared key resources, advocacy efforts, and event planning to cater to both undergraduate and graduate student

populations. We are hopeful to continue our efforts to strengthen these ties further. While we might not be collaborating on some areas due to different financial and logistical realities and areas of focus, there are some areas where we saw opportunities to strengthen our partnerships.

### **Healthy Campus Alberta Summit (Calgary)**

On behalf of the GSA, I attended the Healthy Campus Alberta Summit in Calgary. This was a very productive engagement where I had a chance to learn how some of the other post-secondary institutions are addressing mental health and the different services, events they offer to their students. In one of the sessions, the role of student organizations and how they can help universities in strengthening these efforts was also discussed. In another session, I learned about the value of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and evidence-based approaches. We also talked about the value of the culture of connection, belonging, the benefits of neighbouring, recreation opportunities, emergency preparedness, and using resident assistants for consultations and knowledge sharing (in terms of student housing on campus). In a collaborative session, we discussed key questions related to mental health on campuses, including current knowledge and research gaps, challenges involved, driving meaningful impact, and gaps in representation from different demographics. One of the sessions focused on interconnected partnerships, shared responsibility and resources, identifying common goals, clear communication, striking work/life balance, as well as setting expectations among partner groups/organizations. In the previous year, we were able to leverage some of these aspects and formed meaningful partnerships with groups and units across campus. I think this is something we can develop further and ensure that we connect with other stakeholders on campus this year and work together toward common goals and objectives in addressing mental health and well-being.

### **GSA Meeting with Florence Glanfield**

The GSA Executive Board met with Dr. Florence Glanfield, Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming & Research, UofA). Dr. Florence has been actively involved in the creation of the VPIR position and has also been helping the GSA in advertising the By-elections for the position. The meeting was held to discuss the recent events regarding the elections for the VPIR position and seek guidance from her to move forward in a respectful and meaningful way. Dr. Florence is also graciously helping the GSA in connecting with an Indigenous knowledge holder to help us navigate and move forward with an understanding of Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing, being, and doing. This meeting is set for June 23, and I look forward to learning and re-learning through the teachings of the Knowledge Holder.

### **GSA/ Campus & Community Recreation (CCR) Facilities Tour**

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Earlier this year, I requested a tour of the CCR facilities for the GSA Executive Board, which was organized on May 20. Christin Legault gave us a detailed tour of the Hansen Fitness and Lifestyle Centre, the Van Vliet and other associated facilities. The purpose of the visit was to inform the board members about the various community and recreation opportunities that can be availed by graduate students. The Centre now has a [live tracker](#) that can be used to track occupancy in the Centre during regular hours of operation.

**Important Notes:**

1. The office of the Dean of Students is offering ***Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)*** to our student communities. There are limited spots available for these dates: June 12-13, July 31-Aug 1, Oct 16-17, Nov 6-7, and Dec 11-Jan 1. Interested councillors can directly contact Kevin Friese at [friese@ualberta.ca](mailto:friese@ualberta.ca). Please note that if interested, you will have to attend both days together as shared above.
2. If you are a student parent, please visit this [link](#) to see more details about lactation stations and other services provided for student parents on campus.

Best Regards,

***Saad Arslan Iqbal***

GSA VP Student Services (2024-25)

*Please email me at [gsavpsse@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpsse@ualberta.ca) if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback related to my portfolio or the initiatives.*

## Item 7c: Vice-President Student Life Reports

**2025-2026 Vice-President Student Life  
Report to GSA Council for the June 2025 Meeting**

**2025-2026 Vice-President Student Life's Meetings Attended (Hazel)**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between May 22nd 2025 to June 18th 2025 (**not inclusive of weekly GSA Board and other internal meetings**). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

## Reports:

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

GSA/UAI Collab (May 28)
Days of Action (May 28 and 29)
Campus Community and Recreation (May 30)
Meeting with the Assistant Dean, Community Wellness Supports - SAC (June 3)
World Mental Health Day (June 3)
GSA EDIC (June 4)
UASAC Meeting (June 5)
Meeting with Deb Eerkes, Lead SGBV Response (June 5)
GSA/SU (June 6)
Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations (June 9)
Meeting with a student (June 11)
Governance Committee (June 13)

## GSA Council Report

Date: June 23rd, 2025

From: Hazel Kemuma, Vice President (Student Life)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope as it's progressively getting warmer, we are all now encouraged to step outside and engage in fun summer activities. The following is a brief report on some of the meetings that I have been involved in since the last council update:

**Multiculturalism Day & Canada Day Celebration Planning Meeting:**

I attended a planning meeting with representatives from Asset, ISVS, and the GSA to coordinate a joint campus event in celebration of Multiculturalism Day (June 27) and Canada Day. The event aims to foster diversity, inclusion, and community connection, particularly for new students who

have arrived during the spring and summer terms. The GSA will take the lead on organizing the BBQ and recruiting volunteers to assist with flag carrying during the celebration. The event will also support charitable causes, including a Campus Food Bank donation drive and a winter coat collection for displaced Palestinian students newly arrived under the UofA bursary program.

**Days of Action (DOA) Orientation and Mental Health Collaboration:**

I participated in an introductory session on the various Days of Action (DOA) observed on campus, and I will be part of the planning committee for World Mental Health Day. To gain deeper insight into DOA initiatives, I had a 1:1 follow-up meeting with Heather, where we agreed to maintain close collaboration on mental health-related efforts. This includes joint input on GSA events such as Social Hours and other wellness-focused programming to ensure alignment with campus-wide mental health priorities.

**Meeting with Campus Community and Recreation (CCR):**

I met with CCR to discuss potential collaborations and received updates on the Hanson Fitness and Lifestyle Center (HFLC). While we await the analysis of recent survey data, CCR shared last year's results to inform planning. We explored the idea of hosting joint sports events at campus recreation facilities, with the GSA setting up an information table to engage participants and promote available graduate student resources.

**World Mental Health Day Working Group:**

As a member of the planning team, I participated in the first meeting of the World Mental Health Day Working Group. We agreed to retain the mental health awareness walk, which received positive feedback last year, while implementing improvements in route accessibility and distance. We also noted the need to develop a clearer and more engaging wrap-up session at the end of the walk to enhance participant experience.

**UASAC Hiring Panel Participation:**

I was invited to serve as a panelist for the hiring process of the new Manager at the University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre (UASAC). The panel aimed to assess candidates' leadership capacity in providing trauma-informed care and fostering a supportive environment for survivors. This engagement also offered a valuable opportunity to advocate for graduate student needs within campus support services.

**Residence Services and Move-In Coordination Meeting:**

I followed up on the move-in volunteer forms, which have now been shared, and DEOs are in the process of signing up. It was confirmed that our GSA tabling area will be strategically placed to maximize engagement with incoming graduate students. We also discussed the upcoming staff reshuffling within residence management, and plans are underway to schedule introductory meetings with the new team to explore how best to support graduate students in residence.

Thank you for your continued support and should you have any questions, concerns or contributions please feel free to contact me.

### **GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report**

The committee continues work on the Harm Reduction Tent initiative, which promotes student safety through access to harm reduction supplies, peer-based education, and trauma-informed resources at campus events where alcohol is served. This year's scope includes a funding needs assessment, volunteer training, data tracking, and a coordinated awareness campaign.

Project updates from the EDIC two-year action plan included the identification of the following as key priority areas for this year (with further input expected from the broader committee):

- **Continuation of the Harm Reduction Tent:** We are currently working on securing grants and exploring funding options. A request for support has also been brought to the GSA Board. Niloufar (VP External) will be leading outreach to campus-based alcohol vendors to seek sponsorship opportunities.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** The committee seeks to prioritize joint programming, events, and policy work with the GSA, university units, and student-led groups.
- **Resource Allocation:** Early steps are being taken to explore the formation of an EDIC Funding Advisory Group, with longer-term goals to develop scholarships, advocate for inclusive research, and identify funding gaps.

A presentation on the experiences of Palestinian students was delivered to the committee as part of broader advocacy around Anti-Palestinian Racism. At this stage, deliberations are ongoing on how best the GSA can support and advocate for affected students in a meaningful and accountable way.

**Yours sincerely,  
Hazel Kemuma.  
VP Student Life 2025-2026**



## Item 7e: Vice-President External Report

**2024-2025 Vice-President External  
Report to GSA Council for the June 23, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Niloufar Mirfallah
Date: June, 23, 2025

**2025-2026 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Niloufar)**

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

Date	Meeting
May 28	Edmonton Student Alliance meeting
May 28	Alumni Council Year Celebration
May 28	Summer Collaboration with UAI
June 11	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
June 13	ISE online meeting

**Awards for Faculty Excellence Adjudication Meeting**

The final decision meeting (Phase 2) is scheduled for June 19, 2025. In the meantime, between Phase 1 and Phase 2, I worked on the second phase of the applications.

**Edmonton Student Alliance meeting**

The meeting began with expressions of appreciation for the previous board. This was followed by the election of a new board.

**Alumni Council Year Celebration**

the previous board was appreciated and a new board was introduced

**UAI Collaboration – Canadian Multiculturalism Day Event**

I have been participating in planning discussions for the Canadian Multiculturalism Day celebration scheduled for **June 27, 2025**, in partnership with International Student & Visitor Services (ISVS), the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), ASSET (Alumni Student Support and Engagement Team), and the Campus Food Bank. The event will feature a flag ceremony, guest speeches, live performances, outdoor games, face-painting, and a community BBQ, while encouraging donations to the Campus Food Bank. Because this initiative falls under the VP External portfolio, I am coordinating with the executive team to ensure proper GSA representation and to align our involvement with the event's advocacy and community-engagement goals.

**International student Experience meeting (ISE)**

As co-chair of the ISE meeting and a member of the Innovation Grant Subcommittee, I participated in discussions that included an update on the subcommittee's ongoing work. We also reviewed the draft 2025–2026 work plan for the International Student Experience Innovation and Impact Grant and held an initial conversation about setting priorities for the upcoming year. Due to the sensitive nature of the draft materials, specific details remain confidential at this stage.

**Professional Exam Support Initiative**

As part of our efforts to expand career support, we've initiated development of an Exam Reimbursement Program aimed at helping graduate students recover the cost of key professional certification exams. We've begun outreach to a range of exam-administering bodies — including CPA, AAMC, PEBC, and others — to explore potential student discounts or collaboration opportunities. These conversations are still at an early stage, and no formal commitments have been made.

## Item 7f: Associate Vice-President Labour Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Nathan Lamarche, AVPL
Date: June 2025

**2024-2025 GSA AVPL Meetings Attended (Nathan Lamarche)**

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
2nd June	Meeting with PSAC
6th June	Labour Strategic Work Plan Town Hall
9th June	Labour Negotiations Meeting
10th June	Meeting with Law Firm
10th June	Meeting with Student Legal Services
11th June	Meeting with Outreach Coordinator concerning Town Hall and Outreach Event
18th June	Meeting with GSA/Florence Glanfield re VPIR Position
19th June	LRC Outreach Tabling Session-SUB
20th June	Meeting with University Administration

Dear GSA Council,

I hope the summer is going well! My report is fairly condensed into one core point, as that has taken up the vast majority of my time this month.

**Childcare**

Concerns have been raised about the University of Alberta's decision to cut childcare funding. I have reached out to two University unions to express my support in their fight against this decision by the University.

## **Law Consultations**

The GSA executive and Labour specifically have conflicting interests. Adding to that, the GSA executive has an ongoing practice and a profound history of manipulating and misrepresenting legal advice in order to put drive politically motivated decisions. It is a massive conflict of interest to have the same law firm representing Labour and the rest of the GSA. These law consultations have been on a variety of topics, but finding a separate law firm willing to represent Labour is a major component of that. No money has been spent on *my* outreach to law firms.

## **Democracy and the GSA**

Last meeting, which I was unable to attend due to being away for academic leave, I had prepared a report which was not read due to time constraints in council. I would like to update all of you on this matter today. As mentioned before, I have formally called for the President's resignation. Not only did he attempt to "order" me to not attend convocation ceremonies, but he also had someone among the staff remove the respective events from my calendar. I have had my emails to the council blocked, I have had my motions delayed, I have had my communications to my constituents altered. He has ignored emails and his responsibilities, he has suggested deliberately wasting the Labour budget, and he has manipulated the process of hiring an Executive Director to cut the hiring committee out of the equation.

The President does not seem to understand the concept of a democracy, and rather assumes that this is a dictatorship under his control. He will deny this, but this is how he has been acting. The steps he has taken are ones to impose his will and to advance his own self-interests. He is not your friend. He is an enemy of every single member of the Graduate Student Association, including the council.

Even taking his desires for a dictatorship aside, his priorities are clear. In last month's report, literally every single one of the points in the President's report was exclusively about international students, disregarding domestic students entirely. This is a man who has previously attempted to correct me about my own field and my own department. He does not represent the GSA, he represents himself.

The President sits on the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta. He is literally part of the highest governing body of the entire university. The very nature of his position within the GSA places him at a severe conflict of interest with virtually every decision he has the power to make. This is

also in direct violation of the Post-Secondary Learning Act, which requires that our representative on the BoG is appointed, which is not what we are doing by coupling the position with the President. A similar situation exists with the VPA and our representative on the General Faculties Council, which the PSLA deems must be elected.

The GSA is an organisation that represents the wellbeing of graduate students, not of the university. Our duty is not to make sure the university is doing well. My job as the AVPL is to ensure the wellbeing of academically employed graduate students. The office of the President is a risk to that mission, and the individual who occupies it has taken steps to deliberately tear it apart. We need accountability. We need trust. Currently, we have no system of protection whatsoever. Last month, the University of Calgary GSA provided its justification to the students in their coup to seize power and destroy democracy. Their rationale for the removal of the council and AVPL, all without a vote or proper process of any kind, was to lie. They claimed that the PSLA states that elected officials of the GSA must be elected by all graduate students. This is not true. But it didn't matter that it was a lie, they chose to do it anyway.

This is the reality that we face. It's a lesson I learned through union work, and it's one that remains relevant today. The Board is going to do whatever the Board wants to do. They will use any illegal action they feel is necessary to push their power through for their own benefit. This is what happened in Calgary. None of their council had a say. It was illegal, of course, but that didn't stop them. The lawsuits currently being fought against them aren't stopping them. They're just dipping into the wallets of graduate students to fund their own corruption. Calgary is not an isolated incident.

This is not some far-off thing. We're already seeing blatant election fraud, for which I have prepared a petition and a motion to fight against. I sent an email to many councillors with the link to this petition, but you can also find it [here](#), which you should consider a component of my report. This has been sent out to a great many students, with plans (as of my writing this) to send it out to many more. This matter of election fraud and corruption is where a substantial amount of my work this month has gone.

This is a crisis that has stepped beyond our doorstep and has long since occupied our home. Our GSA is about to perish. It will become an organisation that can administer fees as it desires to anyone it desires. It will be able to allocate funds as it so wishes. A tiny fraction of our budget goes to actually helping students. The vast majority of it goes to the executives and the staff, and not simply to paying stipends, but to giving bonuses, benefits, and vanity lines on a resume. This is being funded

by money out of your pocket. Each graduate student will pay in this coming year, 158,36\$. Of that, each student will pay 89,29\$ exclusively to the salaries and benefits of staff members. Another 32,25\$ will go exclusively to directly elected officers, excluding the AVPL. That's 77% of your fees going to DEOs and staff alone.

Would you like to know how much goes directly to the graduate students? Let's be generous and include the strategic work plan initiatives, even though those can functionally be spent on anything if the board votes on it.

12,95\$. Twelve dollars and ninety five cents. Just 8% of your fees.

I am telling you all of this because what happened in Calgary is exactly what will happen here, unless we stop it.

And yet, I have faith. Last month, this council voted against a motion that would have turned the GSA into a dictatorship. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. We have advantages that Calgary did not. We have a better structure. A better system. And we have a warning. We are standing on a precipice. We must take action, or we will lose. But if we act now, not only can we protect our own GSA, but our actions and our victory can offer hope to the University of Calgary as well, along with Athabasca, Regina, and every other student government in Canada.

I have begun to write a constitution. I have been repeatedly harassed by several people within the GSA for starting this work. I will be consulting on its contents with graduate students and with external parties as well, including multiple unions. My mission is to reshape the GSA's existing structure into something functional and realistic, within the boundaries of legal restrictions imposed on us by the PSLA and Alberta Labour Code. There is a lot to say on this matter, far too much to cover in a meeting. This is also a long process. You won't see this up for a vote at the next council meeting, nor the one after that. Among the consultations I plan to hold, I will also specifically be consulting with you, the councillors.

We can do this.

An injury to one is an injury to all.

In solidarity,  
Nathan Lamarche, Associate Vice-President of Labour

## Item 7i: GSA Chief Returning Officer Report

Dear GSA Council,

I'm leaving any updates this month to the DRO and ERC. As I plan to wrap up my graduate program next year, I will not be putting my name forward for another term as CRO, and this will be my last report to the GSA Council. I am also regretfully resigning from my current term, as I am preoccupied with meeting research-related deadlines this month.

I have served as both the DRO and CRO of the GSA for the past five years and have had the opportunity to work with passionate, dedicated, and committed ERC members, councillors, DEOs, and staff. I'm proud of what we have accomplished together - from running elections through the pandemic to revising our bylaws and policies to ensure fairness and transparency. I'd also like to thank all of the graduate students who courageously put their names forward for nomination during elections and diligently served our graduate student peers.

I recognize there is still more work to do, and trust that these processes will continue to be updated and improved. During my time with the GSA, I have learned and grown professionally and personally. As the CRO, decisions were not always easy to make, but I am grateful for the support and understanding I received. As I reflect on the end of my term, I hope that I have contributed positively to the GSA's elections processes.

Serving on GSA Council for the past five years has been a privilege and a highlight of my graduate program. I wish you all the best and look forward to seeing what you will all accomplish during your time with GSA.

See you all around campus :)

Sophie

## Item 7j: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: June 16, 2024

Dear members of the GSA Council,

Since the last Council meeting, the Nominating Committee has been busy filling vacancies on several standing committees and working on internal improvements. We have so far successfully been testing the STV voting system. Once its reliability in various scenarios is confirmed, we will be happy to suggest it to GFC to be implemented as a broad voting policy.

The Nominating Committee is currently a 1 member short, with the member resigning for academic reasons. We are looking forward to having a new member appointed by the Council to continue our operations in full capacity.

This month, we have had a pleasantly busy time reviewing nominations for CRO, GSA Speaker, GSA Senator, ACB and BFC. The resulting selected candidates appeared in the voting sections of today's Council meeting.

Additionally, I had a chance to interview one candidate for the Deputy Speaker position. The NoC will review the total pull of nominations tomorrow. The Nominating Committee also approved the pool of candidates for GSA EDIC, expecting them to be presented for the vote during the next meeting.

Overall, we are still looking for volunteers and advertising the following positions remaining to be filled:

- 3 Councillors for the GSA Board. Please, put your candidacy forward.
  - 1 GSA member for the GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)
  - 1 GSA member for GSA Elections & Referenda Committee
- Additionally, we are currently advertising the nomination for Vice-President Academic for the • International Students' Association (ISA), looking for 2 Graduate Students

Sincerely,  
Arseniy Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair



## Item 7L: GSA Management Report

**GSA Management  
Report to GSA Council for June 23 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Cindy Roose  
Date: June 23 2025

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

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

Staff have been busy helping department associations run their elections, approving student group registrations, and processing grant requests. The Board's Strategic Work Plan (SWP) has been finalized and will be presented at the Council meeting. Work is underway on the fall orientation schedule. The primary orientation event will be on September 3rd in the Dinwoodie Lounge. Staff are creating an orientation video that will serve as our primary informational piece for department orientations this year.

The annual audit work for the GSA 2024 - 2025 finances will begin soon. Our Finance Manager, Dorota Dziekan-Kryjak, and Accountant, Seidy Louangxay, will work with a local firm to provide the necessary materials and this work will occur over the months of July - August.

The office has been supporting the work of several standing committees including the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), and Governance Committee (GC). These committees have been drafting work plans and reviewing potential changes to bylaw and policy. The staff have been helpful in coordinating meetings, providing research support, and ensuring these committees have enough members and resources to work effectively.

Sincerely,

Cindy Roose  
Acting ED

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

Management has been engaged with the following since the last meeting of May 21, 2025:

#### **Strategic**

- The Acting ED was away from the last 2 GSAB meetings due to conference attendance and vacation.
- Work is underway to finalize the SWP for 2025 - 2026 based on feedback generated since April. The Board met on June 10th to work on a draft.
- Interviews for a summer student will commence this week.
- The Bargaining team will continue negotiations in late June.
- The posting for the ED is live and will remain up until the position is filled.
- Members of the Board continue to meet with Studywell to negotiate Health and Dental Plan options.

#### **Operations**

- We have a good amount of interest for the GSA Senator role, but we will be reopening nominations for Deputy Speaker and DRO on Friday.
- The Grants Coordinator has processed 130 ATG with 25 CCG plus another 40 ATG in the works.
- Student group work has been very busy, as well, likely because many need to renew in May. We will be updating the GSA liability form so that it aligns with the UofA updated policies.
- The GSA has supported the ISA graduate student executive position election, with results to be announced today (Tuesday, June 10th at noon)
- The NoC is voting on candidacy for the CEO and BFC nominees to be forwarded to Council in time for our first mailing
- Archiving of GSA records is underway to ensure we fit within the university's limits for Google Storage

#### **Social Media**

##### **Facebook**

Reach: -23% (May 13-June 10)

Followers: no change (current: 2052)

##### **Instagram**

Reach: -35.7% (May 13-June 10)

Followers: -1 followers (current: 1579)

**Twitter/ X**

Followers:-5 followers (1279)

### **Management Report to the GSA Board, June 18 2025**

Management has been engaged with the following since the last meeting of June 12, 2025:

#### **Strategic**

- Work is underway to finalize the SWP for 2025 - 2026 based on feedback generated since April. The SWP will be presented at the June Council meeting.
- Interviews for a summer student are happening this week.
- The Bargaining team will continue negotiations for AEGS students next week.
- Members of the Board continue to meet with Studywell to negotiate Health and Dental Plan options.
- Negotiations have been completed for the renewal of the NASA Collective Agreement for GSA staff.

#### **Operations**

- The NoC Hiring Committee student-at-large voting will close today (June 17th), so the committee can be formed this afternoon.
- The ISA will have its final voting period this week, wrapping up the graduate student elections.
- The NoC is in the midst of GSA Standing Committee votes for candidacy approval to Council, to help fill our vacancies across the board. There has been a good amount of interest in every position, other than GSA Board for Councillors and the DRO position.
- The graduate student position advertisement and nomination period for the Campus Radio Board will open this Friday.
- We are preparing for the replenishment of FGPS Council and its Standing Committees - nominations open in the first week of July.
- We are also administering the election for the AFNS departmental GSA.
- The work of scheduling orientations is underway.
- Archiving of GSA records is underway to ensure we fit within the university's limits for Google Storage

#### **Social Media**

##### **Facebook**

Reach: -94% (June 10-17)

Followers: no change (current: 2052)

**Instagram**

Reach: -91.3% (June 10-17)

Followers: -2 followers (current: 1577)

**Twitter/ X**

Followers: no change (1279)

## Item 9a: Submitted Motions to Council - Outlines of Issue

**Outline of Issue****Suggested Motion for GSA Council:**

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the below proposal for Councillor-led Motion procedure.

**Background:**

"The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the policies.

**WHEREAS** no current formal structure exists for the proposal of written motions,

**AND WHEREAS** the creation of a formal structure for the proposal of written motions would help ensure efficiency and clarity in the GSA structure,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** a structure for written motions be defined in the GSA policies (and made clearly available to the public through the website) as a requirement for putting forward a motion, in the following structure: all clauses are to be presented in the form of "WHEREAS" and "BE IT RESOLVED THAT," where any number of at least one of the former and at least one of the latter, in that order, and where any additional clauses of each be presented as "AND WHEREAS" and "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT," and where any additional context that is relevant and useful to the discussion of the motion but not contained within the official scope of the motion itself or its component clauses, be added in an optional section entitled "CONTEXT," and that the written motion shall be preceded with a clear statement of which meeting the motion shall be presented at, and for the purposes of clarity shall also clearly state its function in the cases of direct changes to bylaws, direct changes to policies, and indirect proposals to change the policies or bylaws but are first charged to the governance committee to draft."

**Jurisdiction:**

C.POL.5.2 Motions (formal proposals that GSA Council take certain actions), are normally accompanied by a Notice of Motion (advance written notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at an

upcoming meeting of GSA Council). Notices of Motion must Section C: GSA Council 14 be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the GSA Council material, as described above.

C.POL.5.2.a To move a Motion, voting members of GSA Council must first be recognized by the Speaker. A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.

C.POL.5.2.b During discussion and debate, voting members of GSA Council may:

C.POL.5.2.b.i Move an amendment to a Motion. Amendments to a Motion must be germane; that is, they must be closely related to the subject of the Motion.

C.POL.5.2.b.ii Move a Motion to Defer, which enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.

C.POL.5.2.b.iii Move a Motion to Table, which allows GSA Council to lay aside a Motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to GSA Council.

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

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

C.POL.5.2.d Voting members of GSA Council may also:

C.POL.5.2.d.i Move a Motion to Refer, which allows GSA Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a GSA Standing Committee.

C.POL.5.2.d.ii Move a Motion to Rescind, which allows GSA Council to cancel or stop an entire Motion that had already been adopted.

C.POL.5.2.d.iii Move a Motion to Reconsider, which allows GSA Council to return to a Motion that has been voted on at the meeting, in an instance where new information emerges or the situation changes, allowing GSA Council to consider and vote anew, as if GSA Council had not previously voted on the Motion.

C.POL.5.2.e GSA Council may vote to close meetings, in which case only GSA Council members and GSA staff may attend; others wishing to attend must have permission extended by GSA Council following a vote.

C.POL.5.2.e.i Open session minutes of GSA Council will be posted on the GSA website. Closed session minutes are confidential. Motions may only be considered in open session.

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the following changes to Bylaw according to the below stipulations.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the bylaws.

**WHEREAS** the current bylaw policy requires all motions to be put to the Speaker prior to the current GSA meeting,

**AND WHEREAS** any changes to the bylaws currently require two consecutive votes in two months with two-thirds majority each time to pass, creating inefficiency and slow change of process, which hurts the GSA's ability to implement new bylaws and improve the structure of the Bylaws,

**AND WHEREAS** the current system prohibits rapid response and actions from members on the Floor,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the governance committee be charged with drafting an amendment to the bylaws to grant the GSA council the power to present a motion at any regular GSA meeting without supplying said motion to the Speaker in advance, provided that such a motion be defined as a spoken motion (in contrast to a written motion, which shall be defined as any motion presented in writing to the Speaker in advance) and presented verbally to the floor, and that any spoken motion presented that does not create a change to the budget of one thousand dollars or more be voted upon at the same meeting, and that and that any motion dictating a change of one thousand dollars or more be presented at the same meeting, but voted upon at the following regular meeting. This motion shall act as the first of two votes to approve said bylaw, in order to not delay the process.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

F.POL.4 GSA Governance Committee

F.POL.4.1 Composition

F.POL.4.1.a The President, as Chair.

F.POL.4.1.b The Vice-President Student Life, as Vice-Chair.

F.POL.4.1.c Three (3) Councillors or recent former Councillors elected by GSA Council as voting



members.

F.POL.4.1.d The Speaker and Executive Director (or delegate) as non-voting members.

**F.POL.4.2 Mandate**

F.POL.4.2.a 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.

F.POL.4.2.b Make any editorial changes (such as factual inaccuracies and other editorial issues) to the GSA governing documents as deemed necessary by the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC).

F.POL.4.2.c As per a Motion approved by the GSA GC on 9 August 2013, and subsequently revised by the GSA GC on 29 February 2016, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA GC have delegated authority to approve “purely editorial” changes. “Purely editorial” changes are defined as punctuation, italicization of Latin terms, capitalization, spelling, font, and renumbering.

**F.POL.4.3 Meetings**

F.POL.4.3.a Quorum is three (3) voting members including either the Chair or Vice-Chair.

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the following changes to Bylaw according to the below stipulations.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the bylaws.

**WHEREAS** the current structure of the GSA bylaws forces a minimum of two months to change with two-thirds vote at each meeting, which acts to discourage motions for changes to the Bylaws,

**AND WHEREAS** all GSA councillors are expected to attend meetings, such that the presence of councillors is to be expected at each meeting and thus not expected to cause substantial change to the vote,

**AND WHEREAS** bylaw changes are required in order to improve the ability of the GSA to function and represent the student body,

**AND WHEREAS** a two-thirds majority is substantial enough that two of such votes need not be Required,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** henceforth, the governance committee be charged with writing an amendment to the bylaws to include that motions to amend the bylaws require only a two-thirds majority at a single council meeting, and need not be approved as well by a standing committee (though functional edits may be made by the governance committee in keeping with the motion's intention, meaning, and spirit, without breaking, changing, or violating its purpose, function, or form), only by the GSA council.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

Section Q: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Labour Relations Committee, Section Q.POL.7.2.d  
The GSA Labour Relations Committee will *"make recommendations to GSA Council with respect to GSA Bylaw and Policy on collective bargaining."*

Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, Section A.BYL.1.2

*"These Bylaws ... may be amended by two (2) two-thirds majority votes of GSA Council held on seven (7) calendar days' notice of Motion and no less than one (1) week apart."*

Section A: Authority, GSA Bylaw, Authority, 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."*

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the following change to GSA Standing Committee attendance, accessibility and advertising.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the bylaws.

**WHEREAS** standing committees are expected to uphold the mission of the GSA,

**AND WHEREAS** the discussions of committees concern all GSA members,

**AND WHEREAS** transparency is key to the success of the GSA and the involvement of its Members,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** any GSA member may attend but not vote at the meeting of any standing committee except the ACB, without requiring invitation, and that all upcoming meetings shall be advertised on a dedicated page of the GSA website.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** relevant accessibility accommodations be made for students as needed to attend such meetings, including remote meetings.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

I.POL.16.1 A total of six (6) GSA members including at least one (1) Councillor elected by GSA Council, as voting members.

I.POL.16.2 The Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer as non-voting members.

I.POL.16.3 The Executive Director (or delegate) as a non-voting member.

I.POL.16.4 Two (2) members from amongst the six (6) voting members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) will be elected by the GSA ERC to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair for the duration of their time on the GSA ERC or until they resign their positions. The members elected will be reported to GSA Council.

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the following proposal to Standing Committee and confidentiality bylaw and policy.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the bylaws.

**WHEREAS** standing committees are expected to uphold the mission of the GSA,

**AND WHEREAS** secrecy and confidentiality when not needed to protect the privacy, health, and safety of individuals, contribute instead to the detriment of the GSA,

**AND WHEREAS** there are no bylaws or policies that mandate that standing committees be private, secret, or confidential in nature,

**AND WHEREAS** such secrecy discourages attendance from non-committee members,

**AND WHEREAS** the council and committees have a responsibility and expectation of transparency and representation to the graduate student body,

**AND WHEREAS** the GSA is expected to act with integrity, honesty, and in good faith,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the governance committee be charged with amending the bylaws to mandate all standing committees except the ACB to provide full meeting minutes in addition to the existing summaries, available on the GSA website to the public for all committee meetings within the last three years (to be removed from the website and available upon request after 3 years and deleted after 7), posted no later than 168 hours after the meeting's conclusion, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** all recommendations made to a committee must be made public in their totality in the same format as the minutes even if presented outside the scope of a meeting, including all recommendations made to the Budget and Finance Committee by any party, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** no standing committee except the ACB be permitted to hold a closed session or prohibit material from entering the public meeting minutes, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** no standing committee hold recess, remain in session, or otherwise extend a single meeting to last for over 24 hours.

C.POL.5.2.e.i Open session minutes of GSA Council will be posted on the GSA website. Closed session minutes are confidential. Motions may only be considered in open session.

H.POL.4.3 All GSA Standing Committee, GSA *ad hoc* committee, and GSA subcommittee members may be requested to sign and abide by confidentiality agreements regarding the information provided or matters discussed at the committee's meetings.

H.POL.5.4 GSA representatives on University committees, councils, and other bodies are expected to uphold the wishes of their committees on all privileged or confidential information.

H.POL.14.8.f The GSA ACB Chair will attend GSA Council and report briefly, in closed session, on Complaints concerning GSA Officer(s) that have been heard and decided.

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the reintroduction and drafting of an impeachment and vote of no confidence procedure.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion indirectly proposes a change to the bylaws to be drafted by the governance committee to present to the council at the next GSA council meeting.

**CONTEXT:** We need a means of holding our executives (and committee chairs) accountable. A method of removing them from office can present itself through two methods: impeachment or a Vote of No Confidence. The GSA has previously had a structure for impeachment and it was removed. This motion proposes that it be reintroduced with some changes that create an ethical system of accountability. The problem here lies in the nature of these two systems. A Vote of No Confidence that immediately removes a DEO from office is flawed because it places the power of removal in the hands of the council members, when that executive was elected by the graduate student body. However, a form of impeachment will either not remove the DEO from their position (and therefore lacks any purpose), will remove them from their position (and therefore is no different from a Vote of No Confidence), or will declare that individual unfit for office and then delegate the decision of their removal to a third party. The third party in this case would be composed of a smaller group of individuals, likely elected by the council, which further distances the process from the democratic system in a similar and more significant way than the Vote of No Confidence, and creates further risk of a lack of accountability. In order to function, this third party would need to be able to reject the removal of the DEO from their office, but this would violate the democratic will of the GSA. If this third party is assumed to agree with the GSA's Impeachment vote, then there is no purpose to their existence. Considering all of this, the following process is presented as an ethical and accountable approach that permits greater involvement from the graduate student body.

**WHEREAS** the GSA council and graduate student body has no means of holding executive officers accountable,

**AND WHEREAS** the ability to hold executive officers accountable is a required element of a functioning structure,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** that the governance committee be charged with drafting a bylaw that

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shall be presented to the council, to introduce a process of Impeachment against any Directly Elected Officer (DEO) at any GSA council meeting, that shall pass at a 50%+1 majority, and that in the event of an Impeachment, the Impeached DEO be immediately suspended from their position until a Vote of No Confidence against the Impeached DEO is put to the GSA council, and that a Vote of No Confidence shall be declared against an Impeached DEO at the next regular GSA meeting that falls a minimum of two weeks in the future of the Impeachment, and that a Vote of No Confidence shall not be put to any DEO that has not been successfully Impeached, and that a second Impeachment vote shall not be put to the same DEO within any 60-day period (or two regular GSA meetings including cancelled regular meetings, whichever is greater), and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the governance committee also be charged with creating a bylaw that shall be presented to the council, to introduce a process for a Vote of No Confidence, where such a vote may be put to the council to immediately remove any GSA Council-Elected Officer from their post, or any non-executive Chair of committee from the role of Chair, or any Impeached DEO (in accordance with the above process) from their position, and the reason for their removal (including mention of an Impeachment) to be made available in council meeting minutes and archives, and that such a motion may be put forth no more often than once every three months (or three regular GSA meetings including cancelled regular meetings, whichever is greater) for the removal of any individual officer, and that such a motion may be put forth no more than once every three months by the same presenting individual regardless of whom it may target, and that such a motion shall pass at a rate of two-thirds majority by the GSA council, and that any successful Vote of No Confidence shall trigger a by-election for the vacant position, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the governance committee, in both of these charges, create such bylaws in keeping with the spirit of this motion, which is accountability and a proper democratic process, and that any changes made to either of these charges be made to improve the process rather than to change its intention.

**Jurisdiction:**

**H.POL.14.1 Receipt of Complaints and Setting the Hearing Date(s)**

H.POL.14.1.a Complaints about a GSA Officer(s) will be directed to the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) Chair and copied to the Executive Director (ED) (or delegate).

H.POL.14.1.b Complaints may be made by any person(s).

H.POL.14.1.c Complaints about the performance or conduct of a GSA Officer(s) or about conflict of interest or commitment relating to a GSA Officer(s) must be in writing (ie not oral), and signed. They must provide a complete description of the circumstances that have prompted the Complaint, a list of any known witnesses the Complainant intends to call, and any suggested remedy or action.

H.POL.14.1.d Upon receipt of a Complaint, the GSA ACB Chair will confer with the ED (or



delegate), who will seek legal advice if necessary.

H.POL.14.1.e Where there is a Complaint about a GSA Officer(s), the GSA ACB Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), will decide, normally within two (2) working days, if the GSA Officer(s) may be suspended with pay, as relevant, until the hearing is complete; as needed the President or Acting President, in consultation with the ED (or delegate) will decide on how Directly-Elected Officer(s)' duties will be carried out during a suspension.

H.POL.14.1.f The GSA ACB Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), can dismiss a Complaint if it is unfounded, frivolous, or vexatious. This decision must be given in writing and is final and binding.

H.POL.14.1.g If the Chair proceeds with the Complaint, a hearing date(s) will be set.

### **Outline of Issue**

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

That GSA Council **APPROVE** the changes to the Associate Vice-President Labour voting privileges.

#### **Background:**

The following motion shall be put to the GSA council at the March 2025 meeting. This motion directly proposes a change to the bylaws.

**WHEREAS** the AVP Labour currently has no opportunity to vote on matters that concern the AVP Labour, including budgetary concerns.

**AND WHEREAS** the AVP Labour sits as a non-voting member in committees.

**AND WHEREAS** the AVP Labour functionally represents all graduate students and matters that concern all graduate students, regardless of their academic employment status,

**AND WHEREAS** the role of the AVP Labour is hindered through an inability to vote on relevant Matters,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the governance committee be charged with amending to the bylaws to grant the AVP Labour an equal vote in all standing committees and all matters concerning the AVP Labour, and all matters that other VP roles are capable of voting on.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

B.BYL.3.1 All GSA members, except associate members, are eligible to vote and run in all GSA elections (excluding the election of the Associate Vice-President Labour, in which voting and nominations are restricted to academically-employed graduate students) and referenda.

D.BYL.2.2.g The Associate Vice-President Labour is responsible for labour-related matters concerning academically-employed graduate students (including collective bargaining), and leads the GSA's work as a union.

D.POL.4.8 Depending on the unique backgrounds and skills of Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) (and **excluding** the Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL)), they may be called upon to assist with special projects, new initiatives, or aspects of a colleague's portfolio.

#### D.POL.11 Associate Vice-President Labour

##### D.POL.11.1 Duties

- D.POL.11.1.a The Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL) has overall responsibility for matters relating to academically-employed graduate students and oversight of the GSA's work as a union.
- D.POL.11.1.b The AVPL is the chief negotiator of the Collective Agreement (CA) with the University covering all academically-employed graduate students.
- D.POL.11.1.c The AVPL also negotiates other matters with the University related to academically-employed graduate students, including issues regarding interpretation of the CA.
- D.POL.11.1.d The AVPL, in consultation with faculty stewards, where appropriate, advises academically-employed graduate students and answers questions from them related to compliance with and interpretation of the CA, as well as works towards informal resolution of disputes where appropriate.
- D.POL.11.1.e The AVPL seeks resolution of grievances in accordance with the process outlined in the CA, in consultation with the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) and the Executive Director (ED) (or delegate) as needed.
- D.POL.11.1.f The AVPL collaborates with the GSA LRC on specific labour-related projects.
- D.POL.11.1.g The position of AVPL requires close contact with the ED (or delegate) on labour-related matters as they arise and regular weekly contact with the President, ED (or delegate), Executive Coordinator, and the other Directly-Elected Officers.
- D.POL.11.1.h The position of AVPL totals approximately twenty (20) to thirty (30) hours per week on average and may include evenings and weekends. This includes but is not limited to both time spent preparing for and attending formal meetings as well as time spent reading and responding to emails, participation in travel associated with conferences and advocacy opportunities, work done on various projects and initiatives, informal strategic and problem-solving meetings, etc.

##### D.POL.11.2 Committees

- D.POL.11.2.a The AVPL chairs the GSA LRC and leads the GSA Negotiating Team.
- D.POL.11.2.b The AVPL is a non-voting member of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.
- D.POL.11.2.c The AVPL is a member of any University boards and committees related to workplace health and safety issues.

##### D.POL.11.3 Qualifications

- D.POL.11.3.a A background in law and/or business and/or labour issues is advantageous.
- D.POL.11.3.b Previous experience on the GSA LRC or with collective bargaining is advantageous.

D.POL.11.3.c The AVPL must be an academically-employed graduate student at the time of their election, or have been academically-employed within the preceding academic year.

## Item 9b: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F

**Outline of Issue****Suggested Motion:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Item 9c: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J

**Outline of Issue****Suggested Motion:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>Current Policy</b> (deletions are noted as <del>striketroughs</del> and changes/additions are noted in <b>red</b> font)	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Referenda Policy</b>	



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

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

<p>J.POL.15.5 The renewal referendum question must clearly state:</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.a The original purpose of the initiative.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.b A summary of achievements and value added to graduate students' experience.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.c The proposed continuation of the initiative for the subsequent years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.d Any proposed changes to funding or implementation, if applicable.</p> <p>J.POL.15.6 If the renewal referendum passes, the initiative will continue for the remainder of the original three-year term and an additional three years from that point.</p> <p>J.POL.15.7 If the renewal referendum fails, the initiative will conclude at the end of its original three-year term, <del>with a one-year wind-down period to ensure orderly closure of operations.</del></p> <p>J.POL.15.8 If the renewal referendum fails, the Asker must wait a minimum of two (2) years before consideration by the CRO.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 The GSA Board shall have the authority to establish specific procedures and timelines for the renewal process, ensuring they align with the GSA's broader governance and election policies.</p>	<p>that initiatives can evolve to meet changing needs.</p> <p>6. This structure helps in maintaining financial stability by allowing initiatives to secure funding for subsequent years while also providing a mechanism for discontinuation if they no longer meet student needs.</p> <p>7. Regular renewal referenda keep the graduate student population engaged and informed about ongoing initiatives, fostering a culture of active participation in GSA affairs.</p> <p>8. The two-year wait period gives the Asker time to adjust their request, and it alleviates voter burnout of referenda questions.</p>
<p><b>J.POL.15.16 Reporting</b></p>	<p>Clerical Change</p>

<p>J.POL.1516.1 The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will draft a procedural report following each referendum. This report will outline major decisions, a summary of discussions and consultations with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC), processes, issues, and recommendations for any future referendum. This report will be provided to the next CRO and Deputy Returning Officer, the GSA ERC, the GSA Board, and GSA Council.</p>	
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## Item 9d: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K

**Outline of Issue****Suggested Motion:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

	proposals presented to the BFC are well-vetted and strategically justified. This approach minimizes the likelihood of prolonged or contentious discussions during BFC meetings, allowing the committee to focus its time on high-level oversight rather than operational deliberations.
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