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Item 1: Agenda

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

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
5:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	A. Nazir, GSA Speaker

1 min	1	2-5	Approval of the Agenda for May 26, 2025 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	6-25	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of April 30, 2025 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	A. Nazir, GSA Speaker
2 min	4		Announcements	
15 min	5		<u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u> A. GSA Strategic Work Plan Update Presentation & Consultation	A. Kumar, GSA President
20 min			B. Graduate Student Peer Support Pilot Program Presentation	P. Stack, HRHSE Associate Vice-President
10 min	6	26-30	<u>ELECTIONS</u> A. GSA Appeals & Complaints Board: a. Five vacancies b. Three nominations	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
30 min	7	31-32	<u>ACTION ITEMS:</u> A. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section D: First Reading a. Outline of Issue: Section D b. Section D Revisions	A. Kumar, GSA President

		33-34	B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue: Section F b. Section F Revisions 	
		35-40	C. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue: Section J b. Section J Revisions 	
		41-44	D. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: First Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue: Section K b. Section K Revisions 	
30 min	8	45-58	<u>INFORMATION PIECES</u> Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. President's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Graduate Students' Association, University of Alberta Submission to the Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness b. GSA Board Report c. GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report d. GSA Governance Committee Report B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor C. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal E. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA Labour Relations Committee 	<p>*NRS: No report submitted *NMS: No meeting scheduled</p> <p>NRS NMS NMS</p> <p>NRS</p>
		59-61		
		61-64		
		65-69		
		70-72		
		73-75		

		76	<p>G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <p>H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p> <p>I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi & Temi David</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>	<p>NRS</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NRS</p>
15 min	9	77-80	<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>a. Question from N. Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences Councillor: GSA Bylaw and Policy, section K.BYL.1.2 states, "GSA Council will receive a recommendation on the annual operating and capital budgets, together with a recommended three (3) year budget and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting." As we found out during the latest budget proposal, the university requires a finalized budget by early May, effectively leaving Council with two regular sessions to approve the budget. Two regular sessions does not provide Council with much time to work with the Board and BFC to resolve a contentious budget, and failure to pass a budget during the regular April meeting would have a disastrous impact on the financial viability of the GSA. Are there any external reasons why the bylaws stipulate a March deadline? Or is this an internal deadline that 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		Adjournment	

Item 2: GSA Council April 30 2025 Minutes

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Held online via Zoom

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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

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GSA SPEAKER:

Zain Patel in the Chair

GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Amirah Nazir

CLOSED SESSION:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

- GSA Speaker: Zain Patel
- GSA Deputy Speaker: Amirah Nazir

Departmental Councillors:

- Ning Dai, Biochemistry
- Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi • Deputy Returning Officer: Temi David • Senator: Ola Mabrouk <p>GSA Executives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSA President: Haseeb Arshad • VP Academic: Riya Kamran • VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal • VP External: Parman Mojir Shaibani • AVP Labour: Muneeb Raja <p>Councillors-At-Large:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ibrahim Khodabocus 2. Christine Hymanyk 3. Georga Boffen Yordanov 4. Margaret DeCoste 5. Allyson Lynch 6. Abdul Hadi Syed <p>Standing Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair <p>Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incoming GSA President: Aashish Kumar • Incoming VP Academic: Chen Okafor • Incoming VP Student Life: Hazel Kemuma • Incoming VP External: Niloufar Mir Fallah • Benjamin Kucher • Patricia Dekeseredy • Andrea Dekeseredy • Rohini Roy Roshimi • Si Ning Liu • Amirhossein Afkhami • Muhammad Faizan Tariq • Jasmine Maghera • Leah Hennig • Shawn Duckett 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering • Nancy Wang, Business PhD • Kiera Greenaway, Civil & Environmental Engineering • Ozge Akca Zengin, Chemical & Materials Engineering • Vera Fiawornu, Communication Sciences & Disorders • Iain Smith, Computing Sciences • Michelle Bey, Dentistry • Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences • Devinder Pal Singh, Economics • Ajibola Adigun, Educational Policy Studies • Jennie Burton, Elementary Education • Nathan Lamarche, English & Film Studies • Colin Hamnett, History, Classics, & Religion • Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology • Eileen Tang, Lab Medicine & Pathology • Dalia Cristerna Roman, Linguistics • Lillian Low, Medical Genetics • Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology & Immunology • Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience • Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics & Gynecology • Seth Peyton, Oncology • Toqa Abdelwahab, Ophthalmology • Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics • Fulin Wang, Pharmacology • Joshua Barden, Philosophy • Daniel Carleton, Physics • Grace Essuman, Physiology • Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences • Cheryl Pan, Psychology • Emily Ward, Psychiatry
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathryn Short, Public Health • Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Sciences • Shea Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources • Aynaz Gerami, Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology • Ivan Ma, Surgery <p>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chirag Thakur, Business MBA • Dana Villareal, Digital Humanities • Reyna Alvarez, Drama • Hannah Perry, Library & Information Studies • Arash Salemi, Mechanical Engineering • Ping Lam Ip, Sociology
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:05	-	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	Approval of the Agenda for April 30, 2025 GSA Council R. Kamran moved. P. Mojir Shaibani seconded. 36 voted for. 1 against. Motion PASSED.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of April 9, 2025 GSA Council Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, gave Council five minutes to review the minutes. R. Kamran moved. A. Belosokhov seconded. 36 voted for. Motion PASSED.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3	Changes in GSA Council Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outgoing representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Georga Boffen Yordanov, CAL ○ Christine Hymanyk, CAL ○ Haseeb Arshad, GSA President ○ Eileen Tang, Lab Med & Pathology Councillor 	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rija Kamran, VP Academic ○ Parman Mojir Shaibani, VP External ○ Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences Councillor ○ Muneeb Raja, AVP Labour ○ Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion Councillor ○ Taylor Zimmerman, Library & Information Studies Councillor ○ Kathryn Short, School of Public Health Councillor ● Incoming representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emily Ward, Psychiatry Councillor ○ Shea Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources Councillor ○ Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Medicine Councillor ○ Amir Shamsi Ardekani, Alternate of Rehabilitation Medicine ○ Hannah Perry, Alternate of Library & Information Studies ○ Ping Lam Ip, Alternate of Sociology 	
5 min	4	<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, addressed prior concerns of safety and decorum in Council meetings, explaining that safety concerns necessitated moving the Council meeting online. This recommendation came from UAPS. Reports of members feeling unsafe or hesitant to speak were acknowledged. The Speaker outlined meeting conduct expectations, enforced speaking time limits (two interventions of 10 minutes each per motion), and stressed the necessity of maintaining respect to ensure productive discussions. He thanked the Council for attending these meetings and holding each other accountable to create a safe environment. He stated that disagreements can occur, but respect should always be present. ● R. Kamran, VP Academic, emphasized that nominations are open for the Graduate Student Peer Support Program, inviting volunteers to participate. A link will be sent to sign up for involvement and training. 	
	5	<p><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Strategic Work Plan Update Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● H. Arshad presented a comprehensive update on the Strategic Work Plan achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He highlighted the launch of the \$200,000 Graduate 	H. Arshad

		<p>Course-Based Engagement Award, with university funding secured for two additional years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The GSA successfully maintained \$8.55 million in tuition fee offsets and shifted merit-based awards to hybrid models (Discover UAlberta and Turtle Island Awards). ○ A new health and dental plan contract was finalized, resulting in \$400,000 in savings over three years. ○ The Graduate Mental Health Report was published, accompanied by a mental health photo contest that received over 70 submissions. ○ The Graduate Peer Support Program was also established. ○ Further initiatives included proposing a campus-wide food strategy, advocating for enhancements to the UAlberta app, and renewing the U-Pass agreement, which saved students \$3.4 million. ○ Tuition fee increases for international graduate students were prevented, and a differential tuition model was negotiated. ○ At the federal level, the GSA helped preserve the Canada Student Grant's maximum value of \$4,200 through CASA. ○ Provincially, the GSA secured ability exemptions and engaged with provincial leadership on legislative issues (Bills 13, 17, 18) and a new provincial advocacy body was established. ○ Internally, bylaw revisions enhanced accountability and financial management. A two-year EDI Action Plan was developed through extensive consultation. The Council Effectiveness initiative progressed, and community engagement was expanded through rebranded social hours and partnerships with New Majority and other organizations. ○ No questions were raised on the Strategic Work Plan, and members endorsed the plan's results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M. Raja updated the Council regarding Bargaining: we have tabled multiple monetary and non-monetary proposals. Improvements have been made in the language and in the mandate, but they haven't reached an agreement as of yet, particularly regarding the monetary piece. They are planning on meeting the employer in June and July. We are expecting some movement from the employer, especially around the monetary part, and we are 	
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		<p>hoping that we can reach an agreement soon. M. Raja encouraged students to check the website for updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H. Arshad took the opportunity to thank everyone for what we have achieved this year. • N. Lamarche, EFS Councillor, asked why H. Arshad is part of the meeting, if he has been suspended by the ACB. Z. Patel stated that his knowledge regarding ACB procedure is limited and deferred to A. Nazir, Deputy Speaker. She detailed that they had been notified that the ACB had suspended both H. Arshad and N. Lamarche pending investigation. He replied that ACB has no jurisdiction to suspend him and did not provide a complaint explaining why he is suspended. He stated that H. Arshad is under their jurisdiction and so, has been suspended. • A. Belosokhov noted that ACB decisions are final, but without an ACB member at Council to explain the decision and clarify the final ruling, it is not within the Council's purview. • A. Nazir, Deputy Speaker, noted that this discussion is better had through the question period and focused Council back on the SWP discussion. There were no further questions. • A. Belosokhov thanked and commended the team for the achievements from this year. • I. Khodabocus, CAL, seconded A. Belosokhov and thanked the Board for the work they've achieved this year. 	
15 min	6	<p><u>ELECTIONS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Councillors-At-Large:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two vacancies Two nominations Successful candidates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Anagha Devkota Muhammad Faizan Tariq 	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
	7	<p><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></p> <p>A. Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of Issue Referenda 	<p>H. Arshad</p> <p>S. Iqbal, GSA VP Student</p>

	<p>S. Ribeiro, Political Sciences Councillor, raised a motion to divide the motion into four motions by section. S. Giesbrecht seconded the motion.</p> <p>New motions suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section D Approval - Section F Approval - Section J Approval - Section K Approval <p style="text-align: center;">30 votes in favour. No votes against. Motion PASSED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A. Belosokhov and Z. Patel agreed that the document can be reviewed as a whole, and then voted on separately. S. Ribeiro agreed as well. ● H. Arshad summarized Section D: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This piece is to expand the definition of GSA Officer to encompass every representative of and to the GSA, whether they are elected, appointed or delegated to any internal or external council or committee. This was recommended by ACB to ensure fairness to all GSA members by encompassing all representatives within their jurisdiction. ● H. Arshad summarized Section F: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ● H. Arshad summarized Section J: 	Services
		N. Lamarche, EFS Councillor & Incoming AVP Labour

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These changes included redefining a GSA asker to be any GSA member. This keeps the GSA in alignment with the PSLA, as the GSA can only represent graduate students, so any referendum asker must be a GSA member. The Board can provide exemptions on the basis of documents that prove tangible benefits for graduate students. ○ Referenda will no longer be continued in perpetuity; there will now be a three-year rotation, at which point the Asker will need to resubmit the question for approval again, to ensure the fee should still be collected. ○ There will be a re-approval process, where Askers will need to provide reports on how the funding has been used. ○ There will also be an opt-out option for the referendum fees. ● H. Arshad summarized Section K: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes include formalizing the approval process: the budget is first worked on and approved by the BFC, sent to the Board for approval, and finally to Council for approval. ○ A contingency plan is also suggested to ensure the financial stability of the GSA if the Council does not approve a budget, then the previous year's budget will continue until another is passed. ○ The finance team recommended e-transfers for reimbursements below \$600 to avoid spending money on cheques. Amounts \$600 or lower are approved by the ED and President (or delegate DEO, if the President is to be reimbursed), and amounts larger are approved by the Board in a formal process. ○ The formalization of procedure of BFC preliminary budgetary discussion materials being confidential and password-protected, as stated at the top of each agenda and in every materials email. BFC confidential materials are mandated to be password-protected. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Lamarche suggested debating and voting separately. S. Ribeiro raised a Point of Clarity; she stated that we should debate and vote on each point at a time for clarity purposes. • N. Lamarche disagreed with the bylaw change in Section D. He posited that this bylaw would allow the executives to silence Councillors. With regards to Section K, N. Lamarche determined that consensus after decisions would silence any dissenting opinions. • D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, disagreed and raised that, in the rationale, it states GSA Councillors can be investigated by the ACB as Officers. Councillors are held accountable by the ACB, based on their mandate; executives have nothing to do with this process. D. Carleton clarified with N. Lamarche that consensus is required for the finance team before bringing recommendations to BFC and once consensus is reached at BFC, all members of BFC should support the decision. He recommends clarification to support what is intended. • A. Belosokhov agreed with D. Carleton and disagreed with N. Lamarche. There is nothing in the first bylaw change regarding the ACB that gives any sort of power to the Board regarding complaints. He asserted that there is a question of personal bias, as N. Lamarche will be becoming an Officer and will then be held accountable by ACB. This section overall (K.POL.5) is specifically about the BFC; the overall bylaw makes sense when taken together. • I. Khodabocus, CAL, raised a motion to defer these four motions for the sake of time, in preference of discussing the budget action item. • Z. Patel stated that this motion would require four separate votes to postpone these motions, and a majority vote. • N. Lamarche raised a Point of Privilege and asked if there is a current Speaker list. Z. Patel confirmed and shared the live spreadsheet of the Speaker list. N. Lamarche also raised that one of the motions has a contingency plan for the budget, which should be discussed. 	
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		<p>Motion to POSTPONE Section D of the Revision document to the May Council meeting.</p> <p>I. Khodabocus moved. R. Somasundaram seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Belosokhov agreed with I. Khodabocus, but stated that we may spend more time on postponing these motions rather than just discussing and voting on them. • G. Boffen Yordanov asked for clarification on the new process. • H. Arshad agreed with A. Belosokhov, and suggested limiting the discussion to 5-10 minutes before each vote. • N. Lamarche raised a motion to have the contingency plan for the budget motion first, and then postpone the other three sections as one vote later on. Z. Patel stated that Robert's Rules state that we can postpone an action item to the next main Council meeting. <p>24 votes in favour. 3 against. Motion PASSED.</p> <p>Motion to POSTPONE Section F of the Revision document to the May Council meeting.</p> <p>I Khodabocus moved. H. Arshad seconded.</p> <p>29 votes in favour. 3 votes against. Motion PASSED.</p> <p>Motion to POSTPONE Section J of the Revision document.</p> <p>H. Arshad moved. S. Iqbal seconded.</p> <p>29 votes in favour. Motion PASSED unanimously.</p> <p>Motion to POSTPONE Section K of the Revision document.</p> <p>I. Khodabocus moved. H. Arshad seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Lamarche recommended not deferring this action item, as this contains the contingency plan for the 2025-2026 budget. S. Ribeiro agreed with this recommendation, emphasizing that this bylaw is very important for continuing operations during ongoing budgetary discussions, and that passing this item may influence budgetary discussions. • N. Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences Councillor, agreed that passing a contingency plan would be helpful, but wanted to 	
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		<p>remind Councillors that bylaws require two readings before they are fully instated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Kamran, VP Academic, agreed with N. Morley that it is helpful to have the contingency and that even if passed this session, it would not come into effect in time. • S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, agreed and confirmed R. Kamran and N. Morley's assertions. • D. Carleton asked when the university needs the budget finalized to still collect dues. Z. Patel was informed that the hard deadline is May 5th. • N. Lamarche asked for clarification whether at the May meeting, these motions will still be considered as the first reading, which was confirmed by Z. Patel. • It was checked and confirmed we maintained quorum. <p style="text-align: right;">29 votes for, 9 against. Motion PASSED.</p> <p>B. GSA Budget & Finance Committee: Budget Approval</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of Issue 3-Year Plan and 2025-2026 Budget 2025-2026 GSA Operating Budget (Including Capital Budget) (HD Estimated) GSA 2025-2026 Operating Budget (including Capital Budget) Narrative GSA 2025-2028 Restricted and Other Funding Budget GSA 2025-2028 Restricted and Other Funding Budget Narrative GSA 2025-2028 Labour Union Restricted Fund Budget GSA 2025-2026 Labour Union Restricted Fund Budget Narrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to this budget included the reinstatement of the full AVP Labour stipend due to concerns about payment transparency after the conclusion of the general election; the Indigenous Strategic Initiative Funds were retained, and it was clarified they were never removed; and the removal of union administrative salaries from union funding. The \$27,000 GSA Conference/Career Fair line 	
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		<p>item was discussed as a placeholder, pending the incoming Board's decision on its spending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Lamarche raised two points: he had meetings with M. Padfield and S. Wolgemuth from the DoS and FGPS to clarify the budget situation. They confirmed that if we do not have a contingency plan in bylaw for the budget, then the university will not collect GSA fees from students. He admitted he called H. Arshad out for this and recognized he was incorrect. He stated he will still vote against the budget, despite not having a contingency plan, and encouraged Councillors to make an informed vote, knowing the financial risk. • M. Raja, AVP Labour, stated that union dues can't change without a referendum, so union dues should still be able to be collected even if the budget is not passed. He stated he will confirm this with staff. • I. Khodabocus emphasized that changes can still be made after the budget passes. He emphasized to Council that if the budget does not pass, we cannot inform the Registrar's Office to collect our fees and we do not have a contingency plan, so we will not have an income line. This means for your constituents that there will be no health and dental plan, no U-Pass (which was voted on with a 90% approval rate), no CFB, no grants, no events, no council remuneration, no IGSA, no Standing Committees or graduate student representation at the university. He believes it is not right for Councillors to hold their fellow students liable because they don't agree with a few budget lines, to rob them of all of their critical services. He stated that he is not 100% happy with the budget, but thinks that the GSA services are fundamental and should not be risked. • S. Ribeiro raised a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry and asked for clarification if Council can approve the budget and make recommendations to BFC as well. Z. Patel deferred to H. Arshad to answer this question. He confirmed that any line can be altered after the approval, but a line itself cannot be added after the fact. Any line can be overspent or underspent, contingency funds can be used, and any line can be restricted by BFC by recommendation. • N. Lamarche raised a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, and asserted that Council could vote to approve the collection of last year's fees. He acknowledged that raising a new motion at Council orally 	
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		<p>is not our procedure, but stated that Council or the Speaker could overrule the procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R. Kamran raised that Point of Parliamentary Inquiry isn't for the purpose of raising a point outside of the Speaker's list. It is not for certain that the university would accept a vote without formalized paperwork. Changes to budget lines can occur after the fact, so the vote on the budget itself should continue. ● H. Arshad raised that the finance team (the ED, President, Chartered Accountant, and Finance Manager) is separate from the BFC, which is composed of both staff and students. The students have complete authority to spend the budget lines. The governance structure dictates that the budget is either approved or in bylaw, as the university needs documentation for their auditing purposes. One motion is not enough for their auditors. He agreed with I. Khodabocus' points. ● P. Mojir Shaibani, VP External, emphasized that this is the final chance to approve the budget before the university's deadline of Monday, May 5th. He stated that the loss of GSA services will increase costs for graduate students and encouraged Councillors to vote in favour with their constituents in mind, as changes can be made after the fact. ● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, clarified that this is not H. Arshad's budget - he wanted the Councillors to be aware that when BFC adjusted this version of the budget, H. Arshad was not present. The AVP Labour stipend reduction has been removed because it wasn't advertised during the election period, for fairness purposes. The Indigenous Strategic Initiative Fund was never removed, but was renamed, and has been reverted to the previous name and clarified it is still restricted to the Vice-President Indigenous Relations. The AD and FM salary redirects have been removed from the labour fund. The Conference budget line has been renamed 'conference/career fair' line. There is no obligation to spend anything in this line; it is up to the incoming Board if they would like to host a conference or career fair, but the creation of this line gives them the option. He stated that if we start looking at individual lines, we will always find issues. We have to look at the entire context and at the budget being the main driver for the GSA's operations. We need to give the upcoming board the time and energy for positive initiatives rather than constantly going over these lines. This is 	
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		<p>usually the time to celebrate our achievements, but all the time has been taken up with these discussions for the last three meetings. The BFC has taken the recommendations of Council and adjusted the budget, so it is up to Council to make an informed decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Carleton thanked S. Iqbal regarding summarizing the changes and I. Khodabocus for raising the risks of not passing the budget. He stated that Councillors may not be happy with the budget, but knowing we have no contingency and the deadline is May 5th, Councillors would be doing a disservice to their departments by not allowing the budget to pass. Given a year's time, we could still be debating it further and it won't reach any sort of closure. In the interest of time and the student body, we should just pass the budget and change individual line items later. This budget is only for one year. Next year, we will make a budget for 2026-2027, which doesn't have to have anything to do with this budget. The three year projections are in no way binding. Do what is best for your departments. • A. Belosokhov replied to N. Lamarche's Parliamentary Inquiry: he has been wondering whether the Council can just pass a motion to continue with last year's budget. There is a misunderstanding regarding the Council's mandate. It is an oversight body, it doesn't operate as an executive or administrative body, which is in the bylaws. According to bylaw, Council cannot pass a motion or vote to approve this. They would have to disapprove the budget and refer it back to the BFC, as they have the mandate from the Council to organize budgetary documents. The Council elects the BFC members, so they have the elected authority to do this work. Council cannot just pass a motion to continue with the last year's budget. Either we shut down the GSA and services, or approve the budget and change line spending later. • N. Morley agreed with I. Khodabocus and D. Carleton, stating that the priority should be maintaining GSA services and changes can be sent to the BFC at a later date. It should not be a considered option to put the GSA in financial risk. • Ping Lam Ip stated that the potential dissolution of the GSA is an unhealthy discussion of debate, it is all the Councillor's responsibility to continue GSA services for their departments. He stated that the blame should not be put on Councillors for not 	
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		<p>passing the budget, stating that the budget should not have been controversial in the first place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Ribeiro stated that her department and constituents don't wish to risk the financial stability of the GSA, but hopes the Council will consider what they want from the budget. She recommended beginning budgetary discussions earlier in future to avoid tight deadlines and to allow for clarification if Councillors are confused. The changes in this budget were recommended by Council to BFC, which were then implemented, so discussion and debate is key to getting the budget Council wants. • N. Lamarche was reminded, as it's his second time speaking that he has 8 minutes for this point. He asserted that once the budget is passed, the BFC and Board have the primary influence over changing spending, asserting that Council would have to make a motion to change spending, which he believes could be ignored. He also suggested raising a motion to approve a contingency policy rather than bylaw, if the budget fails. He stated that if the Speaker doesn't allow the change in motion procedure, Councillors could vote to overrule him. He stated he intends to vote against the budget. • S. Louangxay, GSA Accountant, raised for consideration that a contingency plan would be a great idea, but the income from last year is not sufficient to cover the expected costs of this upcoming year. She encouraged Councillors to keep that in mind. • R. Reif, Obstetrics & Gynecology Councillor, stated that she appreciated the work of this year's Board and that the GSA continuing to exist is critical, and the conversations are focusing on external factors out of our control. A 'bad' budget passed is better than no budget, we have a huge responsibility for these items for the graduate student body at large. It's a budget we can work with and none of the executives have threatened Council. Thank you for the work and it's important to move forward with this. • M. Raja stated that he would vote yes to the budget and would encourage Council to do the same, and continue work on it later. He would have preferred had we approved the contingency action item, but recommended that budgetary discussions occur earlier in the year in future. He stated that these discussions, despite the higher tensions, have led to thorough debates and the BFC has been very willing to accept any recommended changes. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I. Khodabocus agreed with R. Reif that every Councillor has a responsibility to graduate students at large, and the negative ramifications necessitate voting in favour of this budget. • H. Arshad acknowledged concerns that the travel budget has increased and clarified that when Council voted to join CASA, our travel expenses were raised due to travelling across the country. If the Council would prefer not to have these costs, they can vote to keep or rescind our membership. • He also raised that there had been concerns raised around the removal of the CFB funding line; he clarified that this decision was made in conjunction with the CFB ED, as the referendum passed to include CFB funding as a separate fee. • He also clarified that the BFC calls for any change of spending, executives don't have control over those changes. There is a voting member Councillor position on the BFC, so they are more than able to forward on Council's recommendations to the BFC for discussion and implementation. • He acknowledged the importance of having a budgetary contingency bylaw and stated it must be listed as bylaw rather than policy because bylaw is enforceable by the law, which the university has to follow. He emphasized that no budget is perfect and even he is not happy with the budget, but it doesn't mean he will not support the budget because you have to support the best decision for the organization and graduate student body. <p>41 votes in favour. 2 against. 2 abstentions. Motion PASSED.</p> <p>C. Submitted Motions to Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of Issue - Councillor-led Motion Procedure Outline of Issue - Bylaw Update Procedure Outline of Issue - Bylaw Update Procedure Outline of Issue - Standing Committee Attendance, Accessibility & Advertising Outline of Issue - Standing Committees & Confidentiality Outline of Issue - Impeachment & Vote of No Confidence Procedure Outline of Issue - AVP Labour Voting Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I Khodabocus motioned to defer these motions. N. Lamarche stated that deferring them should be automatic. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Z. Patel thanked everyone for a very civilized meeting and the executives for their work this year. He asked the executives to take no more than 4 minutes. 	
	8	<p><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></p> <p>Reports:</p> <p>A. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> President's Report <ol style="list-style-type: none"> As submitted He stated that he has had the privilege of serving on the GSA for two years now and has learned a lot. He stated that working on the GSA Board is the greatest opportunity that the Canadian education system could have afforded him as an international student. He loved working with the team and wished the incoming team all the best for everything they want to achieve this year. GSA Board Report GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He was unable to attend this month's meeting GSA Governance Committee Report GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report <p>B. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> As submitted She thanked the Councillors and grad students at large for entrusting her with the responsibility of this position for two years. We made significant strides in many initiatives, and it's unfortunate that we don't get to celebrate our achievements as much as we should, but any of the achievements made by GSA are the achievements for grad students at large, and we have much to celebrate. She stated that she has been extremely fortunate to work with amazing people through both of her terms at GSA. She appreciated H. Arshad's leadership through this year, through all the turbulent times from start to finish with the encampment issues in May of last year. She thanked all students for entrusting her with the opportunity, and wished the new incoming team all the best. <p>C. Vice-President Student Life: None at this time</p> <p>D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p>	

		<p>a. S. Iqbal is very thankful for the outgoing board; it was a privilege working with them. He encouraged everyone to review the SWP report to see what we have achieved and what he will be working on next year. It will be another privilege to continue this role and his work. He stated that the Board tries to find ways to go out of their way to improve things for graduate students, particularly to connect students on and off campus, and begin new initiatives that students raise. He stated that students should keep in mind that the Board are graduate students themselves with their own research, families, feelings and professional life. At the entire GSA level, we act on a human-to-human basis, to build relationships, and that includes the staff. We have a really good collegial relationship with the staff, who are there to help us. We all have certain responsibilities to show respect to each other and try to be collegial. Differences of opinion are at the heart of this work and are important for discussions, but they should always be respectful. This is how healthy communities democratically work together.</p> <p>b. He looks forward to working with the incoming board this year, the Council, the GSA staff and the GSA members. He encouraged everyone to take a commitment to develop good relationships with each other, and share suggestions and feedback. He stated that himself and the new Board are happy and open to suggestions and feedback, and he encouraged students to reach out to them individually.</p> <p>E. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> <p>b. P. Mojir Shaibani is very glad to have been part of this team and appreciated all the guidance from the other board members, as he was only in the position for 8 months. H. Arshad especially guided him in federal, provincial and municipal advocacy. Everything was for the benefit of students. Over the years, he's heard the problems graduate students have been facing and has worked to help how he can. It was a pleasure to be your VP External.</p> <p>F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja</p> <p>a. M. Raja stated that it was a privilege to serve AEGS for the</p>	
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		<p>last two years and to work with the board. They have done substantial work as a team. He appreciated the support and guidance from both the Board and Council throughout his two years of service. We have had disagreements along the way, but positive disagreements lead to better decisions. He wished the Board all the best. He wanted to especially thank Cindy, as he enjoyed working closely with her for the last two years. He wished everyone all the best.</p> <p>b. GSA Labour Relations Committee: No report submitted</p> <p>G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk</p> <p>a. No report submitted</p> <p>H. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p> <p>a. No report submitted</p> <p>I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi & Temi David</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> <p>J. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov</p> <p>a. No report submitted</p> <p>K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</p> <p>a. No report submitted</p> <p>L. GSA Management</p> <p>a. As submitted</p>	
	9	<p>Question Period</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Deputy Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, April 24, 2024) Oral Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed in favour of time 	
	10	<p>Z. Patel provided a final word: he extended his thanks to the outgoing board and welcomed the new board. He encouraged the Board and Council to continue holding each other accountable for the next year. It is important we maintain accountability to ensure that work continues to represent graduate students the best we can at every GSA meeting. He appreciates the immense work that everyone has done and continues to do.</p> <p>He noted that starting in May, we are adjusting meeting times to 5:00-7:00 PM to improve accessibility to the meetings. Z. Patel will be at a conference in Kelowna, so Amirah will be Chairing the May meeting. He</p>	

		encouraged any questions regarding this to be directed to the gsa.speaker@ualberta.ca email.	
		Adjournment 9:15 PM	

Item 6: 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) 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

“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

Statement of Interest:
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.
Bio:
<p>Current Volunteer Positions:</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"> - General Counsellor (Students' Association) - VP of finance and acting Vice President (Science Union) - Student Ambassador - General member of the Mental Health Committee (Students' Association) - Policy and Governance Committee (Students' Association) - Student Representative of Advisory Health Summit Committee (Mental Health Alberta) <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

Statement of Interest:

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 7a: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section D

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

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

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section D

Background:

Implementing changes to the definition of GSA Officer. By expanding the definition of GSA officers to all representatives of the GSA, the bylaw grants the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) clear jurisdiction to hear complaints related to their performance or behavior. This promotes fairness, transparency, and integrity within GSA governance structures and ensures that all representatives are held to the same level of responsibility and oversight, regardless of their specific role or appointment route.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Bylaws (deletions are noted as striketroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>D.BYL.1.1d GSA Councillors and any GSA member appointed, elected, or delegated to any internal or external committee shall be recognized as GSA Officers.</p>	<p>By defining these individuals as officers, the bylaw grants the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) clear jurisdiction to hear complaints related to their performance or behavior. This promotes fairness, transparency, and integrity within GSA governance structures and ensures that all representatives are held to the same level of responsibility and oversight, regardless of their specific role or appointment route.</p>

Item 7b: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

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

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section F

Background:

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

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

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

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

Item 7c: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

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

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section J

Background:

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

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

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

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

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

<p>a fee 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>	
J.POL.11	
<p>J.POL.15 Referendum Duration and Renewal</p> <p>J.POL.15.1 Referenda approved by the GSA membership shall have a duration of three (3) years from the date of implementation.</p> <p>J.POL.15.2 To ensure continued funding and accountability, referendum askers must initiate a renewal process by the year that the current dedicated fee expires.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3 The renewal process shall involve:</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.a Submitting a detailed report to the GSA Board outlining the achievements, challenges, and financial management of the initiative during the first two years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.b Conducting a new referendum vote among the graduate student population.</p>	<p>This policy addition serves several important purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A referendum should not be perpetual unless there are extenuating circumstances. 2. It ensures that initiatives funded through referendum remain accountable to the graduate student population by requiring a renewal vote based on demonstrated performance. 3. The three-year initial term with a second-year renewal vote allows for adequate planning and implementation while also providing a timely opportunity for review and adjustment. 4. By requiring a detailed report and clear communication of achievements, the policy enables graduate students to make informed decisions about continuing support for initiatives. 5. The policy allows for adjustments to be proposed during the renewal process, ensuring that initiatives can evolve to meet changing needs.

<p>J.POL.15.4 The renewal referendum will be held during the GSA general election in the year of expiration.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5 The renewal referendum question must clearly state:</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.a The original purpose of the initiative.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.b A summary of achievements and value added to graduate students' experience.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.c The proposed continuation of the initiative for the subsequent years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.d Any proposed changes to funding or implementation, if applicable.</p> <p>J.POL.15.6 If the renewal referendum passes, the initiative will continue for the remainder of the original three-year term and an additional three years from that point.</p> <p>J.POL.15.7 If the renewal referendum fails, the initiative will conclude at the end of its original three-year term, with a one year wind-down period to ensure orderly closure of operations.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 If the renewal referendum fails, the Asker must wait a minimum of two (2) years before consideration by the CRO.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 The GSA Board shall have the authority to establish specific procedures and timelines for the renewal process, ensuring they align with the GSA's broader governance and election policies.</p>	<p>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>
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<p>J.POL.1516 Reporting</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>	<p>Clerical Change</p>
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Item 7d: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

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

Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section K

Background:

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

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Bylaws (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>K.BYL.1.2 GSA Council will receive recommendations on the annual operating and capital budgets, along with a recommended three (3) year budget forecast and business plan, no later than its March regular meeting. GSA Council shall approve only the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The three-year forecast and business plan shall be received as an information item. The Budget and Finance Committee shall review, recommend, and approve the draft budget and three (3) year forecast, followed by review, recommendation, and approval by the GSA Board, prior to presentation to GSA Council.</p>	<p>This clarification ensures that both the BFC and the GSA Board formally review, recommend, and approve the draft budget and the three-year forecast prior to their presentation to Council. This layered approval process aligns with best financial governance practices by ensuring due diligence, and shared accountability across GSA's decision-making bodies. It also clarifies that GSA Council's authority is to approve the upcoming fiscal year's budget, while the multi-year forecast is presented for information only</p>
<p>K.BYL.1.3 In the event that the GSA Council does not approve an annual budget before the start of the fiscal year, GSA shall continue to operate in a manner consistent with the most recent annual budget approved by the GSA Council.</p>	<p>This new bylaw sets a clear contingency plan to ensure the continuity of GSA operations in the event that the annual budget is not approved by GSA Council before the start of the fiscal year. It reflects best practices in governance by establishing a fallback mechanism that protects the organization from administrative delays while respecting the Council's budgetary authority.</p>
Current Policies (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>K.POL.3.7.a Financial documents requiring signature, including but not limited to cheques, email disbursements, and investment instructions, require two (2) signatures: either any</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>

two (2) Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) or any one (1) DEO and one (1) Director.	
K.POL.3.7.d The President and Executive Director will approve amounts below \$600 via email, with explanations provided by the Finance Manager and reported to the GSA Board in the management report. Electronic transfers should be used unless unavailable, in which case cheques may be used. Both approvers will provide electronic "signing authority" confirmation for all disbursements. Cash payments are strictly prohibited.	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.
K.POL.5.9.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.
K.POL.5.2 Any recommended change to a budget line must first be discussed among the Finance Manager, the President, and the Executive Director (or delegate) prior to presentation to the BFC. Once consensus is reached, all members shall support the decision.	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

	<p>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.</p>
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Item 8a: GSA President Report

**2025-2026 President
Report to GSA Council for the 26th May 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Aashish Kumar, President
Date: 21 May 2025

2025-2026 GSA President Meetings Attended (Aashish Kumar)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 1st May 2025 to 21st May 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
1 May 2025	Meeting with StudentCare & GSA VPSS (May 1)
5 May 2025	CASA Introductory Meeting (May 5)
5 May 2025	Standing Committee on Convocation (May 5)
6 May 2025	Regular Meeting with Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students & Enrollment) (May 6)
6 May 2025	Board of Governors New Member Orientation (May 6)
7 May 2025	CASA Introductory Meeting #2 (May 7)
7 May 2025	Chancellor's Forum on Misinformation (May 7)
8 May 2025	Meeting with the VPSS & Kevin Friesse, Assistant Dean: Health & Wellness, Dean of Students (May 8)
12 – 17 May 2025	CASA Conference (May 12-17)
20 May 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Physiology (May 20)
20 May 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Cell Biology (May 20)
21 May 2025	Department Chair Meeting: Linguistics (May 21)

21 May 2025	FGPS Council (May 21)
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Dear Council Colleagues,

I am deeply honored and humbled to have been elected as President of the Graduate Students' Association at the University of Alberta. It is a privilege to serve such a vibrant and diverse graduate student community, and I am committed to working collaboratively with all of you to advance our shared interests and build a stronger, more inclusive GSA.

Over these first weeks I have been learning more about our current governance structure and about GSA's dual role—both as a representative association and as a trade union. One thing is already clear: we will only achieve our goals if we work together and support one another. That means making full, strategic use of the talented professional staff we have, so that our limited resources are directed where they matter most. Rather than diverting precious funds to external legal fees, I would far rather see those dollars invested in graduate students' education—even if it benefits just one person, that investment strengthens our entire community.

To avoid any misconceptions, I also want to clarify the limits of presidential authority within the GSA. The President does not exercise unilateral control. All significant decisions, especially those involving finances, are made collectively by the GSA Board, which comprises voting and non-voting representatives alongside our professional staff. This multi-layered structure provides essential checks and balances, ensuring transparency, accountability, and sound, collaborative decision-making.

Please find attached the full submission to the Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness.

In response to recent funding cuts to daycares, the GSA collaborated with AASUA, NASA, PDFA, and the SU to submit a joint coalition letter urging the university to reconsider its decision. While the university retains full discretion over such funding, this letter represented our strongest collective advocacy. Moving forward, I am working with our VP Student Services to explore partnerships with additional childcare providers and develop sustainable support for graduate student parents. These updates have been, and will continue to be, shared at GSA Board and Council meetings, where member feedback is always welcome.

Meeting with StudentCare & GSA VPSS – May 1

The purpose of this meeting was to maintain a positive and professional relationship with our current provider, StudentCare. I was genuinely interested in hearing their insights and appreciated the productive nature of our conversation. One key takeaway was the evident success of the previous GSA administration in working collaboratively with StudentCare. Their efforts have contributed to improved terms that will benefit our health and dental plan moving forward. We are now in the process of finalizing a better deal with Ellement, which will enhance the services available to graduate students. As we are preparing to roll out this improved plan, the GSA will also be launching an aggressive awareness campaign, including the introduction of a new app and interface, to ensure that students can easily access and navigate their benefits.

CASA Introductory Meeting – May 5

This was an engaging introductory meeting held virtually with other member associations and delegates of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). The session provided a valuable opportunity to connect with student leaders from across the country, begin building relationships, and better understand CASA's structure, mission, and advocacy priorities. We (VP External and I) were introduced to CASA's key areas of focus, including federal advocacy on graduate student issues such as research funding, student financial aid, housing, and international student support. The meeting also covered the roles and responsibilities of member associations within CASA, as well as an overview of upcoming conferences and advocacy weeks. Overall, this was a promising start to our engagement with CASA for the year. I look forward to continuing collaboration and representing the interests of UAlberta graduate students on a national level.

Standing Committee on Convocation – May 5

This meeting focused primarily on planning and logistics for upcoming convocation ceremonies. The committee discussed key elements such as the overall structure and flow of the ceremonies, potential speakers and presenters, and ways to ensure the events reflect the significance of the achievement for graduating students. It was insightful to observe how much coordination and thought goes into creating a meaningful convocation experience. While the GSA's role in this process is limited, I appreciated the opportunity to be part of the conversation and to represent the interests of graduate students in shaping this important milestone.

Regular Meeting with Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students & Enrollment) – May 6

In this meeting, we covered a variety of important topics affecting graduate students. We discussed updates on the new Health and Dental Plan and explored opportunities to strengthen connections between alumni and current students. I proposed the idea of organizing a career fair and conference aimed at fostering alumni engagement and providing valuable networking opportunities for graduate students.

I also raised some ongoing concerns previously brought up by the former President to ensure continuity in addressing key student issues. Additionally, Melissa informed me that the consultation process for tuition fees is scheduled to begin in late June to early July, which will provide an opportunity for student input on this important matter.

Board of Governors New Member Orientation – May 6

During this orientation, I received a comprehensive overview of the university's governance framework and its key stakeholders. The session provided insight into the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Governors, senior administration, faculty, staff, and student representatives. I also learned about the decision-making processes, strategic priorities, and how different governance bodies interact to guide the university's direction. This orientation was invaluable in helping me understand how the GSA fits within the broader university governance system and how we can effectively engage with other stakeholders to advocate for graduate students.

CASA Introductory Meeting #2 – May 7

In this follow-up meeting, I had the opportunity to learn more about the various subcommittees within CASA and their specific focus areas. This deeper dive provided clarity on how advocacy efforts are organized and how member associations, including ours, can contribute effectively to each area. Understanding the structure of these subcommittees will help us better align our priorities and participate meaningfully in national advocacy initiatives.

Chancellor's Forum on Misinformation – May 7

I attended a very insightful panel discussion focused on the implications of misinformation in today's society. The forum explored how misinformation spreads, its impact on public discourse and decision-making, and strategies for promoting accurate and responsible information sharing. It was a valuable opportunity to engage with experts and reflect on the challenges misinformation poses for communities, including our graduate student body.

Meeting with the VPSS & Kevin Frieze, Assistant Dean: Health & Wellness, Dean of Students – May 8

As part of my effort to engage with key stakeholders across campus, I met with the Vice President Student Services (VPSS) and Kevin Frieze, Assistant Dean of Health & Wellness. The goal of this meeting was to open lines of communication and explore opportunities for collaboration on new initiatives that support graduate student health and wellness. Building strong partnerships like these will be essential to developing programs that effectively meet the needs of our community.

CASA Foundations Conference – May 12–17

Attending the CASA Foundations Conference was an incredibly informative and energizing experience. The sessions covered a wide range of topics essential to student governance, including an in-depth introduction to Robert's Rules of Order, which will be invaluable in facilitating effective and orderly meetings within the GSA.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the conference was the opportunity to connect with student leaders and representatives from associations and unions across the country. I was pleased to see that the voices of graduate students were not only welcomed but valued deeply. CASA clearly recognizes that many undergraduate students continue on to graduate studies, and they acknowledged the importance of including graduate perspectives in national advocacy efforts.

A key highlight was learning about CASA's successful advocacy efforts that led to international students becoming eligible for Tri-Council funding. Building on that progress, I plan to strongly advocate for increasing the current cap, which allows only 15% of award recipients to be international students. Expanding this percentage would better reflect the diversity of Canada's research community and promote a more inclusive approach to federal research support.

Department Chair Meeting: Physiology – May 20, Department Chair Meeting: Cell Biology (May 20),
Department Chair Meeting: Linguistics (May 21)

As part of my effort to better understand the on-the-ground realities faced by graduate students across different faculties, I met with the Chair of the Department of Physiology. My goal in meeting with department chairs is to gain deeper context around many of the campus-wide issues we often hear about. It's important to me that, as a student representative, I focus on challenges that can be reasonably addressed within the scope of the GSA's capacity and mandate.

I recognize that my time in this role is limited, so it's essential to prioritize actionable concerns—ones we can realistically solve through collaboration. To do that effectively, we must first understand the complexity of existing problems before proposing solutions. These conversations with department leadership will help ensure that our advocacy is grounded, informed, and constructive.

In addition, I advocated for the importance of building community through more frequent social hours and informal networking opportunities. I also offered the support of the GSA in helping to organize or host these events within the department, should there be interest. Strengthening connections at the department level is a small but meaningful step toward improving the graduate student experience.

FGPS Council (May 21)

At this meeting of the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS) Council, several key items were discussed. One notable proposal involved changes to the MBA program that would allow students to complete the program within one year—an effort aimed at improving program flexibility and accessibility.

There was also a discussion about the new graduate admissions portal, which was particularly relevant to faculty representatives. Many were seeking clarity on the approval process steps within the new system, highlighting the need for streamlined communication and clear workflows during the implementation phase.

During the meeting, I presented the GSA's report. While brief, I took the opportunity to highlight a number of ongoing initiatives our team is working on. I also emphasized a core value that will guide our work this year: the GSA's priorities must be shaped by the priorities of graduate students—not the other way around. Listening, engaging, and responding meaningfully to students' needs is how we aim to lead.

**Graduate Students' Association, University of Alberta Submission to the Expert Panel on
Post-Secondary Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness**

Background:

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) as established by the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) is a non-partisan organization that represents and advocates for graduate students at the University of Alberta and provides a wealth of services to its members that enrich the graduate student experience.

To the Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness,

Question 1: What is working well and what challenges may exist within the current post-secondary funding model?

Answer 1:

What is working well:

1. **Student Consultation (Token, but Present)**
Alberta's institutions do formally invite student representatives—graduate and undergraduate—into tuition fee consultations. While input often feels more “for show” than truly deliberative, the very existence of these tables means students can raise concerns directly to decision-makers rather than being entirely excluded.
2. **Strong Research and Alumni Impact**
Even under funding pressures, Alberta's universities continue to generate world-class research and economic value:
 - a. The University of Alberta alone produces over \$550 million in sponsored research revenue each year—funds that underpin labs, scholarships, and graduate stipends.
 - b. Its alumni network drives a \$19.4 billion annual economic impact in the province, partly through commercialization of grad-student research.
Framing graduate education as a driver of these tangible returns (both scholarly and economic) is a powerful lever in funding discussions.

What are the challenges:

1. **Consultation Often Feels Tokenistic**
 - a. **Predetermined Agendas:** Student “advisory” meetings frequently serve to inform rather than to consult and treat us as partners.
 - b. **Lack of Follow-Through:** Even well-argued points—such as requests to increase transparency on tuition fee dollar utilisation, creating more hybrid awards than

merit-based awards given the factual financial realities of students, and clarifying scholarship-admin costs in actual spending calculation—rarely change the final proposed Tuition Fee Proposal.

2. Over-Reliance on Self-Generated Revenue

With provincial grants held flat for the last few years and not even adjusted to inflation, universities lean on tuition, donor giving, and ancillary operations to fill the gap. But:

- a. Urban vs. Mid-City Disparities: Downtown campuses can monetize real estate and host short-courses; middle-of-town campuses lack such options, deepening inequities.
- b. Tuition Pressures: Students bear the cost of balancing these budgets, even as their “consultation” role remains limited.

3. Bill 13 & Provincial Budget Consolidation

All revenue—whether government block grants, tuition surpluses, or endowment returns—now flows through centralized provincial controls. This cuts off the flexibility universities once had to reinvest in:

- a. Graduate Research Infrastructure (labs, equipment, technician support)
 - b. Scholarship Administration & Student Services (counseling, career centers)
- These “indirect” costs don’t count as part of “direct instructional” funding, yet they’re indispensable to high-quality graduate programs and the very innovations that fuel Alberta’s economy.

Question 2: Regulatory constraints that may exist for PSIs?

Answer 2:

1. Consolidated Budget Requirement (PSLA)

- a. Centralized Accounting: All institutional revenues—government grants, tuition surpluses, endowment returns and ancillary income—must flow into a single provincial budget line.
- b. Surplus Restrictions: Year-end carry-forwards cannot be deployed for routine maintenance or operational needs without ministerial approval, and then only for designated new capital projects.

2. Bill 13 Revenue and Asset Controls

- a. Provincial Revenue Capture: Institutions may not retain or directly reinvest funds they generate; all revenue is absorbed into the government’s consolidated fund.
- b. Land-Donation Transfer Rule: Donated real estate must be offered to the province at its historical book value before the institution can assume control—eliminating the opportunity to leverage current market value for campus development or partnerships.

3. Carry-Forward Approval Processes

- a. Project-Specific Authorization: Accessing accumulated surpluses requires submitting proposals for new initiatives only; routine capital upkeep (e.g., lab repairs, building maintenance) is ineligible.
- 4. Implications for Institutional Agility and Student Experience
 - a. Deferred Infrastructure Renewal: Critical maintenance and upgrades languish, undermining safety, accessibility and learning quality.
 - b. Limited Financial Flexibility: Inability to capitalize on ancillary revenues or assets stifles innovation in program delivery, research partnerships and community engagement.

Question 3: Are there areas for improvement within the current tuition structure?

Answer 3:

- 1. Transparent Reporting of Fee Utilization
 - a. Annual Tuition-Revenue Disclosure: Publish a detailed breakdown showing exactly how tuition dollars are allocated (instructional salaries, lab maintenance, student services, administration, etc.).
 - b. Open Data Access: Make underlying reports and third-party analyses publicly available rather than citing opaque surveys that students cannot review.
- 2. Meaningful Student Input in Fee-Setting
 - a. Feedback Integration: Commit to a “you said, we did” report that tracks student-collected feedback through to the final fee decision, highlighting which suggestions were adopted or why certain requests could not be accommodated.
 - b. Universities often invoke budget constraints as the primary rationale for declining specific student requests. In practice, institutions must demonstrate how competing priorities and limited discretionary funds led to each decision, rather than offering a generic funding excuse.
- 3. Board of Governors’ Oversight and Accountability
 - a. Efficiency Audits: Require regular external reviews of administrative overhead and service-delivery models to identify and eliminate non-value-added positions or functions.
 - b. Fiduciary Balance: Instruct governors to consider both “financial sustainability” and “student affordability and wellbeing” as co-equal responsibilities, rather than defaulting to resource maximization.
- 4. Enhanced Communication Practices
 - a. Modernized Channels: Upgrade digital platforms (mobile apps, centralized portals) to deliver timely, searchable information on tuition changes, funding allocations, and consultation opportunities.

- b. Proactive Disclosure: Beyond legal minimums, universities should proactively announce upcoming fee discussions, release all relevant data in advance, and host open Q&A sessions with finance officers. Most importantly, these sessions must be properly advertised and scheduled during common break periods—not during class times—to maximize attendance and ensure meaningful student participation.

Question 4: The impact of funding mechanisms on student experience and quality of teaching?

Answer 4:

Over the past couple of years ago, Alberta's shift toward tying institutional funding to enrolment targets has created a funding environment that too often forces short-term budget fixes at the expense of long-term educational quality. From a graduate-student leader's standpoint, this has several direct consequences:

1. As core funding is funneled into meeting enrolment-driven targets, vital student-centred services—academic advising, mental-health counselling, career development—face budgetary squeeze. These “indirect” supports are too often viewed as dispensable overhead, yet they are crucial for retention, equity of outcomes and for guiding first-generation or under-represented cohorts through complex graduate pathways.
2. When funding volatility drives universities to replace tenure-track appointments with sessional instructors, students lose out on sustained mentorship, coherent program delivery and the scholarly networks that underpin research training. Although sessionals bring flexibility, they lack the institutional memory and capacity to lead curriculum enhancements or secure external grants.
3. Centralized budgeting rules and carry-forward restrictions mean routine upkeep of labs, lecture halls and collaborative workspaces is perpetually deprioritized. Aging equipment and poorly maintained learning environments not only impede hands-on training and research safety but also signal to prospective students and faculty that the institution cannot sustain a cutting-edge academic culture.
4. Without a funding model that explicitly prioritizes student experience, institutions struggle to expand outreach and supports for a diverse student body. Proper investment attracts talented learners from varied backgrounds—fueling the innovation Alberta needs to compete globally. Conversely, underfunding drives cost-cutting that narrows access, stifles creativity and undervalues the broad societal returns of a fully supported post-secondary sector.

In short, a funding framework that balances stable, predictable core support with transparent, student-driven reinvestment is essential. Only by safeguarding continuous faculty appointments, robust

support services and up-to-date facilities can Alberta's PSIs deliver the high-quality teaching and inclusive student experience that underpin global competitiveness and meaningful innovation.

Question 5: Ensuring a focus on key performance indicators, merit-based hiring and recruitment, and qualitatively demonstrable outcomes

Answer 5: In 2020, the provincial government proposed tying up to 40 percent of operating grants to key performance indicators (KPIs), phased in from 15 percent in 2020–21 to 40 percent by 2022–23.

Although well-intentioned, that proposal generated confusion over metric definitions and implementation timelines, leaving institutions and students unclear on how to align their efforts to secure sustained funding.

1. Clear, Phased KPI Framework

To move beyond ambiguity, Alberta should adopt a multi-year KPI roadmap with:

- a. **Defined Metrics:** Focus on a concise set of measures—graduation rates, work-integrated learning placements, research commercialization events—each with precise data-collection methods.
- b. **Phased “At-Risk” Schedule:** Mirror the 2020 proposal’s 15 / 30 / 40 percent trajectory, but accompany each phase with published guidelines, capacity-building workshops for data management, and joint university–student briefings.
- c. **Transparent Reporting:** Require annual public dashboards that display institutional performance against each KPI, including methodological notes to ensure comparability and trust.

2. Merit-Based Hiring and Recruitment

Ensuring that faculty and leadership appointments advance strategic priorities requires:

- a. **Standardized Process Documentation:** Publicly share position descriptions, evaluation rubrics and the weighting of criteria (research output, teaching excellence, service).
- b. **Diverse Search Committees:** Include external subject-matter experts, faculty peers and student representatives to promote fairness and guard against insular decision-making.
- c. **Recruitment Transparency:** Publish annual summaries of hires—numbers by faculty rank, time-to-fill data and demographic indicators—aligned to institutional goals such as interdisciplinary collaboration or pedagogical innovation.

3. Qualitatively Demonstrable Outcomes

Quantitative metrics must be complemented by narrative evidence of impact:

- a. **Impact Case Studies:** Issue biennial reports highlighting student capstone successes, community-engaged learning projects and faculty-led research commercialization.

- b. Structured Feedback Loops: Institutionalize regular peer-teaching reviews and student-faculty roundtables, then publish synthesis reports showing how insights informed pedagogical enhancements.
 - c. Innovation Portfolios: Require each academic unit to submit an annual portfolio documenting curriculum innovation, new teaching technologies and cross-disciplinary initiatives, explicitly linked to KPI domains.
4. Outcome-Oriented Funding Signals
- a. By tying portions of grants to metrics like graduate employment rates and research outputs, the model incentivizes universities to focus on demonstrable outcomes—pushing institutions to measure and improve the very activities (e.g., work-integrated learning, commercialization supports) that benefit students.

By embedding these measures within a clearly articulated, collaboratively governed framework—complete with phased implementation, transparent processes and both quantitative and qualitative accountability—Alberta can ensure that its performance-based funding genuinely drives teaching excellence, faculty quality and meaningful student outcomes.

Question 6: How changes to the international student program have impacted/will impact Alberta's PSIs and student experience.

Answer 6:

Federal caps and processing delays in Canada's International Student Program have substantially affected Alberta's post-secondary institutions (PSIs) and the broader student experience—despite the vital role international students play on our campuses.

1. Revenue Impacts and Budget Adjustments
- International students typically pay two to three times the domestic tuition rate, making their enrollment a significant revenue source for Alberta's post-secondary institutions (PSIs). The federal government's recent cap on study permits has led to a substantial decrease in international student numbers, resulting in immediate financial shortfalls for many institutions. For instance, Olds College reported a loss of approximately \$5.1 million in tuition revenue for the 2025–2026 academic year due to decreased international student enrollment. This financial strain forced the college to suspend several programs, including hospitality and tourism management, craft beverage and brewery, and agriculture technology integration (Omori, 2025). Similarly, Red Deer Polytechnic anticipates a \$10 million deficit for the next academic year, leading to the suspension of five programs and potential layoffs of over 100 employees (Omori, 2025). At the University of Calgary, a decline of approximately 9% in international student enrollment—from 6,998 to 6,394 students—resulted in an \$11 million drop in tuition revenue

(MacDonald, 2024). These financial challenges have prompted institutions to implement cost-saving measures such as hiring freezes, program suspensions, and deferral of capital projects to maintain core teaching operations. The situation underscores the critical financial role international students play in sustaining Alberta's higher education system.

2. Research Capacity and Global Standing

International students are integral to Alberta's research ecosystem: they contribute heavily to graduate-level labs, co-author a significant share of publications, and help attract external grant funding. At the University of Alberta alone, over \$550 million in sponsored research revenue supports state-of-the-art facilities and graduate stipends. Reduced international enrolments thus threaten not only lab staffing but also Alberta's global research rankings and competitiveness.

3. Innovation and Economic Spill-Overs

Beyond fees, international graduates fuel entrepreneurship: more than 75,000 companies have been founded by U of A alumni, generating \$250 billion in annual revenue. Over 60 percent of those start-ups—roughly 45,000 ventures—originate from international graduates, often commercializing advanced research and creating high-value jobs on-campus through innovation hubs.

4. Campus Diversity and Community Vitality

International students are integral to campus life, enriching classroom discussions with global perspectives and sustaining vibrant cultural, social, and academic programming. Their presence fosters peer-learning opportunities and supports the social infrastructure—such as clubs, events, and mentorship networks—that underpin a strong student experience. Beyond the campus, international students significantly contribute to Alberta's economy. In 2022, international students in Alberta spent approximately \$1.89 billion, supporting over 20,970 jobs across various sectors, including hospitality and food services. Nationally, the participation of international students in the accommodation and food services sector has been notable. Between 2000 and 2018, the share of international students among paid workers in this sector increased from 0.1% to 4.6%, highlighting their growing role in supporting essential services. The absence or reduction of international students can diminish both the vibrancy of campus life and the broader economic contributions they facilitate, highlighting the importance of their continued presence and support.

5. Long-Term Workforce Integration

Many international graduates remain in Alberta, joining critical sectors and mitigating skill shortages. Their pathways from campus to career are a direct return on investment: when fewer permits are issued, Alberta risks losing both the talent and the demographic diversity needed for a globally competitive workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input. We appreciate being included in this important process and would welcome more direct, ongoing dialogue to ensure clear communication and meaningful engagement moving forward.

Sincerely,



Aashish Kumar,

GSA President 2025-2026

Item 8b: Vice-President Academic Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Chen Okafor
Date: May 21 st , 2025

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between May 1st to May 21st (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
May 5 th	GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight
May 7 th	Chancellor's Forum on Misinformation
May 12 th	GFC Executive Committee
May 13 th	GSPS Draft Training Plan Meeting
May 13 th	Graduate Student Peer Support Pilot Program
May 13 th	GFC Orientation
May 15 th	GFC Programs Committee
May 20 th	FGPS Caucus
May 21 st	FGPS Council

Dear Council Colleagues,

My name is Chen Okafor. I haven't had a chance to properly introduce myself, but as of May 1st, 2025, I am the new Vice President Academic for the Graduate Students' Association. The past few weeks have been very informative as you are about to see in the updates below. While a few meetings started and ended quickly, many went overtime with some great discussions involved. I am happy to report that I contributed to many of the conversations, despite being new to the job. Below are the meetings I attended and the summaries of what was discussed.

GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (May 5th, 2025)

This was my very first meeting as VP Academic for the Graduate Student Association. The GPO which is a subcommittee of the General Faculties Council wants to establish an ad hoc committee on academic governance. The purpose of this committee centers on determining whether the GFC is diverse enough in terms of its composition, making sure that the GFC employs effective decision making and ensuring that whatever the GFC does aligns with the Post-Secondary Learning Act. I inquired as to why the GPO is unable to do what this committee is being established for and was given a succinct reply—time.

Chancellor's Forum on Misinformation (May 7th, 2025)

I attended this event along with President Aashish Kumar of the GSA. The purpose of this forum chaired by our very own Chancellor Somji was to listen to preeminent panelists discuss how to root out and deal with misinformation in our information age. The distinguished panelists present included UAlberta Political Science Professor Feo Snagovsky and Emergency Physician Shazma Mithani. During this event I took the opportunity to network with Anastasia Lim and Kelly Spencer who are both from the Office of the Vice President for External Relations. As of this writing I have a meeting scheduled in July with Kelly Spencer and Anastasia has promised to get back to me regarding discounted opera tickets for UAlberta graduate students.

GFC (General Faculties Council) Executive Committee (May 12th, 2025)

In this meeting the proposal for an ad hoc committee from the GPO was put forward to the GFC Executive Committee under the consent agenda. The motion passed. There was another motion put forward to approve the discrimination and harassment policy in preparation for the larger GFC meeting, but I voiced my concern because I knew nothing about it. I have since read the policy and reached out to Kate Peters (Secretary to the GFC) voicing my concern. A new portal for GFC members has also been established, and I have been granted access as of May 13th, 2025.

GSPS Draft Training Plan Meeting (May 13th, 2025)

In this subcommittee meeting Kevin Friese (Assistant Dean, Health & Wellness) introduced me to some of the key people involved in drafting the volunteer training plan for the Graduate Student Peer Support program launching this Fall. This is a program offering peer-based support to graduate students going through such things as mental health challenges while at the same time managing academic coursework. For this meeting Kevin sought my input on the draft training plan for the volunteers and we agreed that future collaborations will follow.

Graduate Student Peer Support Pilot Program (May 13th, 2025)

The GSPS Pilot Program meeting immediately followed the GSPS Draft Training Plan meeting, and there was quite a bit of overlap between the two meetings. In this meeting Philip Stack (Special Advisor to the AVP, HRHSE) went into greater detail regarding what the Graduate Student Peer Support program is

meant to achieve. He asked me about the work the GSA is currently doing to promote volunteer recruitment for the program. I made it clear that I wasn't briefed on the GSA's efforts to promote this volunteer initiative. The GSA has since rectified that. Philip will be speaking at our next GSA Council meeting regarding GSPS volunteer recruitment efforts on May 26th, and there will be promotional material going out to all graduate students informing them of this wonderful opportunity.

GFC Orientation (May 13th, 2025)

In this meeting Kate Peters (Secretary to the GFC) and Sithhara Naidoo (Governance Officer) welcomed new members to the GFC. Rija Kamran the previous VP Academic and several other panelists answered questions on what it means to be a member of the GFC. The new portal for the GFC was also again announced, as well as the date for the next GFC meeting which is on May 26th.

GFC Programs Committee (May 15th, 2025)

For this particular meeting there was discussion around the different types of certificates the University of Alberta offers and how students come to learn about these certificates. There was much discussion surrounding the UAlberta graduate embedded certificates and whether they can be reimagined. Erin Pollock (MPH Program Director) suggested that the five-to-seven-year review process for a graduate certificate may be too long, considering how rapidly things evolve in our world today. Her perspective is one that I also share.

FGPS (Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) Caucus (May 20th, 2025)

I chaired this FGPS caucus, my first time chairing a meeting in my new role. An apology was delivered for starting late. I went through the agenda step by step for the following day's GPS Council meeting, asking whether anyone had any questions or concerns. No one spoke up regarding the upcoming May 21st GPS Council meeting, and so the caucus was adjourned.

FGPS Council (May 21st, 2025)

As of my writing this report the FGPS Council meeting is yet to occur. I will be supporting President Aashish Kumar in the report he will be delivering to the FGPS Council. One item that I could potentially be discussing is setting up one on ones with graduate students in CAB on a regular basis.

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

Sincerely,
Chen Okafor
VP Academic (2025-26)

Item 8c: Vice-President Student Life Report

2025-2026 Vice-President Student Life Council Report

Meeting with Deb Eerkes, Lead SGBV Response (May 1)
Graduate Program Support Team (May 5)
EDI and Indigenous Initiatives Multi-Institute Committee (May 5)
Meeting with Tim Ira: EDI Initiatives (May 8)
Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations (May 12)
GSA EDIC (May 12)
CTL Advisory Meeting: Shaping the Course (Re)Design Lab (May 13)
Meeting with Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost ACB (May 13)
Integrating Equity Group (May 15)

GSA Council Report

Date: May 26th, 2025

From: Hazel Kemuma, Vice President (Student Life)

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope Spring has brought you a little cheer and a moment's respite from the hustle that was the end of winter semester. The following is a brief report on some of the meetings that I have been involved in since starting office.

I met with the Lead SGBV Response who spearheaded the Options Navigation Network initiative on campus. The initiative is aimed at streamlining the university's response to SGBV cases and we discussed at length opportunities for collaboration with the GSA. We'll continue to work with them, especially on sharing information about available resources on our social media platforms, tabling during GSA events and promoting the "Foundations of Campus Sexual and Gender-Based Violence" online course. The DEOs' engagement with the course was also highlighted as a potential knowledge-building tool.

During my sitdown with the VP Facilities and Operations, I followed up on several initiatives previously discussed by my predecessor including a successful implementation of the unused meal donations program to the campus food bank which will then be distributed to students in need. The impact of this program will be assessed in the new academic year with plans to increase student awareness through education. We explored opportunities for GSA engagement with graduate students in residences, including volunteering during move-in on August 27, pending release of the volunteer form.

I later discussed with the Vice Provost ACB on the ongoing university's ACB initiatives and the GSA's role in **implementing** the "Changing the Story" action plan. The contributions that my predecessor put in as

part of the steering committee was commended . The Action Plan focuses on fostering equitable access and a sense of belonging that is not rooted in sameness. Key upcoming projects include the launch of a Disability Cultures and Access Hub (anticipated mid-August), a learning module on the experiences of Black Canadians, and the formation of a Race Equity Council. We also explored ways to improve how graduate students can log and report experiences of racism and microaggressions.

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

Hazel Kemuma.
VP Student Life

GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report

Although quorum was not met, the EDI Committee held an introductory meeting to establish rapport and begin discussing the direction for the year. I had the opportunity to meet fellow committee members and despite the informal setting, we engaged in a productive conversation centered on the two-year action plan approved in the previous term.

The agenda of the meeting was to have clear priorities on what we wanted to achieve this year. A key priority that we agreed to continue with is the harm reduction tent that was started last year and increase its scope. As such there will be a need for a comprehensive needs assessment and updated volunteer training materials. In addition to that there was a strong interest in advocating for trauma-informed training for faculty members and TA/RAs. A one-pager outlining how ASSIST and Mental Health First Aid could be packaged into an accessible module for graduate students and academic staff is in the works. I will be following up with further details on both fronts.

Because of the comprehensiveness of the action plan and its action items, To streamline our efforts and set clear goals, we proposed creating a Google Form to vote on and prioritize key action items for the year. This tool will help the committee collectively determine which initiatives to focus on first. We also discussed the importance of selecting one overarching EDI priority that can be presented to the GSA for alignment and formal support.

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

Hazel Kemuma

VP Student Life (EDIC Chair)

Item 8d: Vice-President Student Services Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Saad A. Iqbal
Date: May 21, 2025

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended by Saad A. Iqbal
Below is a list of meetings I attended between April 23, and May 21, 2025 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were

accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
April 23	Days of Action Committee Meeting
April 24	CFB Board Chairs and ED Meeting
April 25	CAHRD Meeting
April 26	GSA and UASU Meeting
April 29	GSA Executives and Chancellor Meeting
May 8	CFB Board Chairs and ED Meeting
May 12	Students Who Parent Working Group Meeting
May 12	CFB Board Meeting
May 14	Kevin/Saad Meeting

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope you're all doing well, in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between April 23, and May 21, 2025:

Days of Action Committee Meeting

In the DoA Committee meeting, members went through the year-in-review guide which can be accessed through this [LINK](#). The DoA Committee continues to support various events and programs tailored to each Day of Action and the key messages and behaviors intended for their observance. I am happy to share that a total of 5 campaigns and 26 programs across 3 campuses were organized in the year 2024-25, reaching over 2500 members of our campus communities. We also discussed some feedback from this year's DoA programming as well as revised key messages and behavior statements. In the breakout rooms, I contributed toward the World Hello Day key messaging and revision of the key metrics for programming. This year, our VP SL and I will continue to take part in the programming of key Days of Action representing the GSA, and the details will be shared as we move along. Please take a look at the link provided above and share your thoughts, feedback, or suggestions for improving the work of the DoA Committee.

CFB Board Chairs and ED Meeting

These are general meetings between the two co-chairs of the CFB Board and the ED to go through key areas of priority as well as set up the agenda items for the CFB Board meetings. Much of our discussions have revolved around a smooth transition of the new co-chairs as well as the draft budget of the CFB for the year.

CAHRD Meeting

The Coalition for Action on High Risk Drinking (CAHRD) was formed after consideration of high risk drinking among the students of the UofA as a health and wellness issue. The Coalition believes in the need for a coordinated response to high risk drinking among the student community. During this meeting, members discussed the future directions of the coalition as well as setting a frequency of meetings. The GSA's involvement in the coalition remains an important consideration. This was also the last meeting that I attended to cover for our VP SL portfolio which was vacant at the time. Since this work falls under the portfolio of our VP SL, I also shared that Hazel will be joining the meetings after May 1, 2025.

For context, please refer to [THIS](#) document which notes: *"Results of a survey of 1,870 randomly selected University of Alberta students in the 2009-2010 academic year 72% reported binge drinking at least occasionally. In addition, 40% meet the criteria for classification as high risk drinkers; this translates into*

about 14,000 U of A students who drink in a way that puts them at risk for experiencing harmful consequences. Of those students surveyed, 16.3% reported experiencing harm to their work, education, or employment opportunities, as a result of their drinking”.

GSA and UASU Meeting

The UASU and GSA Executives for the years 2024-25 and 2025-26 met to discuss key areas of priority and ideas for collaboration. The SU and GSA counterparts shared individual and collective learnings and initiatives that they will be focusing on this year. In the last year, the UASU and GSA worked closely on many key advocacy issues and strengthened collaboration. Under the VPSSE portfolio, I shared my top priorities for the current year as follows: an enhanced support system for students who parent, countering food insecurity and increased support for the Campus Food Bank, and initiatives addressing the mental health and wellbeing of our graduate students. I look forward to working collaboratively with the UASU, especially the VP of Student Life, Logan West.

GSA Executives and Chancellor Meeting

The UofA Chancellor invited the GSA executives of the years 2024-25 and 2025-26 to have a meaningful conversation about our collective and portfolio-related priorities. The previous Board members shared their experiences of the past year including details on the completed as well as ongoing initiatives. They also shared their learnings and some collective feedback on how the Chancellor's office can lend support to the GSA in key matters. The new executives shared their vision and priorities for the current year. Overall, this was a very productive meeting, and we discussed how the GSA can improve its outreach, advocacy, and initiatives with a broad understanding of different student groups and their needs.

Students Who Parent Working Group Meeting

In this regular meeting of the working group, members shared insights on its vision, mission, and values followed by a discussion on institutional scans where each member was tasked to research how different Canadian universities are supporting their students who parent with different support systems, activities, and events. My contribution in this regard is to conduct an institutional scan on Graduate Student Governance. I would like to share the outcomes of the scans once we have more information on this.

CFB Board Meeting

In the CFB Board meeting, we mainly discussed the budget of the current year and members raised points of clarification as well as some suggestions and feedback on the budget. Additionally, the CFB ED shared important updates related to the operational working of the CFB as well as regular updates from various committees working to strengthen its overall organization.

Kevin/Saad Meeting

In my regular meeting with Kevin Friese, I requested information about the funding cuts to the six affiliated daycare centers and their implications for parents on campus. However, the DoS office cannot confirm the details about this funding cut as this is not under their jurisdiction and lies with Campus Services instead. However, the DoS office has done considerable work to pilot a child-minding program (on an hourly basis). However, the proposal is not being pursued at the moment due to a lack of funding to support the project.

While we continue to advocate for the continuation of funding to the six affiliated daycare centers, for the last year, I have also been trying to contact local child-minding providers to see if we can extend any support to our graduate student parents. So far, we have only been able to get additional discounts from Bredin Early Bird, but our efforts are ongoing. I am also looking at collaborating with other impacted user groups to see if we can collectively create more opportunities with other service providers. I will keep the Council posted on any updates in this regard.

Updates from Kevin included details about the Counselling and Clinical Services (CCS) and hiring process for the University Health Centre's Manager. The CCS has previously piloted its One at a Time Therapy (OAATT) Program and is currently preparing a one-year impact report which will soon be shared with partners on campus. It is important to note that the funding for the OAATT program came from the Targeted Enrollment Expansion (TEE) funding as a temporary measure. This impact report is, therefore, important to ascertain the viability and sustainability of the OAATT program. However, this funding is going to continue for the current year.

The hiring process for the University Health Centre is underway. Currently, there is an acting Manager in place, and the position will soon be filled by a permanent Director/Manager.

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. Please note that if interested, you will have to attend both days together as shared above.
2. We finally have a ribbon-cutting date set for the ***Mamava Pod Launch*** (lactation station). The pod has already been placed in the SUB and will formally be opened for use on May 30, 2025. 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. For this event, the Students Who Parent Working Group is looking forward to interviewing students who parent and gathering

their insights. If you are a student parent or know another student parent who might be interested, please send an email to me so I can forward your details to the organizers. Since the event is close, it would be appreciated if we get a response at the earliest.

Best Regards,

Saad Arslan Iqbal

GSA VP Student Services (2025-26)

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

Item 8e: Vice-President External Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the May 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Niloufar Mirfallah
Date: May, 21, 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 1	Awards for Faculty Excellence Adjudication Meeting
May 5	CASA Introductory Meeting / CASA Board of Directors Overview
May 6	GSA Awards & Selection Committee Meeting
May 6	CASA Board of Directors Overview
May 7	CASA Introductory Meeting
May 12-17	CASA Conference

Awards for Faculty Excellence Adjudication Meeting

I attended the Phase 1 Adjudication meeting of the Awards for Faculty Excellence Committee on May 1, 2025. Phase 1 is now complete, and the final decision meeting (Phase 2) is scheduled for June 19, 2025.

GSA Awards & Selection Committee Meeting

As the new VP External and Chair of the committee, I received all relevant documents and underwent an introduction and training on the associated processes in preparation for the upcoming meetings.

CASA Conference

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) was born out of a pivotal moment in Canadian student advocacy—and it all started here at the University of Alberta. In 1990, U of A hosted the very first *Winds of Change* conference, a national gathering of student leaders determined to address shared challenges in post-secondary education. By 1995, these early efforts led to the formation of CASA: a non-partisan, member-driven organization focused exclusively on advocating for students at the federal level.

Since then, CASA has become a trusted voice in Ottawa, known for its evidence-based advocacy and collaborative approach. With over 400,000 students represented across Canada, CASA continues to influence federal policy on student issues.

The Foundations Conference week in CASA is designed to bring student leaders together and give us the fundamental tools and skills to advocate to the government for the upcoming year.

During Foundations Week, the Board of Directors was elected by CASA's primary voting members. The exciting news is that Alberta is well represented: The Chair is from the University of Alberta Students' Union, the Director of Policy is from the University of Calgary Students' Union, and the Director of Membership is from the University of Lethbridge Students' Union. This strong presence of Albertan delegates on the Board signals a promising and impactful year ahead for federal student advocacy—especially for Alberta students.

Graduate Student Advocacy at Foundations Week

During the week, CASA held workshops focused on the importance of graduate student advocacy. They highlighted that graduate students are directly affected by federal policies—such as Tri-Council funding, immigration, and research investments—and play a key role in teaching, research, and innovation.

They also emphasized how graduate students face unique challenges: they often work as TAs or RAs while studying, may not be enrolled in structured coursework, and rely on unstable funding. Many also balance caregiving responsibilities and face greater mental health and isolation issues. These discussions reinforced why strong federal advocacy for graduate students is essential.

CASA Strategic Plan 2024–2027: A Roadmap for National Student Advocacy

CASA's Strategic Plan provides a three-year framework to guide its work in making post-secondary education more accessible, affordable, innovative, and high-quality. Developed through extensive

consultation and approved in 2024, the plan outlines five main focus areas—or pillars: **Policy & Research, Advocacy, Membership, Governance, and Public Relations.**

Each pillar supports CASA's mission through clear goals and measurable actions. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are embedded across all areas, not treated as separate work. This plan ensures continuity, transparency, and stronger federal advocacy for students, even through leadership transitions.

National Indigenous Advocacy

The National Indigenous Advocacy Committee (NIAC) is a dedicated body within CASA that ensures Indigenous student voices are heard and prioritized in federal student advocacy. NIAC advises on policies affecting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners and supports the development of inclusive, culturally aware strategies. Through this committee, CASA aims to advance reconciliation and equity by embedding Indigenous perspectives into all areas of its work.

Everyone knows CASA doesn't have the power to make policy, but it does have the power to influence it through advocacy. By being a united national voice, CASA has helped shape important conversations and push for change on key student issues. Their continued efforts demonstrate that student advocacy can make a real impact.

Recent Areas of CASA's Advocacy Focus Include:

- Canada Student Grants and Loans
- Tri-Council Graduate Student Funding
- Youth Mental Health Fund
- Post-Secondary Student Support Program
- Apartment Loan Construction Program
- International Student Working Hours
- Student Work Placement Program

Item 8f: Associate Vice-President Labour Report

**2025-2026 Associate Vice-President Labour
Report to GSA Council for the May 2025 Meeting**

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

2024-2025 GSA AVPL Meetings Attended (Nathan Lamarche)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 1 May to 21 May 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
12 May 2025	JHSC Orientation
14 May 2025	CUPW Union Outreach
14 May 2025	Law Firm Outreach (Chivers Carpenter)
15 May 2025	Monthly Check-In with Chief Steward & Outreach Coordinator
16 May 2025	VPIR Candidate Outreach
16 May 2025	UofA JHSC Meeting
20 May 2025	LRC Meeting

Dear GSA Council,

Welcome! I am excited to have taken over the position of AVPL. I'm hoping everyone's enjoying their summer so far! A few points to make here before I get into the report. First, I am not present at the GSA Council meeting due to academic conference travel. I have asked the Deputy Speaker to read out a statement for me in regards to one of the motions being presented at this meeting. This will also mean that I will be missing the upcoming Town Hall. I am scheduling another one specifically for Labour in early June. Second, the LRC met on the 20th of May. This was a preliminary and informational meeting to discuss my plans for the Labour portfolio moving forward. Therefore, there is no LRC report included. That said, a Labour update has been sent out to our AEGS. If anyone has questions about my report, feel free to email me!

AVPL Report**JHSC Meetings (12th, 16th)**

The orientation went smoothly, and the meeting on the 16th was the final meeting for the summer. The next one will be in September.

External Outreach (14th)

In order to further the Labour portfolio's goals, we need stronger union outreach. For that reason, relationships with more than one union are important. As a GSA, we liaise with PSAC. As a former member, I have professional connections through CUPW. CUPW isn't likely to contribute much at the moment given the negotiations situation with Canada Post (it's quite complicated). However, in the future, I plan to consult with them on bylaws and policies, planned changes, and education. On the note of the law firm outreach, Chivers Carpenter is an extremely well-known and reputable Labour law firm (basically the name brand for the field) that the GSA has had previous dealings with. I have started looking into why these dealings stopped, including contacting Chivers Carpenter. They plan to get back to me with more details. Our last dealing was in 2018. I have raised some concerns about the legal advice given by our current law firm, through I need to investigate this further as well, as I do not have enough information to say one way or another whether we should be looking to switch. We have been using them since at least 2017, meaning there was some degree of overlap.

Labour Meetings (15th, 20th)

I have met with the LRC and the Chief Steward & Outreach Coordinator. In these meetings, we discussed my plans for the Labour portfolio moving forward. These plans are preliminary currently. Some changes are likely to be introduced sooner, though the larger ones I am planning on developing over the summer and holding consultations with students and other organisations about them in the late summer and fall. It's too early to introduce them to Council today, much less when I'm not even there to answer questions.

VPIR Candidate Outreach (16th)

The byelection for the position of VPIR has been passed to the IGSA. We need a VPIR! As an Indigenous student, and as an executive, I have done some outreach with a candidate who is looking to assume the role. A lot of this is tentative right now, but we do have an interested nominee. I will pass on more information when I can, but from the looks of it, based on the information supplied by the IGSA, we may have an election for VPIR in late June. In the meantime, I am preparing to fill in for some limited aspects of the VPIR role on a volunteer basis, most notably a presentation for the other executives on Treaty basics, pronunciations of nation names, and Indigenous history and self governance. I am also planning on working together with the Settler and International members of our GSA on a new Treaty acknowledgement for the GSA, though this is a task I would prefer to leave to the VPIR.

GSA Board

I have met with some struggle within the GSA Board while attempting to communicate Labour priorities. We are less than a month into this new term, and yet already, the President of the GSA has seen fit to add a "disclaimer" to my statements on a social media post, despite my reminding him that he did not have the authority to do so. He has also floated suggestions twice now to use the Labour budget for frivolous spending, including legal advice for

his own education, and for the contents of that social media post. He has also claimed that I was a criminal for correcting him (after having done so several times already) on the Alberta Labour Code, despite my experience with and understanding of that particular act. His claim was that my opinions and intentions were illegal, not my correcting him. He refused to listen to my explanation of the Act, instead opting to "take back the floor" and cut me off while I was mid-sentence in our first Board meeting. He attempted to order me to not attend any convocation ceremonies due to it not being a requirement of my position, ignoring my stance on the benefits of such attendance and ignoring the fact that it isn't up to him. As I have informed him, I will be attending the ceremonies anyway. There have been many other concerns as well. After the "disclaimer" as the metaphorical straw, and especially considering that we are less than a month into this tenure, I have formally called for the resignation of the President of the GSA.

Good luck to everyone over summer! An injury to one is an injury to all.

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

Item 8j: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: May 21, 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. The vacancies on the Appeals and Complaints Board have been advertised, and the candidates are forwarded to the Council for a vote.

In collaboration with the GSA staff, we have implemented and are testing the new STV (Single Transferable Vote) voting system, which should improve the accuracy and fidelity of the selection.

We are currently working on selecting CRO and DRO candidates, as well as the GSA Senator position.

Sincerely,
Arseniy Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair

Item 8L: GSA Management Report

**GSA Management
Report to GSA Council for May 26 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Cindy Roose
Date: May 26 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.

DEO onboarding and training has been ongoing since mid-March and through April. During May and June, they are participating in several workshops to assist in their onboarding process. This work is going well and the DEOs are eager to get to work. A Strategic Work Plan Town Hall (SWP) is scheduled for May 27, 2025 from 12-2pm to get student feedback on priorities for the year. In addition to the survey data that was collected in April and the feedback from this Council meeting, all will be compiled to allow DEOs to craft their Strategic Work Plan for the year.

Staff are currently planning for the fall orientations. The primary orientation event will be on September 3rd in the Dinwoodie Lounge and scheduling is underway for department orientations. Work is being done to create an orientation video that will serve as our primary informational piece for department orientations this year.

Preparation is underway for the annual audit of GSA 2024 - 2025 finances. 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 June - 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, May 7 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last meeting from April 30,

2025:

Strategic

- Developing a timeline for work on the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan. SWP Town Halls will be scheduled for this month.
- DEO onboarding has begun with 101 presentations. Governance training will be up next.
- The HR Manager will be drafting operational policies over the summer.
- The GSA will hire a summer student for a 6 week period running from June - July.
- 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.

Operations

- Departmental elections are wrapping up - the SGSA second nomination window has been significantly more successful than the first round.
- Presidential meetings with every Department Chair are being organized and have been very positively received.
- Council remuneration is being organized as this term's attendance is being finalized.
- Organization of Standing Committee meetings and materials is underway, particularly for the incoming DEOs to review key materials
- This week, management and the NoC Chair are interviewing candidates for the ACB and Speaker positions, to be voted on at the next Council meeting.
- The Speaker and Admin Assistant will be enforcing the Council attendance rule as of this last meeting and will be removing a few Council delegates from the list.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: +12% (April 29-May 6)

Followers: no change (current: 2054)

Instagram

Reach: +55% (April 29-May 6)

Followers: -3 follower (current: 1578)

Twitter/ X

Followers:+1 followers (1287)

Management Report to the GSA Board, May 21 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last meeting from May 7, 2025:

Strategic

- There is an SWP Town Hall scheduled for May 27 and since the AVP Labour will be away, I am trying to schedule another for June 6.
- DEO onboarding continues with governance training this week.
- The HR Manager will be drafting operational policies over the summer.
- We have begun short-listing the summer student applications.
- 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. A call out has been made for the student-at-large seat and the HR Manager will ask the NASA staff to select a representative to sit on the committee.
- The Board will meet with Studywell this week 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.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: -28.9% (May 13-20)

Followers: no change (current: 2052)

Instagram

Reach: -14% (May 13-20)

Followers: +5 followers (current: 1585)

Twitter/ X

Followers: no change (1284)