

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

[Item 1: Agenda](#)

[Item 2: Minutes](#)

[Item 6.1a: 2023-2024 Draft GSA Audited Financial Statements - Outline of Issue](#)

[Item 7.1a: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes - Outline of Issue \(October 21 Second Reading\)](#)

[Item 7.1b: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes \(October 21 Second Reading\)](#)

[Item 7.2a: U-Pass Referendum Question - Outline of Issue](#)

[Item 7.2b: U-Pass Referendum Question and Background](#)

[Item 8a: Nominees for GSA Speaker](#)

[Item 9.1a: GSA President Report](#)

[Item 9.1b: GSA Board Report](#)

[Item 9.1d: GSA Governance Committee Report](#)

[Item 9.2: GSA VP Academic Report](#)

[Item 9.3: GSA VP Student Life Report](#)

[Item 9.4: GSA VP Student Services Report](#)

[Item 9.5: GSA VP External Report](#)

[Item 9.5a: GSA Awards Selection Committee Report](#)

[Item 9.6: GSA AVP Labour Report](#)

[Item 9.6a: GSA Labour Relations Committee Report](#)

[Item 7: GSA Senator Report](#)

[Item 9: GSA CRO/DRO Report](#)

[Item 10: GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair Report](#)

[Item 11: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report](#)

[Item 12: GSA Management Report](#)

Item 1: Agenda

Monday, November 18, 2024

Held in-person in 2-100 Council Chambers

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

<p><i>The GSA and the University of Alberta reside on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Anishinaabe, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. In acknowledging this traditional territory and its significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon it, we recognize its longer history that reaches beyond colonization and the establishment of European colonies and recognize the GSA's ongoing collective responsibility in working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples and what that means for the work of the GSA as it aims to practice the principles of being Good Relations with FNMI peoples, Nations, communities, and lands.</i></p>
<p><i>The GSA's confidentiality practices are outlined below and can be summarized as follows: information arising in a closed session of GSA Council or a committee, information about identifiable individuals, or information otherwise marked or indicated as confidential, needs to stay that way. Discussions that are off the record or confidential often involve personal information, information on negotiations, business information, or other information of a similar nature.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER: Amirah Nazir in the Chair GSA SPEAKER: None at this time</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CLOSED SESSION: Discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA will occur in Closed Session</p>

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

1 min	1	2-5	Approval of the Agenda for November 18, 2024 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
1 min	2	5-14	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of October 21, 2024 GSA Council	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	A. Nazir, GSA Deputy Speaker
10 min	4		Announcements	
15 min	5		PRESENTATION ITEMS A. RSM Audit Report Presented by Winson Co & Leon Pfeiffer, RSM Auditors	W. Co & L. Pfeiffer
30 min	5.0-5.37		B. Tuition Discussion Presented by Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost: Students & Enrollment, Kathleen Brough, Chief of Staff, & Chantal Delfs, Strategic Communications	M. Padfield, K. Brough, C. Delfs
15 min			C. EDI Action Plan Presentation Presented by Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost EDI, and Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, EDI	C. Smith, T. Ira
30 min			D. M. Janz Presentation Presented by Michael Janz, City Councillor	M. Janz
1 min	6	15-16	INFORMATION ONLY 1. GSA Council to receive for information the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements a. Outline of Issue 2. GSA Tuition Town Hall Online Feedback	H. Arshad, President
		6.0-6.4		
5 min	7	17	ACTION ITEMS 1. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 Second Reading a. Outline of Issue a. Recommended Bylaw Changes	H. Arshad, President

20 min	10		<p>DISCUSSION ITEMS</p> <p>A. In-Camera Item: Closed Session Council-Elected Officers, GSA Councillors and DEOs may remain for this discussion. Guests and staff will step out.</p>	H. Arshad, GSA President
15 min	11		<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, November 14, 2024) Oral Questions 	
			Adjournment	

Item 2: Minutes

Monday, October 21, 2024

Held in-person in 2-100 Council Chambers

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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

Farhan Khalid in the Chair

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

None at this time

CLOSED SESSION:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

- GSA Speaker: Farhan Khalid
- Chief Returning Officer: Sophie Shi
- Deputy Returning Officer: Zain Patel
- Senator: Ola Mabrouk

GSA Executives:

- GSA President: Haseeb Arshad
- VP Academic: Rija Kamran
- VP Student Life: Benjamin Kucher
- VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal
- VP External: Parman Mojir Shaibani
- AVP Labour: Muneeb Raja

Councillors-At-Large:

1. Georga Boffen Yordanov
2. Margaret DeCoste
3. Christine Hymanyk
4. Abdul Hadi Syed
5. Allyson Lynch
6. Destiny Otoadese
7. Mohamed Sabek

Departmental Councillors:

1. Prithviraj Vellamunda, AFNS
2. Ning Dai, Biochemistry
3. Samantha Tan, Biological Sciences
4. Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering
5. Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology
6. Yousef Haidar, Chemistry
7. Kiera Greenaway, Civil & Environmental Engineering
8. Cassandra Baragar, Communication Sciences & Disorders
9. Iain Smith, Computing Science
10. Michelle Bey, Dentistry
11. Andy Zhang, Digital Humanities
12. Alissa Watson, Drama
13. Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
14. Ajibola (Jibs) Adigun, Educational Policy Studies
15. Scott Taylor, Educational Psychology
16. Jennie Burton, Elementary Education
17. Nathan Lamarche, English & Film Studies

<p>8. Ibrahim Khodabocus</p> <p>Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wasimah Joomun, CASA Executive Director ● Temi David ● Akhil Mohandas ● Amirah Nazir 	<p>18. Amber Smith, IGSA</p> <p>19. Eileen Ai-Lin Tang, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology</p> <p>20. Dalia Cristerna, Linguistics</p> <p>21. Pouneh Mohammadi Nejad, Mathematical & Statistical Sciences</p> <p>22. Connor Oborn, Medical Genetics</p> <p>23. Qi Feng Lin, Medical Microbiology & Immunology</p> <p>24. Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience</p> <p>25. Rebecca Reif, Obstetrics & Gynecology</p> <p>26. Raj Somasundaram, Pediatrics</p> <p>27. Fulin Wang, Pharmacology</p> <p>28. Joshua Barden, Philosophy</p> <p>29. Savannah Ribeiro, Political Science</p> <p>30. Emilie Desnoyers, Psychiatry</p> <p>31. Cheryl Pan, Psychology</p> <p>32. Kathryn Short, Public Health</p> <p>33. Matt Ball, Renewable Resources</p> <p>34. Ivan Ma, Surgery</p> <p>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amirmahdi Mohamadi, Chemical & Materials Engineering 2. Reyna Alvarez, Drama 3. Zeynep Oyku Ozturk, Educational Policy Studies 4. Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion 5. Yimiao Zhao, Oncology
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
6:00	-	Land Acknowledgement	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	Approval of the Agenda for October 21, 2024 GSA Council	F. Khalid,

		BK MOVED. HA SECONDED. Motion PASSED.	GSA Speaker
1 min	2.0-2.10	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of September 23, 2024 GSA Council SI MOVED. BK SECONDED. Motion PASSED.	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
2 min	3	Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eileen Ai-Lin Tang, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology • Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion Alternate • Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Science • Joshua Barden, Philosophy 	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker
	4	Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophie Shi has reached her fourth year of service to the GSA 	
	5	PRESENTATION ITEMS: CASA Presentation H. Arshad, GSA President, introduced the guest. W. Joomun, CASA ED, introduced the organization’s mission, values, and structure during her presentation. CASA advocates for approximately 365,000 students across Canada, focusing on making post-secondary education accessible, affordable, and high-quality. Operating on a "one school, one vote" principle, CASA consists of 26 member schools and emphasizes a non-partisan, research-based approach to advocacy. Delegates from member institutions, such as the GSA, represent student voices at the national level, and CASA encourages active participation and accountability from these delegates. Wasiimah highlighted the importance of collaboration and communication between CASA and its members, inviting questions and encouraging engagement to enhance advocacy efforts. She explained that CASA's advocacy efforts focus on securing funding from the federal government, which is then distributed to provinces, impacting tuition and accessibility at the institutional level. CASA engages in advocacy through policy research, releasing papers on critical issues such as Indigenous education and student housing. Direct student involvement in meetings with parliamentarians adds a personal touch to the advocacy process, as stories from students illustrate the challenges they face.	Wasiimah Joomun, CASA Executive Director

		<p>Key achievements from CASA's advocacy include the elimination of interest on student loans and increased funding for mental health resources. CASA's annual cycle involves setting priorities in May, advocating in November, and reviewing successes in April, ensuring that student perspectives are consistently represented at the federal level. Finally, she encouraged participation and engagement among delegates to maximize the impact of CASA's work.</p> <p>A concern was raised by H. Arshad about a new policy affecting English language testing for Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) applicants. He referenced a federal report that posited that international students lack verbal communication skills, and requested access to this report. Wasiimah stated she would reach out to the minister's office to obtain it. The discussion then turned to CASA's advocacy priorities, noting that recent changes in policies from IRCC occurred after these priorities were finalized. H. Arshad suggested that CASA's board should proactively address emerging issues raised by international members. Wasiimah explained that while CASA's primary focus is federal advocacy, they actively respond to urgent issues by submitting briefs to the government. She acknowledged the need for better communication with members about these efforts and highlighted that CASA has submitted several briefs to ISCC in recent months to ensure student voices are represented.</p> <p>Another participant inquired about CASA's provincial advocacy efforts, emphasizing that funding cuts from the Alberta government have a significant impact on students. Wasiimah responded that CASA operates at a federal level but is developing partnerships with provincial groups to collaborate on issues affecting students nationwide. While CASA cannot directly advocate at the provincial level, they provide resources, data, and support to empower local advocacy efforts.</p> <p>GSA's Proposal for the Utilization of Tuition Fee Offset</p> <p>As part of the Tuition Budgetary and Advisory Committee (TPAC), the GSA proposed the utilization of the tuition fee offset to support various financial aid initiatives. While a tuition fee proposal is standard, the university allocates a portion of revenue for emergency bursaries and student financial support. Our proposal emphasized the need for increased investment in the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF) and the course-based student scholarship. Although funding exists for this</p>	<p>H. Arshad, President</p>
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		<p>year, sustainability requires an increase in the GSSF. We also highlighted the Campus Food Bank's critical role, noting a 550% increase in utilization over four years, alongside a 4,000% rise in food purchases, yet no direct university budget allocation for it. Additionally, we conducted two surveys on the financial and mental health realities of graduate students, revealing that 66% diagnosed with mental health issues did so after starting their degrees, linking financial stress to mental health challenges.</p> <p>Our recommendations included further support for the GSSF, course-based Master's students, and the CFB, as well as lifting the restriction preventing first-year international students from applying for emergency bursaries. The university's current policy requires first-year students to demonstrate sufficient financial resources, but we argued that emergencies can arise regardless of financial preparedness. Our surveys showed that 27% of respondents were first-year master's students, indicating significant need. We await the university's response to our recommendations, while other discussions on tuition fees remain confidential.</p>	
15 min	<p>6</p> <p>6.0</p> <p>6.1-6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p>	<p><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - September 23 Second Reading</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>b. Recommended Bylaw Changes</p> <p>HA MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p>Motion PASSED.</p> <p>B. GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw Changes - October 21 First Reading</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>b. Recommended Bylaw Changes</p> <p>SI MOVED. BK SECONDED.</p> <p>Motion PASSED.</p>	<p>H. Arshad, President</p> <p>H. Arshad, President</p>
15 min	7	<p><u>ELECTIONS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Deputy Speaker:</p> <p>a. One GSA Member Position: Amirah Nazir</p> <p>B. Appeals & Complaints Board:</p> <p>a. Two Councillor Positions: Zeynep Oyku Ozturk</p>	F. Khalid, GSA Speaker

		<p>C. Governance Committee:</p> <p>a. One Councillor Position: Ajibola (Jibs) Adigun</p>	
30 min	8	<p><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></p> <p>Reports:</p> <p>A. GSA President: Haseeb Arshad</p> <p>a. President’s Report</p> <p>i. H. Arshad highlights that as part of the GSA’s accountability measures, all committee Chairs are required to submit written reports.</p> <p>ii. Following discussions with President Flanagan, a revised proposal for a new UofA app will be submitted, focusing on essential features due to a reduced budget.</p> <p>iii. The IRCC has made recent policy changes and the GSA Board is drafting a statement regarding this.</p> <p>iv. Additionally, the GSA's mental health survey revealed that 30% of graduate students are facing mental health challenges, with 79% postponing their degrees due to job market concerns. The GSA is advocating for a graduate Co-op program, inspired by a successful initiative in the Computing Science department, to help students gain work experience.</p> <p>v. Lastly, H. Arshad discussed the potential for a graduate peer support program, which is being explored in collaboration with university representatives.</p> <p>vi. In response to a question about the new dental and healthcare provider, H. Arshad explained that negotiations are still ongoing, and details on coverage will be finalized once a contract is signed.</p> <p>b. GSA Board Report</p> <p>i. As submitted</p> <p>c. GSA Budget & Finance Committee Report</p> <p>i. As submitted</p> <p>d. GSA Governance Committee Report</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As submitted e. Third-Party Investigation Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Following discussing the university's response to the removal of the Palestinian Protest encampment with the third-party investigator, the university has created an advisory board to discuss how we can support Palestinian scholars with the same level of commitment as the university previously announced for Ukrainian students. B. Vice-President Academic: Rija Kamran <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. R. Kamran encouraged students to reach out with any feedback regarding the Canvas transition as she can take any suggestions to the Learning Management System Advisory Committee that is working on improvements. b. Tuition Relief Working Group has begun, but currently only for international thesis-based PhD and Masters students. This group will be providing recommendations on how to provide tuition relief and then extend it to domestic students as well. c. PhD Minimum Funding implementation work is ongoing; funding starts in Fall 2025, so in Winter 2025 students will begin receiving letters. R. Kamran encouraged any students concerned with the language in these contracts to reach out to her. C. Vice-President Student Life: Benjamin Kucher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. B. Kucher detailed his meeting with the Dean of Students, Vice-Provost EDI where they discussed the development and implementation of non-disciplinary accountability options that can be taken in the event of interpersonal harm and academic misconduct that don't have to escalate to the formal complaint process - a process that does not give students adequate opportunities to respond throughout the case compared to faculty b. Recent marked increase in student group engagement; B. Kucher encouraged students and student groups to reach out to him re partnering on initiatives c. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. None at this time D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. U-Pass negotiation deal has been agreed upon, securing savings for students in the millions of dollars, but details cannot be shared currently. b. Hydroponics farm update: S. Iqbal and Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean Health & Wellness, met with students from Engineers for a Sustainable World (ESW UAlberta) who are running their own hydroponics experiment to discuss challenges and opportunities. Any further suggestions are encouraged to reach out to Saad. c. CFB AGM detailed the increasing need for funding and donations to match the increasing demand d. The CFB is looking for volunteers for Trick or Treat Fundraiser on October 26th via Instagram e. Questions centered around CFB referendum re tuition payments: funding has not yet been released by the university to the CFB. There was a jump from 2000 to 12,000 visits a year over the last three years, leaving a deficit of \$83,000. No data is collected on students who use the CFB donations. Participation in CFB efforts is highly encouraged. f. B. Kucher, VP Student Life, highlighted the late September snack and school supply drive put on by the Dean of Students, GSA, SU and CFB E. Vice-President External: Parman Mojir Shaibani <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted F. Associate Vice-President Labour: Muneeb Raja <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted b. University HR upgrading policies re discrimination, harassment and duty to accommodate. New policies regarding discrimination and harassment policies for students, which previously was not specific to students. c. Collective Agreement Bargaining updates: the lead negotiator for the GSA was off sick before the negotiations, leading to a delay to December 3rd for sharing our proposal d. PSAC did not renew the contract for the GSA support contact at PSAC without notifying us, so our concerns have been noted. M. Raja will have a meeting with the Regional Executive Vice-President on Wednesday to ensure compliance with our service agreement. G. GSA Senator: Ola Mabrouk H. GSA Speaker: Farhan Khalid 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Sophie Shi and Zain Patel J. GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair: Tianxu Wang <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted K. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair L. GSA Management, Executive Director: Lewie Moodley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted 	
	<p>9</p>	<p>Question Period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on Thursday, October 17, 2024) B. Oral Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Zain Patel, DRO, raised concerns about a presentation from Bright Learning Lab regarding the Saver AI app, suggesting a potential conflict of interest involving L. Moodley, GSA ED, who was associated with H10 AI, the parent company. Lewie clarified that he had declared this conflict in March and was not a paid employee, but rather providing strategic advice on an educational project to the parent company while completing his PhD. He emphasized that participation in the app's pilot program was voluntary and that there would be safeguards to protect student data, ensuring it would not be used for AI training. b. Another council member expressed concerns about data privacy and how the app would improve without using student data. L. Moodley responded that a contract would define how the app collected feedback and emphasized that the app's purpose was to gauge interest among students. He assured that the board would maintain control over any contracts, ensuring no financial benefits for GSA members. H. Arshad encouraged any councillors with further concerns to reach out to him. c. Further questions arose about potential costs for students after the pilot ended. Lewie stated that the free pilot was temporary and would assess whether the app met student needs. He acknowledged that if the university decided to adopt the app, there might be discussions about student fees, but this remained uncertain. d. The need for clearer definitions of conflicts of interest in GSA bylaws was discussed, with an emphasis on transparency and responsibility among council members. It was suggested that if the council wanted 	

		<p>to vote on the app’s adoption, it should be raised as an actionable item at the next meeting.</p> <p>e. Finally, B. Kucher, VP Student Life, provided an update on efforts to restore the sexual assault center, noting that new leadership was working on hiring counselors and revitalizing volunteer programs.</p>	
		Adjournment 7:58 PM	

Item 6.1a: 2023-2024 Draft GSA Audited Financial Statements - Outline of Issue

Outline of Issue

2023-2024 Draft GSA Audited Financial Statements

Suggested Motion:

That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements.

Background:

The GSA is required by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (Section 97(1)) to have its financial statements audited annually. Our auditor, Leon Pfeiffer, is with the firm RSM Canada.

Note from the Executive Director: The audit process begins with a Letter of Engagement, which sets out the parameters of the audit. Members of our audit firm, RSM Canada, then review relevant financial information and other files prepared by the Financial Team. The audit representative(s) have access to any info they wish to see, and pose questions to the President, Accountant, Financial Manager, and Executive Director (and to other members of the organization, as required). The audited financial statements then proceed to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC), GSA Board, GSA Council, and, ultimately, the Board of Governors for information. They are also posted on the GSA website.

The GSA BFC originally received, for information, the 2023 -2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements at their meeting of October 17 2024. The GSA Board approved them at their meeting of October 23 2024. Members of the GSA BFC have been invited to attend the discussion of the audited financial statements at the November 18 2024 GSA Council meeting.

According to our Auditor, the GSA’s financial position continues to be strong at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Jurisdiction:

Post-Secondary Learning Act, Section 97(1):

“Each student organization of a public post-secondary institution shall provide audited financial statements annually to the board of the public post-secondary institution and shall make the audited financial statements available to students of the public post-secondary institution on request.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.3.5.a:

“Following the GSA fiscal year end, the Accountant and the Financial Manager, in consultation with the ED (or delegate), will arrange for an audit of the GSA’s financial records by an accredited auditor as required by the Post-Secondary Learning Act. Audited financial statements are normally due ninety (90) days after the GSA’s fiscal year-end. Audited financial statements will be submitted by the Auditor to the President and ED (or delegate); then to the GSA BFC for information; then to the GSAB for approval; then to GSA Council for information and onward transmission to the University of Alberta Board of Governors. The Accountant and the Financial Manager will prepare draft financial statements and the year-end working papers.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K.POL.5.4:

“The GSA BFC will receive information and advice from the GSA Auditor with respect to any information and recommendations the Auditor wishes to present.”

Item 7.1a: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes - Outline of Issue (October 21
Second Reading)

Outline of Issue

GSA CEO Restrictions on: Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D, E related Nominating committee policy and by law update around restrictions on paid members.

Suggested Motion:

That the GSA Council, for approval, recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, **GSA Restrictions on Multiple Positions: Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D, E.**

Note: This is the second reading of changes to GSA Bylaw. The first reading occurred on October 21, 2024 and the second reading will be on November 18 2024. Bylaws require two readings and policy only one reading. Policies are effective and in place from October 22 2024.

Background:

We conducted this review to identify potential conflicts of interest in holding multiple positions within the GSA that report to the Council. Understanding these conflicts helps ensure transparency, fairness, and impartiality, particularly in roles like the CRO and DEO during elections. By addressing these issues, we aim to improve the governance structure and maintain the integrity of decision-making processes within the GSA.

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.”

Item 7.1b: GSA Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes (October 21 Second Reading)

Current Bylaws (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>Restricting Members on External Awards from Applying to Paid Positions</p> <p>D.BYL.1.1c GSA Members who are recipients of external awards that explicitly prohibit paid employment are ineligible to apply for DEO and Council-Elected Officer positions that provide a stipend or an honorarium. However, such members are encouraged and permitted to run for volunteer-only positions within the GSA, where no financial compensation is provided.</p>	<p>This ensures compliance with external award conditions while promoting fairness and transparency by allowing only eligible members to apply for paid roles</p>

Current Policy (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
<p>Policy for Nominating Committee</p> <p>E.POL.2.8a All nominees are encouraged to attend the GSA Council meeting where election will be held for their contested position. During the meeting, each nominee will be allocated a maximum of 30 seconds to present their qualifications and reasons for seeking the position. This brief introduction will allow Council members to assess the suitability of the nominees.</p>	<p>Encouraging candidates to attend council meetings and present themselves ensures informed decision-making and increases transparency in the election process. Plus, this policy statement also streamlines the process.</p>

Item 7.2a: U-Pass Referendum Question - Outline of Issue

Outline of Issue

2025 U-Pass Referendum Question

Suggested Motion for the GSA Council:

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass program, to run concurrently with the 2025 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached.

Background:

Over the past several months, students and staff from Edmonton post-secondary institutions have been in negotiations with ETS about renewal of the U-Pass program. In October of 2024, an Agreement-In-Principle was reached with participating institutions for a 3-year contract, ending August 31, 2028. While 2025 - 2026 will see no fee increase (remains at \$180.00/term), fees will go up by \$2.50 in 2026 - 2027 (\$182.50/term) and another \$2.50 in 2027 - 2028 (\$185.00/term).

A pilot program was established in 2021 that defined additional exceptions for students. These exceptions have now been made permanent. The Agreement-In-Principle will be signed upon a successful referendum vote during the 2025 GSA General Election.

Additional information concerning the history of the U-Pass and the proposed fee structure can be found in the attached background to the referendum question.

The attached question was drafted in consultation with the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), who reviewed it and approved of its submission to the GSA Board and GSA Council on 1 November 2024.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section 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 majority vote at any meeting of GSA Council. Normally a referendum will be held in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSAB.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section J.BYL.2.3

“Notwithstanding the process by which a referendum is initiated, a clearly worded referendum question will be developed in consultation with the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the GSAB, and GSA Council. GSA Council will approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of a referendum question.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Bylaw, Referenda, Section J.BYL.3.1

“Referenda questions will be submitted to GSA Council for approval no later than the first mailing for the November GSA Council meeting, unless a referendum is determined to be urgent by the GSAB as noted above.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Policy, Referenda, Section J.POL.7.6.

“GSA Council will vote whether to approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of the question.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J: Referenda, GSA Policy, Referenda, Section J.POL.7.7

“If GSA Council approves the holding of a referendum and the wording of the question, a referendum is then held in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda.”

Item 7.2b: U-Pass Referendum Question and Background

2025 U-PASS REFERENDUM QUESTION**Background:**

U-Pass is the student group discount program that provides students with unlimited public transit offered by Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route).

In 2006, the GSA, along with the University of Alberta Students' Union and the MacEwan, Norquest, and NAIT student associations, negotiated to implement the initial U-Pass program. The first GSA U-Pass referendum was approved in 2007 and subsequent referenda have been approved in 2010, 2013, 2017, and 2021.

More information about the U-Pass can be found [here](#).

The current U-Pass agreement is due to expire on 31 August 2025. After negotiation, an Agreement-In Principle was reached that would see the cost of the U-Pass set on a 3 year contract at the following rates:

2025-2026 - \$180.00/term
2026-2027 - \$182.50/term
2027-2028 - \$185.00/term

The previous Agreement-In-Principle ran a pilot program with additional exemptions under the U-Pass program for:

- Seniors (any student over the age of 65 at the start of a given academic term);
- Recipients of the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program (any student who can demonstrate participation in the AISH program); *and*
- Distance (any student who can demonstrate their principal residence is greater than 100 km from Edmonton).

After this round of negotiations, these exemptions are now permanent.

In November 2024 GSA Council, pursuant to GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda, approved the wording for the 2025 U-Pass referendum question and the holding of the referendum.

Question:

Do you support the continuation of the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) subject to the following conditions:

- The U-Pass would provide unlimited usage of regular transit systems in Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route) within the participating municipalities' service area during the Fall, Winter, and/or Spring/Summer (May-August) terms to all continuing graduate students enrolled in at least one course for credit in a term (includes thesis registrations);
- The cost of the U-Pass fee to each graduate student would be mandatory and set at \$180.00/term in 2025-2026, \$182.50/term in 2026-2027, and \$185.00/term in 2027-2028 (for each of the Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer terms), beginning 1 September 2025 and extending to 31 August 2028;
- Under certain circumstances, some graduate students would continue to be exempt or eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program (below are excerpts from the current U-Pass agreement concerning exemption and opt-out provisions, with the addition of the pilot program exemptions.

Excerpt from the 2025-2028 U-Pass Agreement (addition of pilot program exemptions)

The following graduate students would be exempt from the U-Pass program:

- “a) a Student who is not enrolled in any course for credit located on a University of Alberta campus within any of the Municipalities for that School Term;
- b) a Student who is enrolled only in the Executive MBA program;
- c) a graduate Student who is designated as an off-campus thesis student by the University; *and*
- d) a Student who is enrolled only in a program of study offered by the University's Faculty of Extension, which program of study leads to a certificate.”

The following graduate students would be eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program:

- “a) a Student who has a valid Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS) registration, Strathcona County Mobility Bus registration, or St. Albert Handibus registration, Spruce Grove Specialized Transit Service (STS) registration, Fort Saskatchewan Special Transportation Services Society (STSS) registration, or Leduc Assisted Transportation Services (LATS) registration; and is able to prove their registration with a valid photo ID card;
- b) a Student who has a valid CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) registration and is able to confirm such registration with a valid CNIB-issued photo ID card;
- c) a Student who is currently an employee of a transit system owned and operated by any of the Municipalities and is able to provide written confirmation on official letterhead of their employment at the beginning of each School Term; *and*
- d) a Student who, pursuant to official University regulations, policies or procedures (as may be amended from time to time) respecting registration and fees assessments, has the option of being

- assessed the athletics and recreation fee or the health services fee by the University, and who is in a cooperative work experience program or work internship and who is registered only in one or more courses designated as “Work Experience” for that School Term, and who is either: i. For Fall and Winter Terms - fulfilling their course requirements outside the boundaries of the Municipalities for the majority of the School Term; or
- ii. For Spring/Summer Term – fulfilling the majority of their course requirements outside of the boundaries of the Municipalities; or
- e) a Student who is enrolled at another post-secondary educational institution and is required to participate in a transportation program similar to the U-Pass Program (if any) being offered to students of this other post-secondary educational institution by said institution and the Municipalities.”
- f) a Student who is, or will be turning, 65 years of age or older during the relevant School Term, and who can provide documentation verifying the same;
- g) a Student with a valid registration in the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program during the relevant School Term, and who can provide documentation verifying the same; or
- h) a Student whose principal residence is outside of a 100km radius measured from the main campus on which their in-person courses are delivered, and who can provide documentation verifying the same.

Item 8a: Nominees for GSA Speaker

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

These positions were advertised in the GSA newsletters of October 25 and November 1 2024, with a deadline of November 8 2024. Two (2) nominations were received for the position of Speaker and GSA NoC-approved.

There will be an electronic vote held at the November 18 2024 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the Monday November 18 2024 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 November 18 2024 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

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

Speaker

- 1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology)**
- 2. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)**

Jurisdiction:

Section D.BYL.3.1.d

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

Section E.POL.3.2.a

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

Section E.POL.3.2.b

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

Biographies and brief resumes of the nominees for Speaker are BELOW. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**Nominations for SPEAKER
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)
Two (2) Nominees**

1. Zain Patel (Cell Biology) - Resigned from DRO as of Nov. 12, 2024

<p>Statement of Interest</p>
<p>I have served on GSA Council for approximately two years – 1 year as a councillor and 1 year as DRO. I would like to continue being involved with the GSA by serving as the GSA Speaker. During my time as DRO, I extensively familiarized myself with bylaw and policy, namely for Elections and Referenda, but have also familiarized myself with other relevant pieces such as council structure, meeting procedures, ACB procedures among others. The role of Speaker is to act as neutral and impartial arbiter of bylaw and policy during Council meetings and I believe I am suited to this role - my experience as DRO showcases my ability to provide neutral and impartial perspectives in various situations. The 2024 General and Re-Election as well as the recent 2024 by-election demonstrate my ability to problem solve and work efficiently in high-stress situations.</p> <p>I also believe that familiarity with bylaw and procedures are essential for all council members. Some potential initiatives I'd like to take to ensure all council members (new and continuing) are on the same page include providing brief reminders of relevant policies at the beginning of meetings, namely on how elements of meetings like voting, motions and such work. This would also support council attendance and engagement. Council attendance is also crucial to ensure the graduate student base is aware of significant updates and changes. Familiarity with bylaw and procedures in council meetings could go a long way to promote better engagement in council. Other strategies to promote engagement would be to effectively manage question periods to ensure key points are addressed concisely and to facilitate discussion as needed.</p>
<p>Bio</p>
<p>Currently I am in my fourth year of a PhD in Cell Biology. During my undergraduate and graduate studies, I have been extensively involved with various initiatives on campus, such as Week of Welcome, NeurAlbertaTech, Cell Biology Students' Association, and the GSA Council. All of my experiences on campus have enabled me to develop key skills in communication, conflict resolution, leadership, problem solving and critical thinking. More recently, I have served as DRO for the GSA which has played a significant role in furthering my understanding of GSA operations.</p> <p>Furthermore, I recognize that there is still much for me to learn, but I believe that the skills I've developed and the experiences I have had over the years will provide an essential framework for my success in the position of GSA Speaker. My aim is ensuring that the Council meetings continue to run smoothly and in accordance to bylaw and policy, and ensuring there is mutual trust and respect between all members of council including DEOs and council members.</p>

2. Sumaila Sulemana (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)

<p>Statement of Interest</p>
<p>As a student I believe having a blend of extracurricular activities alongside your main course of studies is a balance approach towards once education. I would like to take on this Speaker role as a way of grooming myself to tackle societal issues pragmatically from a neutral stand point. I believe this is also a way to develop my sense of responsibility in leadership roles.</p>
<p>Bio</p>
<p>I am Sumaila Sulemana. I am currently a PhD student at the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta where I am currently researching waste rocks such as mine tailings potentiality for CO2 mineralization. Prior to this I had my masters in Geoscience and Sustainable Energy at the University of Manchester and a Bachelor's degree in Geological Engineering at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. During my BSc. I worked with the Student Representative Council by helping them initiate the free studies of French and Chinese courses for students across campus. I happen to also form business initiatives with my colleagues and our team came in 3rd place in a business innovation challenge that was organized by the Student Representative Council at that time. I worked as a Teaching assistant after my BSc. at the department of Geological Engineering where I was still handling the affairs of students. In my masters degree at the University of Manchester, I had the opportunity to serve as a Program Chairperson of the Society of Petroleum Engineers(SPE) student chapter and served as a Secretary for American Association of Petroleum Geoscience(AAPG)student chapter at the University. I recently held a position as an ATLAS representative of the Remote Sensing and GIS department at the department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, UofA. I led my team to participate in the just-ended Imperial Barrel Award Competition 2024 where we represented the University of Alberta and came first in the Regionals and won second place in the Global final. As someone who likes learning languages as a hobby, aside from my fluency in English, I have basic to medium fluency in French, Chinese and Arabic. I believe my experiences in the side of academia has set a good basis for me to apply for the role of Speaker at the Graduate Student Association at the University of Alberta and I think this position will also help build up my leadership skills.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Item 9.1a: GSA President Report

2024-2025 President

Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting

To: Council Members
From: Muhammad Haseeb Arshad
Date: 2024/11/13

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between Oct 21 to Nov 18, 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
Oct 21	Monthly Meeting with Chief of Staff, J. Smith & President Flanagan
Oct 21	GAC Meeting
Oct 21	Meeting with NASA Rep
Oct 22	DEO Governance Training Session
Oct 22	People Strategy Launch Event
Oct 23	University Awards Night: Teaching, Learning & Research
Oct 24	Ellement Contract Negotiations
Oct 24	Campus Recovery Pledge Follow-Up Meeting
Oct 24	Referendum Edits
Oct 28-31	CAGS Conference
Oct 29	Leg Day for Provincial Advocacy Planning
Oct 31	Leg Day for Provincial Advocacy Planning
Nov 4	Ellement Contract Discussion
Nov 4	Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney
Nov 5	NDP Caucus
Nov 5	UCP Caucus
Nov 5	UC GSA Team Lunch
Nov 6	GFC APC
Nov 6	GSA Fall Social
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
Nov 12	GSA Budget Discussion
Nov 12	DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting
Nov 13	TBAC Meeting

Nov 13	Meeting with BoG Student Reps
Nov 14	BoG Special Meeting
Nov 14	Built for Purpose Working Group Meeting
Nov 14	Campus Walk & Talk
Nov 15	GFC Council Caucus
Nov 15	GAC Meeting
Nov 15	Teaching and Learning AI Subcommittee Meeting
Nov 18	Monthly Meeting with Chief of Staff, J. Smith & President Flanagan

Dear Council Members,

I hope this report finds you well. As we reflect on November and the significance of Remembrance Day, we also find ourselves midway through our term in office, with just three months remaining before the elections for the next executive team. Our institutional memory reminds us that much of our success today stands on the foundation laid by our predecessors, and we should acknowledge their contributions. I am very excited for you all to see the progress that my team has made regarding our Strategic Work Plan (SWP), which will be presented at the next Council meeting.

Working towards our ambitious SWP plan is no small feat—it demands dedication, and a commitment to prioritizing graduate students’ interests. Among our most important goals this year is the course-based graduate scholarship. I’m thrilled to share that the application for this hybrid award will open next week. This initiative, built on two years of our research, is both timely and essential, given the immense financial pressures faced by our course-based graduate members. While the university’s administration has lauded this effort, we have worked tirelessly to ensure they also recognize that inadequate funding is often the root cause of a subpar academic experience. We continue to advocate for an increase in our graduate student support fund to sustain these awards in future years, as the GSA may not be able to fund them indefinitely otherwise.

Similarly, we are actively collaborating with the university to address the lack of guaranteed minimum funding packages for thesis-based master’s students. Following the approval of the PhD minimum funding package, this area has seen limited attention. However, in my meeting with Provost Dr. Verna Yui, she has committed to addressing this gap. She acknowledged the vital contributions of graduate students to knowledge production, and teaching in our institute that aspires to climb international ranking and be a leader in research.

It goes without saying that optimal academic experience surpasses beyond just funding. It’s about ensuring that graduate students can pursue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. I’m pleased to report that the University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre has resumed full operations, thanks to the efforts of the new Assistant Dean of Community Wellness Support, Dunsie Strohschein. Drop-in services and virtual appointments are now available during operational hours (8:30 AM to 4 PM). Additionally, I’ve been working closely with the UASU to advocate for a campus recovery pledge, supporting students and community members recovering from drug

addition. Discussions with the Dean of Students' office have been promising, and I will follow up with UASU President (Lisa Glock) to formalize our vision for this initiative.

As you all are aware that transitioning to a new health and dental insurance provider (Ellement) was a major undertaking. As someone who dealt with numerous concerns about StudentCare's inefficiencies during my tenure as VP Student Services, this is an issue close to my heart. I'm pleased to report that we have finalized our contract negotiations with Ellement, and the board will soon present recommendations for plan benefits to the Council. We are committed to ensuring that we will at least keep the same benefits while striving to reduce the plan premiums. This is going to be a challenging task given that current inflationary pressure in Alberta is around 3%.

This month, I also attended the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies Conference in Toronto with our VP Academic (Rija), which offered valuable insights into funding and supervision practices across Canadian institutions. These ideas will help inform our ongoing student-supervisor survey, which is currently in the planning phase.

Externally, our VP External Parman and I engaged with provincial stakeholders, including the Minister of Advanced Education (Rajan Sawhney) and NDP, UCP MLA caucuses, to advocate for graduate student priorities. Our key asks included 10% targeted funding in terms of scholarships and bursaries for graduate students, more transparent MNIFs guidelines, institutional accountability regarding tuition fee proposals, carve outs in Bill 18 for post-secondary institutes, student loan forgiveness via creating a policy to encourage students to stay in Alberta to get this facility, and finally amendments in the Labour relation code (LRC) to allow academically employed graduate students to choose their own bargaining agent by amending 58.4(a)(c), and striking out 58.4(2), 58.2(b). The feedback from these meetings has been encouraging, particularly regarding targeted funding and LRC amendments. We also met with the UCGSA to discuss reviving ab-GPAC, recognizing the importance of a unified provincial graduate advocacy body.

Finally, regarding the tuition fee town hall and the upcoming proposal, I must emphasize the financial pressures faced by our members. Over 70% of CFB members are graduate students, yet many live below the minimum standard of living set by the university. The lack of financial aid for course-based master's students, combined with the alarming finding that 40% of respondents in our recent mental health survey reported being clinically diagnosed with mental health issues after starting their graduate studies, highlights the urgent need to address these challenges. Notably, inflation in Alberta is currently at 3%, which is significantly lower than last year. Additionally, according to Stats Canada, the percentage increase in tuition fees across Canada this year is lower (1.84%) compared to last year's increase (2.5%). For context, the University of Calgary proposed increases of just 2% for domestic students, 4% for international students, and 0% for thesis-based programs. I urge you all to amplify your constituents' concerns at the upcoming town halls—our collective voice is crucial to making a difference.

In closing, transparency and accountability have been my guiding principles as President. I admit that this year has been particularly challenging due to factors beyond my control. I have been working closely with the staff to

implement significant changes in our bylaws to ensure greater accountability within our association. That said, I want all of you to know that I take your concerns very seriously and have done my utmost to address them, whether they relate to operational matters or transparency in decision-making. I encourage all of you to familiarize yourselves with our integrated bylaws & policy and board policy documents to provide informed feedback. I have always strived to adhere to the bylaws, but I am also eager to seek your advice on how we can further enhance the transparency in our operations. I understand that this process may take longer than anticipated, but I assure you that together, we can create lasting positive change for our association.

I want to thank our management team, Lewie and Cindy, and our dedicated staff—Grace, Dorota, Brandy, Vanessa, and Seidy—for their invaluable contributions. Your hard work often goes unseen but is deeply appreciated. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all. Let’s continue to strive for a better graduate experience, together.

Sincerely,
Haseeb Arshad
President, GSA

Item 9.1b: GSA Board Report

**GSA Board
Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting**

To: Council Members
From: Chair GSA Board
Date: 2024/11/13

Dear Council Members,

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

13 November 2024 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Estimated Travel Expenses for the CASA Advocacy Week 2024 Conference, Kids & Company Discussion, Future with CASA Discussion, Student Meeting Reports Reminder, DEO's Reports

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSA Board APPROVE the estimated expense for two (2) representatives to attend the Canadian Association for Student Associations (CASA) Advocacy week, November 24-29, 2024, in Ottawa, Ontario BK **MOVED.** RK Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6 November 2024 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

U-Pass Referenda Question, GC-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Changes for Section O, Awards Policy, Savver AI Discussion, Work Ticket System, Proposed Changes to the Education Amendment Act 2024, the Health Statutes Amendment Act 2024, and the Fairness and Safety in Sport Act Discussion, DEO's Reports, Last week of November Scheduling.

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSA Board RECOMMEND to GSA Council the holding of a referendum on the U-Pass program, to run concurrently with the 2025 GSA General Election and using the proposed question as attached. BK **MOVED.** PS Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Motion: That the GSA Board RECOMMEND to GSA Council, for approval, the recommended changes to GSA Policy: Recommended Changes to GSA Policy, Section O.POL.2.5 and 2.7. BK **MOVED**. SI Seconded. HA, BK, and RK voted against. SI and PS abstained. **NOT CARRIED**.

23 October 2024 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

My UAlberta App Presentation, Student Financial Support Process for Emergency Bursaries, 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements, IRCC Updates, DEO's Reports

Motions and Agreements:

Motion: That the GSA Board RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION and forward the GSA Council the 2023-2024 draft GSA Audited Financial Statements. BK **MOVED**. SI Seconded. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

I am happy to answer any questions.

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

Item 9.1d: GSA Governance Committee Report

**GSA Governance Committee
Report to GSA Council for the 18 November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council Members
From: Vice-Chair GSA GC
Date: 2024/11/13

Dear Council Members,

On November 5, 2024, the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) met to review the proposed bylaw and policy updates to GSA Policy, Section O.POL. 2.5 and 2.7. After careful consideration, the GSA GC voted to recommend the proposed changes to the GSA Board for further review.

The GSA Board further debated the proposed changes and decided to vote against bringing these changes to council this month. The rationale behind not bringing the changes to council at this time is based on the need for further consideration with both the Budget and Finance Committee and the Awards Selection Committee.

I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Thanks,

Benjamin Kucher, VP Student Life and GC Vice-Chair

Item 9.2: GSA VP Academic Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Rija Kamran
Date: November 14, 2024

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 21 to November 18 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Oct 21	Graduate Program Support Team Meeting
Oct 21	GAC Meeting
Oct 22	DEO Training Session
Oct 23	GFC Nominating Committee
Oct 23	University Awards Night: Teaching, Learning & Research
Oct 28-31	CAGs Conference
Nov 4	Graduate Program Support Team (GPST)
Nov 4	GFC Executive Committee
Nov 6	CASA Campaign Tabling Session
Nov 7	GFC Programs Committee
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
Nov 7	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC) - Meeting #2
Nov 7	Council on Student Affairs
Nov 12	LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting
Nov 13	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee
Nov 13	GAC Meeting

Nov 15	GFC Council Caucus
Nov 15	College of Health Sciences Round Table Discussion
Nov 18	GPS Caucus

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are well. Fall term continues to be a busy term for us as we work to further the key initiatives and priorities for this year.

(October 21) Graduate Program Support Team Meeting'

I attended the GFC Programs committee meeting. We discussed an item on the updates to Code of Applicant Behavior (CoAB), that called for a review of the existing CoAB and the Admissions Policy. The recommended approach was the rescission of the CoAB and to move the information about application misconduct and consequences into the Admissions Policy to streamline the policies. We also discussed changes and clarification in language around external examiners in candidacy and final thesis defense. The meeting concluded with a consultation on an interdisciplinary program in sustainability that is being proposed by the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

(October 28-31) CAGS Conference

Along with GSA President H. Arshad, I attended the 62nd Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) Annual Conference, which was themed “Graduate education in an age of uncertainty: challenges & opportunities”. I had the opportunity to learn about and discuss the current landscape of graduate studies in Canada. We presented the reports from our financial realities survey and mental health survey, steps taken to address the issues and some recommendations. The program included a keynote address by Dr. Joseph Aoun, President of Northeastern University. It was an insightful guide for Canadian universities to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with the transformative effects of artificial intelligence. The program included a comprehensive update from the Tri-Agency Council (CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC) on innovations in supporting Indigenous & racialized graduate students. This was a wonderful opportunity to network with administrators, faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students from across Canada.

(November 6) CASA Campaign Tabling Session

Along with the GSA VP External P. Shaibani, we held a tabling session to further the advocacy efforts for CASA’s campaign, *Secure Student Grants*. The goal of the campaign is to engage with students on the affordability of post-secondary education and advocating to the Federal Government to permanently increase Canada Student Grants from \$3,000 to \$4,200. We will invite all graduate students to participate in this campaign and share their stories

of how they have been impacted by the Canada Student Grants, furthering the case for investment in this initiative. We were able to meet with some graduate students and learn about the impact of these grants on their life as a graduate student.

(November 7) GSA Tuition Town Hall

We hosted a town hall to present the updates on the tuition proposals for the upcoming academic year. The University has proposed a 2% tuition increase for domestic graduate students keeping in line with the tuition increase cap as defined by the provincial government. We will be hearing about the proposal for international tuition increase at the council meeting and will be hosting another townhall following that. Historically, these town halls have not been very well attended. I would encourage you all to attend the town hall session and voice your concerns about the proposed tuition increases.

(November 7) GFC Programs Committee

I attended the GFC Programs committee meeting. We discussed the new Master of Nurse Practitioner Practice, changes to Masters of Science in Laboratory Medicine and Pathology 2nd level specialization in molecular diagnosis, as well as some changes to the GFC Programs Committee Composition.

(November 12) LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting

I am continuing to participate in LMS of future advisory committee meetings. This committee is working to ensure a smooth transition from Moodle (e-class) to the new LMS Canvas. Together with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), this committee is also working to create resources like a glossary of terms comparing features of e-class and canvas, as the needs are being identified by the university community. The new LMS Canvas is being adopted in 3 phases with some departments and courses transitioning to Canvas this Fall. For this academic year, e-class and Canvas will both be accessible for students depending on where the course is being housed. As we navigate through this change, please feel free to pass on any comments or concerns about Canvas to me, and I will take them to the committee on your behalf.

We are continuing work on the implementation of PhD minimum funding and tuition relief mechanisms for thesis-based students. I will provide your more updates as they come through.

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

Thank you

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

Item 9.3: GSA VP Student Life Report

**2024-2025 Vice-President Student Life
Report to GSA Council for the November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Benjamin Kucher
Date: November 13, 2024

Date	Meeting
October 21	World Social Justice Day Working Group Initial Meeting
October 21	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
October 23	Prayer, Worship & Ceremony Space Support Grant - Adjudication
October 23	UASSC
October 23	Living Library Chat
October 23	Deans' Advisory Committee
October 24	SGBV in WIL Working Group
October 25	CASA Board Meeting
October 25	EDI Plan Steering Committee
October 29	NIAC Meeting

October 31	SEAP Support Team Meeting
October 29-31	National Gathering on Unmarked Burials – The Release of an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework
November 1	Food Services RFP Consultation
November 4	Meeting with Duns Stroschein
November 5	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
November 5	UC GSA Team Lunch
November 5	Meeting with C. Smith, EDI Vice-Provost
November 6	EDI Reading Group
November 7	Unitea/ASSET Discussion
November 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
November 7	Meeting with Indigenous Services Canada
November 8	Meeting with NIAC Delegate
November 8	CASA Board Meeting
November 11	Meeting with Wasiimah, CASA ED
November 12	Living Library: Event Sub Group
November 12	NIAC Meeting
November 12	Meeting with DoS
November 12	Meeting with R. Sanghera
November 13	NIAC/Painted Warriors Ranch Meeting
November 13	Meeting with UASU NIAC Delegate
November 14	SGBV in WIL Working Group
November 14-17	NIAC/CASA Board Retreat
November 18	Meeting with Duns Stroschein

GSA Council Report

Date: November 13th, 2024

From: Benjamin J. Kucher, Vice President (Student Life)

I hope you are all staying warm as we transition into the colder months. It's hard to believe that we're already nearing the end of both the fall semester and the calendar year! Time seems to have flown by, and I hope everyone is wrapping up their projects and getting ready for a well-deserved winter break. Below, I have provided an update on my recent activities and initiatives since our last meeting.

This past month has been particularly busy as we gear up for Advocacy Week with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), scheduled to take place next week from November 24th to 30th. Much of my work has been centered on refining and preparing the key asks we will be presenting to the federal government during this critical week of advocacy. These asks are designed to address pressing issues affecting students nationwide, and you can find more details on CASA's website [here](#). Additionally, I have been involved in drafting briefs and other formal submissions to the House of Commons to further articulate our priorities and proposals. We are in the final stages of editing a comprehensive summary advocacy document, which delves deeper into CASA's specific policy recommendations and the research supporting them. Once this document is finalized, I will ensure that it is shared with all of you, so you have a thorough understanding of the issues we are advocating for.

Another significant area of focus this month has been engaging in extended, thoughtful conversations with the Vice-Provost of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and the Dean of Students. These discussions have revolved around analyzing the impact of new policies recently introduced by the United Conservative Party (UCP) during their Annual General Meeting. In particular, we are assessing how these policies may affect marginalized and underrepresented groups within our university community. Our conversations have explored existing support systems across different units on campus, identified gaps in those supports, and strategized on how best to connect students with resources that can meet their specific needs.

In addition to these ongoing dialogues, I have been actively working on initiatives to foster a stronger sense of community and engagement around EDI principles among students. One of the key efforts in this area has been the establishment of an EDI Reading Group in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

(FGPS). We have successfully hosted the first two of our four planned sessions in October and November, with the remaining sessions scheduled for February and March of next year. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with registration exceeding our initial expectations. This group has provided a valuable platform for graduate students to critically engage with literature on EDI topics, while also offering a space to share personal reflections and experiences.

Additionally, I've been working closely with Unitea and the ASSET program to coordinate a collective tea time centered on the theme of social connection and combating the pervasive sense of isolation often experienced by graduate students. This initiative will align with the upcoming GSA Social Hour, scheduled for December 3rd from 1 to 2 pm. It aims to create a relaxed, inclusive environment where students can connect and support one another over discussions that matter to them. Further details will be shared through the GSA newsletter in the coming week, so please keep an eye out for those updates.

As we head into the final stretch of this year, I remain committed to advocating for the needs of our student community, especially in areas where their voices are most crucially needed. The efforts outlined above represent only a fraction of the work being done, and I am deeply grateful for your continued support and collaboration. As always, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these initiatives in greater detail. I look forward to continuing our shared efforts in the months ahead, and I wish you all a warm and restful holiday season.

Thank you for your continued support and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or feedback you may have.

Benjamin Kucher,

GSA VP Student Life.

Item 9.4: GSA VP Student Services Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Saad A. Iqbal
Date: Nov. 14, 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP Student Services Meetings Attended by Saad A. Iqbal
Below is a list of meetings I attended between October 18 and November 14, 2024 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
October 21	CFB Policy Committee Meeting
October 22	CFB Prairie Urban Farm Volunteering
October 22	DEO Training Session
October 23	DOA Meeting
October 28	FGPS Caucus (attended on behalf of VP Academic, Rija Kamran)
October 28	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting
October 28	GFC Executive Committee meeting (attended on behalf of VP Academic, Rija Kamran)
October 29	Meeting with Kevin Friese
October 29	CFB Discussion with Erin O’Neal
October 30	FGPS Council
November 1	Heroes for Health Grant Discussion
November 4	Student Group Mental Health Network
November 4	CFB Board Meeting
November 5	UAI Meeting with Diana Kim
November 5	UC GSA Team Lunch
November 12	GSA and DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,
 I hope you're all doing well, in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between October 18 and November 14, 2024:

CFB Policy Committee Meeting

In this routine meeting, the CFB Policy Committee discussed items of concern to streamline the policies of the Campus Food Bank.

DEO Training Session

This training session for the GSA Executive Board covered organizational policy setting, recognizing the goals of leadership, defining key challenges, prioritizing key mandates, defining what success is and how to get there. Together, we discussed and went through exercises that encouraged us to think about our individual and collective challenges and opportunities to work together in realizing the goals and objectives of the GSA.

DOA Meeting

In this meeting, members were briefed about the World Mental Health Day programming along with feedback on how to enhance future events and activities. Overall, these discussions were around the River Valley Wellness Walk led by Dr. Dwayne Donald, the Mindful Drawing Workshop led by Stephanie Medford, and the Light Up Purple Campaign. The GSA front desk was also decorated with Light Up Purple Campaign materials during the week of World Mental Health Day. Participants appreciated being out in nature, hands-on activities, and learned how to slow down, allow themselves to experience feelings, and not be judgmental about themselves as well as Indigenous wisdom and Knowledge. The meeting also covered updates related to mental health and wellness activities from various groups on campus.

MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting

In this meeting, the MNIF Report (2023-24) was shared for approval followed by a preliminary proposal discussion. For context, attendees were also provided with MNIF agreement terms of reference, the 2022-23 MNIF Annual Report and the MNIF Committee Work Plan (2024-25). Important issues and concerns were also raised by the GSA to seek more clarification about the MNIFs and their usage.

Meeting with Kevin Friese

In this meeting, Kevin shared important highlights about the One-at-a-time Therapy (OAATT) program. This is a new program that has been offered since April and is run by the Counselling and Clinical Services. More details about the program can be found through [THIS](#) link. We also discussed some positive updates about Kevin and Erin (CFB) working together to make the food pantry more sustainable by incorporating enhanced fundraising and some creative programming around the 'Adopt a Week Model'. The child-minding proposal whose details were shared earlier in the year has also moved forward and updates will be shared soon.

CFB Discussion with Erin O'Neal

Erin O'Neal, the Director of the CFB will be sharing the annual report in one of our upcoming Councils. Considering that food insecurity is a key concern among our graduate students and many councilors have shared their enthusiasm to help support the CFB, I think this would be a great opportunity for the council members to ask questions and show support in whatever capacities they can. We also discussed the rising costs as an issue to

maintain sustainable working of the CFB and the food pantry. For context, the cost to run the food pantry for a week is approximately \$1500, which could go as high as \$2000 in the near future.

Heroes for Health Grant Discussion

Earlier this month, I shared an idea with the GSA Executive Board to see how the GSA can enhance the service value and the aesthetic appeal of the GSA Parent's Lounge located in Triffo Hall. All Board members agreed that it would be a good initiative to enhance the outlook of the lounge to make it more appealing for children and parents and increase its usage. For this purpose, we are looking at applying for the Heroes for Health Grant. More details can be found through [THIS](#) link.

Student Group Mental Health Network

In this meeting, members discussed updates from various groups on campus to support the mental health and well-being of students. Also discussed were ideas about which strategies and events work better and how these may improve in the future.

CFB Board Meeting

In this board meeting, we discussed various issues and updates related to the Campus Food Bank. Among the key issues discussed were the rising costs and increasing usage of the CFB and ideas on how to make the CFB's operation more sustainable and productive to counter the rising demand and food insecurity. For context, please note that the CFB spends around \$15,000 per month on groceries and the demand has increased by more than 600% (for more details please visit this [ARTICLE](#) and the CFB [WEBSITE](#)). Despite the financial challenges, the CFB continues to support all clients in effort to not turn away anyone who visits.

UAI Meeting with Diana Kim

In this meeting, Diana Kim from the UAI attended on behalf of Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison. Diana and I discussed some of the upcoming events that the UAI organizes every year to see how the GSA can help spread the information to our GSA members. We also discussed three potential events that the GSA and UAI can mutually organize. More details about these events will be shared after receiving some feedback from the Board and the relevant staff members.

GSA and DoS Bi-Monthly Meeting

In this meeting, Dr. Ravina Sanghera, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Students discussed key ideas around the purpose and values of the Office of the DoS. Earlier in the term, we requested some statistical data on the use of the Writing Services, Academic Success Centre to understand what the usage of these services looks like at the graduate student level. To help us find these details, Dr. Ravina invited Dr. Kate Pratt from the Writing Services who briefed the Executive Board by sharing data about the usage of the services as well as testimonials and feedback from graduate students. It was also discussed that in future, the office of the DoS will also coordinate that various offices and service providers periodically share this data with the GSA Council. For those who wish to learn more about the Academic Success Centre can refer to [THIS](#) link, and for a more detailed overview of the services offered by the Writing Services, through [THIS](#) link.

A personal Note,

Referring to the DEO Training Session held on October 22, one key takeaway for me was the realization that we often forget to celebrate our individual and collective achievements and accomplishments!

As graduate students, we juggle a multitude of responsibilities extending to academic progress, research, social engagements, families, and, for many of us, volunteering or job-related commitments. It's easy to dwell on what we haven't accomplished, rarely pausing to reflect on our successes.

Therefore, halfway into the fiscal year and moving towards a new calendar year, I wanted to take a moment and celebrate all the collective achievements that we have made so far in our diverse student advocacy and leadership roles. Most importantly, we need to celebrate the individual and collective roles that allow us to serve graduate students in different capacities. In fulfilling these challenging responsibilities, we must remember that our well-being depends on the emotional and mental support we provide each other.

As DEOs, many of our achievements and advocacy efforts hinge on collaboration. Although we have different portfolios, we seek collaborative feedback and brainstorm ideas to ensure that everything that we talk about, the initiatives we pick up and the resulting actions are all supportive of our graduate students' diverse needs and help them successfully navigate their graduate journeys. During the first half of our terms, we have achieved great success in advocating for our members both within and outside the University. Our efforts, whether through advocacy, expanding support networks, or enhancing services, demonstrate our shared commitment to improving the graduate journey. As these updates will be shared soon, I will not delve into the details at this time. But these are all important issues to celebrate!

Here, the role of our staff members is also crucial. From providing administrative support to consultations, guidance and feedback, our staff is integral for us to carry out our fiduciary responsibilities. In my role as the VPSSE, I have found that our staff is very dedicated to providing their support where and whenever required, and often, even goes beyond their stipulated duties and responsibilities to help us achieve our goals.

At the Council level, the diversity of our councillors and their perspectives enriches our decision-making process. Not only does the Council support the effective functioning of the GSA but also holds the GSA Board accountable. Whether it is through advocating for diverse needs and perspectives, providing suggestions, and feedback, or raising concerns about particular issues, the Council ensures that whatever the GSA does is aligned with the best interests of our graduate student community. So, please don't ever feel that any comment, suggestion, question, or even criticism is unnecessary or irrelevant if it is for the collective benefit of the GSA members. If nothing else, you are just fulfilling your obligations to the Council!

In the end, I would like to thank my fellow Board and staff members for their support, feedback, and guidance, and to our councillors for actively participating in the discussions, raising important issues, and helping us keep on track to support graduate students. I would also like to thank all the volunteers of the GSA, members of various standing committees, and non-voting members whose contributions and commitment to supporting the GSA is equally important.

I would like to end with this: in fulfilling our respective roles and responsibilities, let us all take time to reflect back and appreciate what we do individually and collectively – for ourselves and others. And while we do this, let us also continue to uplift each other and ensure we keep achieving great successes!

Best Regards,

Saad Arslan Iqbal

GSA VP Student Services (2024-25)

Item 9.5: GSA VP External Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Parman Mojir Shaibani
Date: November 13, 2024

2024-2025 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Parman)

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

Date	Meeting
Oct 9	Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting
Oct 10	UASSC Update/Q&A
Oct 15	Meeting - Chancellor & GSA Executives
Oct 16	Advisory Search Committee for Vice President International and Enterprise
Oct 18	Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy
Oct 21	ESA Meeting
Oct 22	Alumni Careers Committee Meeting
Oct 29	GSA Social Hour
Oct 31	Legislature day preparation
Nov 1	ISA Council Meeting
Nov 4	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Grant Hunter
Nov 4	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney
Nov 5	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with NDP
Nov 5	Graduate Students' Legislature Day with UCP
Nov 6	CASA Campaign Tabling Session
Nov 7	GSA Tuition Town Hall
Nov 8	GAC Meeting

Nov 12	CASA GIRC Consultation
Nov 12	CASA FPC Consultation

Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting (Oct 9th)

The meeting addressed several key issues, including concerns over potential interference by the Alberta government in federal research grants to universities and issues related to Bill 18.

Updates were provided on upcoming strike votes and rallies by education support workers within Edmonton Public Schools and the broader public sector. The session also included updates on the bargaining processes and labour concerns affecting various post-secondary institutions across Alberta.

Participants expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the bargaining process on member engagement and momentum. Discussions included strategies for collaboration among unions and preparations for potential job action. The organizers encouraged student groups to share their perspectives and labor-related concerns.

In addition, the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA) is considering an accelerated bargaining timeline, with potential job action anticipated as early as 2023. The Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) at the University of Alberta also faces negotiation challenges.

UASSC Update/Q&A (Oct 10th)

A report was presented detailing the activities of the University of Alberta Safety and Security Committee (UASSC). The UASSC team highlighted their responsiveness to safety, security, and maintenance issues on campus. They referenced a 2024 Student Experience Action Plan survey in which 89% of students selected "Somewhat agree" or "Agree" in response to whether they felt safe on campus. However, a baseline from the 2024 Student Experience survey showed only 58% of students selected "Agree" when asked if they feel safe at U of A. This discrepancy was attributed to the 58% reflecting those who chose "Agree" exclusively, while the 89% included responses for both "Agree" and "Somewhat agree."

I also raised concerns regarding the water fountain filters in the DICE building, as there appears to be no evidence of recent filter replacements. I was advised to submit a maintenance ticket for this issue. Unfortunately, it has now been over a month without any updates on the status of this request. Additionally, it was revealed to me that many water fountains across campus, including most in the DICE building, do not currently have filtered water.

Meeting - Chancellor & GSA Executives (Oct 15th)

This meeting provided the Chancellor with an update on the specific responsibilities of each GSA Department Executive Officer (DEO). The Chancellor also offered his support to students, including assistance with providing resources to the campus food bank.

Advisory Search Committee for Vice President International and Enterprise (Oct 16th)

The purpose of the meetings done with this committee is to review applications for the new Vice President, International and Enterprise positions and ultimately select a candidate for the role. All matters discussed in these meetings are confidential.

Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy (Oct 18th)

The presentation covered definitions for tuition waivers, remissions, scholarships, sponsorships, bursaries, and salaries. A significant portion of the meeting focused on outlining the differences between the tuition fees paid by domestic students and those paid by international students at different institutions across Canada.

ESA Meeting (Oct 21st)

Carrie Hotton-MacDonald, the first female ETS branch manager, shared plans to conduct a transit survey for post-secondary students. ETS aims to gather insights through focus groups to shape the survey questions, with the project timeline running from fall 2024 to spring-fall 2026.

Abdul, the University of Alberta Students' Union VP External, suggested combining transit and affordable housing topics in one survey. I proposed that students should have the option to choose which part to complete, to avoid survey fatigue.

We also discussed the city's welcome package for students, noting that it's difficult to access and lacks appeal. Abdul plans to provide this feedback to the mayor.

Alumni Careers Committee Meeting (Oct 22nd)

In the meeting, we reviewed mentee applications and discussed recommendations for upcoming Career Services activities. We also explored strategies for student-to-alumni transitions, considering new ideas and conducting an environmental scan. Additionally, we took a tour of the Campusbridge platform and discussed the rollout of Career Conversations in partnership with the Career Centre.

GSA Social Hour (Oct 29th)

A Halloween themed social hour was hosted to connect with the graduate students.

Legislature day preparation (Oct 31st)

The purpose of this meeting was to prepare the attendees for upcoming discussions with provincial MLAs.

ISA Council (Nov 1st)

The primary focus of the meeting was to select two distinct chancellors for the ISA—one representing graduate students and the other representing undergraduates. Unfortunately, the graduate candidates were unavailable, so their selection was postponed to a future meeting. However, the undergraduate candidates presented, and a chancellor was successfully chosen from their group.

Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Grant Hunter (Nov 4th)

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Among these, Minister Hunter committed to reviewing the proposal to separate labor relations and advocacy.

Graduate Students' Legislature Day with Minister Sawhney (Nov 4th)

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Minister Sawhney committed to allocating some targeted funds for the graduate students. Additionally, she asked how the funding should be allocated, and we suggested directing it more toward students through grants and bursaries rather than university administration.

Graduate Students' Legislature Day with NDP (Nov 5th)

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. Additionally, the possible impacts of Bill 13 on students were also discussed. There were hopes of increasing targeted funding for graduate students, supporting the separation of labor relations from student advocacy, clarifying the roles of the GSA and its representatives, and engaging in a deeper discussion about Bill 13 with authorities.

Graduate Students' Legislature Day with UCP (Nov 5th)

Key topics discussed included advocating for a 10% targeted funding increase for all graduate programs in Alberta, requesting student debt relief, and exploring measures to make student life more affordable. Additional requests focused on ensuring part-time students working off-campus remain eligible for financial aid, establishing comprehensive MNIF (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees) guidelines, requiring graduate student consultation in all Provincial Priorities Act (PPA) regulations, and separating labor relations from student advocacy. The UCP is likely to support the separation of labor relations from student advocacy through their authority.

CASA Campaign Tabling Session (Nov 6th)

The event was held to encourage student participation in securing federal grants by gathering insights on the level of financial aid needed to support their basic needs.

GSA Tuition Town Hall (Nov 7th)

The university gave a presentation to inform students about upcoming tuition increases. The meeting also provided a platform for students to voice their concerns about the tuition hikes and overall student experience.

CASA GAC Meeting (Nov 8th)

The meeting reviewed the materials that the CASA GAC committee will present during Advocacy Week at the end of November.

CASA GIRC Consultation (Nov 12th)

The policy changes regarding CASA GIRC were discussed.

CASA FPC Consultation (Nov 12th)

The policy changes regarding CASA FPC were discussed.

Item 9.5a: GSA Awards Selection Committee Report

GSA Awards Selection Committee
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting

Dear GSA Council,

Here are some updates on recent discussions regarding policy changes to the awards offered by the GSA. After reviewing the recommendations suggested by staff and students, suggestions were brought forward for further discussion with the Awards Selection Committee (ASC). I then prepared a list of policy changes and Saad (ASC vice-chair), along with staff, prepared a final draft of the proposed policy changes, which I reviewed and approved to be brought to the Governance Committee.

However, due to the rushed process, I did not have sufficient time to review the changes in detail with the staff. While the Governance Committee (GC) approved the changes, some concerns were raised, particularly by Haseeb (GSA President), who could not attend the Governance Committee meeting but shared valid feedback separately after the meeting. Following these concerns, the GSA Board decided to allocate more time for further review, allowing us to refine the policy changes and enhance the quality of the awards program.

The proposed changes will be discussed in greater depth at the next council meeting.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns at gsavpext@gmail.com.

Best regards,

Parman Mojir Shaibani
GSA VP External and ASC Chair

Item 9.6: GSA AVP Labour Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Muneeb Masood Raja

Date: 13 Nov 2024

2024-2025 GSA Associate VP Labour Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 22 Oct to 15 Nov 2024 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
22 Oct	DEO Training Session
22 Oct	People Strategy Launch
23 Oct	Meeting with PSAC Regional Executive Vice President Pierie Region
24 Oct	Meeting with UofC and UofL Labour Representative
26 Oct	Trick or Treat – Campus Food Bank
29 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
29 Oct	GSA Social Hour
29 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
30 Oct	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
30 Oct	GPS Council
30 Oct	GSA Grievances Discussion (Confidential)
31 Oct	ACAA Solidarity Meeting
1 Nov	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
5 Nov	Lunch with UofC GSA Team
6 Nov	Meeting with a Student (Confidential)
6 Nov	GSA Fall Social
7 Nov	Grievances Discussion (Confidential)
7 Nov	GSA Tuition Townhall

14 Nov	Meeting with PSAC Representatives
15 Nov	UofA JHSC Meeting

Dear Council Colleagues,

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

(Oct 22) DEO Training Session

In this training, the attendees discussed the organization's goals and plans of the GSA. Through different sessions, we focused on sharing ideas, setting priorities, and identifying best practices for moving the GSA forward. The training covered organizational priority setting, recognizing leadership goals, defining challenges, prioritizing mandates, and defining what success looks like and how to achieve it.

(Oct 22) People Strategy Launch

I participated in the launch of the People Strategy as a member of the committee. The strategy is designed to help the university attract, develop, and retain top talent while fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes collaboration, well-being, and ongoing learning in support of teaching, research, and engagement. It focuses on strengthening our culture and workplace in ways that empower, energize, and support individuals, positioning the University of Alberta as an employer of choice that helps people build fulfilling and long-term careers. I urge you all to read the people strategy report [here](#).

(Oct 23) Meeting with PSAC Regional Executive Vice President Pierie Region

We were recently informed that Keira Gunn is no longer with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), which came as both a surprise and disappointment given the positive working relationship we had established with her. Unfortunately, we were not notified about this change directly by PSAC and I had to reach out to a PSAC representative within the Edmonton regional office to get more information. In a meeting with Marianne Hladun, PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President (REVP), Prairies, we voiced our concerns regarding the lack of communication from PSAC and the potential challenges ahead. However, we were reassured that PSAC would honor the service agreement and continue to provide support in the same capacity.

Since that meeting, we have been assigned a new representative from the PSAC Edmonton Regional Office. While we remain optimistic that this transition will not impact the upcoming bargaining process or the level of support we've come to expect from PSAC, I will be closely monitoring the situation to ensure that the necessary support is provided in line with our service agreement.

(Oct 24) Meeting with UofC and UofL Labour Representative

In this meeting, we addressed our ongoing situation with PSAC regarding the service agreements. We are working together to gain better clarity on the interpretation of the agreement and to ensure that our members receive the support outlined within it. Additionally, we emphasized the importance of keeping collective bargaining as a top priority throughout this process.

Over the month, I have been focused on resolving several issues faced by academically employed graduate students. In addition to that, we are preparing to present our bargaining proposal to the university on December 3.

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

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

Item 9.6a: GSA Labour Relations Committee Report

**GSA Labour Relations Committee
Report to GSA Council for the Nov 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council

From: Muneeb Masood Raja

Date: 13 Nov 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council:

We have been focused on expanding our outreach by providing more autonomy and support to our faculty stewards. Each steward is now assigned to directly communicate with their faculty, introducing themselves and explaining their role and how they can support academically employed graduate students (AEGSs) in their roles as employees. This approach will help strengthen the connection between stewards and members within each faculty, enabling more direct support for our members. Additionally, we are working to finalize the list of departmental groups to extend union support to them. This initiative will allow us to collect broader feedback and ensure we stay well-connected with our members through these groups. We will be reaching out to these groups soon to begin building strong connections with each of them.

Besides that, we are seeking five AEGSs to serve on the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC). Nominees must come from departments not currently represented, which include Electrical & Computer Engineering, Policy Studies, Biological Sciences, Human Geography, and Pharmacology. If interested, please submit your nomination by Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 12:00 PM (Noon) by filling the form provided in this [link](#). The nomination for the GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC) was also included in the AEGS newsletter sent on Wednesday. It is crucial that we fill these positions as soon as possible, as we are currently struggling to reach quorum for our regular LRC meetings. Your help participation is greatly appreciated.

In Solidarity,

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

Item 7: GSA Senator Report

To: GSA Council
From: Ola Mabrouk, GSA Senator
Date: November 12, 2024
Subject: Summary of GSA Senator Activities

Report on Activities as GSA Senator

As part of my ongoing commitment to representing and advocating for the graduate student body, I would like to highlight my recent activities and contributions in my role as GSA Senator:

1. Senate Plenary Participation:

I attended the Senate Plenary sessions on two consecutive days, fully engaging in discussions on key issues impacting the university community. My presence ensured that graduate students' perspectives were included in decision-making processes.

2. Committee Involvement:

I was an active member of several committees (confidential). My contributions helped to shape the outcomes and final decisions of the committee.

3. Meeting with the Chancellor:

I had the opportunity to meet with the Chancellor one-on-one to discuss topics of importance to the graduate student community, such as housing, tuition and minimum guaranteed funding. This meeting allowed me to emphasize the needs and concerns of graduate students.

4. Support for Campus Food Bank:

Recognizing the increasing need for food security resources, I actively participated in a fundraising initiative for the campus food bank. Through this effort, we were able to raise donations, which will contribute to supporting students experiencing food insecurity on our campus.

These engagements have provided me with valuable insights and opportunities to advocate effectively for the graduate student community. I look forward to continuing my work as GSA Senator and contributing to initiatives that benefit our students.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Ola Mabrouk
GSA Senator

Item 9: GSA CRO/DRO Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting**

Dear GSA Council,

I hope everyone had a restful Reading Week!

I have been working closely with ERC to make recommendations for minor policy changes to the elections section of the Bylaw and Policy. I also met with Haseeb to discuss his suggestions for referenda policy changes. Thank you to ERC as well as Cindy and Grace for their continued work on these revisions.

I also met with Cindy and Saad to discuss the upcoming U-Pass referendum, which is being presented at this Council meeting. If this referendum passes GSA Council, it will appear on the ballot for all graduate students to vote on. As the deadline for referenda to be brought to Council was November, the U-Pass is the only potential referendum for this year's election cycle.

The nominations for the upcoming election will open in late January. Please keep this timeline in mind and make your constituents aware of it as well.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact gsa.elections@ualberta.ca.

Sophie Shi
GSA Chief Returning Officer

Item 10: GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair Report

**2024-2025 Nominating Committee Vice Chair
Report to GSA Council for the October 21 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council

From: Tianxu Wang

Date: November 13, 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I am pleased to provide an update on the recent activities of the Nominating Committee since the last GSA Council meeting. Our primary focus has been on addressing outstanding vacancies within several key committees to ensure the GSA continues to function effectively with capable and committed members.

All advertisements for GSA committee vacancies were reviewed by the Nominating Committee prior to dissemination. Currently, we have vacancies for the roles of GSA Speaker and GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB). While we received two nominations for the Speaker position, unfortunately, no applications were submitted for the ACB role. We are actively working to broaden our outreach and will continue to issue calls for nominations to encourage applications for this important position.

For the Speaker position, the evaluation process involving structured interviews with all candidates was conducted by the GSA Associate Director and myself. To ensure thorough documentation and transparency, we prepared an interview report following each session. This report, which included detailed assessments of each candidate's qualifications and responses, was distributed to all Nominating Committee members along with the candidates' bios and relevant background information. These materials provided the Committee with a complete view of each candidate, facilitating an informed decision-making process.

The voting phase was conducted in a transparent and orderly manner. Each Nominating Committee member cast their vote based on a careful review of the interview materials and the candidate's potential to fulfill the responsibilities of the Speaker role. We ensured that each member had time to consider the interview findings, enabling a thoughtful and unbiased selection process.

We are dedicated to maintaining a high standard of integrity and inclusiveness in all our work. The Nominating Committee will continue to actively seek qualified candidates for vacant roles and refine our processes as needed to align with the GSA's goals and values. We remain committed to fostering a collaborative and equitable environment that serves the best interests of the GSA community.

Sincerely,

Tianxu Wang

Nominating Committee Vice Chair

Item 11: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to the GSA Council for the 18th November 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Elsie Osei
Date: 13th November 2024

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

The GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) met in November to review and propose updates to the GSA Bylaws regarding referenda and elections. Critical suggested revisions include changes to some sections in Elections Bylaw I, which now limits the renewal period for referenda to three years, and Referenda Bylaw J, which mandates a one-year waiting period before a failed referendum can be re-submitted. The committee also discussed the importance of GSA members being nominated by fellow graduate students, including all candidates in the all-candidates forum and the need for strict adherence to the nomination form requirements. The election timeline was revised to promote fairness, and the need for prompt communication during the election period was highlighted. The members of the ERC will vote to recommend these suggested revisions to the GSA Governance Committee.

These changes are crucial for maintaining fairness and transparency in GSA elections and referenda processes. Limiting referenda renewal to three years ensures that issues are regularly revisited, allowing for timely updates and preventing outdated mandates. The one-year waiting period for re-submitting failed referenda discourages redundant proposals and fosters thoughtful consideration before resubmission. Peer support is guaranteed by mandating nominations from other graduate students. Equal participation is encouraged by combining all candidates in forums. During the election period, clear instructions on the nomination form and timely communication ensure an efficient and equitable process that fosters confidence in the democratic processes of the GSA.

The meeting concluded with the CRO's onboarding presentation for the new committee members, ensuring we are well-prepared to contribute effectively to the election and referendum processes. This onboarding session

provided a comprehensive overview of the ERC's responsibilities, key policies, and upcoming tasks, allowing us to familiarize ourselves with our roles and expectations.

Sincerely,

Elsie Osei, Chair of the GSA ERC

Item 12: GSA Management Report

**GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for November 18 2024 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Lewie Moodley
Date: November 18, 2024

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I trust this message finds you well and you are enjoying the cooler days and getting ready for the winter/holiday season. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the various initiatives and activities currently underway within the Graduate Students' Association. Below, I outline the key points of our ongoing efforts.

Our recent social events, the Halloween-themed social and the Fall Social, were great successes, with many graduate students in attendance who thoroughly enjoyed the festivities. The atmosphere was lively and engaging,

bringing together students from various departments. A special thank you goes to Brandy Ellamil for his hard work and dedication in organizing these events, ensuring that everything ran smoothly and that everyone had a wonderful time. His efforts were instrumental in creating a fun and welcoming environment for all.

The staff have been working behind the scenes to organize the tuition townhalls. We have planned two tuition townhalls in the month of November for graduate students to provide their feedback on the tuition proposals. We encourage students to attend these and provide feedback on the proposed tuition changes.

Budget planning for the 2025-2026 fiscal year began in November, marking the start of a comprehensive process to ensure financial stability and strategic resource allocation for the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). During this period, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) will collaborate closely with the GSA's leadership team to assess funding priorities, project expenditures, and align the budget with the strategic goals. This early planning phase allows for a thorough review of financial needs, potential risks, and opportunities for growth, ensuring that the GSA remains fiscally responsible and well-prepared for the upcoming year. We plan to present our first budget draft to the BFC later in November.

Finally, the staff have been actively supporting students across a range of important committees, including the Awards Selection Committee (ASC), Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC), Tuition and Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC), Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Committee, and Governance Committee (GC). Their involvement in these committees has included assisting with meeting preparation, providing guidance on policy and procedure, and ensuring that student representatives are well-equipped to contribute effectively.

We are confident that these efforts will significantly enhance our ability to serve the graduate student community and advance the mission of the GSA. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Lewie Moodley

Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, October 23 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **October 16 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now open and students have started using the Good Grants platform. Good Grants has successfully launched and we have 30 applications submitted so far.
- Our annual audit with RSM Canada is ongoing; this is an annual financial report. The audit report will be presented to the BFC on October 17 2024, Board on October 23 and Council on November 18.
- Nearly all spots on Standing Committees are filled; there is one spot left for Councillors on ACB. We are arranging monthly meetings for Standing Committees, as well as training sessions.
- Social Media updates:
 - **Facebook** Reach: +40.9% (Oct 15 - Oct 22) Followers: no change (current: 2065)
 - **Instagram** Reach: -11.9% (Oct 15 - Oct 22) Followers: -1 follower (current: 1438)
 - **Twitter/ X** Followers: no change (1354)

Management Report to the GSA Board, November 6 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **October 23 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now open again for summer. All forms in Good Grants have been completed and we will continue training with our specialist on next steps to complete the setup. We have 60 new applications so far this month. For new system updates, we have been approved for integration with CCID.
- The staff are preparing to host a range of seasonal events, including the Halloween Coffee Break and the Fall Social. We're focused on fostering a welcoming community atmosphere that celebrates the season and brings everyone together.

- The staff have been working behind the scenes to get everything ready for the Tuition Town Hall and upcoming Council.
- We have been onboarding and working with our new HR and Payroll manager who is getting acquainted with her new role. The leadership team is working hard to bring forward the first draft of the 2024-2025 budget in the coming weeks.
- Elections - No nominations for ACB have come forward and only one has come forward for GSA Speaker, we are sending out an additional reminder email to the Council. A new opening has come up on the GSA EDIC that will be advertised as well.
- Social Media updates:
 - **Facebook** Reach: +104.5% (Oct 22-Nov 4); Followers: +2 followers (current: 2067)
 - **Instagram** Reach: +125.6% (Oct 22-Nov 4); Followers: +12 followers (current: 1450)
 - **Twitter/ X** Followers: -2 followers (1352)

Management Report to the GSA Board, November 13 2024

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on **November 6 2024**.

Executive Director update:

- Grants are now open and students have started using the Good Grants platform. Good Grants has successfully launched and we have approved over 70 applications so far.
- We are currently preparing our 2025-2026 budget which will be due at the end of this month as a first draft.

- Our annual audit with RSM Canada is ongoing; this is an annual financial report. The audit report will be presented to the BFC on October 17, Board on October 23 and Council on November 18 2024.
- Nearly all spots on Standing Committees are filled; there is one spot left for Councillors on ACB. We are arranging monthly meetings for Standing Committees, as well as training sessions.
- Social Media updates:
 - **Facebook** Reach: +11.8% (Nov 4 - Nov 12); Followers: -2 followers (current: 2065)
 - **Instagram** Reach: +35.3% (Nov 4 - Nov 12); Followers: +14 followers (current: 1464)
 - **Twitter/ X** Followers: -9 followers (1343)

The Graduate Students Association of the U of A

Audit Findings Report
For the Year Ended March 31, 2024



RSM Canada LLP

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October 17, 2024

The Board of Directors
The Graduate Students Association of the U of A
Room1-49 University of Alberta, Triffo Hall
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2E1

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

Re: Audit of the financial statements of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A

This report summarizes certain key audit findings and responses to assessed audit risks which we believe to be of interest to assist the Board of Directors in discharging their responsibilities in connection with the audited financial statements of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A (the "Association") for the year ended March 31, 2024.

We would like to express our appreciation for the cooperation we received from the officers and management of the Association with whom we worked during our audit. We look forward to meeting with the Board of Directors to discuss the content of this report and answering any questions you may have.

Yours very truly,

RSM Canada LLP

per: Leon Pfeiffer, Partner

cc: Lewie Moodley, Executive Director

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Status of the audit	1
Significant audit findings	1
Misstatements and adjustments	3
Other findings and recommendations	3

APPENDICES

Other required communication	A
Draft independent auditor's report and draft financial statements	B
Management representation letter	C
Summary of adjustments	D
Summary of uncorrected misstatements	E
2024 NPO industry trends and topics	F

STATUS OF THE AUDIT

We have substantially completed our audit of the financial statements of the Association for the year ended March 31, 2024.

Outstanding items

The following items require completion prior to issuing our auditor's report:

- receipt of management representation letter (Appendix C);
- subsequent events review to audit report date; and
- approval of the financial statements by the Board of Directors.

Draft independent auditor's report and draft financial statements

Our draft independent auditor's report and draft financial statements is attached (Appendix B).

SIGNIFICANT AUDIT FINDINGS

Materiality

Final overall materiality was \$61,400 based on total revenues. This was not changed from planning materiality as communicated in our Audit Committee Planning Letter.

Accounting policies

Management is responsible for selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies. The Board of Directors is responsible to review accounting policies adopted by the Association and where alternative policies are available, determine the most appropriate policies to be adopted in the circumstances. If the Board of Directors believes that the adoption of or change in accounting policies may produce inappropriate or misleading financial reporting, this concern must be discussed with management and us.

Our views on the qualitative aspects of accounting practices used in the Association's financial reporting are intended to assist the Board of Directors in its review of the financial statements. Policies affecting the understandability, relevance, reliability and comparability of the financial statements are:

Changes in significant accounting policies, including adoption of new standards.	There were no new accounting policies adopted or changes to the application of accounting policies of the Association during the year.
Accounting policies unique to the industry, or relate to controversial or emerging areas.	No significant items to report.

Existence of alternative policies and methods.	No significant items to report.
Effect of timing of occurrence and recognition of transactions relating to when accounting policies are adopted.	No significant items to report.

Conclusion

We reviewed the significant accounting policies selected and applied by management and in our judgment we believe that the accounting policies are, in all material respects, acceptable under Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and are appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Association.

Significant risk

The following is a summary of key issues and significant risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Issue/Risk Area - Management override of controls

Issue/Risk Area

Management override of controls is, by definition, a significant risk

Our Response

During the course of our audit, we designed and performed audit procedures to respond to the risks of management override of controls. Our procedures included assessing appropriateness of general journal entries and other adjustments on a test basis, reviewing accounting estimates for biases and evaluating business rationale for transactions outside the normal course of business. These procedures did not reveal any evidence of management override of controls and, as such, no additional audit procedures were performed.

Conclusion

We reviewed all significant accounting estimates and agree that they are, in all material respects, free from possible management bias and of material misstatement. The audit procedures performed in the areas noted above were consistent with those set out in our Audit Committee Planning Letter. The accounting treatment of the items noted above and related disclosures are appropriate and in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. We were able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to reduce the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements to an appropriate low level.

MISSTATEMENTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments

During our audit, we identified accounting differences that required adjustment. These differences were adjusted by management after discussion with us (Appendix D).

Misstatements

During our audit, we aggregated uncorrected financial statement misstatements. Management deemed the effects of these misstatements to be immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements. Management has not corrected these misstatements. We are required to request that the Board of Directors consider adjusting the financial statements for these misstatements although we acknowledge that the amounts are below materiality (Appendix E).

OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Other Findings and Recommendations

During our audit, we may identify certain other items which we believe to be relevant to the responsibilities of the Board of Directors. The communication of these items is incidental to the purpose of our audit and no procedures have been carried out to determine whether other such matters exist. We identified the following item:

- During our audit, we noted that deferred revenue is being recorded when cash has not yet been received by debiting accounts receivable and crediting deferred revenue. We note that this is done in order to issue invoices and track receivables, however for year end financial statement purposes only deferred revenue received in cash can be included. Therefore we recommend that the Organization track these amounts and record an adjustment at year end to reverse any amounts in deferred revenue that have not yet been received in cash.

Appendix A

Other required communication

Area	Comment
Independence	CAS 260, Communication with Those Charged with Governance, requires communications in relation to any matters or relationships which we believe may have a bearing on RSM's independence or the objectivity of the audit engagement team. We have considered whether there are any independence matters or relationships that could have a bearing on the question of our independence. We confirm that, in our professional judgment, RSM is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the audit team is not impaired.
Illegal Acts, Fraud, Intentional Misstatements and Errors	Testing during our audit did not reveal any illegal, improper or questionable payments or acts, nor any acts committed with the intent to deceive, involving either misappropriation of assets or misrepresentation of financial information.
Related Party Transactions	We conducted tests and procedures to identify related parties and transactions. Our audit did not reveal any related parties or significant related party transactions that were not disclosed to us by management, nor did it reveal any significant related party transactions which give rise to suspected fraud. There has been no disagreement between management and ourselves regarding the accounting for and disclosure of related party transactions.
Disagreements with Management	During our audit, we did not have any significant disagreements with management.
Consultations with Other Accountants	We are not aware of any consultations that have taken place with other accountants.
Cooperation of Management	We received full cooperation of management and other personnel during our audit and we had full and unrestricted access to all records and personnel required to complete our audit. We encountered no significant difficulties during our audit that should be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

Appendix B

Draft independent auditor's report and draft financial statements



**THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
OF THE U OF A**
Financial Statements
Year Ended March 31, 2024

Draft for discussion purposes only

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Index to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	Page
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	1 - 2
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
Statement of Financial Position	3
Statement of Operations	4
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes to Financial Statements	7 - 12
Schedule of Revenues (<i>Schedule 1</i>)	13
Schedule of Expenses (<i>Schedule 2</i>)	14
Schedule of Administration and Services Expenses (<i>Schedule 3</i>)	15 - 16

Draft for discussion purposes only

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A (the "Association"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at March 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

(continues)

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Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Edmonton, Alberta

Chartered Professional Accountants

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 2,057,182	\$ 3,948,156
Short-term investments (Note 3)	161,288	237,251
Accounts receivable	271,373	197,625
Prepaid expenses	10,676	3,130
	2,500,519	4,386,162
RESTRICTED INVESTMENTS (Note 4)	3,340,465	3,341,901
	\$ 5,840,984	\$ 7,728,063
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 227,733	\$ 218,908
Health and dental plan payable	961	2,310,106
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	1,027,128	789,337
	1,255,822	3,318,351
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	1,689,926	1,325,426
Internally restricted (Note 6)	2,895,236	3,084,286
	4,585,162	4,409,712
	\$ 5,840,984	\$ 7,728,063

LEASE COMMITMENT (Note 7)

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

President

Executive Director

Vice President

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
REVENUES <i>(Schedule 1)</i>		
Administration, GSA fees and services	\$ 1,240,509	\$ 1,248,876
Graduate Student Support Fund	895,412	978,285
Other restricted	174,409	157,238
Commercial activities	32,906	25,214
	2,343,236	2,409,613
EXPENSES <i>(Schedule 2)</i>		
Administration and services <i>(Schedule 3)</i>	1,089,731	1,142,896
Graduate Student Support Fund	895,412	978,285
Other restricted	174,409	157,238
Commercial activities	5,109	12,259
	2,164,661	2,290,678
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	178,575	118,935
OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)		
Investment and interest income	359,819	207,778
Unrealized gain (loss) on restricted investments	82,384	(60,185)
	442,203	147,593
Labour Union		
Labour union dues collected	97,884	73,706
Labour union interest income	14,701	1,763
Labour union expenses	(112,585)	(75,469)
	-	-
Health and dental plan net loss	(445,328)	(257,615)
	(3,125)	(110,022)
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 175,450	\$ 8,913

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2023 Balance	Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	Transfers (Note 6)	2024 Balance
Unrestricted Fund	\$ 1,325,426	\$ 364,500	\$ -	\$ 1,689,926
	1,325,426	364,500	-	1,689,926
Internally Restricted Net Assets:				
Health and Dental Plan Fund	813,703	(399,451)	-	414,252
Legal Defense Fund	639,132	61,046	-	700,178
Financial Stabilization Fund	1,439,413	137,430	-	1,576,843
Human Resource Fund	95,419	2,743	-	98,162
Labour Union Fund	96,619	9,182	-	105,801
	3,084,286	(189,050)	-	2,895,236
	\$ 4,409,712	\$ 175,450	\$ -	\$ 4,585,162

	2022 Balance	Excess of revenues over expenses	Transfers (Note 6)	2023 Balance
Unrestricted Fund	\$ 1,190,822	\$ 247,604	\$ (113,000)	\$ 1,325,426
	1,190,822	247,604	(113,000)	1,325,426
Internally Restricted Net Assets:				
Health and Dental Plan Fund	1,039,655	(225,952)	-	813,703
Legal Defense Fund	585,622	(2,990)	56,500	639,132
Financial Stabilization Fund	1,394,281	(11,368)	56,500	1,439,413
Human Resource Fund	92,740	2,679	-	95,419
Labour Union Fund	97,679	(1,060)	-	96,619
	3,209,977	(238,691)	113,000	3,084,286
	\$ 4,400,799	\$ 8,913	\$ -	\$ 4,409,712

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN):		
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ 175,450	\$ 8,913
Items not affecting cash:		
Change in accrued interest income	(5,959)	(15,018)
Unrealized (gain) loss on restricted investments	(82,384)	60,185
	87,107	54,080
Changes in non-cash working capital (Note 8)	(2,143,823)	2,198,257
	(2,056,716)	2,252,337
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of restricted investments	(188,865)	(197,283)
Purchase of short-term investments	-	(69,923)
Redemption of restricted investments	278,644	20,192
Redemption of short-term investments	75,963	-
	165,742	(247,014)
(DECREASE) INCREASE IN CASH	(1,890,974)	2,005,323
Cash - beginning of year	3,948,156	1,942,833
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 2,057,182	\$ 3,948,156

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

1. PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta (the Association) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated on December 20, 1972 pursuant to Section 94(1) of The Post-Secondary Learning Act. The purpose of the Association is to represent the interests of graduate students before the University administration and the general public. As a not-for-profit organization under the Income Tax Act (Canada), the Association is exempt from income taxes.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of presentation

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are defined as cash on hand and cash on deposit, net of cheques issued and outstanding at the reporting date, and cashable guaranteed investment certificates.

Restricted investments

Restricted investments consist of:

- Guaranteed investment certificates that are being held for long-term purposes and are recorded at cost.
- Mutual fund investments that have quoted prices in an active market and are carried at fair value. Unrealized gains or losses are reported in the statement of operations.

Revenue recognition

The Association follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Student fees are recognized as revenue in the year to which they relate and services are provided.

Commission revenue from the health and dental plan consists of the difference between the premiums charged to the student body and the premiums paid to the administrator of the plan. The commission revenue is recognized when earned which is generally the point at which the Association remits the premiums to the administrator of the plan.

All other revenues are recorded in the period in which they are earned and collection is reasonably assured.

Investment and interest income are recognized on an accrual basis as they are earned. Interest income earned from the grant and labour accounts are deferred for future use.

Other restricted revenue consists of Graduate Student Assistance program and CSJR fees which is recognized in the year in which the services are provided and when collection is reasonably assured.

(continues)

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (*continued*)

Donated goods and services

The work of the Association is dependent on the donated goods and voluntary services of many members. Because of the difficulty in determining the amount or fair value, the value of donated goods and services is not recognized in these statements.

Activity expenses

The Association has chosen to classify their expenses by function. Detailed revenue and expenses for each function are disclosed in the supporting schedules.

Financial instruments

Measurement

Financial instruments are financial assets or liabilities of the Association where, in general, the Association has the right to receive cash or another financial asset from another party or the Association has the obligation to pay another party cash or other financial assets.

The Association initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value.

The Association subsequently measures all its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost, except for investments in equity instruments that are quoted in an active market, which are measured at fair value. Changes in fair value are recognized in the statement of operations.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include cash, accounts receivable and guaranteed investment certificates included in restricted investments and short-term investments. The Association's financial assets measured at fair value are equity instruments included in restricted investments.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities and health and dental plan payable.

Transaction costs

Transaction costs and financing fees are expensed as incurred for financial instruments measured at fair value and capitalized for financial instruments that are subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost.

The Association recognizes its transaction costs in the statement of operations in the period incurred for its equity investments and all other financial assets and liabilities subsequently measured at fair value. Financial instruments, that are subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost, are adjusted by the transaction costs and financing fees that are directly attributable to their origination, issuance or assumption.

(*continues*)

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Impairment

Financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost are tested for impairment, at the end of each year, to determine whether there are indicators that the asset may be impaired. The amount of the write-down, if any, is recognized in the statement of operations. The previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, directly or by adjusting the allowance account. The reversal may be recorded provided it is no greater than the amount that had been previously reported as a reduction in the asset and it does not exceed original cost. The amount of the reversal is recognized in the statement of operations.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS

Short-term investments consist of one (2023 - three) guaranteed investment certificate bearing interest at 4.25% per annum (2023 - two at 4.60% and one at 4.30%), maturing January 2025 (2023 - two in March 2024 and one in November 2023).

4. RESTRICTED INVESTMENTS

	2024	2023
Mutual fund investments, recorded at fair value (carrying value of \$2,225,849 (2023 - \$2,100,576)	\$ 2,382,822	\$ 2,175,164
Guaranteed investment certificates (GIC's), bearing interest from 4.11% to 5.28% (2023 - 3.82% to 5.07%) per annum, two maturing in July 2024 and one in February 2026 (2023 - July 2023, February 2024 and July 2024).	933,753	1,148,806
	3,316,575	3,323,970
Accrued interest	23,890	17,931
	\$ 3,340,465	\$ 3,341,901

Restricted investments have been designated for specific purposes described in Note 6.

During the year, the Association recognized an unrealized gain of \$82,384 (2023 - \$60,185 loss) related to the change in fair value of the investments recorded at fair value.

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

5. DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS

Deferred contributions represent unspent resources externally restricted for specific purposes as follows:

	2023	Contributions received during the year	Amounts recognized as revenue	2024
Graduate Student Support Fund	\$ 292,041	\$ 999,985	\$ 895,412	\$ 396,614
Graduate Student Assistance Program	284,378	178,379	158,072	304,685
Labour Union Fund	212,918	225,496	112,585	325,829
	\$ 789,337	\$ 1,403,860	\$ 1,166,069	\$ 1,027,128

6. INTERNALLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Internally restricted net assets are comprised of the following Funds:

Legal Defense Fund

The Legal Defense Fund was established to provide resources to enter into legal action where appropriate. Any unspent funds at year-end from the budgeted legal fees are placed into the fund.

During the year, \$Nil (2023 - \$56,500) was transferred into the Fund from the Unrestricted Fund.

Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund

The Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund was established to ensure that adequate funds would be available in the event the Health and Dental Plan costs exceed the amounts collected in fees from graduate students. The fund balance fluctuates to allow for the addition or withdrawal of investment funds depending on when fees collected exceed or are less than Plan costs.

During the year, \$Nil (2023 - \$Nil) was transferred out of the Fund to the Unrestricted Fund. Due to timing differences, the Health and Dental Plan Reserve and the Health and Dental Investment Account do not align, as the transfer to cover the loss incurred on the Health and Dental Plan, paid through the Operating Account, is made after the year-end.

Financial Stabilization Fund

The Financial Stabilization Fund was established to safeguard the Association against uncertainty and to provide for unknown, unexpected expenditures that would provide for the ongoing operations of the Association. The balance will be adjusted annually at the discretion of the Budget and Finance Committee and will grow until it is equal to at least one years' operating costs.

During the year, \$Nil (2023 - \$56,500) was transferred into the Fund from the Unrestricted Fund.

(continues)

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

6. INTERNALLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS *(continued)*

Human Resource Fund

The Human Resource Fund was established to fund medical and parental leave for the staff and managers.

During the year, \$Nil (2023 - \$Nil) was transferred into the Fund from the Unrestricted Fund.

Labour Union Fund

The Labour Union Fund was established to support the Association's work as a labour union in support of Academically-Employed Graduate Students in matters of labour relations.

During the year, \$Nil (2023 - \$Nil) was transferred into the Fund from the Unrestricted Fund.

7. LEASE COMMITMENT

The Association has a five year lease which expires June 2026, to lease a portion of the Killam Centre for Advanced Studies from the University of Alberta at \$1 per year and utilities at no cost. In addition, the Association leases its photocopier under an agreement that began January 2023 and expires in December 2027. Future aggregate minimum lease payments as at March 31, 2024, are as follows:

2025	\$	1,123
2026		1,123
2027		1,123
2028		842
	\$	<u>4,211</u>

8. CHANGES IN NON-CASH WORKING CAPITAL

	2024	2023
Accounts receivable	\$ (73,748)	\$ (36,930)
Prepaid expenses	(7,546)	2,756
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8,825	48,881
Health and dental plan payable	(2,309,145)	2,033,714
Deferred contributions	237,791	149,836
	<u>\$ (2,143,823)</u>	<u>\$ 2,198,257</u>

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2024

9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Association is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis provides information about the Association's risk exposure and concentration as of March 31, 2024. There is no change in the Association's risk exposure for the current year.

Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Association does not believe it is subject to any significant concentration of credit risk. Cash is in place with a major financial institution. Accounts receivable are generally amounts receivable from the University of Alberta.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk arises from the possibility that the Association might encounter difficulty in settling its debts or in meeting its obligations related to financial liabilities. It is the Association's opinion that there is no significant liquidity risk as of March 31, 2024.

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency rate risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Association is mainly exposed to interest rate risk and other price risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Association is exposed to interest rate risk arising on its interest bearing guaranteed investment certificates. As the guaranteed investment certificates are cashable at any time, it is the Association's opinion that there is no significant interest rate risk.

Other price risk

Other price risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk), whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual financial instrument or its issuer, or factors affecting all similar financial instruments traded in the market. The Association is exposed to other price risk through its investments in quoted shares.

10. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

The comparative figures in the statement of cash flows have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Schedule of Revenues

(Schedule 1)

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Graduate Student Support Fund		
Child care grants	\$ 434,000	\$ 380,575
Academic travel awards	365,377	277,778
Emergency bursaries	76,035	302,432
Graduate student recognition awards	20,000	17,500
	895,412	978,285
Administration, GSA Fees and Services		
Graduate Students' Association fees	1,209,319	1,217,686
TD Insurance Meloche Monnex (TDIMM) revenue	11,500	11,500
Studentcare funding	10,000	10,000
Orientation	5,000	5,000
Dean of Students funding	4,190	4,190
Awards Night	500	500
	1,240,509	1,248,876
Other Restricted		
Graduate Student Assistance Program fees	158,072	140,983
CJSR fees	16,337	16,255
	174,409	157,238
Commercial Activities		
Physical Activity and Wellness Centre (PAW) revenue	27,796	20,104
Handbook revenue	5,110	5,110
	32,906	25,214
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,343,236	\$ 2,409,613

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Schedule of Expenses

(Schedule 2)

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Graduate Student Support Fund		
Child care grants	\$ 434,000	\$ 380,575
Academic travel awards	365,377	277,778
Emergency bursaries	76,035	302,432
Graduate student recognition awards	20,000	17,500
	895,412	978,285
Administration and Services (Schedule 3)		
Human resources	664,973	637,032
Governance	223,181	207,023
Services	119,566	118,487
Professional	55,564	104,435
Office administration and operational costs	21,708	27,850
Office administration and operational costs	4,739	48,069
	1,089,731	1,142,896
Other Restricted		
Graduate Student Assistance Program fees	158,072	140,983
CJSR Fees	16,337	16,255
	174,409	157,238
Commercial Activities		
Handbook	5,109	12,259
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,164,661	\$ 2,290,678

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Schedule of Administration and Services Expenses

(Schedule 3)

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Governance		
Elected officers stipends and benefits	\$ 192,717	\$ 186,451
Employer contributions		
Employer CPP contributions	10,256	9,533
	10,256	9,533
Elected officers - Other		
Executive officers recognition	1,188	1,132
Insurance (directors' and officers' liability insurance)	1,170	197
Executive officers discretionary expenses	779	661
Executive transition	709	240
Board and other committees	59	247
	3,905	2,477
Council		
Other honorarium	5,000	-
Council expense	4,015	1,672
Election	3,253	3,355
Council speaker honorarium	2,035	2,035
Chief Returning Officer honorarium	2,000	1,500
	16,303	8,562
	223,181	207,023
Advocacy		
Government and external relations	4,195	14,851
University relations	544	154
Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council fees	-	33,064
	4,739	48,069
Human Resources		
Salaries and benefits	611,706	598,803
Employer contributions		
Employer CPP contributions	27,747	22,075
Employer EI contributions	10,731	8,462
	38,478	30,537
Other human resources		
Professional expense allowance	10,115	3,881
Workers' Compensation Board	2,951	3,210
Staff recognition	1,723	601
	14,789	7,692
	664,973	637,032

(continues)

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE U OF A

Schedule of Administration and Services Expenses (continued)

(Schedule 3)

Year Ended March 31, 2024

Office Administration and Operational Costs

Repair and maintenance	10,371	9,360
Telephone and cable	2,822	2,822
Office Supplies & Maintenance	2,401	7,405
Small equipment purchases	2,316	2,636
Payroll and bank service charges	1,928	1,548
Photocopier lease/office	1,312	3,516
Insurance	558	563
	21,708	27,850

Professional

Financial audit	17,329	13,781
Investment advisor	15,798	20,240
Legal fees - general	13,970	39,884
Consultants	5,317	27,380
IT service agreement	3,150	3,150
	55,564	104,435

Services

Grants and Subsidies		
Academic workshop subsidies	12,000	12,000
	12,000	12,000
Student Groups		
Academically-related student group awards	32,950	20,575
Council remuneration student groups	9,750	8,500
	42,700	29,075
Other		
Food Bank	27,000	25,000
Orientation	18,143	35,095
Awards Night	13,032	10,506
Child care access	5,249	5,021
Association of Managers in Canadian College University and Student Centre membership	800	725
Annual strategic plan initiatives	642	1,065
	64,866	77,412
	119,566	118,487

TOTAL ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES EXPENSES	\$ 1,089,731	\$ 1,142,896
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Appendix C

Management representation letter



The Graduate Students Association of the U of A

Room1-49 University of Alberta, Triffo Hall
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2E1

October 17, 2024

RSM Canada LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants
2500 Bell Tower
10104 103rd Ave
Edmonton, AB
T5J 0H8

Dear Sirs:

We are providing this letter in connection with your audit of the financial statements of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A (the "Association") as at March 31, 2024 and for the year then ended, for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations and cash flows of The Graduate Students Association of the U of A in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

We acknowledge that we are responsible for the fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and for the design and implementation of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error. We have assessed the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud, and have determined such risk to be low. Further, we acknowledge that your examination was planned and conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards so as to enable you to express an opinion on the financial statements. We understand that while your work includes an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, it is not designed to identify, nor can it necessarily be expected to disclose fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. An item is considered material, regardless of its monetary value, if it is probable that its omission from or misstatement in the financial statements would influence the decision of a reasonable person relying on the financial statements.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, as of October 17, 2024, the following representations were made to you during your audit.

Financial statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter dated June 21, 2024, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations; in particular, the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance therewith.
2. The Association's significant accounting policies are disclosed in the financial statements and:
 - (a) there have been no changes in the Association's accounting policies.
 - (b) the accounting policies selected and applied are appropriate in the circumstances.
 - (c) significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
3. Significant matters have not arisen that would require a restatement of the comparative financial statements.

Completeness of information

4. We have provided you with:
 - access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements, such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of this audit;
 - unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence; and
 - all minutes of the meetings of directors and committees of directors, or summaries of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared.
5. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
6. We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory agencies, applicable securities commissions or governmental authorities, including their financial reporting requirements.
7. We are unaware of any instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered when preparing financial statements.
8. We have identified to you all known related parties and all known related party relationships and transactions, including guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration.
9. We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.

Fraud and error

10. We have no knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Association involving management; employees who have significant roles in internal control; or others, where the fraud could have a non-trivial effect on the financial statements.
11. We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Association's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
12. We believe that the effects of the uncorrected financial statement misstatements summarized in the accompanying schedule are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Recognition, measurement and disclosure

13. We believe that the significant assumptions used in arriving at the fair values of financial instruments as measured and disclosed in the financial statements are reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.
14. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
15. All related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately measured and disclosed in the financial statements.
16. We are not aware of any environmental laws or regulations that impact our Association.
17. The nature of all material measurement uncertainties has been appropriately disclosed in the financial statements, including all estimates where it is reasonably possible that the estimate will change in the near term and the effect of the change could be material to the financial statements.

18. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel. Any such items have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.
19. We confirm that there are no derivative or off-balance sheet financial instruments held at the year then ended.
20. All liabilities, both actual and contingent, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
21. The Association has satisfactory title to, or control over, all assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Association's assets or assets pledged as collateral that are not disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.
22. We have disclosed to you, and the Association has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
23. There have been no events subsequent to the statement of financial position date up to the date hereof that would require recognition or disclosure in the financial statements.
24. The terms of your engagement, as set out in your letter to us dated June 21, 2024, are still in effect and we agree with the terms as set out.

Journal entry approval

25. We confirm our approval of and acknowledge responsibility for the journal entries listed in the accompanying schedule.

Yours very truly,

Lewie Moodley, Executive Director

LP/wc

Summary of Uncorrected Misstatements

Description	Effect: Increase / (Decrease)					
	Assets	Liabilities	Net Assets	Revenue	Expenses	Revenue over (under) expenses
Unrecorded misstatement - Factual						
SLAM2 [3/31/2024] - To record the factual misstatement in grant expenses.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (562)	\$ -	\$ (562)	\$ 562
Unrecorded misstatement - Projected						
SLAM1 [3/31/2024] - To adjust for projected misstatement in grant expense testing.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (5,068)	\$ -	\$ (5,068)	\$ 5,068
Unrecorded misstatement - Judgmental						
None present						
Total uncorrected misstatements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (5,630)	\$ -	\$ (5,630)	\$ 5,630
Cumulative net assets misstatements			\$ -			

Appendix D

Summary of adjustments



The Graduate Students Association of the U of A

Year End: March 31, 2024

Journal Entries: Adjusting

Date: 4/1/2023 To 3/31/2024

Number	Date	Name	Account No	Reference	Debit	Credit	Recurrence	Misstatement	
RSM1	3/31/2024	Accounts Receivable	1205	5200.110		964,000.00			
RSM1	3/31/2024	Deferred Fee Revenue	2300	5200.110	964,000.00				
		To reverse 2024-2025 GSSF funding not received as of year-end.							Factual
RSM2	3/31/2024	Deferred Fee Revenue	2300	6400.100	217,756.96				
RSM2	3/31/2024	GSSF Bursary Revenue	4255	6400.100		217,756.96			
		To reverse the entry prepared by GSA that increased deferred revenues to tie to the bank.							Factual
RSM3	3/31/2024	Deferred Fee Revenue	2300	6400.100	33,200.07				
RSM3	3/31/2024	GSA Labour Union Dues Collected	4920	6400.100		33,200.07			
		To reverse the entry prepared by GSA that accounted for funds received in the current year for prior year revenues recognized.							Factual
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Accrued Liabilities	2217	PBC		66,104.25			
GSA J117	3/31/2024	GSAP fees	5497	PBC	66,104.25				
		To record accrual related to GSAP fees from October 2023 to March 2024.							
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Deferred Fee Revenue	2300	PBC		20,308.24			
GSA J117	3/31/2024	GSAP Fees Collected	4678	PBC	20,308.24				
		To adjust GSAP fees deferred revenue balance to actual.							
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Deferred Fee Revenue	2300	PBC	86,412.49				
GSA J117	3/31/2024	GSAP Fees Collected	4678	PBC		86,412.49			
		To reverse original entry made to adjust GSAP Fees deferred revenue.							
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Accrued Liabilities	2217	PBC		180.00			
GSA J117	3/31/2024	U-Pass Expense for Elected Members	5052	PBC	180.00				
		To record accrued liability for Winter 2024 U-Pass DEO reimbursement.							
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Interest Revenue	4140	PBC	35,984.65				
GSA J117	3/31/2024	GSSF Bursary Revenue	4255	PBC		35,984.65			
		To record Bursary Revenue.							
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Accounts Receivable	1210	PBC	5,407.52				
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Dental Plan Remittances	5520	PBC		2,170.12			
GSA J117	3/31/2024	Health Plan Remittances	5610	PBC		3,237.40			
		To adjust for the balance receivable from Studentcare from the Health and Dental invoice.							
					1,429,354.18	1,429,354.18			
Net Income (Loss)			175,449.55						

Appendix E

Summary of uncorrected misstatements

Description	Effect: Increase / (Decrease)					
	Assets	Liabilities	Net Assets	Revenue	Expenses	Revenue over (under) expenses
Unrecorded misstatement - Factual						
SLAM2 [3/31/2024] - To record the factual misstatement in grant expenses.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (562)	\$ -	\$ (562)	\$ 562
Unrecorded misstatement - Projected						
SLAM1 [3/31/2024] - To adjust for projected misstatement in grant expense testing.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (5,068)	\$ -	\$ (5,068)	\$ 5,068
Unrecorded misstatement - Judgmental						
None present						
Total uncorrected misstatements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (5,630)	\$ -	\$ (5,630)	\$ 5,630
Cumulative net assets misstatements			\$ -			

Appendix F

2024 NPO industry trends and topics

Below is a summary of the trends impacting the nonprofit industry:

Trend/ hot topic	Description	Suggested reading/webcasts
Data management and digital transformation	Nonprofits are continuing to invest in technologies to serve their stakeholders more effectively. This includes customer relationship management (CRM), donor management, member systems, dashboarding and measurement of key performance indicators (KPIs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support your business transformation with your IT infrastructure https://tinyurl.com/24nvt4b5• Workday adaptive planning transforms nonprofits budgeting and forecasting https://tinyurl.com/55nca2uk• Effective utilization of generative AI on third-party management programs https://tinyurl.com/357rutfy• Where to start: Frequently asked questions about generative AI https://tinyurl.com/3u5cwj52• 6 common mistakes companies make when selecting a managed security services provider https://tinyurl.com/2p8nujxn• Transforming the IT Leadership Role https://tinyurl.com/yuk7as3u• 5 signs your nonprofit needs to update its business processes https://tinyurl.com/34rpa9uh
Donor/Member engagement	It is imperative that nonprofits maintain close connections with their donors, members or volunteers. The relationship with the donor/member/volunteer has changed post pandemic and organizations need to relook at their engagement models to ensure they are bringing the right value and experience to their stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A guide for associations to weather economic downturns https://tinyurl.com/nb2vv4md• Enhancing constituent experience with identity management https://tinyurl.com/yztetbrd

Appendix F

2024 NPO industry trends and topics (cont'd)

Trend/ hot topic	Description	Suggested reading/webcasts
Human capital	Organizations are rethinking how to protect their most valuable asset—people. Employee attraction and retention is a key focus to navigate through the upcoming years given staffing shortages and increased compensation demands. Organizations are looking to new staffing models, outsourcing or the gig economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing a human governance framework for artificial intelligence https://tinyurl.com/22bf99zzThe battle for retention: What do workers want? https://tinyurl.com/5dz7h2yrA total rewards approach to executive compensation https://tinyurl.com/muxbc2n25 ways nonprofits can stay agile https://tinyurl.com/ypyraavbWhy organizations should take a strategic approach to human capital management https://tinyurl.com/5n883wtn
Cyber risk/security	Organizations face large reputation and financial risk in the event of a cyber security breach. Cloud-based technologies pose different challenges than before, and the technical sophistication is not a skillset seen in a lot of nonprofit organizations. We are seeing more organizations elevate the risk assessment and potential impact of cyber-related matters in their annual risk assessments. Organizations are also developing response plans for the day the incident happens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 Steps for safeguarding your business against cyberattacks https://tinyurl.com/2s3ndfkyFor boards, the best cybersecurity defense is a good offense https://tinyurl.com/pmpa9kbjWhy cyber risk is still a main responsibility for board members https://tinyurl.com/mtwrhsz7
Inflation	Nonprofits are faced with significant cost increases and a lack of ability to increase funding, all while dealing with stakeholders who also are responding to increased costs. Nonprofits will need to rethink budgets, plan for salary increases to retain employees and prioritize spending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Canada financial conditions update: Stabilization and recovery https://tinyurl.com/3wuwhcchIncreasing a nonprofit's impact through operational efficiency https://tinyurl.com/mrx4z4k6

Appendix F

2024 NPO industry trends and topics (cont'd)

Trend/ hot topic	Description	Suggested reading/webcasts
Accounting Standards currently under review by the Accounting Standards Board (AcSB)		
Contributions	Revenue Recognition and Related Matters: The AcSB wants to improve financial reporting by Not-for-Profit Organizations (NFPOs) by creating guidance that will result in financial statements that are less complex and more comparable for financial statement users. The related exposure draft was issued in March 2023 and the AcSB is currently deliberating feedback on the exposure draft.	More information can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/54jef26
Insurance Contracts with cash surrender value	The AcSB has undertaken a project to provide guidance on the recognition and measurement of the cash surrender value of an insurance contract as a result of stakeholders indicating that there is diversity in the accounting for the cash surrender value of an insurance contract. The related exposure draft was issued in November 2023 and the AcSB is currently deliberating feedback on the exposure draft.	More information can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/bdhfycwx
Reporting Controlled and Related Entities by Not-for-Profit Organizations	The AcSB is also performing research in the areas of improvements to Section 4450 Reporting Controlled and Related Entities by Not-for-Profit Organizations.	https://tinyurl.com/mrtjrbas
Recognition of intangible assets and subsequent measurement of goodwill	The AcSB is also performing research in the area of the subsequent measurement of goodwill and acquired intangible assets in order to understand current challenges with the recognition of intangible assets acquired in a business combination and the subsequent measurement of goodwill and the information needs of financial statement users.	https://tinyurl.com/yejtb38w

Other resources that could be of interest to you:

- The Real Economy <https://tinyurl.com/mwv332py>
- Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) 2023 State of the Sector Report <https://tinyurl.com/252txt5k>

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